



Newsletter for the Macleay Catchment

EDITION 49 SPRING 2015



WELCOME to the **Spring Edition** of the Macleay Landcare Newsletter where you'll find that there's been a great deal happening in your local valley.



In fact, Macleay Landcare has run 10 workshops this year and submitted 12 grant applications in the last 12 months. This effort is in response to local interests and needs ranging from habitat conservation, corridor connections, shore birds and wild dogs to worm farms, worm burdens and grazing budgets!

The Committee and Staff would like to welcome our new committee member, Alastair Smedley. This is Alastair's second stint on the committee and we are fortunate to benefit from his experience, enthusiasm and local knowledge.

Our recent AGM saw few changes to the Landcare Network Committee with Graham Butcher (Chairperson), Sally Ayre-Smith (Vice-Chair), Neil Cracknell (Treasurer) and Kristy Forche-Baird (Secretary) retaining their executive roles and Chris Osborne and Vanessa Standing continue as members. We wish Angela Hand the very best as she has left her long standing role with us here at Landcare.

Funding for Landcare is never far from our minds and as a region of Landcare Networks we have put in a bid to the NSW Govt for additional funding to keep our doors open and services available. There will be more about this in our next Newsletter...Moving with the times, this newsletter will be the last that we mail out to those of you who also receive it on email. We plan to email it only in the future and if people require a hard copy then there will be some available at the office. For members who do not have access to the internet we will continue to send it to you at this stage.

Look out in this edition for up-coming events, work shop wrap-ups and other Landcare news....local news for local people!

In this edition

Chairs Report	2
Macleay Landcare Activities summary	2
What Grows after Fire at Grassy Head?	2
New Plan to help fish habitat	3
GPG Crown Rot Control	4
Native Coastal Grasses at Hat Head	4
The DPI Prograze Course wrap up	6
Drenching your Stock	7

UP Coming Events

GPG Crown Rot Control Valla, Nov 26th	4
Yoemans Plow Beechwood, Nov 22nd	7
Healthy Horses Part 1 Nambucca, Dec 5th	5
Healthy Horses Part 2 Macleay Dec 6th	5

PLANTING in SPRING?

Weed mats, generously donated by Macleay Options are available free to Macleay Valley residents undertaking native seedling planting. We also have bamboo stakes and plastic tree guards for purchase. Don't forget that a range of bush regeneration tools and tree planters (Hamilton and Potti Putki) are available for hire.



Chairs Report

2014/15

Looking back over the last twelve months makes me very proud of our Landcare Officers Natasha English and Sharon Cunial, the dedication and hard work they have put in is reflected in the number of field days and workshops they have organised and presented.

While all of that was happening they somehow managed to apply for every grant available and were successful more often than not as well as managing the projects that are currently running plus put out our quarterly newsletter which seems to get better with every publication. We lost our Landcare Support Officer Kieran Berry in December which also added to their workload.

Our other member of the office staff Manda Godfrey has fitted in incredibly as Administration Officer and has streamlined some of the financial reports to make it easier for the committee to keep track of the dollars and has done a tremendous job on financial control of the current projects which means at the click of a button anyone can see where the project is up to.

Natasha, Sharon and Manda have been a tower of strength and an absolute delight to work with I cannot thank them enough for their willingness to help when required they have made my term as Chair an absolute pleasure.

The Committee must also be complemented on the way they have conducted themselves over the last twelve months with regular workshops, the fact that consensus has been reached at every meeting and a vote has never had to be taken indicates a cohesive like-minded group getting on with the job. I also have to thank them for making my life easier as Chair.

Graham Butcher



Macleay Landcare Activities From August 2014/15

- 10 Events (field days/ workshops) hosted
- 8 Events supported
- 12 funding submissions valued at \$1,500,00
- 6 successful submissions valued at \$159,930

Grants

- Rehabilitating Significant Coastal Vegetation at Grassy Head (Environmental Trust \$93,280)
- Revision of Riparian Revegetation Brochure (North Coast Local Land Services \$2,000)
- Structural Woody Habitat for fish and bank protection on the Macleay River (Recreation Fishing Trust \$30,367)
- Building Scraps from Soils with Kempsey High School (NRMA \$4,900)
- Collombatti Landholders Collaborate on Feral Animal Control (Aust Govt \$10,000)
- Macleay Valley Sustainable Grazing and Winter Dung Beetle Trial (Aust Govt \$18,800)

Other Activities

- Numerous property visits
- River management plans developed
- Plant species identified

Spring Time Monitoring at Grassy Head

The third consecutive year of vegetation monitoring has been undertaken as part of an Environmental Trust funded project 'Rehabilitating Significant Coastal Vegetation at Grassy Head'. This project will observe for the next 3 Spring Season



how the Themeda Grassland, an endangered Ecological Community, recovers from a fire in 2009. Results to date indicate that after the burns there has been:

- An increase in diversity and abundance of native vegetation
- A reduction in bare ground ie a progressive return of plants
- More shrub and tree seedling growth than re-sprouting
- Increased Kangaroo Grass (*Themeda australis*) cover
- Decreased weed presence and abundance.

