Woodland Wanderings

Newsletter of the Grassy Box Woodlands Conservation Management Network

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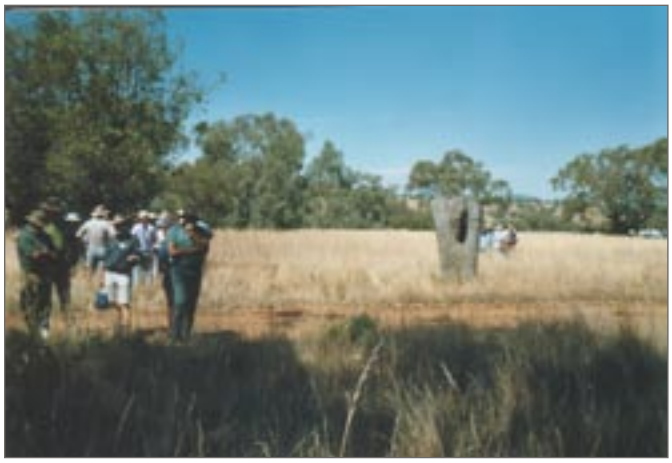
Friends of Klori TSR

by Kate MaLaren

Photo by Toni McLeish



Travelling Stock Routes (TSR) are a vital resource and can be a wonderful adventure land. The TSR adopted by the Friends of Klori is quite special - a White Box Woodland of high conservation value and biological diversity. It is located a few kilometres west of Somerton on the North-west Slopes of NSW. As a small group of volunteers, sometimes what we want to accomplish seems well outside the time we have available, but we help each other to do what we can as we can, enjoy our site and each other's company. We try to make sure we meet on a day on which at least 2 or 3 are present (not only good for occupational health and safety, but also for a cuppa and time to stop, watch and listen). Each of us has strengths. These range from identifying flora or birds and herbiciding, to motivating the group, documenting activities and keeping in contact with others who share expertise or interest in White Box Woodland.

Our major focus has been to trial and employ ways to contain a very invasive South African grass known as Coolatai Grass (*Hyparrhenia hirta)* and to monitor flora, fauna and the level of our success in our trials and general work.

We have, through Grassy Box Woodland CMN, Envirofund and CMA grant funding been able to purchase herbicide and a brushcutter, as well as producing a brochure to raise awareness and provide information about control of Coolatai.

Our local council has also helped to keep out Coolatai reinfestation by erecting seed traps on the road culverts that drain into the reserve. Most recently, with the support of a diverse range of experts and participants, we were able to hold a field day - and what a wonderful day it was! It brought together a stimulating, informative and interested group of people and it helped Friends of Klori to focus on a deadline by which we met most of our year's goals.

Support Friends of Klori by purchasing their woodland Flora notelets . Details page 2.

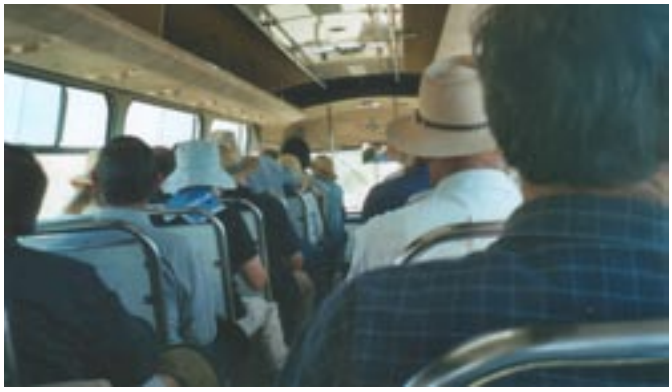


Photo by Toni McLeish

Welcome to Issue 1 2005 of Woodland Wanderings

Toni McLeish—Editor

The network email discussion group is up and running, but it needs you and your questions and answers to make it successful. We have discussed control of Paterson's Curse, harvesting of Kangaroo Grass, Phalaris invasion of Box-Gum Woodland, and sustainable firewood collection. Please join us by emailing me with "join email group" in the subject line.

I've enjoyed meeting a number of network members personally over the past 5 months, while providing displays at a "People in the Landscape" Conference in Armidale and at the CWA Annual Conference in Mudgee. In Armidale over 300 people attended, all with positive attitudes towards balancing social, economic and environmental aspects of their lives, especially the keynote speaker Allan Savoury, who was inspirational. A site visit to Tim and Karen Wright's property at Uralla at the conclusion of the conference demonstrated to all that through Holistic Management the Wrights were certainly achieving this.

As for the NSW CWA, they continue to grow in numbers and interest in the environment, with the past year being the first of many to come where they have included in their studies Australian plants and animals.

Grassy Box woodland field days at Somerton and Morongla gave me another opportunity to meet members who have a genuine interest not only in conservation on their own properties put also on public sites in their area. You all continue to amaze me with your commitment, especially in seasons as hard as these.

The networks monitoring forum in Orange— "Monitoring -The Necessary Tool To Maintain & Improve Remnant Health"—was the next opportunity I had to meet more members. 86 people attended this forum, which resulted in ideas to move forward on the issue of member support with monitoring. Again I really enjoyed sharing the learning experience with members and I will expand on the outcomes in the next newsletter.

45 members now have GBW CMN signs on their gates, helping promote the network, which is great because this improves our chances of future funding. The network has also funded Coolatai warning signs for the South-west Slopes, to be placed in existing patches by the regional weed control coordinator at Wagga Wagga.

Thank you to all the individuals and organisations that have supported the network over this period, making all these activities a success. Welcome also to the members of the Southern Tablelands Grassy Ecosystem CMN who will be sharing our newsletter.

Our draft website is on line awaiting your feedback ideas and suggestions, at **http://users.tpg.com.au/tmcleish/.**

Finally a reminder to all north-western members that we will be offering free flora and bird surveys of your Box-Gum Woodland sites this spring. You will get a letter shortly with details.

lateral thinking TO RAISE FUNDS

Friends of Klori is a 'Not-For-Profit' organisation comprised of a small group of people dedicated to preserving the native vegetation of Klori Travelling Stock Route. This Grassy White Box Woodland is listed on the Register of the National Estate and can be found North of Somerton, north west NSW

To fund on ground activities, the group raises money from the sale of notelets featuring flora species from the site. They are very reasonably priced at $10 for a pack of 10 including envelopes. A species list is available if you would like a particular species featured on your order.

Contact Joan Overeem
ph: 02 67671518 or
Email:jovereem@aapt.net.au

Australian Network for Plant Conservation (ANPC)

Workshops in Regional NSW 2005

Management & Rehabilitation of Disturbed Native Vegetation—approaches and techniques

Photo by Kate Boyd

Locations and dates

Armidale
19-20 July 2005, University of New England.

Wagga
14-15 September 2005, Wagga Wagga Council Chambers.

Dubbo
25-26 October 2005 (venue to be confirmed).

