



Wollombi Valley Landcare Group News for April 2010



Burralong Valley Botanical Walk & Landcare Annual General Meeting **Saturday 17th April 2010 at 10:00am**

The next Landcare meeting will include a Botanical Walk commencing at 10:00 am at Lesley & Graham Williams' property at 293 Burralong Valley Road, Murray's Run followed by a BYO lunch, a plant ID session and a brief Annual General Meeting.

Previous Botanical Walks have taken place in the spring so an autumn walk will provide interesting insight into the Dry Sclerophyll bush after summer.

Dr Jane Mowatt, botanist and president of Wollombi Valley Landcare, will lead the walk and share her vast knowledge.

We will meet for coffee and cake at 10.00 am and an introduction to Dry Sclerophyll woodland. Jane will then lead the walk from 10.30am to 12.30 pm. Please wear suitable footwear and clothing and bring your water bottle, sunscreen and hat. The walk is moderately steep so a reasonable level of fitness is needed.

At 12.30 pm coffee and tea will be provided at the Dairy in Burralong Valley, Murray's Run. BYO lunch and any samples of plants you would like Jane to identify, then stay on for the Wollombi Valley Landcare AGM at 2.00 pm.



Drive 7.5 kms along Murray's Run Road to Causeway Drive, then cross the Wollombi Brook and turn right onto Burralong Valley Road. Travel for approx 1km to property number 293 and follow the driveway to the house. Landcare signs will show the way.

For more information contact Diane Bell 4998 8105 or Lesley Williams 4998 8205

Looking forward to seeing you there.

Everyone is welcome.

The views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of Wollombi Valley Landcare Group Inc, or any other Landcare agency or government department, but are presented to promote discussion about and the practice of sustainable land use and environmental responsibility.

Our last meeting in February – a visit to Nick & Linda Lycos' property on Watagan Creek Road

Nick manages to not only keep himself in vegetables, but also produce an excess to sell to local people from one rectangular plot of land.

Unlike other gardens we have visited, Nick works systematically in rows under three major constraints. The narrow valley runs east - west with a ridge to the north; the area is vulnerable to flooding; and he gets frosts down to -3°C . The ridge to the north reduces his direct winter sun dramatically with the result that the only pumpkin he recommends growing under his light regime is butternuts - a useful hint for the rest of us with limited sun.



He has planted his plot on the alluvial flats next to the Watagan Creek. This means it is flooded at times like in June 2007. His policy is to build the fence and row supports to be easily replaceable and just rebuild after any floods. In return he obtains a flat, low site on deeper soil than on the slopes.

Unlike the rest of us who import mulch hay for our gardens, Nick has a system based on harvesting and baling the meadow hay off his adjoining paddock. This is then available for use in thick (6") layers, deep enough to keep the bottom layer and the soil cool and moist. Using a row rotation of potatoes, then corn, then beans, he digs, weeds and remulches the rows between each crop.

In addition to the hay, cow manure, chicken pellets and powdered rock are added to increase nutrient levels. Nick especially recommended Extraphos + Potash from Ausmin Aust P/L, www.ausmin.net.au, 1800 790 900.

Trickle irrigation at 7" intervals along the rows is provided from a header tank and is turned on when squeezing a handful of soil shows it needs more water.



We were also shown several useful labour saving tips: pick beans sitting down on a crate (to save the back); use a circular netting for cucumbers to let them have sun from all sides and be easy to reach; block grass from getting into the beds with a complete "Advertiser" to line the trench between the grass round the edge and the hoped to be grass free beds. This does need replacement every now and then; control snails with iron chelate (this is acceptably organic).

This has all produced an impressive harvest of butternut pumpkins, beans, capsicums and eggplants amongst others.

Nick recommends three books:

- The One Straw Revolution, Masanoby Fukuoka, ISBN 0-87857-220-1
- Farmers of Forty Centuries, F.H. King, ISBN 0-87857-054-3
- Plowman's Folly and, A Second Look, Edward H. Faulkner, ISBN 0-933280-51-3.