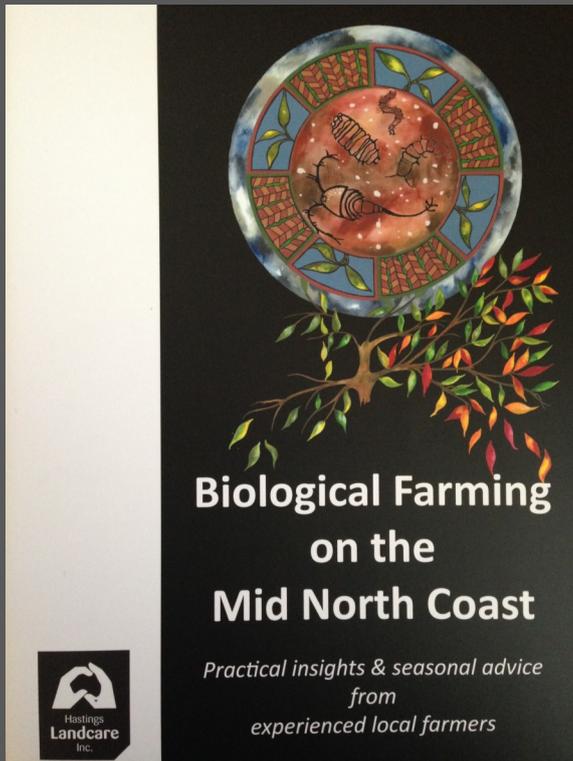
A growing interest in Themeda Grassland management is developing in NSW with many other Councils and NPWS trialling their own controlled burns. MLN will keep you up to date with how this monitoring project is developing as this may have consequences for other Dunecare Groups, Kempsey Council and NPWS managing grassy headlands in the Shire.

Photo: Damon Telfer, GECO Environmental, and Mark Robinson check plots.

NEW GUIDE!

Biological Farming

Based on what local farmers told us about barriers to adopting biological farming practices and where more information was needed, Hastings Landcare interviewed three local biological farmers to bring you Biological Farming on the Mid North Coast.



The guide shares practical insights and seasonal advice from experienced local farmers—Lauchie Hollis, Chris Eggert and Jeremy Bradley. A range of topics are discussed, including of course a very strong focus on the soils.

A valuable reference for established and new farmers, particularly if you are just getting started in biological farming, the guide is available for purchase from Macleay Landcare in hard copy and on-line soon from Hastings Landcare for \$10.

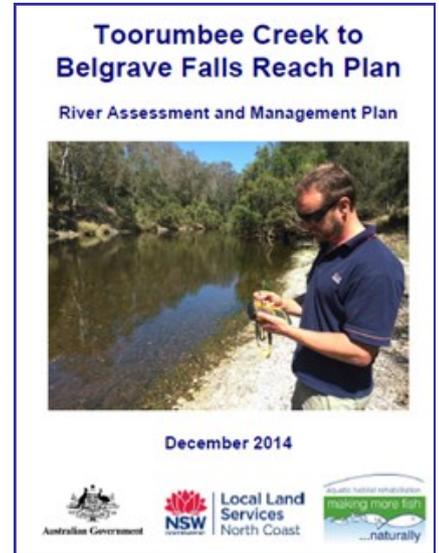
Thanks go to the Hastings Valley farmers who volunteered their time and freely shared their experience and to the North Coast Local Land Services who funded the project *Building Resilience in our Soils and Landscapes through improved Soil Management*.

New Macleay River Plan Helps Fish Habitat

The Aquatic Habitat Rehabilitation Unit of NSW DPI and the North Coast Local Land Services undertook a detailed mapping exercise of the riverine condition of the Macleay River from Toorooka Bridge down to the tidal limit at Belgrave Falls.

The length of river was divided into 9 reaches and in-stream and riparian zone habitat features were recorded. Of particular interest for fish habitat were deep refuge pools, large woody debris (snags), native and exotic vegetation cover, erosion and stock damage.