Workshop focus

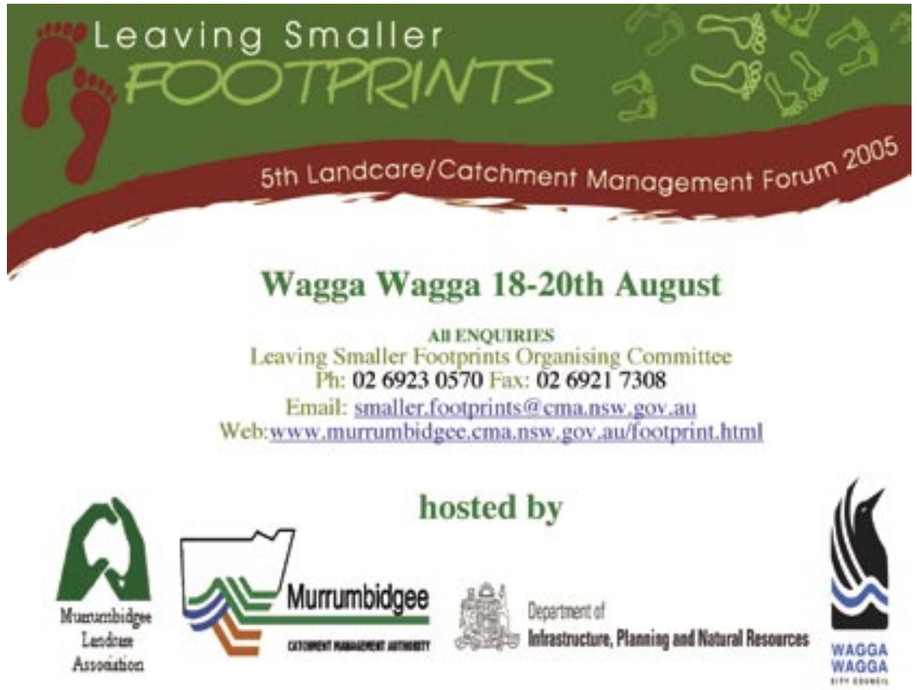
The workshop will focus on the understanding and skills required to undertake ecological rehabilitation and management of disturbed native vegetation, whether in the context of other responsibilities (such as managing powerline corridors or roadside verges) or rehabilitating a site for its conservation and ecosystem values.

The workshop will also cover aspects of legislation that rehabilitation practitioners need to understand and work with, and will include local case studies and site visits.

The workshop will encourage the exchange of skills and knowledge derived from practical experience and research.

Further information

http://www.anbg.gov.au/anpc/wshop-NSWrehab-2005.html
phone (02) 6250 9509
Email: "mailto:anpc@anbg.gov.au"



by Michael Andrews

The ironic roles of fire in the conservation of a woodland remnant in urban Bathurst

The Brooke Moore Woodland is a tiny 2 hectare remnant of Yellow Box—Blakely's Red Gum Woodland in the heart of urban Bathurst. The remnant is within a 7 hectare reserve of Crown Land managed on behalf of the NSW Department of Lands by Bathurst Regional Council and zoned for local recreation. Due to its urban setting, the site is stock free and unfenced.

Over the past decade, the Council's Parks and Recreation Section has been aware of the significance of the remnant and has avoided mowing the site, which is the maintenance practice for most of Council's recreational land. However, the surrounding 5 hectares includes a sporting field and mowed parkland. On a number of occasions the remnant has been used as a Kangaroo Grass seed harvest site by the former Department of Land and Water Conservation.

The threats to this site are somewhat different to many woodland remnants. Its small size, firewood collection, urban pets, vandalism, rubbish dumping and trail bike riding are inevitable issues and will always restrict the site's value as habitat for vertebrate fauna. However its importance as a haven for the understorey components of Grassy Box Woodland cannot be ignored and its high visibility to both the residents of Bathurst and travellers on the adjacent Great Western Highway presents an exciting opportunity for interpretation and awareness of the values of woodland remnants.

The remnant consists of woodland tree species, predominantly *Eucalyptus blakelyi* (Blakely's Red Gum) *E. bridgesiana* (Apple Box) and *E. melliodora* (Yellow Box). It has a diverse association of native understorey species. In March 2004, *Themeda australis* (Kangaroo Grass) was the dominant grass species and the lack of any form of grazing vertebrates or recent fire events had allowed this grass to become dense and rank. The density of this vegetation appeared to restrict the growth of other understorey species that might have been expected to occur within the site.

Two recent events and the securing of financial assistance from the Environmental Trust's Restoration and Rehabilitation State and Local and Governments Grant Program have brought about the future conservation, expansion and enhancement of the remnant and the opportunity to promote the values of Grassy Box Woodland to the community.

Table 1. Native understorey species recorded in the burnt patch

SCIENTIFIC NAME	COMMON NAME
Leptorhynchos squamatus	Scaly Buttons
Asperula conferta	Common Woodruff
Dianella revoluta	Black-anthered Fla-lily
Stackhousia monogyna	Creamy Candles
Wahlenbergia communis	Native Bluebell
Themeda australis	Kangaroo Grass
Bulbine bulbosa	Bulbine Lily
Acaena ovina	Sheep's Burr
Geranium solanderi	Native Geranium
Chrysocephalum apiculatum	Common Everlasting (or Yellow Buttons)
Plantago gaudichaudii	Narrow Plantain
Poa labillardieri	River Tussock
Dichopogon fimbriatus	Nodding Chocolate Lily
Lomandra filiformis	Wattle Mat-rush
Lomandra multiflora (round leaf form)	Many flowered Mat-rush

In May 2004 a small fire, presumably started by children, occurred within the remnant and extended across approximately one quarter of the woodland area. As with much of NSW, rainfall prior to the event had been below average for the previous 24 months. The fire was of sufficient intensity to discolour leaves in the upper canopy of the mature eucalypts, while understorey species were burnt to ground level. Fire Brigades NSW described the event as a small fire that was relatively easy to extinguish using water only. Rainfall since the event has been above average throughout the late winter and spring of 2004.

By October 2004, following the good rains and monitoring by local people interested in the regenerative capacity of fire in the woodland communities, the species lists in Tables 1 and 2 had been recorded:

Conservation in an Urban Landscape

Table 2. Additional native understorey species recorded in un-burnt areas

SCIENTIFIC NAME	COMMON NAME
Austrodanthonia spp	Wallaby Grass (a number of species)
Austrostipa scabra	Corkscrew Grass
Bothriochloa macra	Red-leg Grass
Elymus scaber	Tall Wheatgrass
Pimelea sp	Rice Flower
Calotis lappulacea	Yellow Burr-daisy
Arthropodium minus	Small Vanilla Lily
Vittadinia sp	New Holland Daisy
Acaena novae-zelandiae	Bidgee-Widgee
Chrysocephalum apiculatum	Common Everlasting (Green Form)
Hypoxis vaginata	Golden Star
Geranium solanderi	Native Geranium
Cheilanthes tenuifolia	Rock Fern
Glycine sieberi	Glycine
Cassinia quinquefaria	Bush Bidgee

(Species were identified by G. and J.Windsor/M.Andrews/ B.Mactaggart)

Ironically, the second event was a development proposal lodged with Bathurst Regional Council by NSW Fire Brigades to construct a fire station on the land immediately up hill from the remnant. The Council has approved that development proposal with conditions designed to conserve the natural values and visual appearance of the area.

