

Bushcare Shoalhaven

PO Box 42, Nowra NSW, 2541 | 4429 3582 | bushcare@shoalhaven.nsw.gov.au

links

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Injuries on Your Bushcare Site

If you or another Bushcare volunteer are unfortunate enough to be injured whilst undertaking volunteer Bushcare work, it is important to report your injury to Council in case you require any further medical assistance or need to make an insurance claim.

Report injuries, or incidents that narrowly avoided an injury, to Shoalhaven Council's WHS Incident Hotline on 44293542.

Injuries need to be reported to allow Council's Work Health and Safety (WHS) and/or insurance claims teams to:

- Arrange for the employee/volunteer to see a doctor as soon as possible and assist in the return of the employee/volunteer to the workplace safely, and as early, as possible
- Ensure reportable incidents are reported to SafeWork NSW in a timely manner
- Notify Council's insurer, if required, in accordance with policy wording

If you have any further questions on reporting injuries/incidents, please call or email Council's WHS Coordinator, Don Hahn on 44293569 or

don.hahn@shoalhaven.nsw.gov.au



Identifying Aboriginal Cultural Heritage on your Bushcare Site

For non-Aboriginal people, identifying Aboriginal cultural heritage items on your Bushcare site, may not be easy. Aboriginal objects include axe-grinding grooves, stones tools and flakes, middens, scar trees and rock paintings or carvings.



Stone flakes

Under the NSW National Parks & Wildlife Act 1974, it is a prosecutable offense to damage or destroy Aboriginal heritage objects. In the Shoalhaven there are many Aboriginal heritage sites and objects, particularly around coastal lakes. These were places that had readily available food sources, both marine and terrestrial, and therefore often had permanent or semi permanent populations of indigenous people living nearby.

You may be wondering how Bushcare activities could possibly damage an Aboriginal cultural object. The digging of holes for planting, or digging out weeds, can disturb Aboriginal sites such as middens.

The NSW Office of Environment and Heritage have developed a code of practice to assist individuals or organisations to exercise due diligence when carry out activities that may harm Aboriginal heritage objects and determine if they need to apply for consent from NSW OEH.

Further details on the code of practice can be obtained at <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/resources/cultureheritage/ddcop/10798ddcop.pdf>

At the Bushcare Representative Group meeting on December 20th last year, the following actions were resolved regarding Aboriginal cultural heritage objects,

- Council officers develop a set of questions to include in the Bushcare Group Action Plan review template to prompt Bushcare Groups to be aware of the presence or absence of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage objects on their Bushcare Group site.
- Council officers undertake a preliminary desktop assessment to assess the costs of engaging a suitably qualified consultant to undertake due diligence investigation of public land where Bushcare Groups currently work, that potentially have Aboriginal Cultural Heritage objects that require due diligence code to be followed and to identify site by site recommendations for the future management of the Aboriginal cultural heritage on these sites. The investigation to proceed where the cost of this investigation can be absorbed within the existing budget.
- Council develop a set of guidelines to assist Bushcare Groups in the identification and management of Aboriginal cultural heritage and include these as part of an Aboriginal cultural heritage identification training for Bushcare Group Coordinators.

To address these actions, Council staff will:

1. Develop a set of questions to determine if further investigations are required as part of a Bushcare Group Action Plan. Examples of these questions are;

- Is the site located within 200m of
 - waters
 - a sand dune system
 - a ridge top, ridge line or headland
 - the base or top a cliff face or
 - within 20m of or in a cave, rock shelter, or cave mouth?



Aboriginal scar tree at Wellington, NSW

2. Undertake an assessment of all Shoalhaven Bushcare sites to see if further due diligence investigation is required to insure that Council is complying with the NSW OEH Code of Practise

3. Work with NSW OEH, Local Aboriginal Land Councils and Bushcare volunteers to develop clear guidelines and training for Bushcare Groups in identifying Aboriginal cultural heritage objects on their sites and working with Council to ensure they are not damaged.

Damage to Saltmarsh Vegetation by Vehicles. New Research

Many Bushcare Groups in the Shoalhaven are working to restore saltmarsh vegetation communities that have been damaged and/or degraded by vehicles driving on them.

Saltmarsh is recognised around the world as important ecological community. In NSW they are protected under the NSW Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995 and the NSW Fisheries Management Act 1994.



Saltmarsh vegetation at Callala Creek Bushland Reserve damaged by vehicles

Shannon Schofield, from the University of Wollongong undertook an honours research study to assess the impacts of vehicles on saltmarsh communities. The study used two locations in SE Australia to assess the impacts of vehicles on both biotic and abiotic variables. The biotic variables measured abundance and composition of saltmarsh vegetation, both standing and the seed bank in the soil. The abiotic variables included physical soil properties, chemical soil properties and micro-topography and hydrology.

The study found that vehicles have an adverse impact on saltmarsh with vegetation cover on average being 90% lower within vehicle tracks. Changes to vegetation species composition are associated with vehicle damage and the soil seed bank is also affected by vehicle disturbance, with an 80% reduction in average seed density within the vehicle tracks.