Finally, we had a quick look at a successful streambank erosion control attempt. By placing wattle branches along the bank and allowing a profusion of *Stephania* (a common local native climber) to grow over them, he has stopped the washing away of a steep, high bank of loose sand.

Our thanks to Nick and Linda for an inspiring visit.

More botanical walks...

Botanical walks are an enjoyable and fascinating opportunity to learn more about the flora of our region. So if there is enough interest we will arrange for another walk on a Saturday in May. Interested? Then call Lesley Williams (4998 8205) or Jane Mowatt (4998

Presidents Report - 2010 April

This year the Wollombi Valley has not experienced any extreme weather events or threats from Gas Companies. However, just to keep us alert, the new Local Environment Plan (LEP) is being written and a furore developed when it became known that it was proposed that the Wollombi Valley was going to be zoned E3 (E for Environmental). Initially, Landcare kept a low profile but the call for nominations to a Working Party resulted in me attending two meetings on behalf of Landcare. Our position being that we would like to see maximum possible protection for our valley from inappropriate development. The outcomes of these meetings are yet to be known and another may occur before the next version of the LEP is placed on public exhibition.

On the executive, during the year, Robyn Lamond left for the North Coast and was replaced by Shelagh Brigg as Secretary.

At the last AGM, we revisited Colin & Aynette Towill's to admire the established streamside plantings that are now forming a good canopy over their bit of Blaxland's Arm. After a cancellation in June due to wet weather we visited Bow Wow Gorge in August to walk through their sub-tropical rainforest. In October, Jeff Betteridge, NPWS Ranger for Yengo National Park, gave us a talk on our marsupials and the Christmas Party was held at Shelagh & John Brigg's property at Millfield with a tour of their rainforest replanting and regeneration. Our last meeting was at Nick & Linda Lycos' property at Watagan Creek Road to pick up tips for growing vegetables in our area.

I have held the Landcare Stall at the Laguna Market each month with the help of other members of the Executive and Louise's Chris. The plant identification service continues to be provided at the stall and it appears to be helpful in establishing contact with new people who are coming to grips with owning property in this area especially with respect to weed control and clearing.

My thanks to all members of the Executive who have helped during the year.

Jane Mowatt

TREASURER'S REPORT
WOLLOMBI VALLEY LANDCARE GROUP Inc.

APRIL 2009 – MARCH 2010

This report includes a detailed statement of earnings and expenses for the year ended March 31, 2010, as well as a balance sheet as at 31 March 2010.

- As of March 31, 2010, Wollombi Valley Landcare Group Inc. had cash at bank of **\$14,250.58**.
- This represents **\$6,289.26** held in unused tied grants at year-end and an amount of **\$7,961.32** in accumulated funds.
- Income for the year was **\$1,246.50**. Memberships accounting for **\$1,110.00**, sales of books and donations made up the balance of these earnings.
- The production of a DVD recording Professor Erskine's presentation and the acquisition of three library books added to the Group's fixed assets.
- Expenses for the year totalled **\$4,995.34**. The most significant expenditure (**\$3500**) was the cost of the fox shooting exercise carried out in late 2009. This cost together with the fixed asset acquisition costs were funded from the Catchment Management Plan Tied Grant. Other expenditure included insurance, production and distribution of the newsletters and sundry costs associated with meetings and workshops.
- This financial year income nominally exceeded expenses (excluding those costs met from the grant) by approximately **\$19**.
- A number of memberships expired at the end of April 2010 and we will be shortly sending reminder letters.

I assumed the role of Treasurer in August last year. I would like to acknowledge the efforts of Robyn Lamond as outgoing Treasurer. The fact that the financial books and records were in a great state when handed over to me has certainly made the task much easier!