The Council and a number of community groups, including Greening Bathurst and the National Trust (Bathurst Branch), were concerned that approval of the fire station may lead to future development applications within the area and pose a new threat of land clearance to the remnant. As a result, the Council has sought and been granted Environmental Trust funding for a two year project to secure, conserve and enhance the woodland remnant.

The Saving Brooke Moore Woodland project will fence the site as a measure of protection from trail bikes, fire-wood gatherers and rubbish dumpers and sign-post the site as "significant roadside vegetation". Walkers will be welcome to visit the site. The fence will incorporate 4 ha of land, allowing the size of the remnant to be doubled. Changed management practices will assist the natural regenerative

Photo courtesy of Bathurst Reional Council

March 2004

processes and strategic revegetation implemented by community members will introduce additional understorey species that might be expected to occur in a site of this type. With assistance from the Grassy Box Woodland Conservation Management Network, the project will also produce a brochure which will not only promote the characteristics and values of this site, but also a number of other publicly accessible Grassy Box Woodland sites throughout the Bathurst Regional Council area.

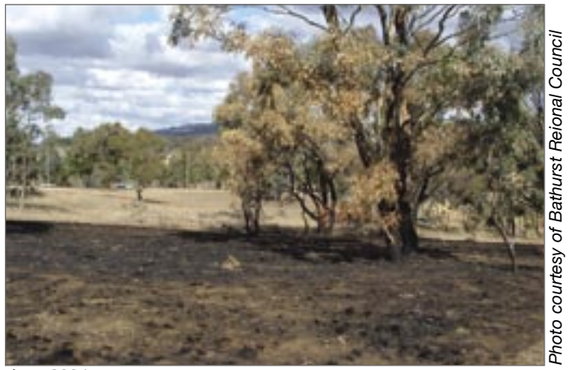


Photo courtesy of Bathurst Reional Council

June 2004

Photo courtesy of Bathurst Reional Council

October 2004

by Ian Anderson

Glossy Black-Cockatoos at Burra Creek Block

Written as a Canberra Bird Note 29 (4)

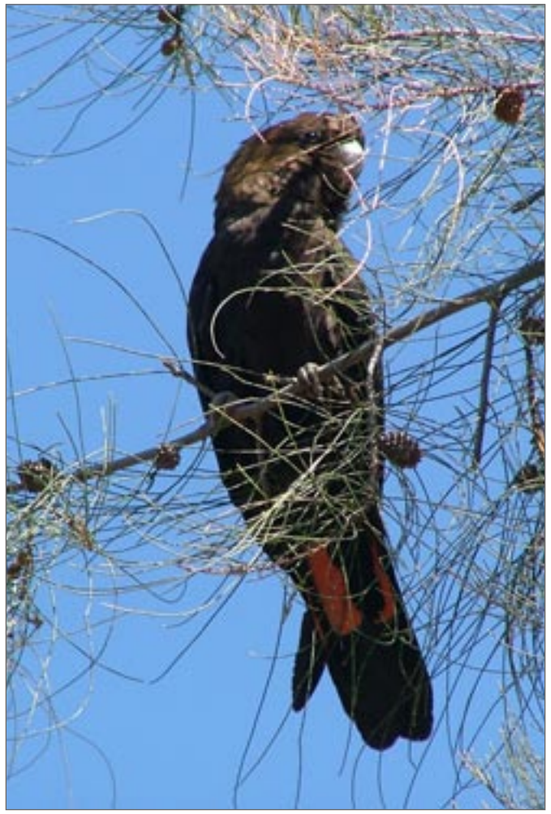


Photo by John Lemon

Glossy Black-Cockatoos have been recorded at a bush block at Burra Creek about 40 km south of Canberra, over the past seven years. The birds are present mainly in winter and spring, with a young bird being present in August of 2002. The regeneration of Drooping She-oak on the block since being burnt out 25 years ago is likely to be responsible for the increasing numbers of records and individuals.

The block of about 16 ha was purchased in the autumn of 1982, and was part of a subdivision of a large grazing property. The area has been grazed since the 1950's. The block is hilly, apart from a flat of several hectares, the underlying geology being granodiorite. There are plenty of boulders visible, especially on the north facing hill and there is a lot of sand in the soil profile. The block had not been pasture-improved, so consisted of native woodland and grassland. It had a significant erosion gully, which is now no longer actively eroding.

Table 1.
Glossy Black-Cockatoo sightings at the Burra Creek Block

YEAR	NO.	TIME
1999	2	4th week July
2000	Nil	
2001	2	4th week October
2002	2	2nd week August
	1	4th week September
	3	1st week October
	2	2nd week October
	3	3rd week October
	3	5th week October
2003	4	1st week June
	3	4th week July
	6	1st week August
	1	4th week August
	3	5th week October
2004	8	2nd week July
	1	3rd week July
	4	5th week October

The predominant eucalypt is Yellow Box (*Eucalyptus melliodora*). The block has recently been accepted for membership of the New South Wales Grassy Box Woodland Conservation Management Network. Burra Creek is in New South Wales, about 40 km south of Canberra, near the Tinderry Range.

I have been recording birds on the block since I purchased it. This has been useful for improving my bird-watching skills.

It is well known that Glossy Black Cockatoos are selective feeders. Their diet consists mainly of the seeds of a limited number of species of Casuarina and Allocasuarina. One of the favourite species in the Canberra region is the Drooping She-oak (*Allocasuarina verticillata*).

I had become familiar with the haunting call of the Glossy Black-Cockatoo on a visit to Kangaroo Island in the 1980's. They roosted there near the small resort called America River.

About two years before I bought the block it had been totally burnt by an accidental fire. A couple of badly burnt, but still alive, old Drooping She-oaks were all that was left of what must have been a forest of them of several hectares on the dry north facing rocky hillside. The forest has subsequently gradually regenerated on my block and those of my immediate neighbours. There has obviously been regeneration from seed, although there is a reference in the literature to the ability of Drooping She-oak to regenerate also from root suckers.

It was a delightful surprise to see and hear the first Glossy Black-Cockatoo in the she-oak forest in March 1998, about 18 years after it had been burnt.

