

Bushcare Shoalhaven

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links



summer edition 2012

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Oh What A Season

Well what a season it has been! Firstly my apologies for the lateness of this latest edition of Bushcare Links but the past few months have been really busy. The increase in rainfall right across the Shoalhaven over the past year to year and a half has meant a massive increase in plant growth. There has been a consistent proliferation of flowering and fruiting of many local species across the coast, rivers and mountains of the Shoalhaven

Never has there been a better time to enjoy Bushcare work and discover new delights that your site's may be uncovering.

For many Bushcare Groups, who have been around for 10 years or less, they would have only known their patch during times of low rainfall or semi drought, with El Nino type of weather patterns having been the dominate feature since 2001. Now that El Nino has taken a back seat and her sister La Nina has come into effect we are experiencing a wetter period.

This means that species that may not have set flower or seed on your site may be taking advantage of this change in weather and reproducing on mass. Some species that may have been dormant in the soil bank are suddenly germinating.

If you are a Bushcare Group that has put in a lot of effort into regenerating your site/patch this will be a time of great bounty and opportunity for you. There will be a high proportion of native seed and fruit setting and germinating on your site. On the other hand if you are a Bushcare Group who is early in the regeneration process you may be getting a little disheartened with the prolific growth and germination of weeds on your site. Don't despair as one positive outcome from the prolific growth rate of weeds is that they are easier to kill.



Be vigilant during this season of abundance as putting the work in now will reap you great rewards in the near future. Plus it is just a great time to be out watching nature at work. Happy Bushcaring to all and have a safe and happy summer.



"A Bush Pea (*Daphnoides pultanea*) in full glory along the Basin Walking Track at Sanctuary Point"

New Youth Bushcare Group in the Shoalhaven

– *Your Chance to Help!*

Shoalhaven Council has received some funding from the Southern Rivers Catchment Management Authority to get a volunteer Youth Bushcare Group up and running in the Shoalhaven LGA.

The idea was born at the NSW Coastal Volunteers Forum held in Wollongong in March last year, two presentation's were given on youth Landcare groups that had got up and running in Sydney and the Illawarra. We thought the Shoalhaven would have enough young people interested in making a difference to their local environment and get together to start their own Bushcare group.

It is a well known fact that the Landcare/Bushcare movement does suffer from a lack of participation from the younger generations x and y, with a survey conducted last year revealing that the average age of a Landcare/Bushcare member is 57 years. How do we attract younger people into Landcare/Bushcare? How do we ensure that all the hard work that has been done by Bushcare and Landcare groups is carried on into the future?

There has always been a strong interest and participation in Green Corps type teams in this area and the formation

of a volunteer Bushcare Group specifically for younger people who want to get involved will give younger people an opportunity to gain experience if they wish to pursue a career in the environmental field.

To get the Youth Bushcare Group started Council have employed a coordinator called Jessamyn Drover to organise and supervise the new youth group. Potential members of the group will be sourced via posters, flyers and through social media such as Facebook.

We are hoping to get the group hitting the ground early this year and they will be a roving group which will work on existing Bushcare Group sites once a month. This is where we are asking for your help. If you are interested in hosting the youth Bushcare Group to help you on your site please call Jessamyn on mobile 0478 489418 or e-mail Drover@shoalhaven.nsw.gov.au please provide some basic information as follows:

- Bushcare Group
- Site
- Location
- Type of work required
- What day of the month suits you
- Contact name, phone and e-mail

If you know of anyone aged between 16 -30 years that may be interested in getting involved please get them to call Jessamyn Drover on 0478489418 and help get this group get off the ground.





Shoalhaven Bushcare Representative Group

– *What's Happening?*

The Shoalhaven Bushcare Representative Group has had its first meeting on September 15th last year which was a chance for the Bushcare volunteer representatives to get their heads around some of the formalities of Council's meeting procedures as well as meet each other.

At the meeting Clr Fergusson was elected as the chairperson for the Bushcare Representative Group. A presentation was also given to the meeting on the current situation of the Shoalhaven Bushcare Program and some time was spent focusing how Council is strategically planning for the short term and long term management of natural area reserve under the control and care of Shoalhaven Council.

A second Bushcare Representative Group meeting was held on Thursday 15th December 2011. There were five Bushcare Action Plans passed and other issues discussed included:

- Amendments to Council's Foreshore Reserves Policy
- Natural Areas Plan of Management – What are the priorities for managing Natural Areas?