Louise Hicks
Treasurer
5 April 2010

WOLLOMBI VALLEY LANDCARE GROUP Inc

BALANCE SHEET	31-Mar-2010	31-Mar-2009
	\$	\$
ASSETS		
Commonwealth Bank Account	14,250.58	17,999.42
Total Assets	14,250.58	17,999.42
LIABILITIES		
Tied Grant Funds		
Blaxland's Arm	2.62	2.62

Bridge to Bridge	1,199.00	1,199.00
Catchment Management Plan	4,007.64	7,775.64
Millpond	340.00	340.00
Noulanan's Arm	229.00	229.00
Nudge Pump	<u>511.00</u>	<u>511.00</u>
Total Liabilities	6,289.26	10,057.26
Accumulated own funds	<u>7,961.32</u>	<u>7,942.16</u>
	14,250.58	17,999.42

STATEMENT OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

INCOME

Book & DVD sales	131.50	270.00
Donations	5.00	0.00
Interest Earned	0.00	93.97
Membership Fees	1,110.00	1,200.00
Auger Hire	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>

Total Income	1,246.50	1,563.97
---------------------	-----------------	-----------------

EXPENDITURE

Fox shooting	3,500.00	0.00
Hire of Premises	44.50	28.00
Insurance	700.00	300.00
Propagation workshop supplies	12.90	0.00
Dept of Fair Trading	43.00	68.00
Office (including Newsletter)	270.34	133.03
Donations	0.00	25.00
Equipment / Books / DVD's - new Assets	118.00	522.55
Books for Selling on to Members	0.00	368.49
Subscriptions	40.00	40.00
Mammals talk refreshments	19.90	0.00
Gifts	78.95	28.60
DVD Recoding	150.00	
Postage, batteries etc	<u>17.75</u>	<u>0.00</u>

Total Expenditure	4,995.34	<u>1,513.67</u>
--------------------------	-----------------	------------------------

Excess/Deficit of Income over Expenditure	-3,748.84	50.30
--	------------------	--------------

EQUITY

Opening Balance	7,942.16	7,369.31
Net Income	-3,748.84	50.30
Adjusted for Expenditure from grants	<u>3,768.00</u>	<u>522.55</u>

Total Equity	7,961.32	7,942.16
---------------------	-----------------	-----------------

TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	14,250.58	17,999.42
---------------------------------------	------------------	------------------

Wollombi Valley Landcare Group Contacts

Mail: Wollombi Valley Landcare Group, Inc. c/o Wollombi General Store, Wollombi 2325

Items for newsletter: Graham Taylor - 9981 6317/4998 3326 wollombi.landcare@gmail.com

Why not join the Landcare Committee?

Our April meeting on Saturday 17th is also our Annual General Meeting. Our current committee of long-term committed members have agreed to continue in their current roles, but we are eager to add some new faces to the committee. Why not join the committee as a 'junior' member to see just what we do? It is one of the best ways learn how Landcare works and participate in setting the future direction of our organisation.

Back copies

Back copies of previous issues of the Wollombi Valley Landcare newsletter are now available on the Wollombi Valley Online website at <http://wollombi.nsw.au> by clicking on Local News, selecting News Archive and scrolling down through the listing for the newsletter you want - they are listed in chronological order.

Experts undervalue the environment: Henry

PETER MARTIN ECONOMICS CORRESPONDENT

Sydney Morning Herald

March 6, 2010

The Treasury boss Ken Henry has taken a swipe at the work of his own department and that of others on valuing the environment, saying much of it is flawed and fails to give proper weight to retaining Australia's unique biodiversity

Fresh from producing the as-yet-unreleased Henry Tax Review and amid preparations for this year's budget, Dr Henry told an environment conference in Sydney that the part of his intergenerational report that had received the least attention was the section on environmental sustainability.

But not only did the wellbeing of future generations depend on the resources left to them by this generation, the environment was likely to become more important to them than it was to us.

"It is very likely that improvements in our material wealth and our understanding of the environment will enhance our appreciation and enjoyment of the environment over time," he said. "There seems great scope, for example, for developing new or improved food crops, medicines and industrial products from our biological diversity."

Market valuations of forests and farmland underplayed their worth because many of their benefits were realised too far in the future to be taken into account in prices. Asking people how much they would be prepared to pay to preserve parts of the environment had resulted in bizarre conclusions, including that preserving blue whales was more important than preserving all whales.