Subsequent records are set out in Table 1. The numbers are an estimation of the numbers of birds seen or heard. Sometimes numbers have been difficult to estimate, particularly when the birds are calling only from the depths of the forest and do not fly. I have never seen the birds drinking at the dam or at the bird bath.

Until mid-2000 I counted the birds on the block once a fortnight; since then, once a week, on average, except when I have been away from Canberra. After the first sighting, the birds have been seen regularly, except for during 2000-01.

The greatest number of sightings were in 2002 and 2003, the years of the Canberra bushfires and a very dry time. Perhaps the block functioned as something of a refuge as other feeding areas failed, perhaps some being burnt.

2002 was also the year of the only breeding record for the Glossy Black-Cockatoo on the block. In the second week of August, there were two birds in a dead tree. One, an immature, was making begging calls in the direction of the other.

A pair of Glossy Black Cockatoos enjoying a feed at Gunnedah

by John Lemon 23.05.05

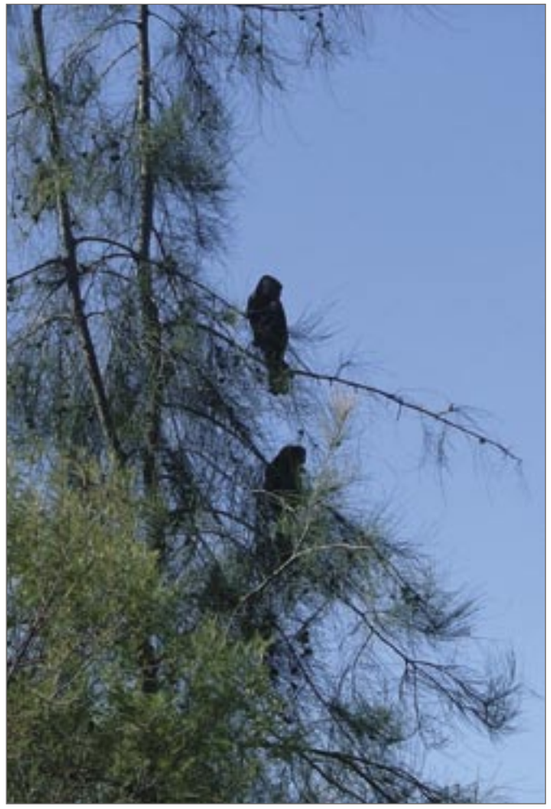


Photo John Lemon

This pair of Glossy Black Cockatoos, *(Calyptorhynchus lathami)*, was photographed while they were eating Belah fruit, *(Casuarina cristata)*, in August 2004. They were spotted in a habitat reconstruction site, established in 1993 at the Gunnedah Resource Centre in north-western NSW. This site was the first established after a direct seeding trial undertaken on the Centre in 1991. Additional plantings were undertaken in 1995, 1998, 2001, 2003 and 2004 and connect with remnant vegetation on the Centre. This is the only time in the 25 years that I've lived in the Liverpool Plains that I have seen these birds. It is quite exciting to observe a threatened species in this area.

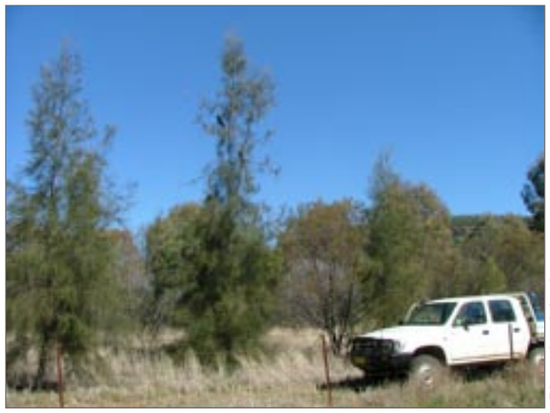


Photo by John Lemon

by Ian Lunt

Tips for monitoring rehabilitation projects

by Ian Lunt

Institute for Land, Water & Society, Charles Sturt University, Albury

May 2005

Good monitoring is the key to successful rehabilitation. Unfortunately, many monitoring programs fail, often because of poor links to management activities and perceptions of low relevance. To be successful, monitoring must have a clear purpose, integrate explicitly with management decisions, and have practical outcomes.

It is impossible to develop a good monitoring scheme without a well defined rehabilitation plan, with clear aims and targets. Rehabilitation programs require clearly defined high-level objectives (e.g. 'restore native ground cover') and detailed performance criteria (e.g. at the most detailed level, 'establish at least 5 native tussock grasses per sq. m. in 5 years'). Monitoring should assess the outcomes of the revegetation program, and results should directly trigger management actions. A key question to ask is, how will the monitoring results influence management decisions and activities? If there is no direct link, monitoring is likely to fall by the wayside.

The first question to ask when designing a monitoring scheme is: 'how much time do you have?' Monitoring must be designed within this constraint. Keeping well designed programs functioning over extended periods of time is a bigger challenge than starting new monitoring programs. Monitoring has to be simple, easy, pleasant and finite, and should be designed to be practicable during later periods of low enthusiasm, not just the initial phase of high expectations. Explicit end-points should be defined at the outset.

Most monitoring questions are about field methods, and data management tends to be neglected. But monitoring is about reporting, not field work. A monitoring scheme is only as good as the data that is stored, analysed and reported - not just the data collected in the field. When reviewing monitoring programs, it is often hard to work out what was done and when, due to the paucity of information on management activities. It is critically important to record all management activities, not just the ecological outcomes. All records need to be written down immediately, otherwise things are quickly forgotten. Always write records for other people to read, not just yourself. Explain everything, using maps, photos and sketches.

