



Southern Rivers Partnerships Conference

Over 180 people from the South Coast region and beyond, involved in the management of natural resources, attended a Partnerships Conference at Narooma in August to share knowledge and discuss the challenges and opportunities they face in their work.

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The event was organised by Southern Rivers Catchment Management Authority (SRCMA), which facilitates natural resource management (NRM) over a 29,000 square kilometre land based and a 2,500 square kilometre coastal, estuarine and marine based area of south-east NSW.

SRCMA, in collaboration with a broad range of stakeholders, is undertaking more than 300 projects in the Southern Rivers region, delivering over \$50 million towards the protection and restoration of natural resources across the landscape.

SRCMA Chairperson, Pam Green said the conference represented the first of its kind for individuals and groups directly involved in NRM in the region.

"The forum generated significant interest from representatives of local industry, Landcare and other community groups, Indigenous groups, universities and other research institutions, non-government organisations and government agencies,"

Mrs Green said.

"There was a combination of presentations and small workshops on topics such as: what makes partnerships work, the benefits of developing long term partnerships, engaging and enabling partners, and community approaches to tackling NRM projects.

"Some excellent ideas and valuable discussions were shared by forum participants throughout the conference.

Delegates took advantage of opportunities to learn from the experience of others and gain skills and knowledge in carrying out NRM projects in partnership.

"SRCMA is committed to the ongoing development of successful relationships between local stakeholders", said Mrs Green.

"The conference has reinvigorated



Chairperson Pam Green addresses the attendees at the 2007 Partnerships Conference

existing partnerships and encouraged the development of new networks. SRCMA's partnership arrangements deliver great social, economic and environmental value and we consider this fundamental in improving the condition of Southern Rivers catchments".

Celebrating Catchment Champions

Winners of SRCMA's inaugural Champions of the Catchment Awards were announced in August, as part of SRCMA's 2007 Partnerships Conference.

The winners and runners-up were selected from 40 nominations with 10 landcare categories covering outstanding individuals, local government, primary producers, community groups, education, indigenous and coastcare initiatives.

SRCMA Chairperson, Pam Green said the awards recognised the outstanding contributions of local individuals and groups who are working towards a sustainable future by improving the management of natural resources of the Southern Rivers region.

"Local individuals and communities are

addressing environmental problems that take into account social, economic and environmental aspects," Mrs Green said.

"The standard of nominations is a powerful endorsement of the commitment of local people to environmental restoration, conservation and innovative natural resource management.

"The importance of community involvement was a strong theme among the awards entries.

"So often this vital work goes unsung. The Awards are a way in which SRCMA can celebrate the natural resource management achievements of our community," Mrs Green said.

The significance of the awards was summed up by Karyn Knowles of Lake

Wollumboola Bushcare, the winner in the Nature Conservation Award category.

"The awards are a celebration of the positive partnerships that can grow in a community where people are learning from one another, discovering new things about themselves and growing in appreciation of the value of our precious natural places and systems. Hopefully these partnerships can be forged with the next generation, to pass on these community strengths," Ms Knowles said.

All winners will now be automatically nominated for the 2007-08 State Landcare Awards to be held at Tamworth in late October.

To download a copy of the award winners and runners visit the SRCMA website: www.southern.cma.nsw.gov.au

2007 in review: A message from SRCMA's Chair

As the year draws to a close it is timely to reflect on SRCMA's achievements during 2007 and the challenges that lie ahead of us in 2008.

SRCMA accelerated on-ground implementation works following sign-off of the region's Catchment Action Plan (CAP) by the NSW Minister for Natural Resources and NSW Cabinet in February.

During the last financial year SRCMA's projects have delivered \$13.8 million in on-ground investment including:

- \$2.0 million in community and partnerships programs
- \$1.9 million in biodiversity programs
- \$3.8 million in soil and land programs
- \$3.9 in water programs
- \$2.2 in coastal and marine programs

A total of 15 Koori engagement projects were being undertaken 2006/2007. SRCMA is working with the Aboriginal community towards increasing Aboriginal participation in NRM projects and Aboriginal employment opportunities in NRM on-ground works over the next 12 months.