The main issues revealed by the mapping were a relative lack of large woody debris, exotic weed encroachment into otherwise good condition native vegetation and direct stock access to the river (even where there was existing stream bank fencing).



The main recommendations for on-ground action include:

1. Control of exotic vegetation
2. Reintroduction of snags
3. Active stock management in the riparian zone
4. Rehabilitation of degraded stream bank vegetation

The report acknowledged that for on ground actions to have any long term benefits, the local community and landholders must be consulted with and involved in those rehabilitation activities.

'Toorumbbee Creek to Belgrave Falls Reach Plan— River assessment and management plan' 2014 is available to read at Macleay Landcare Office or download at www.macleaylandcare.org.au

KEEN FISHERS WILL BE GLAD TO KNOW THAT....Macleay Landcare and landholder Barry Lee at Sherwood will be installing large woody debris back into the river in November to not only save his river bank from further erosion, but also to create fish habitat for the 'golden hole'. The river bank will be fenced and the site revegetated with native seedlings. Funding has been sourced from the Recreational Fishing Trust's Habitat Action Grant. Here are some of the snags waiting to go in...



NOW is the time to spread GPG Crown Rot

THE SPRING BREAK is the right time of year to spread the *Nigrospora oryzae* fungus. This naturally occurring native fungus affects the growth of GPG because it significantly reduces seed production by killing off new shoots.

DPI Research into the fungus showed that a single plant with the fungus spread to cover an area of 1ha in only 12 months. This spread is assisted by cattle movement. Spreading the fungus is equally effective by transplanting a diseased plant or applying the fungus as an inoculant.

You may be lucky to already have it on your property. The symptoms include yellow leaves and weakened tillers (stems) that can be easily pulled from the plant. The fungus is not apparent all year round but shows up about 7 days after first rains in Spring— now.

If you are interested in learning more about using the fungus for GPG control on your property and maybe getting an infected plant to spread at home then you *must* attend the upcoming workshop to be held at Valla Hall in November.



Russell Bowen spoke about Bahia & GPG control on his Aldavilla property at the recent North Coast LLS Pasture Weed Control day

GPG Crown Rot Field Day

Where: Valla Community Hall, Valla

When: 26th November 10am –3pm

RSVP: Hugo Maree NCLLS on 6563 6707

Lunch provided but bring hat, water, sunscreen etc

Presentation in the morning by guest speakers David Officer (DPI) Tim Woodward (Nambucca Shire Council) followed by a paddock walk and talk on a local property.

Native Coastal Grasses Workshop

by Gerold Bosch, Macleay Valley Bushes & Blossoms

On Thursday 10th September members of the Pandanus People, Volunteers, Bush regeneration contractors, NPWS staff and others spent a day at Hat Head studying native and introduced grasses. On the Headland we looked at some areas of Themeda Grassland EEC (Endangered Ecological Community) which were intact & compared them to areas which were disturbed.

We discussed the possible methods of helping to regenerate, restore & manage these grasslands. Some methods discussed included;

Seed collection “directly from the prostrate form growing on the headlands” to use for direct seeding onto bare ground or to grow in a nursery and replant in the very degraded areas. We discussed the importance of eradicating any weedy



grass species which are encroaching into the Themeda, by hand removal or extremely low rate spray treatments by qualified/experienced

people.

We also looked at the two main grass species in the saltmarsh (Couch & Zoysia) and their incredible ability to tolerate so much salt and also being inundated by the tides.

NPWS, The Pandanus People and Bush & Blossoms Environmental Services are currently working together on restoring some grassland areas on the headland and also degraded areas in the saltmarsh.

Thank you to all who attended –it was a great turnout! Gerold

(All photos supplied by Gerold and Sonja Bosch of field day participant and presenters.)



Got Horses?

Don't miss this opportunity

**BOOK EARLY
PLACES ARE
LIMITED**

**HEALTHY HORSES:
HEALTHY LAND**

**\$10/family
Nambucca Valley
December 5
9:30 - 3:30**

**HORSE PROPERTY
PLANNING**

**\$30/family
Sherwood Hall (Macleay)
December 6
9:30 - 3:30**

**Call Hastings Landcare to
book 65864465**

Healthy Horses: Healthy Land

Learn how to use the natural and domesticated behaviour of horses, combined with good land management practices, to create a healthy and sustainable environment for your horses and your property.

You will learn about horse health and welfare, the relationship between horses and pasture, pasture management systems, worm/manure management, how to save time and money on your horse property, and much more!

Stuart Myers and Jane Myers MSc (equine) are international speakers on the subject of sustainable horse property management and were awarded a Winston Churchill Fellowship in 2012. They present on this subject in various countries. Don't miss this great opportunity to learn how to manage your horses, your land and your time/budget so that you create a win-win situation all round.