Allocasuarina spp are creating.

The Bushcare Group will be looking at undertaking some monitoring of the regeneration following the fire to establish if there is a greater diversity of species germinating following the fire. This is important to provide proof that fire can be used as a tool to increase biodiversity on the heath dominated headlands such as North Head.

The group will also be undertaking some control of exotic weed species on the headland, especially annual weeds that appear on the track edges and are emerging following fire. They are also interested in keeping the area tidy and maintaining the labyrinth of walking tracks that make up One Track for All. The North Head Bushcare Group will meet on the second Friday of each month. If you are interested in helping please contact Peter Loyd, the group coordinator on 4454-2059.



"Cate Brooks, Bushcare Support Trainer instructing Peter, Ted and Pam in weed control"

North Head Ulladulla

– *New Bushcare Group*

For those southerners out there, you will know North Head or One Track for All well. Perched on the northern side of Ulladulla Harbour this headland makes up one of two fantastic natural headland's that act as centurions guarding Ulladulla Harbour, both of which are cultural and natural treasures within easy walking distance of the Ulladulla CBD.

Recently there has been the start of a new Bushcare Group on North Head made up of a small group of committed locals. They are looking at following up with some bush regeneration works following a large planned burn that was undertaken in 2010 on the headland.

The North Head Bushcare Group had concerns about the loss of biodiversity on the headland due to dominance of *Allocasuarina* spp which was resulting in the simplification of the heath land due to the monoculture effect that the

Mulgen Creek

– *In the Heart of Bomaderry*

Back in 2002 George Windsor and one of his neighbours were walking their dogs through the local patch of bushland, despairing at the litter and general neglect of the area. George has a long history of tree planting projects at different schools he taught at, and he'd been thinking of starting a Bushcare group. His neighbour said he'd be in it and there it started. The Mulgen Creek Bushcare group has been meeting and working on a riparian area since then.

The first achievement, George says, was getting the rubbish out: "Council removed five truckloads of accumulated dumped garden waste, general household waste and street litter. Our group subsequently removed an assortment of dumped furniture, car parts, masonry and builders' rubble from the creek." As the area had been used for dumping garden waste for many years there was a major weed problem.



Getting the woody weeds – Lantana, Privet and Camphor laurel – under control has been another achievement. Replanting has taken place in many areas but vandalism has been a problem. Four small bridges have been installed over the creek or adjacent drains and a set of stairs to facilitate access to the creek crossing and overcome erosion have been built. A contractor worked on providing about 300 metres of walking track.

Bruce Angus has been a support trainer with the group for a number of years. George says Bruce's positive outlook and plant identification skills is an asset to the group, "and he often has good suggestions about how to do something."

The group has had up to 10 members in the past, but currently has six members on the books, with just four regulars. "People have moved, or become ill, which happens, but it affects what we can do. There are other areas we could work on – we've been asked to take on an area that's choked with Lantana – but we can't realistically do that with our small numbers," George said. "We're largely just maintaining what we've done, keeping the litter under control and preventing the woody weeds re-establishing. But if we get a few new members who knows what we might be able to do."



"Members of the Mulgen Creek Bushcare Group hard at it"

Changes to Council's Foreshore Reserve Policy

Shoalhaven Council has proposed to amend its Foreshore Reserves Policy, which is a policy that acts as a guide for the management of all foreshore reserves that are either owned or managed by Council. The proposed amendments to the policy are mainly related to changing the definitions within the policy of where and under what authority residents can mow/slash foreshore reserves, natural areas or otherwise.

Currently the sections of the Foreshore Reserves Policy that address the distances of mowing from private property boundaries are:

Council values voluntary mowing of grass/lawn by residents and organised 'care' groups on its managed land as a

valuable maintenance contribution up to 3 metres from a property boundary, providing this activity does not encroach into riparian or natural foreshore areas. Voluntary mowing of grass/lawn greater than 3 metres from a property boundary on Council managed land will require authorisation under one of Council's 'Care' programmes.

The requirements of Council for responsible foreshore reserve management have increased over the years with the development of Federal and State legislation and policy. As they relate to foreshore areas, laws and policy generally encourage the use of native vegetation to provide physical stability and biodiversity conservation. Conflict emerges sometimes with residents when mowing operations appear to damage or otherwise compromise the structural stability of riparian areas or natural foreshore areas.