The impact of the continuing drought on rural communities is testing the capacity of land managers and the broader community to invest in NRM. SRCMA's NRM investment programs have had to be more flexible in order to balance and address these challenges.

Good relationships require continual work by both parties. This is also true of the relationships between Regional NRM

bodies (CMAs in NSW), Landcare and other 'care' groups. We are extremely fortunate in the SRCMA region to have seven very active District Landcare Associations and an increasingly active and valuable South East Landcare who are providing great support to their Landcare and other 'care' groups. These organisations are working closely with SRCMA to make sure we are aware of and supporting the activities and aspirations of the broad Landcare community.



The future for regional coordination of NRM across the Southern Rivers region appears positive. SRCMA Board and staff look forward to maintaining the momentum of their work in the coming year to achieve further catchment improvements

My sincere thanks to everyone who has been involved in SRCMA's works and partnerships during 2007. I wish you Blessings of the Season and a safe and happy New Year.

Pam Green

Launch of Network to Help Those With Native Vegetation

A new community network to support local landholders in managing native vegetation was officially launched in August.

The Far South Coast Conservation Management Network (CMN), funded by Southern Rivers Catchment Management Authority (SRCMA), organises information and activities that strengthen local knowledge of native vegetation.

SRCMA Chairperson, Pam Green said at the official launch the CMN is a valuable network for the Bega Valley Shire because it provides support for landholders of any property size with all native vegetation types.

"As well as working with landholders who see conservation as their key goal, the CMN recognises the importance of primary producers and landholders who want to maintain productive enterprises," Mrs Green said.

"Since its inception the CMN has coordinated property walks to improve plant and weed identification, held a demonstration of vegetation corridors on

a dairy farm and conducted community gatherings to develop links between locals to manage native vegetation on their properties.

As well as face-to-face events, the CMN produces a newsletter, provides information on a website and facilitates an email discussion group. This variety of communication makes it easier for the Network to reach its diverse members.

"Feedback from CMN events has been very positive as landholders enjoy sharing ideas with like minded locals," Mrs Green said.

"The social aspect of the Network is the key to its success."

The CMN is facilitated by locals Dan and Vickie Williamson and is guided by the needs and goals of Network members.



Dan and Vickie Williamson with Pam Green holding the CMN logo surrounded by members of the SRCMA board and community members.

The Williamsons work closely with organisations that already provide assistance and advice to landholders. Through CMN activities, participants can benefit from the knowledge of project officers from Bega Valley Shire Council, NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service and SRCMA.

For further information about CMN activities contact facilitators Dan and Vickie Williamson on (02) 6492 5558 or email info@fscmn.com.au.

Volunteers Plant Over 1000 Trees at Ooaree Creek

Ooaree Creek was a hive of activity on the 19 & 20 October, as 37 local volunteers planted native trees along the creek bank as part of Stage 1 of a River Rehabilitation Program.

The program is funded by SRCMA, through the Australian and NSW Governments' Natural Heritage Trust program.

"Ooaree Creek is an important stream as it feeds directly into the natural wetland, Werri Lagoon.", said Pam Green, Chairperson of SRCMA.

"This project aims to reduce erosion of the creek bank and improve biodiversity by increasing the number and range of native plants along the creek".

"Contributions by local communities to environmental restoration and conservation are a vital part of managing our landscapes well for the future," Mrs Green said.

In addition to helping to rehabilitate the creek, volunteers

were able to find out more about design principles for river and stream rehabilitation projects and the advantages of planting long-stems at this site Revegetation techniques for stream banks and conservation sites Bush regeneration techniques (weed and native plant information).

The planting also commence the establishment of a vegetation corridor, which will extend from the rainforest community in the upper reaches of the creek to the coastal lagoon.