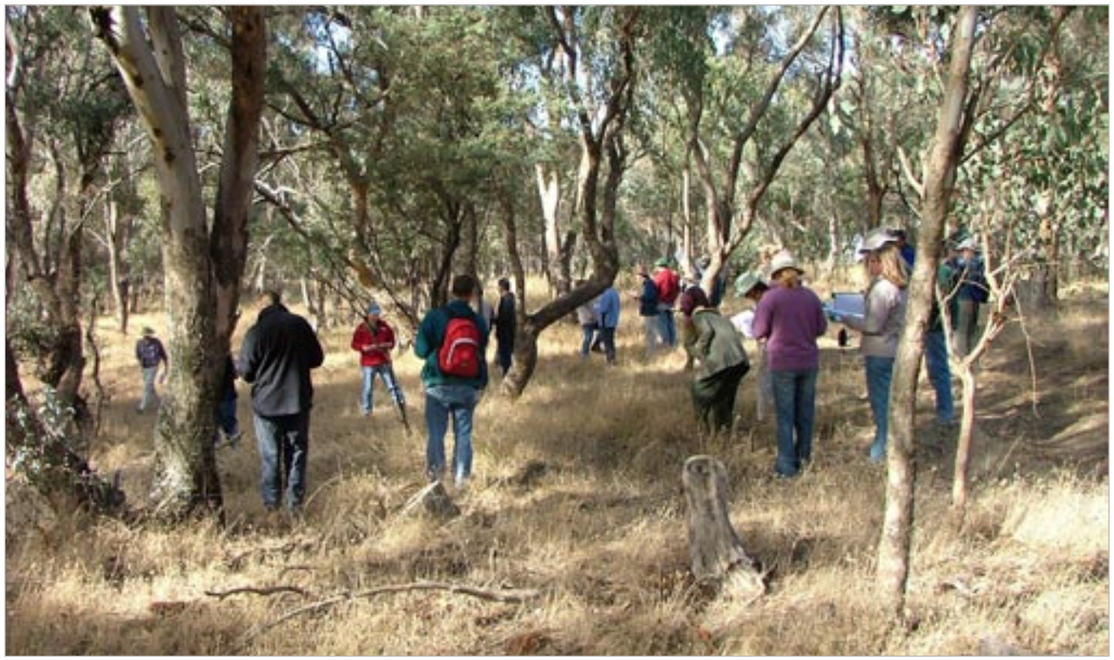


Photo by John Lemon

Monitoring Forum Field Trip to March Reserve

Management of Grassy Box Woodland

Always use a data entry form in the field (not a notebook) to ensure all attributes are recorded. If you have access to a computer, data should be entered in a spreadsheet straight away and graphed, so trends can be easily appraised. This should occur immediately after field work, to allow trends to be regularly compared against management targets. If data management is challenging, then get help, but recognise that good data management is critical to successful monitoring. It is absurd to devote resources to collecting accurate field data without developing simple methods to store and analyse that data.

How can we learn more from our monitoring? Monitoring usually tries to address a simple question: 'how close to our target did we get?' But we can ask better questions than this. Since we have very limited knowledge about most rehabilitation activities, the key question we should always address is: how can we get the best results most efficiently, by improving our methods? Most monitoring does not directly address this question (instead it just tells us how far away from our target we were). Monitoring will be more informative if we expand our project aims to recognise that our best outcome is not just to get an acceptable result on the ground, but also to work out how we can do it better next time. The simplest way to do this is to always use more than one technique at the one time, and to continually compare the outcomes between techniques. This enables techniques to be rapidly refined, and is the basis of active adaptive management.

In summary, successful monitoring programs have seven key ingredients:

(1) management plans must contain explicit, measurable targets,

(2) monitoring results must be directly linked to management objectives,

(3) monitoring must be fast, simple – and hopefully even fun,

(4) monitoring end-points must be defined from t he outset,

(5) management activities must be accurately described,

(6) data need to be entered and reviewed regularly – not just at the end of the project, and

(7) progress will be faster if the outcomes of different treatments are continually compared, rather than just monitoring trends over time.

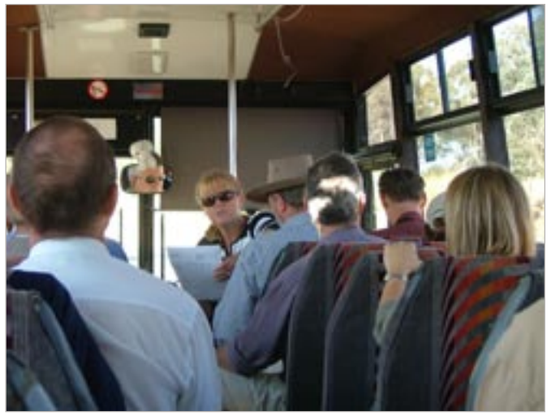


Photo by John Lemon

Monitoring Forum Field Trip to March Reserve

Further reading

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Ehrenfeld, J. G. 2000. Defining the limits of restoration: the need for realistic goals. Restoration Ecology 8, 2-9.

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"Preparation of this article has been assisted by the New South Wales Government through its Environmental Trust"

Editor's note

Ian Lunt was one of the many talented presenters who willingly shared their knowledge at the Monitoring Forum in Orange. Ian's bouncy presentation was enjoyed by all.

More monitoring in the spring issue!

"Logs Have Life Inside" Music and Education Kit

Developed for primary school students, the "Logs Have Life Inside" music and education kit aims to teach children the message that logs have life inside. This message is delivered by reminding students that hollow logs and trees provide homes, nesting sites and feeding grounds for a variety of plants and animals, and by exploring the impact of firewood collection on Australia's native wildlife. The kit also encourages students to protect our native habitats by suggesting simple strategies for conserving dead wood.

Included in the kit are a variety of educational resources designed to assist teachers convey the "Logs Have Life Inside" message. These include a story, fact sheets and illustrated classroom activities. Also featured in the "House on Fire" music and education kit is an original song written and performed by well-known Canberra band Errol Fin.

For more information on firewood collection issues, visit the Department of the Environment and Heritage web site at http://www.deh.gov.au/land/pressures/firewood/index.html. Or contact the Community Information Unit by emailing ciu@deh.gov.au or phoning 1800 803 772.

Hands on for Habitat Awards

School groups have a great opportunity to learn about, and help Australia's threatened species, by getting involved in the Hands on for Habitat Awards. As a lead up to Threatened Species Day (7 September each year), the Awards encourage 6-12 year olds to learn more about Australia's threatened species and to participate in activities to protect our native animals and plants. Schools could also win a share in a range of fantastic prizes! The FREE 2005 Hands on for Habitat Teacher's Resource Kit will be available for delivery from first term 2005. For more information and to order a kit visit www.deh.gov.au/habitat.

Home Owner Guide to Environmentally Friendly Firewood

Questions to ask your Firewood Supplier?

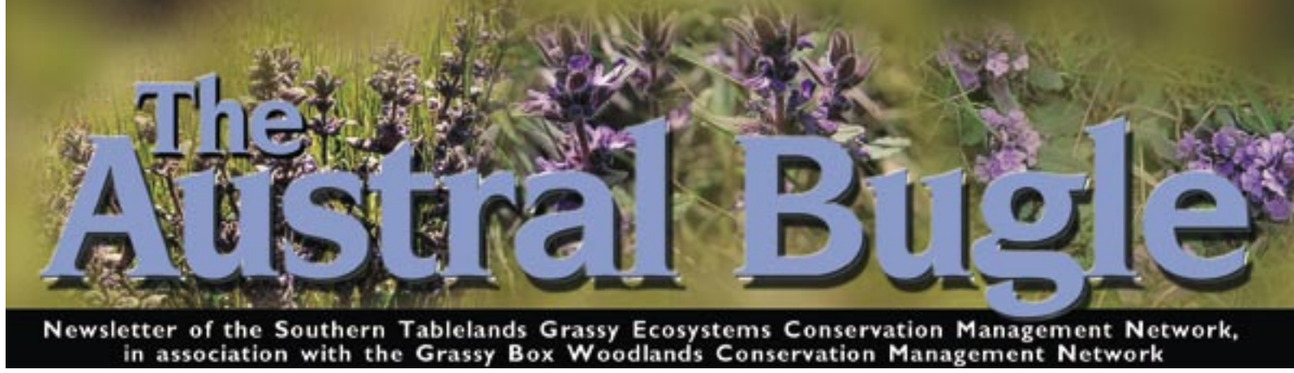
Do you know where this wood was originally collected?

