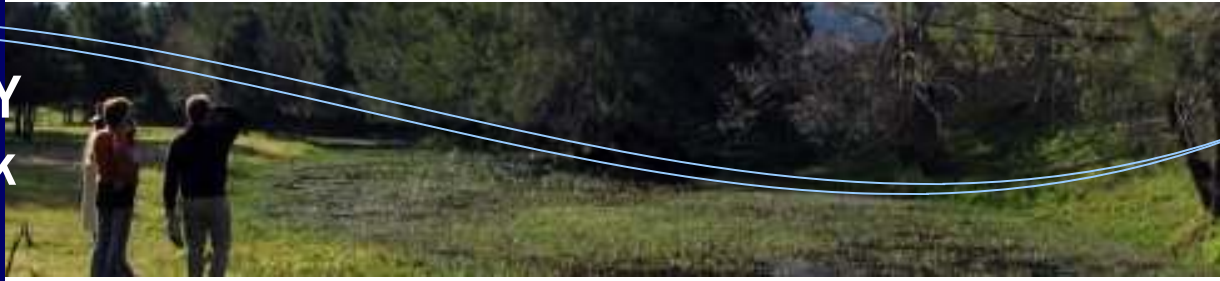


CASE STUDY

Araluen Creek



Araluen Creek

Southern Rivers Catchment Management Authority (SRCMA) is engaged in a variety of natural resource management activities contributing to the restoration and sustainability of the region.

Local Landcare groups are a vital component of these efforts. SRCMA provides support to ensure Landcare groups can continue to make a difference in their local area.

SRCMA has been supporting and working with the Upper Deua Catchment Landcare Group (UDCLG) to repair sections of Araluen Creek identified as high priority. The creek was significantly disturbed when gold was discovered there in the 1800s.

Dredges worked the area for many years turning the valley inside out in the search for fortune. Ongoing and increasing erosion and sedimentation remains a severe problem for Araluen Creek and water quality in the Deua and Moruya River catchments it feeds.



What is being done?

The following activities are being undertaken to improve the water quality, environmental health and biodiversity of the stream, including increasing fish passage and native water-based plants.

- Installation of bed control and streambank protection structures in the form of log sills and rock sausages to stabilise the streambed and banks by controlling sediment flow and increase ponding within the riparian system.
- Reduction of riparian weeds, especially woody exotics—broom, blackberry, privet, seeding willows and poplars.
- Removal of debris blockages to reduce erosion pressures on the streambed and banks.
- Flow monitoring as part of ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the efficacy of interventions at different flow regimes. Piezometers have been installed to monitor groundwater levels to determine changes from the streambed controls.
- Ongoing maintenance of structures damaged during high flows.

Who is involved?

The UDCLG formed in 1996 and aims to educate and encourage the Araluen community and landholders to participate in projects that focus on improving the environment and biodiversity within the catchment.

UDCLG have developed a good working relationship with relevant NSW Government agencies. The NSW Department of Water and Energy and SRCMA are currently working with UDCLG to develop technically sound and innovative solutions to river rehabilitation problems and for assistance in finding those solutions.

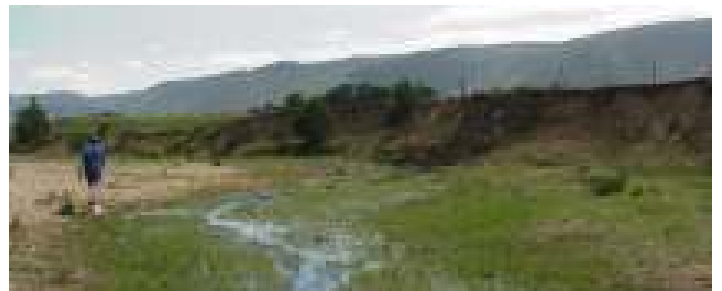
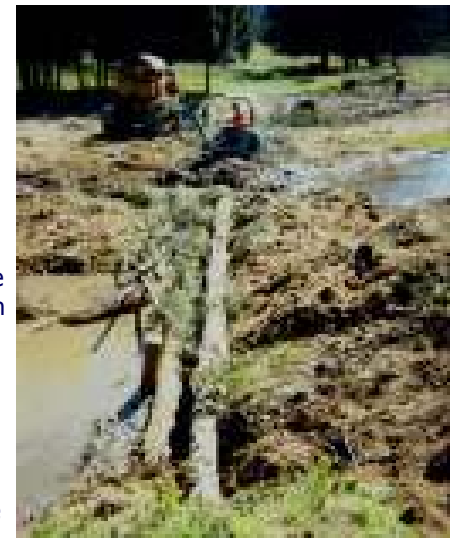
The development of a sound relationship between UDCLG members and local SRCMA staff has been fundamental in the activities and achievements of UDCLG.

Landholders along Araluen Creek have been supportive of the work, directly contributing materials and time on several of the rehabilitation sites.

Why this approach?

The combination of historical dredging and blasting to the creek bed, severe erosion and very mobile bed material means that sites will continue to be prone to severe erosion unless structural interventions are put in place to provide some stability to the streambed and to encourage the re-establishment of native vegetation in appropriate locations.

The works instigated by UDCLG provide the stability required for the Creek to return to its natural condition without further extreme erosion.





What are the results?

- Installation of 250 logs at 23 identified sites along a 10 kilometre stretch of the Creek.
- Installation of piezometers at two sites complement data gathered from the Back Creek gauging station.
- Regular maintenance such as hand packing log structures with rock, weed control and tree planting.
- Working bees and field days (30 plus people) to lend a hand and learn about the techniques being used.
- **Learning opportunity for members of the wider community and NSW Department of Water and Energy and SRCMA staff working in the field of river rehabilitation (?? further explanation required!)**



What are the challenges?

- Establishing responsibility for works on land on different points of the eroded sections of the Creek—without participation from landholders and agreements to fence out stock, the works would not have been successful.
- Sourcing of sufficient labour to build a rock sausage—the same key people did much of the work.
- Scale of the project and the need to have volunteers on site for several days. Volunteers need to be able to balance works with other commitments within their small community. Most of the group's members are property owners on Araluen Creek with farms of their own which require ongoing attention. The completion of project works is a statement of the commitment of UDCLG members.

What are the lessons?

Recent rain has demonstrated the efficacy of the project works. It has also galvanised the importance of working in partnership with SRCMA to gain technical input into project works.

Project funding

Over the past 10 years UDCLG has received funding to the value of \$150,000 from a range of sources including the Natural Heritage Trust, Envirofund and Rivercare. The Group has contributed thousands of hours in volunteer labour, supported also by SRCMA with technical assistance.

Where to from here?

UDCLG are currently investigating its next project which will involve stabilising further sections of Araluen Creek downstream.

What do the project partners have to say?

"It is rewarding to work with such a dedicated Landcare Group. After 10 years and many challenges the Group is still very focused on the rehabilitation of Araluen Creek. Its work has had a very positive influence on the stability and habitat offered by the Creek. They are an excellent example to all Landcare Groups of what can be achieved through effort and working with SRCMA."

Rebecca Bradley, SRCMA Catchment Officer (River Rehabilitation)



Contact

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