Volunteers planting trees at Ooaree Creek

Small Farms and Rural Living Field Day

The Small Farms and Rural Living Field Day was held again this year at the Berry Showground on Sunday 23rd September.

The field day attracted over 2000 visitors with \$6,000 in prizes to be won, all donated by participating exhibitors. \$2100 was raised by the field day raffle, which was donated back to local charities assisting with the event.

In addition to the money raised with the field day raffle, the Berry / Shoalhaven Heads Rugby Club, Nowra Lions Club, Shoalhaven Lantern Club and Red Cross raised over \$6,500 through food sales to assist with their vital community work.

A variety of talks and demonstrations were scheduled throughout the day including sheep shearing, milking and weed spraying demonstrations, feral animal control and fence construction.

Landholders were also encouraged to bring along their unidentified plants, as there was a host of local government agencies and bush regenerators available to identify them on the day.

SRCMA, NSW Department of Primary Industries, Small Farms Network, Dairy Farmers FRRR program and Conservation Volunteers Australia were proud sponsors of this event.

Eco Art To Promote Bush Regeneration

SRCMA is taking an innovative approach to promoting weed control in natural areas by commissioning two ecological art sculptures by local artist Heidi Threlfo.

Ms Threlfo, who has recently returned from her first international exhibition, was commissioned by SRCMA to create a children's cubby house and a large bird's nest made from lantana.

The sculptures were exhibited at the 14th Biennial Weeds Conference at the University of Wollongong, as well as the Berry Small Farm Field Day and the Wollongong Southside Festival. Both sculptures have become part of the environmental education activities at the Wollongong Botanic Gardens.

SRCMA Biodiversity Officer, David Curtis, said that the use of art is a new approach for the SRCMA.

"The SRCMA wanted to highlight the problem of weeds in the local bushland and promote its Bush Incentives Program, which provides funds for landholders on the South Coast to manage their native

vegetation and control environmental weeds", Mr Curtis said.

"Art is a powerful medium to demonstrate these catchment concerns".

Ms Threlfo said her work is a collaboration of ecological sciences and art. It aims to have a holistic approach to art production to promote biodiversity and sustainability.

"I tried to take a playful approach to the pieces in an effort to raise awareness about weeds and the SRCMA's Bush Incentive Program. Hopefully the adults and children who see the works will be inspired to get more hands-on in their local environment", said Ms Threlfo.

"Making this piece has had a huge impact on how I feel about the environment. Sourcing the materials was both hard work and inspiring. I've become more appreciate of the natural spaces that are a part of my local area".

The SRCMA has formed an arts and environment working groups, which has members from Bushcare, Wollongong City Council, Landcare and conservation volunteers Australia, and is currently working on plans for an arts industry partnership.

Heidi Threlfo was commissioned by SRCMA to create a children's Cubby House and a large birds nest, made from lantana



Wollongong Enjoys A Cool Day Out

Cool Day Out was held at Smiths Hill High School, Wollongong on Saturday 15 September, giving local residents the opportunity to learn how they can actively make a difference to the health of the planet.

The day, organised by the Wollongong Climate Action Network, attracted over 2000 people, who were given the chance to participate in workshops on green cleaning.

A great day was had by all, with exhibitors attracting an audience that were specifically interested in the sustainable products and services on offer.

Attendees enjoyed riding the electric bicycles, test driving the hybrid cars, tasting fair trade and organic food, learning about ethical investment, getting up close to a solar system, and many useful tips on how to use less chemicals and power in your home.

The 'Cool Talks' program was inspiring with attendees given the choice of seminars in either the 'Earth' or 'Ocean' theatres. Dr Matthew Nott's 'Cool Talk' gave a first hand introduction to the actions taken by himself and *Clean Energy for Eternity* who have signed three local Bega Valley organisations to a 50/50 energy target for 2020. Dr Nott also instigated the conversion of the Tathra Surf Club to solar and wind power and is hoping to convert all surf clubs on the East Coast.