This policy aims to allow a sensible approach to Council's environmental obligations and the community's need for surrounding property maintenance. As a general rule, grass cutting will therefore be restricted within a minimum of 5 metres of riparian or natural foreshore areas to allow for the mixed depth of root development for bank stabilisation provided by native vegetation.

The proposed amendments dealt with changing the distance allowed from properties boundaries of 3 metres and 5 metres from natural foreshore areas or riparian areas to "an appropriate distance" from a property boundary. Council proposed these changes as it was the view of Council that the current Policy is too prescriptive, and does not allow the extent of mowing on Council's reserves to be customised to the character of the reserve or the wishes of local communities.

The Council is proposing that the current principles of the Foreshore Policy be revised to the following:

- As a general rule, grass cutting will be allowed to an appropriate distance in riparian or natural foreshore areas to allow for the mixed depth of root development for bank stabilisation provided by native vegetation;
- Council values voluntary mowing of grass/lawn on its managed land as a valuable maintenance contribution to an appropriate distance from a property boundary, providing this activity does not damage a riparian or natural foreshore area; and
- Voluntary mowing of grass/lawn on Council managed land may be endorsed under one of Council's 'Care' programs.

Submissions on these amendments closed on the 18th November 2011. Council received approximately 60 submissions, with submissions from the NSW Fisheries, Southern Rivers Catchment Management Authority, NSW Office of Environment and Heritage and NSW Land and Property Management Authority.

Generally many of submissions raised concerns at the wording "appropriate distance" stating that this was too vague a term to have in policy that should be setting clear directions as to the management of the foreshore reserve.



Several legal implications as a result of the change were also raised in the submissions particularly relating to the NSW Native Vegetation Act 2005, as well as the recent amendments relating to the protection of marine vegetation under part 7 of the NSW Fisheries Management Act 1994 and the impact on Ecologically Endangered Communities under the NSW Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995. There was also an issue raised about the impact of the amendments on Council's ability to control the level of public and personal liability risk associated with residents mowing foreshore reserves.

A report has been prepared on the submissions received as well as legal advice that Council has sort relating to the proposed changes to Foreshore Reserve Policy. The report will make several recommendations to Council based on the submissions and the legal advice, so it a case of watch this space.



Changes to Bushcare Support Trainers

For the past five years around 30 Bushcare Groups have been utilising the services of Bushcare Support Trainers to provide on site technical support training in bush regeneration techniques. This includes plant and weed identification, assistance with planning Bushcare projects and providing information on occupational health and safety.

Many of you will be familiar with Rebecca Rudd, Cate Brooks, Bruce Angus, Fiona Proust and Kelly O'Connell, who have all been working with Bushcare Group's across the city, since 2005. In the past this service has been contracted out to Real Options International Pty Ltd via a tender process. Real Options International is a small training and facilitation company based in Huskisson, who have provided a competent and reliable service to date.

Recently however, Real Options increased their fees for both the on-site hourly rate and the administration and management of the service by roughly 15%. This has meant that contracting the service has become financially unviable and beyond the capacity of Council's Bushcare operational budget.

For this reason Council has made the decision to directly employ the Bushcare Support Trainers as casuals. This will provide savings to the Council's Bushcare operational budget which can be used to provide direct support to Bushcare Groups.

This will also mean there will be a delay between the end of the Real Options contract, which is mid December 2011, and the employment of the casual Bushcare Support Trainers. I ask for your patience during this time of transition, of course if you have any question please call Alasdair Stratton 4429 3592

Rennies Beach Bushcare Group Win NSW Clean Beach Award

Congratulations must go to the Rennies Beach Bushcare Group for winning the NSW Clean Beach Regional Environmental Protection award for all the group's efforts in restoring and protecting the native vegetation surrounding the popular Rennies Beach.

Six years ago the Rennies Beach Bushcare Group formed to address some serious environmental vandalism that occurred following the poisoning of several large Coastal Banksia's adjacent to the beach car park at Rennies Beach Close in Ulladulla. The need for action and the anger of local residents was channelled into restoring the damage and today the site looks fantastic thanks to the consistent dedication of the Bushcare Group.