Abiotic factors are also affected by vehicle damage, with increased soil compaction being identified as a major impact of vehicle disturbance. Soil quality was also reduced in areas of disturbance with lower levels of soil organic matter. If you'd like a copy of the honours thesis, please contact Alasdair Stratton

bushcare@shoalhaven.nsw.gov.au

Shoalhaven DCP18

Tree and Vegetation Management

Please be aware that the Shoalhaven Council Development Control Plan 123 for Tree and Vegetation Management has been amended and revised and came into effect on 21st Dec 2016. The key changes to the DCP are as follows:

- There are no Tree Removal Permits issued anymore – they are now simplified Development Applications. If there are 10 trees or less Council, is not required to consult with the public.
- The old 45 degree rule does not apply to hollow bearing trees. The exemption for hollow bearing trees using the 45 degree rule applies only if there is an animal handler on site and applicants will need to have evidence of this.

Approval is required if a tree is less than 50 metres from the bank of a large creek (Category 1) or 30 metres (Category 2) from a smaller one (as defined by the SLEP 2014). If you would like more information on the Tree and Vegetation Management DCP visit <http://dcp2014.shoalhaven.nsw.gov.au/content/tree-and-vegetation-management>

Conjola Bushcare Volunteers Call it a Day!

On December 19, 2016 the long-term volunteers of the Conjola Bushcare Group meet for their last Christmas get together after 20 years of volunteering. The Conjola Bushcare Group started working on Conjola Beach in the mid 1990's as the result of a Coastcare grant



Conjola Bushcare volunteers Marg Moon, Brian and Robyn Marley, Janice & John Strachen, June & Mal Sloan and Council staff Kerry Thompson and Penny Lumb enjoying Christmas lunch at the Lake Conjola Community Hall.

which employed Kerry Thompson as the Project Officer to oversee and coordinate the Bitou Bush control works, which included the valuable work of the Bushcare volunteers.

Every month since then, Kerry and the volunteers have met to manage Bitou Bush on the beach and around Pattimores Lagoon, working on Crown, Council and National Park land.

It is thanks to this consistent, hard work of the volunteers, with Kerry's excellent guidance, that has made the Conjola Bitou Bush control project one of the most successful projects of its kind on the NSW coast.

After years of tick bites, sweat and tears, the volunteers have decided to hang up their boots and tools and pass on the mantle. Lifelong friendships have been made and yarns swapped. Most importantly no one has been lost in the thick bushland during all those hundreds of hours of seeking and destroying Bitou Bush. I would personally like to take this opportunity to thank all the volunteers who have helped over the years (you know who you are) and also to thank Kerry for her consistent dedication, passion and invaluable expertise in the fight for ecological restoration at Conjola Beach.

RegenTV

Regen TV is a fantastic new web site developed by the Australian Association of Bush Regenerators (ABRR) that aims to connect people involved in ecological restoration with new information and knowledge via short videos. There is now a massive range of information available. So smart yourself up and check it out! <http://www.aabr.org.au/regentv/>

Greens secure \$100 million for Landcare at the cost of Green Army Program

"As part of a deal to settle the backpacker tax dispute, the Australian Greens have secured an additional \$100m for Landcare over the next four years," (Landcare Australia website)

However this has meant the axing of the Green Army Program. My personal experience with the three Green Army teams I've worked with, and the Australian Conservation Volunteers who manage them, has been nothing but positive. The teams were very well run and resourced and the participants, surprisingly, were genuinely interested in the environment.

This is a far cry from the old Green Corps program in which we were lucky to get just 1 or 2 motivated participants.

In regional coastal areas, where youth unemployment is high, the Green Army was a great way to engage young people in Landcare/Bushcare, areas which traditionally have difficulty attracting younger volunteers.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Australian Conservation Volunteers for their exceptional professionalism in managing the Green Army program on the South Coast.

They've done a great job and it's been a pleasure to work with them.

Weed Talk – Spike Rush (*Juncus acutus*)

Many of the Shoalhaven estuaries, including Burrill Lake, Lake Tabourie and the Shoalhaven River, have infestations of Spike Rush (*Juncus acutus*). Council is working with Bushcare Groups in these areas to control this serious environmental weed that looks deceptively like its native counterpart, Sea Rush (*Juncus krussii*).

Description

A shortly rhizomatous, tussocky perennial rush which grows in estuarine environments up to 1.6 metres high with very sharp end points on the leaves. The fruit is an avoid brown capsule with seeds 1 – 2 mm long. The plant's sharp, spiny leaves and flower stem look similar, giving the whole plant a characteristic globe shape. The sharps spines can be dangerous and, unlike the native *Juncus krussii* (Sea Rush), can pierce skin.



Spiny Rush (*Juncus acutus*) seed head – Credit Dana Miles

Habitat

Thrives in estuarine environments but will also tolerate freshwater environments. It is widely naturalised in Southern Australia and common in South-East Australia.

Control

A combination of control methods should be used to give the best long-term results. Grubbing or digging out smaller infestations, whilst insuring that any seed heads and rhizomes are bagged and removed from the site. Larger infestations can be chemically controlled with the best results being when the plant is actively growing in spring to autumn. Using Glyphosate can get good results and for better results, cutting the plants and spraying the new growth is advised. Care needs taken not to slash the plant when there is ripe seed present as this will only spread the plant further.



Bushcare Links is a bi-monthly newsletter of the Shoalhaven Bushcare Program which aims to support and inspire ecological restoration by community Bushcare Groups across the Shoalhaven LGA.

If you have something you would like to share, or have any inquiries on the content of this issue, you can email the Shoalhaven Bushcare Coordinator, Alasdair Stratton

bushcare@shoalhaven.nsw.gov.au

The deadline for the next edition is 5pm 24.02.2017