Healthy Horses: Healthy Land is an introductory workshop that is a prerequisite for a more in-depth "equicentral" horse property planning session.



*Building Resilience in our Soils
and Landscapes* with funding
support from



**Local Land
Services**
North Coast

"Equicentral" Horse Property Planning

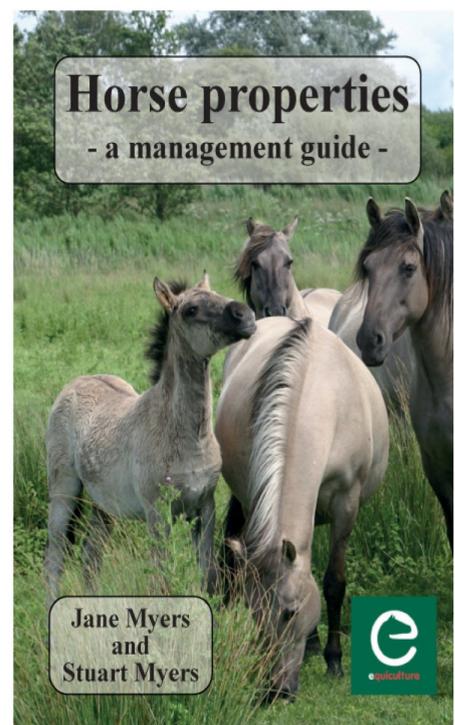
This workshop is **limited to ten properties**. It reinforces the lessons from the Healthy Horses: Healthy Land workshop and applies the principles of "equicentral" planning to individual properties. Following the property planning session, you will visit a horse property and critically review and redevelop the plan for that property, helping you to redevelop your own plan.

Please be advised that you will **need to have attended the Healthy Horses: Healthy Land** workshop held in the Macleay and Hastings last year or the workshop to be held the day before in the Nambucca.

To make the most of the day it will be important to have an **aerial photograph** of your property.

Please contact Hastings Landcare ASAP if you do not have an aerial photograph and we will organise for one to be printed (at your expense).

BOOK EARLY: 65864465



DPI ProGraze Course

Presented by DPI Ag Carol & Harry Rose
Alastair Rayner of Rayner Ag (0427 102 317)

There is no better way to spend two days in the beautiful Macleay valley than on a farm looking and talking about pastures and beef production! And that is exactly what a group of 13 land holders did with Department of Agriculture's Carol and Harry Rose and Alastair Rayner from RaynerAg (and formerly DPI Ag Beef Officer).



Usually a 8 half-day course, the abridged two day work shop squeezed a lot into a short amount of time. Participants varied in their farming experience, their herd and property size however ALL participants rated the course as 'very' to 'extremely' valuable and most will apply this new knowledge to more than 215ha of productive grazing country.

DAY 1 was held at Chris Osborne's property at Moparrabah and focused on the feed quality and quantity of different types of pastures in reference to warming Autumns, soil type, rainfall and herd type. We learned that highly digestible pastures such as rye or lucerne (70-80%) resulted in flat cow pats with concentric circles- that's a conversation starter! And silage made from old Setaria may look nice and bulky but has the energy and digestibility of card board - 45%.

DAY 2 at John and Christine Barnett's Dondingalong property covered beef production with Alastair Rayner and reinforced the importance that energy, digestibility and protein of pastures plays in the red meat production process. In fact high quality pastures with a protein level of 12% or more can drive the circular process by feeding the gut microflora which then increases the digestibility of the grasses and rate of digestion and results in a cow that gets hungry faster, eats more and gains weight faster.



The group learned about various methods to increase muscle scores for improved profits. Alastair indicated that muscle scores increase significantly if breeds are crossed due to what is known as 'hybrid vigour' and recommended this to coastal producers. The group learned the background to the fat and muscle score index system and then went out to the yards for a hands on session. In the afternoon Harry took us out to learn about feed budgeting using John's lush rye paddock. With a straightforward process of collecting, drying and weighing the pasture sample we were able to determine the feed quantity (in days) of the rye paddock per hectare for a herd of cows with calves. There were no surprises that John's experienced estimate was the same as our calculations!

All in all it was a great opportunity to learn from the experts and benefit from scientifically rigorous field trials and studies. It was also a chance for farmers to share their own knowledge and experiences with others new to the industry. Thank you to Carol, Harry and Alastair for a fun and informative course and to Chris and John for hosting us. The course (and a winter dung beetle trial release) was funded by a 2015 grant from the Australian Government.