The award was presented to Annie Boutland, the Rennies Beach Bushcare Group Coordinator, by CEO of Keep Australia Beautiful Peter McLean and Shoalhaven Mayor Clr Paul Green. Peter said this year's awards had been very competitive due to the quality of the submissions and dedication of groups and individuals along the NSW coast.



"Bushcare volunteers George Panneman and Andy Walker, Bushcare Support Worker Cate Brooks, Shoalhaven mayor Paul Green, Keep Australia Beautiful CEO Peter McLean, Bushcare Coordinator, Annie Boutland, Shoalhaven City Council's Bushcare Coordinator Alasdair Stratton and council's Environmental Services Manager, Andrew Gibbs"



Watch Out for Ticks This Summer

So far this season the ticks have been prolific with large numbers of both nymphs and adult ticks that have been thriving. To minimise exposure to ticks over the summer period please ensure that everyone working on your Bushcare sites wears long pants and a long sleeve shirt and applies insect repellent before working on site.

Removal of Ticks

If anyone in your Bushcare Group does get bitten by a tick it is vital that you do not apply any chemical such as methylated spirits or touch or disturb the tick, as this can cause it to inject saliva into the skin which could make the situation worse or lead to an allergic reaction.

Council has developed a work safety procedure for tick removal as follows:

1. Apply aerosol insect repellent that preferably contains pyrethrin or a pyrethroid or a product called Lyclear which is a scabies cream containing permethrin. The combination of hydrocarbons and the pyrethrin acts as a narcotic and prevents the tick from injecting its saliva; this should be done before any attempt to remove the tick.
2. Following this removal of the tick should be undertaken using a product called Tick Twister®.
3. Choose the correct size Tick Twister® size for large or small ticks.
4. Secure with small prongs, which attach to the animals abdomen, to the side of the tick.
5. Lift and twist the tick lightly to unscrew the tick from your skin.

Council stores stocks the Tick Twister® and more information on it can be obtained from the following website www.ticktwister.com



Crookhaven Heads Restoration Project, Culburra Beach

Recently Shoalhaven Council has begun a restoration and weed control project at Crookhaven Heads, Culburra Beach. Crookhaven Heads is situated on the southern side of the entrance to the Crookahaven River. The headland has significant Aboriginal and European heritage and is a prominent landscape feature along the coast being used for maritime navigation. Recently Council received a grant to undertake restoration works on the old lighthouse to restore and protect it from on-going vandalism as well as vegetation management on the headland.

Part of this grant has been used to partner up with the NSW Correctional Services and the Jerrinja Local Aboriginal Land Council. Correctional Services have provided a team of clients to assist with Lantana and Asparagus Fern control on the headland and Council has employed a casual Bush Regenerator, Adam Crossley from the Jerrinja Aboriginal Land Council, to supervise and oversee the bush regeneration on the headland. To date the project has been going well with up to 70% of the primary weed control being completed; the challenge will be to ensure that the secondary follow up work is undertaken into the future.



"Adam Crossley looking over recent Lantana control undertaken by NSW Corrective Services crew"

Native Plant or Weed

– Spot the Difference

The following is from an excellent booklet called "Native plant or Weed – Pick the difference" produced by Ann Loughran on behalf of NSW Primary Industries which used scanned images of native plants and weeds that look very similar. We will be featuring three native plant – weed look a likes in each newsletter, as many Bushcare volunteers are not aware of how similar some native plants look to weed species. In this edition we take a look at the following look a like native/weed species, get your group familiar with these:



Native

Parsonsia straminea (Silkpod Vine)

Breynia oblongifolia (Breynia)

Doodia aspera (Rasp Fern)

For anyone who would like to purchase the a copy of the booklet they can be obtained from the NSW DPI bookshop for \$20 call 1800 025 520 to order by phone or on-line at www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/aboutus/resources/bookshop

Weed look a like

Araujia sericifolia (Moth Pod)

Senna pendula spp *pendula* (Winter Senna)

Nephrolepis cordifolia (Fishbone Fern)



Rasp fern



Fishbone fern



Breynia



Winter Seena



Silkpod



Moth Plant



Buff Banded Rails

We live adjacent to the Basin Walking Track which traverses around some shore area of St. Georges Basin, to Sanctuary Point. Over the past years, we have developed and regenerated bushland either side of the track with care given to maintaining local plant species, and eradication of escapee exotic species.