- ☑ Is it plantation timber?
- ☑ Was dense regrowth thinned?
- ☑ Was coppice growth cut and left to dry?
- ☑ Were forestry off cuts used?
- ☑ Is it timber from approved clearing operations?

Has the removal of the wood impacted on fauna?

- ☒ Were standing hollow trees used?
- ☒ Were dead trees used?
- ☒ Were hollow logs used?

For more information on resources relating to firewood collection see back page.



Editorial of the Austral Bugle by Rainer Rehwinkel

Welcome to the Southern Tablelands Grassy Ecosystem CMN pages within the Woodland Wanderings. After an absence of several years, I appreciate the opportunity to be able to re-surface in this format. Thank you Toni for agreeing to take this on!

The past couple of years have seen a major re-structure of our organisation, as well as some new ways of managing natural resources through the recently established Catchment Management Authorities (CMAs). The decision that the STGE CMN be run as part of the Grassy Box Woodland CMN – in the short term at least – is a result of a number of factors. The re-structure has re-aligned some of my duties; some of these have included providing information to the new tools developed for the CMAs. The STGE CMN project had been established with funding from the NHT and thus was externally funded. A bid to gain renewed funding through the Regional Competitive Grants to continue the project was unsuccessful, despite some very encouraging letters of support from a number of Catchment Management Authorities and other organisations.

In the interim, these pages of the Austral Bugle will appear in subsequent Woodland Wanderings, until the STGE CMN can once again stand as a fully independent CMN. So, enjoy the articles from the Southern Tablelands (I certainly enjoyed Maryke and Helen's stories), and, to members of the Grassy Box Woodland CMN, welcome to the broader horizons!

A Rainy Spring Afternoon by Maryke Booth

It was a rainy afternoon in the spring and my mum Helen and I attended a Friends of Grassland field trip to the Royalla Travelling Stock Reserve, when I first met Rainer Rehwinkel (NPWS grassy ecosystems specialist) and Geoff Robertson (President of Friends of Grasslands). I had just purchased a 23 acre bush block at Royalla. Royalla is a new rural subdivision south of Queanbeyan, NSW and adjacent to the ACT. I was curious as to what might be growing on my block. I casually mentioned to Rainer and Geoff that I had a place around the corner, and would they like to have a look. Around the corner we all went and spent a delightful few hours wandering around in the drizzling rain.

We discovered lots of wonderful plants that I had never seen or heard of, let alone being able to pronounce their names! We saw the striking Blue Devil (E*ryngium rostratum*), which I had been guilty of pulling out the week before, believing it to be a noxious thistle weed, Hoary Sunray (Leucochrysum albicans), Small Vanilla-lily (*Arthropodium minus*), Common Buttercup (*Ranunculus lappaceus*), Austral Bear's-ears (*Cymbonotus lawsonianus*), and one of my favourites – the Showy Copper-wire Daisy (*Podolepis jaceoides*). There were native grasses, including Kangaroo Grass (*Themeda australis),* Poa Tussock (*Poa sieberiana*), Purple Wire-grass (Aristida ramosa) and those wonderful fluffy wallaby grasses (*Austrodanthonia spp.*), and trees including Yellow Box (*Eucalyptus melliodora*) and Mealy Bundy (*E. nortonii*).

It was too late - I was hooked! I had discovered my scrubby little bush block was, in fact, a small piece of high quality remnant grassy Box-Gum Woodland, and certainly worthy of conservation. I have since found out that there are over 100 plant species, 40-odd different types of birds, as well as frogs, reptiles and mammals on my block – and still counting.

In fact the Royalla area is full of pockets of worthy remnant woodland and grassland communities. I realised that many of these needed protecting. I also realised that people needed to understand what they have.

So we had a bit of community get-together and grassland walk at my place in October 2001, where I met many like-minded Royalla residents. In December 2001 we held the inaugural meeting of the Royalla Landcare group.

Today our Landcare group has over fifty members and a very active committee of dedicated Landcarers. Our secretary Leanne Barrett puts in over a day's volunteer hours per week. The group's primary focus is to educate and raise community awareness, as well as doing on-ground works. We have a calendar of events, which over the year, includes Frogwatch, Waterwatch, flora & fauna surveys, weed days, propagation workshops, property visits, nature walks, making nestboxes, slide nights - and walks on rainy afternoons looking at the plants.

For more information about the Royalla area and Royalla Landcare, please call Maryke Booth on (02) 62804128

Helen Willet

The Gundaroo Common

By Helen Willett, Gundaroo Common Herdsman

The Gundaroo Common is an area of 60 hectares on the eastern edge of the village of Gundaroo on the Southern Tablelands of NSW. The Common was gazetted on 19 August 1870. In 1880, an area of 1175 acres was added to this Common to the east and north-east of the village. By 1959 the additional area had been taken up by various lessees and the Common was again an area of 60 hectares adjacent to the village.