"The idea of blue whales evokes a richer mental image than the idea of whales in general," he said.

A practical conservationist, Dr Henry helped draft the Henry Review's tax discussion paper while in central Queensland, caring for northern hairy-nosed wombats. In 2008, in a personal capacity, he is reported to have helped draft a submission opposing plans to cull 500 kangaroos in Canberra.

He said that consulting experts too often gave advice on areas beyond their expertise. In Canberra, grassland ecologists had been asked to "offer advice on the difficult ethical question of whether it is more humane to kill a kangaroo than it is to relocate it".

Boobook Declaration

The Boobook Declaration is a call to the Australian Government to take four essential actions in 2010 to safeguard Australia's rich and beautiful diversity of plants, animals and ecosystems. The declaration arose from an informal meeting of groups and individuals concerned at the lengthening catalogue of bad news about collapsing ecosystems and recognising the impetus for action represented by the 2010 International Year of Biodiversity.



More information about the Boobook Declaration can be found at <http://www.boobook.org.au/declaration.htm>

Groups can sign the Boobook Declaration and show their support for the Australian Government to take the four actions.

Visit http://www.boobook.org.au/what_you_can_do.htm for information on how groups can sign the declaration

Our next meeting

Our next meeting, scheduled for Saturday 19th June, will include a presentation from Jessie Grace of Wildlife A.R.C. (Animal Rescue & Care Society, Inc.) in Gosford, who will give a talk (passionately) for 'as long as we like' about bats. Jessie will come with live specimens of flying foxes and microbats. The talk will cover everything we want to know and care to ask, including making roosts suitable for microbats, etc.



Yes I know many people shudder just at the thought of bats, but here is an opportunity to learn about these creatures.

New and improved CMA website

In late March the Hunter-Central Rivers Catchment Management Authority launched its new website to coincide with the opening of the CMA's 2010-11 Incentives Program.

The new site features information on CMA programs, case studies of projects being carried out in our communities with support from the CMA, media stories, a calendar of events and a range of free publications and resources.



So jump on and have a look at www.hcr.cma.nsw.gov.au and find out what's happening in your region and feel free to post your feedback or suggestions via the enquiry form on the contacts page.



Friday 30th April
Saturday 1st May
Sunday 2nd May

9am to 5pm

The Tocal Field Days are held every year in the first weekend in May. Our visitors include people on the land and looking for the latest innovations, hobby farmers and enthusiasts and people just looking for a great day out.

Whether you enjoy piglet races, great food and wine, fencing demonstrations or the Grand Parade you can be sure the 2010 event will not disappoint. There will be not one but two stages with live country music over three days.

The Exhibitors will bring to you all the latest in farming techniques and technologies from solar energy to fencing construction.

The Tocal Field Days are held in the grounds of the Tocal Agricultural Centre (follow the signs from Maitland along the Paterson/Dungog road. Cross the Hunter River at Lorn, and continue towards Paterson. Tocal Agricultural Centre is 14 km north of Maitland.

What's on? Here is just a sample of the first day. Farm and fencing demos (plowing, fencing, tractors), craft (embroidery, silk painting, printmaking), good food and wine (cooking with bush foods, how to brew the best coffee, cooking demos, all about olives), land management (native farm forestry, weed ID, control & eradication, beef production, stem cell technology, chooks), animal nursery (piglet races, beef cuts), livestock (cattle handling by foot, horse and dog, horse & beef parades).

For more detailed information of whats on each day go to use the 'What's On in 2010' program at www.tocalfielddays.com.

Check on arrival at an Information Booth for any daily updates on talks, demonstrations and times.

Tocal is a must for anyone setting up or already established on the land. Whether you are seeking information or planning to buy a plant for the garden, a new shed, tank or a new tractor - the special Field Day prices are for you.



Ticket prices are Adult (\$16), Child (\$9), Senior (\$11) and Family (\$35).