Recently, we were amazed at the appearance of ground birds, known as Buff Banded Rails. We have been residing here on and off for the past twenty years and have never before noticed these birds. They are not specifically classed as a shore bird, but we have noticed that they seem content and are quite camouflaged, when they walk over the piled up seagrasses along the edge of the lake.

Some of the other observations that we have made include:

- * They fly a little like a duck with their legs hanging down – but only a foot or so above the ground
- * They rarely go far from cover of long grass, but
- * Were often seen pecking at the mown grass after the lawn was cut
- * They seem to be very active after rain showers, pecking away at the insects
- * The adults twitch their tail – reason unknown
- * The main predation in our area was from swooping magpies
- * They seem to travel along known tracks, because they have 'tracked' a path in one particular area.

We were excited to see their seven chicks – tiny black fluff balls on unsteady legs; but this number reduced to five within a few days.

Now after about six weeks, we are seeing adult plumage emerging, and juveniles straying further from their parents.

And the spin-off for us?

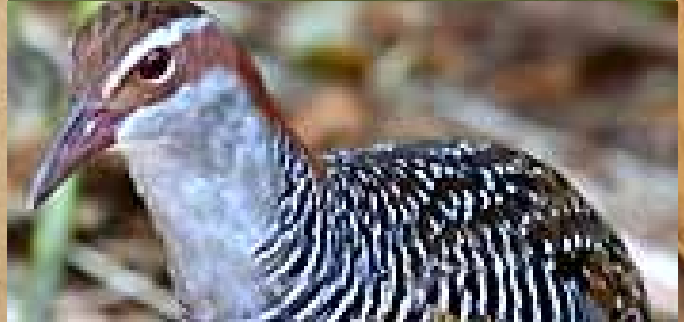
We've learnt that patience has its rewards – they are very fast, but after sitting around quietly for a while, they venture out (barely) long enough for a photo opportunity.

We have made the acquaintance of several bird enthusiasts who have visited our area; as by word of mouth, information on these birds travels through the community. Now about ten weeks on, the juveniles appear to have developed their adult plumage, are hard to distinguish from the parents, and are free roaming for food forage. They are still very fast.

Gwen and Ken Smith - Basin Walking Track Bushcare



"Adult Buff Banded Rail and three fledglings grazing on foreshore area of Basin Walking Track" – Photo courtesy of Ken Smith



"Adult Buff Banded Rail – Photo courtesy of Birds in Backyards website www.birdsinbackyards.com.au

Bushcare Latest Hits

– Courtesy of Wallace Meehan & Barry Vidler
– Mollymook Dunecare/Bushcare Group

THE BUSHCARE BOP

(Sung to the Little Richard tune of "Be Bop Lulula she's my baby")

Verse 1

Bushcare work is my real baby
Bushcare work it drives me crazy
Conservation on our site Regeneration – is just right

Chorus

Bushcare (repeat 3 times)

Verse 2

Coprosma – it must get the chop
Turkey Rhubarb we must stop
Cassia and Wandering Jew
We kill and it starts a new

Repeat chorus

Verse 3

We support Casuarina glauca
She Oak to you but a great performer
Cassine australis is the Olive Plump
Non native plantings are really dumb

Repeat chorus



Verse 4

Bitou Bush and Honeysuckle
We are keen and with some luck
Seem them gone from Bannister Point
Turn it into a native joint

Repeat chorus

Verse 5

Bushcare show some ethic
Work flat out don't be pathetic
We all work with quite endeavours
Bushcare we will be there what ever the weather

THE BUSHCARE WORKERS WALTZ

Sung to "Oh What a Beautiful Morning" (apologies to Rodgers and Hammerstein).

Oh what a beautiful morning
Oh what a fine day to play

Chorus

I've got a terrible feeling
Frances will work us all day.

Verse 1

Oh the vandals are hacking the bushes
The scroungers are fishing beneath
The weeds are as high
As Alasdair's eye
Cape Ivy is climbing clear up to the sky

Repeat Chorus

Verse 2

Oh the tourists are looking like lobsters
They're baking and burning below
They don't bat an eye
As they see us trudge by
We empty our burden
And hope they don't fry.

Repeat Chorus

Written by Barry Vidler of Mollymook Dunecare/ Bushcare

Shoalhaven City Bushcare

POSTAGE
PAID