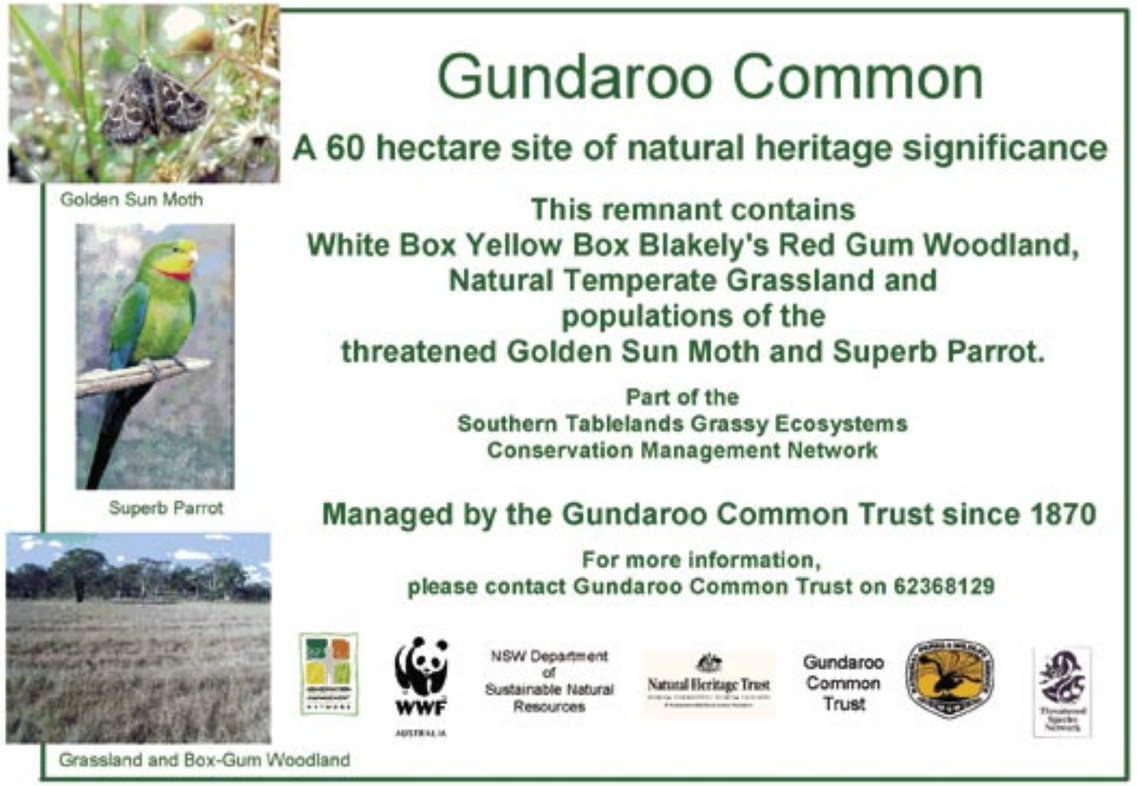
The Common is managed by Trustees, who are elected by the village Commoners for a period of three years, as is pursuant to the Commoners Act, 1989. A Commoner is a resident or landholder within the village boundaries whose application is accepted by the Trustees. A Commoner is entitled to agist cattle on the Common. Originally these included the villagers' milking cows. Maybe the Gundaroo Bullock lived here, as portrayed in A.B. Paterson's The Gundaroo Bullock. Nowadays the cattle are a mixture of dairy and beef breeds, and most are pets with names. The Common has been continually stocked since 1870. If the current drought worsens de-stocking may occur for the first time in the history of the Common.

Native grasslands are one of Australia's most threatened ecological communities and are now important for the preservation of many native plants and animals. Except along roadsides, most native grasslands in the Gundaroo district have disappeared due to pasture improvement and the application of fertiliser. The Common area is an unusual example of natural grassland and open grassy woodland on good valley land. The Common has never been ploughed or sown, except for the establishment of about 5000 trees in 1990 and 1991, under the 'National Soil Conservation Program'. Many native grasses, particularly Kangaroo Grass (*Themeda australis*) and White Top (*Austrodanthonia spp.*) are present, as are noxious weeds and other introduced grassland species. A good stand of large Yellow Box (*Eucalyptus melliodora*), Red Box (*E. polyanthemos*) and Blakely's Red Gum (*E. blakelyi*) exists in the eastern section of the Common. In 1997 a botanical survey was carried out by Isobel Crawford, using funds from The National Heritage Trust. Surveys by Isobel and Rainer Rehwinkel, from the Department of Environment and Conservation, have listed over 100 plant and 30 bird species. The threatened Golden Sun Moth (*Synemon plana*) was seen and specimens collected. The woodland on the Common is also habitat for the vulnerable Superb Parrot (*Polytelis swainsonii*). The fact that the natural grasslands and woodlands provide habitat for threatened species highlights the conservation significance of the Common.

As in most of the similar areas of the Yass Valley, over-clearing and over-stocking in the 1940's and 1950's led to gully erosion. Since 1990 areas of salting have appeared. Invasion by noxious and environment weeds remains the greatest threat to this and many other remnant grasslands.

The Common is now an important recreation area for the district and is used for walking, exercising dogs and riding horses. As the population of the district increases, this amenity value becomes more important. The Common is also of scenic value and provides important open space next to the village and adds to its rural character. Since 1998 the Common has been the location of the annual Gundaroo Bush Races. The Bush Races is now the major fund-raising event for the Gundaroo community, providing much-needed funds for the Gundaroo Memorial Hall, the Gundaroo Park, the Gundaroo and the Back Creek Rural Fire Brigades, the Gundaroo Primary School, and of course the Gundaroo Common. This annual function is held each autumn. The event caters to over 3000 people, with many cars, trucks and horses on the Common for the day and the time needed before and after the event to put up tents and to clear away the rubbish. The native grasslands of the Common are resilient to this annual event and recover well. The timing of the event is important as grasses and forbs are not seeding and many are dormant. For example, at this time of the year the Golden Sun Moth is in the larval form under the ground.

The survival of the Gundaroo Common is not only important for the preservation of an endangered ecosystem but also for the daily use by the Gundaroo people and the yearly use for a large community event.



by Rainer Rehwinkel

Everlasting Daisies

Rainer Rehwinkel (Biodiversity Conservation Officer, DEC)

Some of the most spectacular of the wildflowers in grasslands and woodlands on the NSW tablelands and slopes are the everlastings. Everlastings are characterised by having a ring of papery bracts that surround the central flowers in the flower-head. Typically, if picked and dried, these flowers can last for many years. Some have been used in the floristry industry for many years – others have this potential, which is as yet untapped. Most species are also very suitable for the garden - indeed, some have been in cultivation for many years.

There is a considerable diversity of flower form, flower colour and growth habit amongst the various species of everlastings. Interestingly (and confusingly), most species used to be lumped into two largely now-defunct genera – Helipterum and Helichrysum. Now the everlastings are in a bewildering array of newly erected (and in some cases, still changing) genera, including: Chrysocephalum, Leucochrysum, Triptilodiscus, Rhodanthe and Xerochrysum. Helichrysum still contains two species. Ammobium is an established genus containing one species.

The most common of the everlastings is *Chrysocephalum apiculatum* (Common Everlasting or Yellow Buttons). A highly variable species, various forms occur - some short and others tall-growing, some grey-leafed and others green-leafed. Often, two or more forms can be seen growing side-by-side in the same site. Usually, the flowers, which tend to be clustered, are a clear, golden yellow and ringed with papery yellow bracts. Occasionally, plants with bronzy bracts are encountered. This species is common in grassland, woodland and dry forest habitats.

Some forms of Common Everlasting intergrade with the Clustered Everlasting (*C. semipapposum*), which is usually taller growing. This species is also variable, with forms in the higher country of the south being very silvery and compact in habit. The flowers are clustered, bright yellow and ringed with papery bracts.

The Hoary Sunray (*Leucochrysum albicans)* is also a variable species, with leaf-shape, habit and flower colour all varying between populations. Some have blunt leaves, others very

narrow ones, but in all forms, the leaves are covered with pale grey hairs, giving the plant its common name. Some forms are compact, others tall and spindly, the shorter forms being characteristic of cooler, higher places. In this attractive species, the yellow flower-heads are surrounded by papery bracts that are either pure white, white with pink or purple backs, or golden-yellow. In very occasional populations, pink-backed, white flowered plants and yellow flowered plants can be seen growing together, and in such sites pale creamy or lemony flowers can be encountered too. The habitat of this species varies from alpine to temperate grasslands and woodlands.