'Cool Demos' took place during the day, with exhibitors giving visitors the opportunity to learn about their products in a hands-on way. Karl Lapinskas, the inventor of the Tube Terminator, demonstrated how energy efficient fluorescent tubes can end their lives in a



The 'make your own Bath Bombs' workshops were very popular with children.

way that does not introduce mercury to the environment and allows all the materials contained in the tubes to be easily recycled.

Cool Day Out was a waste wise and carbon neutral event. Visit the Cool Day Out website for more information www.cooldayout.net



SRCMA Bush incentives Officer, David Curtis performing his street theatre show using a years worth of plastic bags – to promote reducing the consumption of plastic bags.

Rainforest Restoration Day

Over 40 property owners and Landcarer's attended a free rainforest restoration workshop on Wednesday 31 October at a property near Gerringong.

The event, sponsored by SRCMA through funding from the Australian Government's Natural Heritage Trust, was a great success, with attendees being introduced to other interested locals, and receiving information on what other property owners have achieved on their land in the past 10 years.

Landcare Project Officer, Nikki Plunkett-Cole said the range of activities appealed to anyone wanting to preserve the rainforest that remains in the Shoalhaven – Illawarra region.

"As well as being a day of fun it was an excellent opportunity for participants to learn about rainforests from local experts in the field of rainforest ecology," Ms Plunkett-Cole said.

"The day included a guided walk through rainforest regeneration sites with botanical experts Anders

Bofeldt, Carl Glaister and David Curtis, and a viewing of a stand of the Threatened *Zieria granulata* species. Participants learnt more about rainforest plant recognition, weed management techniques, stream ecology and the Red Cedar plantation trial on the property.

"The event provided everyone with inspiration to get involved in rainforest conservation and perhaps try some of the restoration techniques on their own properties," Ms Plunkett-Cole said.



Anders Bofeldt with attendees during the guided walk

NRM Reference Groups Underway

SRCMA is currently establishing NRM Reference Groups for the Upper Shoalhaven, Illawarra and Shoalhaven subregions. Similar to the existing Local Management Teams (LMTs) of the Eurobodalla, Bega and Cooma Monaro subregions, the NRM Reference Groups will bring together community and industry representatives, local council staff and state government officers to improve collaboration and coordination of natural resource management in each area.

The first meetings for the NRM Reference Groups were held during November. CMA Board member and Chair of the Shoalhaven and Upper Shoalhaven groups, John Kerin, said of the meetings, "They have been successful first meetings, with all attendees agreeing that more effective communication between organisations involved in NRM is an initial step, and important for the groups. We will be working as a group to guide the strategic direction and priorities for NRM in the subregions, and will play a key role in reviewing the range of NRM programs already underway".

The NRM Reference Groups and LMTs will have a key role in the development and implementation of SRCMA's local NRM plans. SRCMA is currently developing the NRM plans (formally referred to as the Subregional plans) which translate the Catchment Action Plan into a localised level. These plans will be a key tool for the NRM Reference Groups and LMTs, to inform their discussions and decision making.

Region's Efforts to Protect the Platypus

SRCMA recently held a Platypus workshop in Bemboka, which was attended by a large number of people from the local coastal and tableland communities interested in learning more about this resident of our creeks and rivers.

Platypus Ecologist Tom Grant was a guest speaker at the event, and gave a fascinating and informative presentation about the unique marsupial. Tom has researched the Platypus species for more than thirty years and was delighted to visit the region and share his knowledge.

A presentation given by the Bombala Platypus Pals outlined their work raising the profile of this animal and helping to protect its habitat. Information was given about an initiative by Margo Pyke, to establish a similar group on the Bemboka and Nunnock Rivers. Some footage taken by Paul Callaghan, of a Platypus foraging and grooming itself in the upper reaches of the Mataganna, delighted the attendees.

