

## **Riparian Enhancement for Groombridges Creek - Tenterfield**

Woody weeds, including weeds of national significance such as willows, Japanese honeysuckle and small leaf privet, are invading riparian vegetation in the Tenterfield area, causing streambank erosion and affecting biodiversity and habitat values. This project will engage a contractor to remove and control these invasive weeds, including removing material by excavator to minimise soil disturbance. The group will stabilise streambank erosion and improve long-term stability by placing rocks along the bank and planting native seedlings, such as lomandra. The project will enhance the riparian area, improve biodiversity and habitat and reduce the weed threat on site and downstream. Together with the local council, the group will maintain project results through ongoing weed control and monitoring of streambank erosion. The site is adjacent to the New England highway and is ideal for the placement of signage to help raise community awareness about the impact of weeds.

## **Caring for Our Country**

This project will address the effects of the devastating floods in January 2011 on the natural resources and assets of the region. Natural Disaster Environmental Recovery funding will not provide sufficient resources to address the immediate and on going issues.

The major issues being addressed through this project includes the spread of Weeds of National Significance and other emerging environmental weeds which have been washed downstream by the floods and will become established in areas where they have not previously been. The spread of these weeds has significant impact on biodiversity, especially in important riparian corridors.

This project will also address the need for actions on a landscape scale to protect riparian vegetation and restore the stream banks where these riparian corridors are threatened.

Through a partnership between Border Rivers-Gwydir and Northern Rivers Catchment Management Authorities, three of the Landcare Networks and local government in northern NSW this project will engage landholders affected by the floods and support them to repair the damage and on going threats to natural resources following the floods.

A Project Steering Committee will be established with representation from all of the partner organisations. This group will work with CMA MERI Officers to develop a MERI Plan for the project, as well as providing input to the Expression of Interest process and regularly reviewing the progress of the project.

An Expression of Interest process will be run, widely advertised and promoted throughout the region to engage landholders in the project. This process will also have the ability to include EOIs submitted through the Natural Disaster Environmental Recovery program run recently which have not been supported by that program, as well as works which have been identified during the site inspection phase of that program which again were not funded.

An assessment panel will review the EOIs, this panel will include technical expertise from the CMAs and local government, as well as local community members. This panel will rank the EOIs using a number of criteria.

Those landholders whose details are presented in this application have already expressed interest in being part of this project but have not been assured of funding as the process needs to be a fair, transparent and competitive one.

Site inspections will be undertaken to ascertain the extent of damage and on ground works required before a Project Management Agreement is developed to signify the commitment of the landholder to undertake and maintain the project. Project funds will then be paid to the landholder on receipt of invoices paid for materials.

## **Investigating a range of methods for controlling herbaceous weeds in grazing country in Mingoola**

Blue heliotrope has invaded pastures in grazing country in Mingoola. In addition to limiting sustainable grazing due to its poisonous nature, blue heliotrope weed spread is a threat to the local yellow Box grassy woodland endangered ecological community. Several control methods will be used, including pasture improvement, chemicals, grazing management and biological controls, and combinations of these. With assistance from New South Wales Industry and Investment, Mingoola Landcare Group will establish trial plots across several properties, with landholders trialling various methods. Commencement of trials will be linked with a field day on integrated weed management, identification of weeds of national significance and protecting endangered ecological communities and biodiversity. Members of the group will report their progress at regular meetings held around the different demonstration sites. Progress will be assessed using plant surveys and photographic evidence, and outcomes will be communicated to the community. Through this project landholders will acquire skills and knowledge enabling them to combat future weed problems.

## **Demonstrating Natural Sequence Farming for Deepwater**

Deepwater landholders are seeking alternative land management techniques to improve sustainability, reduce costs and reduce reliance on fertilisers and chemicals. This project will trial and demonstrate some of the techniques for improving land management, increasing biodiversity, reducing soil erosion and increasing farm sustainability. Techniques to increase water filtration into the soil will be demonstrated using a series of small banks on the contour. A diversity of tree, shrub and groundcover species will be planted below the banks on two demonstration properties. Records, including photographs of differences in groundcover, soil moisture, pasture growth, species and plant diversity will be maintained. The project will deliver a paddock scale on-farm demonstration of natural sequence farming techniques and include field days on the two properties to look at any differences between demonstration areas and conventionally managed areas. Field days will also provide a forum for landholder discussion regarding other systems that are being trialled across the district.