It is worth noting here that those who have attended previous Landcare capacity building events such as soil health and weed management workshops, are now benefiting from increased pasture production and fewer weeds. If you too are interested in learning more about topics such as soil health, pasture management, fertilisers and their alternatives, stock handling and managements, weeds and small scale organic farming please let Landcare know.



Thanks again to our generous hosts- Chris Osborne and John and Christine Barnett.

Faecal Egg Count Workshop Ian Poe & Jeremy Bradley

Counting the number of eggs in your animal manure is one simple way that cow, sheep, goat and horse owners can minimise the time and costs involved in drenching. Importantly it can also reduce the problem of drench resistance. Drench resistance is already an issue for sheep and goats but is developing problem for cattle.



The main worms in the Macleay Valley are Caparia, Ostotarga and Barbers Pole. Conveniently (or not) they appear as the same shape under simple microscopes which means that that further investigation is required if you want to determine the exact worm species.

Mectins are available as pour on white and clear drenches that treat internal and external parasites in cows. Mectins such as Cydectin have low or no toxicity to dung beetles which is important as dung burial by beetles assists buffalo fly control, pasture health and nutrient cycling.

Ian emphasised that cows older than 18 months develop their own resistance to worms and there is no economic return on drenching. These un-drenched cattle importantly produce cow pats that are non toxic to dung beetles. However, young cattle have the higher worm counts and contaminate the pasture.



Ian emphasised the importance of observing your herd as animals that are poorly or have scours are likely to have high worm burdens. Goats and sheep suspected of a *Barbers Pole* worm burden are particularly important to observe as the worm numbers can rapidly increase over a matter of hours.

Participants brought samples of manure from their animals, some comparing the worm burdens in stock held on up river and down river paddocks, and between older and younger stock. The manure samples were mixed with fresh water and then treated with salt water and then put into special chamber slides and observed under the microscope. Participants came away from the microscope session satisfied that their drenching regimes were effective having



Hastings Landcare invites you to join them in a good old fashioned

Plowman's Picnic

Celebrating our 2015 Local Landcare Champions and the unveiling of the 'ground breaking' **Yeomans Picnic Plow**

Beachwood Sunday November 22nd, 11:30am
Please book with Hastings Landcare 6586 4465

STOP PRESS! Jeremy Bradley wins the NSW Landcare Award for Innovations in Sustainable Agricultural Practices!

In recognition of Jeremy's tireless contribution to and infectious enthusiasm for soil health and innovations in sustainable agricultural practices, we are proud to announce that Jeremy is a **WINNER** of the Australian Government sponsored award in 2015. **Macleay Landcare says- Well done!**

This is the newsletter of the Macleay Landcare Network covering the Lower Macleay Catchment

PO Box 3048, 19 Sea St Kempsey Showground NSW 2440

Tel: 02 65622076 Fax: 02 65622076 and email: admin@macleaylandcare.org.au



Welcome to the following new members: Penny Tamblin, Michael Clarke, Owen Clarke, Eddie Booth, Steven Hughes and Dennis Mitchell.



MACLEAY LANDCARE— SUPPORTING NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT and SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE IN THE MACLEAY VALLEY



MLN Committee Meetings

Bi-MONTHLY every last Wednesday of the month . Next Meeting: Wed 25th Nov from 6pm at Macleay Landcare Office 19 Sea St, Kempsey Showground

A reminder that members are invited to the Macleay Landcare Network’s Committee Meetings. Come along to find out more about this network and how we are working with the community. RSVP on 6562 2076.

Events Calendar

Date and Time	Location	Event Theme
Nov 26th 10am– 3pm	Valla Community Hall, Valla	Crown Rot control of Giant Parramatta Grass. RSVP NCLLS on 6563 6707
Yoemans Picnic Plough	Beechwood via Wauchope	Meet the new Yoeman’s Plough. RSVP Hastings Landcare on 6586 4465
Healthy Horses Healthy Land Part 1	Nambucca	Learn how to make your property healthy for horses \$10/ family. RSVP Hastings Landcare on 6586 4465
Horse Property Planning Part 2	Macleay Valley	You will learn how to develop a plan for your property. You must have attended Part 1 . Limit of 10 families \$30 each. RSVP 6586 4465

This newsletter is produced by the Landcare Officers and support staff of the Macleay Landcare Network Inc. with assistance received in funding from the North Coast Local Land Services. Whilst Macleay Landcare Network Inc. makes every effort to publish accurate and up to date information, the MLN and its employees do not accept responsibility for inaccuracies and or opinions that may be expressed in this newsletter.