Other presenters included Ray Turnbull, who undertook an extensive study of platypus in the Bombala region in 1998, Megan Coleman, who gathered information about Platypus in the Tantawangalo, and Ray Alcock and Alexandra Seddon, who discussed the care of injured Platypus.

SRCMA Board Member Mandi Stevenson was the Master of Ceremonies at the workshop and has platypus living on her Bombala property.

"I know how farmers want to care for the creeks and rivers where these animals live, whilst trying to make a living from the land".

The workshop, funded by the SRCMA through the Australian and New South Wales Governments Natural Heritage Trust program, indicated that the Bombala region is a very important

national stronghold for the species. While the distribution of Platypus is more patchy and scattered on local coastal creeks and rivers, the Brogo and Bemboka Rivers appear to be the most important areas locally.

Workshop organisor, Chris Allen from the National Parks and Wildlife Service, said that the information gathered at the workshop suggested that while platypus numbers seemed to be holding in some areas, they no longer occurred in some creeks and rivers in coastal areas.

"We really need to keep a close watch on how they are faring in this region", he said. "And in order to do this we need to put together a Platypus monitoring program across the area".

Local people interested in learning more about what can be done to protect the platypus and its local habitat can contact Chris Allen on 6495 5008.

Monaro Grasslands Funding Boost

The success of existing Monaro Grasslands Incentives Programs will be further enhanced through additional funding to be announced by the SRCMA at a Grasslands Seminar in Cooma on Tuesday 27 November 2007.

SRCMA is hosting the Grassland Seminar, to be held at 9.30am at Cooma Ex-Services Club, with speakers from the CSIRO, Department of Primary Industries and the Monaro Grasslands Conservation Management Network, to discuss aspects of grassland management. SRCMA will use this opportunity to introduce the new Incentives program, discuss the funding guidelines, and show landholders how they can apply.

SRCMA has allocated \$540 000 through the "Purple Patches" program over the past 12 months, to assist Monaro graziers to better manage their high conservation value pastures. The funding, which has been invested in sub-divisional fencing, water infrastructure and weed control, has allowed the landholders to implement grazing management strategies that will improve the conservation status of their grasslands, as well as increasing the productive capacity of these pastures.

The additional funding will be offered to landholders in the Delegate, Mila, Bombala, Nimmitabel, Dalgety and Berridale areas. It will build on the success of both the Monaro Grasslands Pilot area program and the Purple Patches program by allocating further money for the management of high conservation value grasslands, as well as dedicating funds for grazing management of medium conservation value grasslands.

According to Pam Green, Chairperson of

SRCMA, the true value of the Incentive Programs is that they assist landholders to install the infrastructure, such as fencing and water supply that they need to change their present grazing strategies.

"The basis of the funding assistance is typically a 1:1 ratio of funding assistance to in-kind contribution. The landholder in-kind contribution can be a combination of labour, project management, equipment usage and/or materials.

"During times of financial constraint brought about by drought and low commodity prices, this assistance means that landholders do not have to make a significant cash outlay to achieve their management objectives," said Mrs Green.

Landholders will be able to apply for funding under the new program by submitting an Expression of Interest to the Cooma office of the SRCMA.

The grassland seminar will cover aspects of management from nutrient cycling and fertility requirements of grasslands, grazing as a biodiversity management tool and feed budgeting in native grasslands. People wishing to attend the seminar on the 27th November should register with Mark Robertson at the Cooma office of the SRCMA on 6452 1455 or by email on mark.robertson@cma.nsw.gov.au.



Grasslands of the Monaro.

Catch uP

is the electronic newsletter of
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To contribute a story or to receive a hard copy or an emailed Acrobat PDF version of Catch uP contact:

Laura Mehl
Phone: (02) 4224 9707
Fax: (02) 4224 9669
Laura.mehl@cma.nsw.gov.au

Southern Rivers

Catchment Management Authority
PO Box 3095
Wollongong NSW 2500