## **Investigating competitive advantages of new pasture species over invasive grass species**

This project will investigate the efficacy of introducing competitive pasture grasses to control invasive grass species including weeds of national significance, serrated tussock, Chilean needle grass and African lovegrass which threaten the sustainability of grazing enterprises and local biodiversity. Selected pasture species will be introduced into lovegrass infested areas and monitoring of the establishment of lovegrass reduction, changes in biodiversity, effects on groundcover and soil carbon will be undertaken. The project aims to establish new species and improve resilience of local pastures preventing the spread of invasives into local remnant vegetation and endangered ecological communities. Simple techniques will allow on-going measurement and Queensland University of Technology partnership will assist with assessment and reporting post project completion.

## **Dung Beetles Drive Sustainable Farming**

Dung beetles deliver multiple benefits for both the environment and sustainable agriculture. They increase nutrient cycling, soil carbon and rainfall infiltration, and reduce nutrient run-off. This project will deliver a series of field days across the Northern Tablelands focussing on the benefits of dung beetles and how to optimise their activity across the year, for more effective dung burial. Local Landcare networks will coordinate activities by advertising, organising venues and post-event evaluation. Field days will be delivered by technical experts to build the skills and knowledge of landholders in identifying dung beetle species, monitoring dung beetles, and management practices to encourage dung beetle activity. Increased dung beetle activity reduces the breeding habitat for pest insects such as bush fly and buffalo fly which reduces landholders reliance on chemicals. Project results will be maintained through the information materials distributed at field days and the enhanced skills and knowledge of participating landholders.

## **Revegetation and remnant connections - increasing the biodiversity and connectivity of remnant vegetation and habitat in the Tenterfield district**

This project will address lack of biodiversity and connectivity between scattered areas of native woodland in the extensively cleared landscape of the Tenterfield district. The district includes stands of the Endangered Ecological Community of yellow box Blakely's red gum. Through this project Landcare group members will plant more than 7000 native trees and shrubs across at least 10 properties in spring 2011. Around 4.5 km of fencing will be constructed by participating landholders to protect seedlings from livestock. These planted areas will connect areas of remnant native vegetation, provide shade and shelter for livestock and pastures and reduce erosion caused by wind and water. Project works will be maintained by landholders through ongoing weed and pest animal control, maintenance of fencing and watering of seedlings.

## **Demonstrating Lantana management capacity in Koreelah**

This project will manage Lantana, a weed of national significance, at key sites and properties around the area using equipment and methods the Landcare group has previously learnt. Local weed contractors will be engaged, initially working on up to two hectares of land currently infested with Lantana. Media coverage and signage will be used to draw attention to the achievement of this project.

## **Integrated Wild Dog Control - Liston, New England area**

The project will address the wild dog population in the Liston area, in conjunction with the New England Livestock Health and Pest Authority and the National Parks and Wildlife Service. The project will engage a professional trapper to undertake trapping programs during periods of increased wild dog sightings and attacks. Trapping will be undertaken in conjunction with aerial and ground baiting programs on public and private land. Benefits of the reduction in wild dogs will flow on to the native flora and fauna in adjoining Parks areas. Project results will be maintained through ongoing monitoring of wild dog populations and continued baiting programs. Project outcomes will be reduced threats to biodiversity and reduction in weed seeds carried by wild dogs between farmland and National Parks.

## **Investigating methods for managing invasive grasses in Black Swamp -**

Establish trial sites to examine effectiveness of sowing competitive species and applying organic digestors

This project will investigate methods of controlling the dominant, invasive African lovegrass, a major challenge to sustainable farming in the Black Swamp area, and other potentially threatening grasses such as Chilean needle grass and serrated tussock. Methods of biological control, including sowing competitive productive species and improving break-down and utilisation through organic digestors, should lead to increased soil carbon. At trial sites the project will examine the effectiveness of these techniques. Monitoring will be undertaken to assess changes in the abundance of invasive grasses, productivity and diversity of pasture species and improvements in soil carbon. An advisory publication for land managers will be produced capturing existing knowledge and practices and the project's research and practical outcomes. This project will improve community and land manager capacity to manage invasive grass species by examining new and emerging techniques for increasing soil carbon. Site monitoring to measure results will be ongoing with support from the Queensland University of Technology.

## **Grazing management change to improve groundcover and soil carbon at Pikedale QLD**

Pasture species (native and introduced) located in the Pikedale sub-catchment area require time to recover from grazing. A recent pasture and grazing management workshop series increased local landholder awareness of the issue. This project will support landholders to adopt a more rotational system of grazing management and will include the provision of technical advice to continue to build skills and knowledge. The benefits of changes in grazing management in the Traprock landscape will include increases in groundcover, reduced soil erosion, increased soil carbon and improved sustainability of grazing enterprises. The provision of fencing materials and assistance with off stream watering points will enable participating landholders to demonstrate on areas of their properties the benefits of a rotational grazing system. Technical advice in the form of farm walks will be provided prior to the commencement of the demonstration sites and as a follow up after demonstration areas are established. Results and works of the project will be maintained by participating landholders.