With flowers almost identical to pure-white Hoary Sunrays, but on long, branched stalks, each with a wing-like flange is the Tall Ammobium (*Ammobium alatum*). The flower-stalks carry the flowers in sprays at about 30 cm above the ground. The leaves of Tall Ammobium are also silvery, but unlike Hoary Sunray, are broadly spoon-shaped. This species is found in grassland and woodland.

Another tall plant is the Sticky Everlasting (*Xerochrysum viscosum*— formerly *Bracteantha viscosa*), with golden-yellow papery bracts carried about 30 cm off the ground, on slender stalks clothed with sticky, narrow, dark green leaves. Sticky Everlasting is most commonly found in woodland or dry forest, often in rocky places. Other Xerochrysum species are found in tall, wet forests and alpine woodlands.

Pale Everlasting (*Helichrysum rutidolepis*) is a carpeting plant with narrow, grey-green leaves superficially like the Common Everlasting. It differs in having solitary flower-heads of a clear yellow that emerge in summer or autumn. This plant is at home in low-lying places in grassland or cool-climate woodlands. The similar Button Everlasting (*H. scorpioides*) is more erect, has broader leaves, and flowers in spring. This species is found mostly in Box-Gum Woodland or dry forest.

I have covered a selection of the more common everlastings likely to be encountered in the region – there are others including the Rhodanthe sunrays of which the Chamomile Sunray (*R. anthemoides*) is the most beautiful (see photo). We'll have to leave these for another article! In the meantime, keep your eyes out for the spectacular everlastings!

Managing Native Pastures for Agriculture and Conservation

This new publication has recently been released. In another cooperative venture that seems to be the hallmark of grassy ecosystems work in the Southern Tablelands, this booklet was written by Col Langford, Peter Simpson, Denys Garden, David Eddy, Mike Keys, Rainer Rehwinkel and Bill Johnston (and with a substantial contribution from Sarah Sharp). These authors are from NSW Dept. Primary Industries, NSW Dept. Infrastructure Planning and Natural Resources NSW Dept. Environment and Conservation, Southern Rivers CMA and Environment ACT. The funding was from NHT, and Hawkesbury-Nepean CMA provided support.

This is a useful guide that will hopefully fulfil a great need. More than an update of the 1996 publication "Managing High Rainfall Pastures on a Whole Farm Basis", this booklet a greater emphasis on native pastures and conservation than the earlier publication.

Chapter by chapter, Managing Native Pastures for Agriculture and Conservation explains what native pastures are, outlines common native grasses and their features, and provides an outline on property planning. There are chapters on native pastures and water, managing native pastures, and monitoring. The booklet also covers native pasture performance, livestock performance and the profitability of native pastures.

Generously peppered with illustrations, tables and graphs, each chapter is summed up with a box explaining key points. The booklet is enhanced by a glossary to explain unfamiliar terms.

Please call your local office of NSW Dept. Primary Industries to obtain a copy.

Trees and biodiversity: a guide for Australian farm forestry

By David Salt, David Lindenmayer and Richard Hobbs 'Trees and biodiversity' focuses on how farm forestry might be applied to protect and enhance biodiversity in agricultural landscapes. It examines what is currently known about the biodiversity value of tree plantations and provides a basic framework for improving the biodiversity value of various forms of farm forestry. Practical guidelines on how to improve biodiversity at the level of a stand of trees and at the scale of the broader landscape are also outlined, together with a discussion of some of the possible trade-offs involved. The book is aimed at land-owners, farm foresters, extension workers, conservationists and anyone interested in exploring sustainable farming in an Australian context.

(published: 2004, 201pp, cost: $34) Available through RIRDC (02 62724819; publications@rirdc.gov.au; or via the RIRDC eBookshop athttp://extranet.rirdc.gov.au/eshop/ 'Trees and biodiversity' is the third book in the Agroforestry Guidelines Series. The first two titles are 'Trees, water and salt: an Australian guide to using trees for healthy catchments' and 'Trees for shelter: a guide to using windbreaks on Australian farms'.

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Watch this Space!

Firewood Collection

"For more information on firewood collection issues, visit the Department of the Environment and Heritage web site at http://www.deh.gov.au/firewood or contact the Community Information Unit by emailing ciu@deh.gov.au or phoning 1800 803 772."

Voluntary 'Code of Practice for Retail Firewood Merchants' "http://www.ea.gov.au/firewood"www.deh.gov.au/firewood

This code requires firewood suppliers to source and season firewood in accordance with 'sustainable' management principles to protect ecosystem processes, in addition to providing information to consumers about firewood species, quantity, source and use at point of sale.

Woodland Wanderings (Grassy Box Woodland CMN) newsletter was edited by Toni McLeish and Lorraine Oliver of DEC and was produced with funding from the Federal Government's NHT2.

Useful resources

Williams C. 2004 Old Land, **New Landscapes,** Melbourne University Publishing, Carlton VIC - A story of farmers, conservation and the Landcare Movement.

Useful Websites

Red Steers and White Death: fearing nature in rural Australia by George Main
http://www.lib.latrobe.edu.au/AHR/archive/Issue-August-2004/main.html

Charles Sturt University "The Woodland Web"
www.csu.edu.au/herbarium/woodlandweb/restoration.htm

The Australian Environment Discussion Forum
www.envirotalk.com.au

Blackwell Publishing Plant Science
www.blackwellpublishing.com/plantsci/

NSW Flora online www.plantnet.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au

Land and Water Australia's Native Vegetation Research and Development Program www.lwa.gov.au/nativevegetation

CMN web page

Have your say on the content of network membership website. Draft availabe at http://users.tpg.com.au/tmcleish/.

Free membership sign

Order your free membership sign,
Phone: Toni 6295 7507 or
Email: toni.mcleish@environment.nsw.gov.au

Join our Grassy Box Woodland email chat group

Email Toni to register or pose any question!
toni.mcleish@environment.nsw.gov.au

Article deadlines for Woodland Wanderings

Spring edition deadline —1st September 2005
Autumn edition deadline —1st April 2006

Making Contact

Expressions of interest are invited from all persons or groups wishing to be involved by writing to:
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C/o Toni McLeish NSW DEC
PO Box 2215 Queanbeyan NSW 2620
Phone: (02) 6298 9709
Email: toni.mcleish@environment.nsw.gov.au

Box-Gum woodland fact sheet

A fact sheet about the endangered ecological community White Box, Yellow Box, Blakely's Red Gum Woodland (or Box-Gum Woodland) is available on www.npws.nsw.gov.au/wildlife/thr_profiles/ Box-gum_Factsheet.pdf, or call **Toni McLeish** DEC on (02) 6298 9709.