## **Greening the Granite Belt - Revegetation in the Stanthorpe Area**

This project will improve biodiversity and connectivity between scattered areas of native vegetation and habitat for woodland birds in the extensively cleared landscape of the Granite Belt district. The project will also improve farm sustainability by providing shade and shelter for livestock and pastures. This will reduce soil loss, wind erosion, and create buffer strips to slow surface water flow and reduce water erosion. Project activities include planting more than 5000 native trees and shrubs across five hectares in spring 2011. The seedlings will be protected from livestock by approximately 4.5 kilometres of fencing constructed by participating landholders and a contract planter will undertake larger scale plantings. Planted areas will connect areas of remnant native vegetation containing endangered ecological communities such as yellow box and Blakely's red gum woodlands. Project works will be maintained by landholders through ongoing weed and pest animal (especially rabbits) control, maintenance of fencing and watering of seedlings.

## **Pikes Creek Sub-Catchment Group (New Project 2011-2012)**

"Preventing Hill-slope erosion through grazing management – Pikes Creek"

This project will address the issue of land degradation due to set stocking by assisting landholders to change grazing management practices, to reduce overgrazing and improve groundcover. Groundcover levels of at least 70% are important in reducing the risk of soil erosion, as well as providing other benefits in increasing soil carbon, reducing soil temperature fluctuations and preventing the invasion of weeds. Many properties in the Pikes Creek subcatchment are still practicing set stocking, but following a workshop series that group members attended there is greater awareness of the benefits of a rotational grazing system and group members are looking to demonstrate changes to others in their area.

## **Stanthorpe Landcare**

This project will continue to address the lack of biodiversity, connectivity between the scattered areas of remnant native vegetation and habitat for woodland birds in the extensively cleared landscape of the Granite Belt district. The project will also provide additional benefits in improving sustainability for farming through the provision of shade and shelter for livestock and pastures. This will impact on soil loss and erosion caused by wind, as well as creating buffer strips to slow surface water flow and reduce erosion.

## **Tenterfield Rural Landcare Group**

This project will address the lack of biodiversity, connectivity between the scattered areas of remnant native vegetation and habitat for woodland birds in the extensively cleared landscape of the Tenterfield district. The project will also provide additional benefits in improving sustainability for farming through the provision of shade and shelter for livestock and pastures. This will impact on soil loss and erosion caused by wind as well as creating buffer strips to slow surface water flow and reduce erosion. Many locations within the district are part of the Endangered Ecological Community (ECC) Yellow Box - Blakely's Red Gum Community.

## **Mallow Sub-Catchment Group**

This project will address the problem of land degradation due to set stocking by assisting landholders to change grazing management practices to reduce overgrazing and improve groundcover. Groundcover levels of at least 70% are important in reducing the risk of soil erosion, as well as providing other benefits in increasing soil carbon, reducing soil temperature fluctuations and preventing the invasion of weeds. Many properties in the Mallow subcatchment are still practicing set stocking, but following a workshop series that group members attended there is greater awareness of the benefits of a rotational grazing system and group members are looking to demonstrate changes to others in their area.

## **Drumsleed Sub-Catchment Group**

Management Change for Sustainable Grazing & Groundcover-Drumsleed

This project will address land degradation due to set stocking by assisting landholders to implement changes to grazing management practices, to reduce overgrazing and improve groundcover. Groundcover levels of at least 70% are important in reducing the risk of soil erosion, as well as providing other benefits in increasing soil carbon, reducing soil temperature fluctuations and preventing the invasion of weeds. Many properties in the Drumsleed sub-catchment are still practicing set stocking, but following a workshop series that group members attended there is greater awareness of the benefits of a rotational grazing system and group members are looking to demonstrate the benefits of changes on local properties.

## **Stanthorpe Bushcare Volunteers –**

Successful funding through the Dept. Families, Housing, Community Services etc for equipment \$2,500. This is this groups first successful funding grant, and the new equipment will essentially keep the weeds out of Quart Port Creek, Stanthorpe.

## **Tenterfield Community Gardens -**

Also received funding through Dept. Families, Housing, Community

Services etc. \$5,000 for equipment, tools & shed. The garden is looking good and developing. Planning an Open Day in the future.