

The year is fast drawing to a close and we can look back at our revegetation efforts with a great deal of satisfaction. Rainfall, while not completely reliable, has been a little more generous than in the past two years. Some 18,000 trees and shrubs have been planted. Once more our two Green Corps teams have contributed the bulk of the plantings (12,540), but Sunday and other volunteers made a terrific contribution, planting 4,836 and 661 plants respectively. At the end of 2004, the grand total of trees, shrubs and grasses planted on Ash Island since 1996 is 121,297! (give or take three, ☺).



Wej Paradise, Chairman of the Hunter-Central Rivers CMA plants the 100,000th tree (an Ash) on Ash Island with the help of Kooragang Volunteers way back in February, 2004

Water Matters at Kooragang

Wetlands: As you know the past two years have been fairly dry, one might even say 'drought-like'. This had been putting a strain on our revegetation efforts. Prior to 2002, the rainfall was sufficient to ensure most of the trees and shrubs planted survive without too much fuss. It was a vastly different story in 2002 and 2003 as rain refused to fall. Now thanks to a combination of factors we are able to continue our revegetation program relatively independent of the rainfall. In mid 2002 KWRP built a large shed near the schoolmasters house (you might have noticed it). As well as housing our equipment, it is a grand surface on which to collect rain.



Kooragang Volunteers and water tanker in action, September 2004

Finally, three months ago, it all came together. Guttering and water tanks, sponsored by Hunter Water, were fitted to the shed. Donation of a mobile water tanker, by Orica Australia Pty Ltd, has meant that water collected from the shed roof can be brought to our newly planted trees and shrubs, ensuring them the best possible start in life. The irony is that it has barely stopped raining since! But relax, all is well, we have spent enough time out here to convince us that periods of rain will be followed in due course, by periods of dry, which in turn will be followed by more periods of rain etc, etc.

Many organizations, groups & individuals make things happen at Kooragang Wetlands:

The Kooragang Wetland Rehabilitation Project is only possible due to the help of our sponsors: Hunter-Central Rivers Catchment Management Authority, NSW Dept. Planning, Infrastructure and Natural Resources, Newcastle City Council, Port Stephens Council, NSW Dept. Primary Industry, NSW Dept. Environment Conservation, University of Newcastle, Port Waratah Coal Services, Newcastle Port Corporation, GHD Pty Ltd, NSW Waterways Authority and Energy Australia. Contributions by community groups such as Hunter Bird Observers Club and Society of Frogs and Reptiles as well as individual volunteers have also been of tremendous help. Thank you one and all!

Envirofunding:

We finished planting the 6000 trees and shrubs under the *Fodder to Forest* grant in June, and have been working under the *Habitat in a Hurry* grant since then. Most of the planting has been completed under this grant. What remains involves the placement of bird boxes, perches and other habitat hardware such as small piles of branches or rocks.



Wetland creation - saltmarsh rising on Phoenix Flats:

The 7 hectares of marginal pasture that was excavated in mid 2003 with a series of isolated 'frog ponds' excavated along the side, is developing nicely. Saltmarsh has started to develop on the end closest to older 3 ha created wetland. Red-capped plovers and red-necked stilts have been regularly seen on this new area. The recent rains have ensured the associated 'frog ponds' are full. Some freshwater vegetation has started to colonize these ponds with sedges doing well. However we are yet to hear a call from a pioneering male frog extolling the virtues of this newly-created frog real estate. Keep an ear out, and we'll keep you posted.

Fire - forerunner of forest:

In August a grass fire burnt approximately 3 hectares of Kooragang Wetlands down near some of the riverbank plantings of 1997. The ground was covered with a thick layer of ash. On the good side, this fire got rid of many of the weeds and now with the more recent rain, a number of species such as White Bottlebrush (*Callistemon salignus*), Swamp Paperbark (*Melaleuca ericifolia*) and Weeping Grass (*Microlaena stipoides*) are starting to come up of their own accord. In addition to this, Paul Melehan has been doing a 'Johnny Appleseed' act with casuarina seed. The results are encouraging. NB. This sort of procedure is fine where only a few species are involved. The areas where we plant by hand are not suited to widespread seed broadcasting due to the speciality of the species involved.

Closely watched birds:

Our semi-resident volunteer, Neville McNaughton has reported a number of exciting bird sightings recently. Up to seven Latham Snipe (Japanese Snipe) have been reported in the vicinity of City Farm. These birds are hard to spot as they like long grass. They breed in Japan and migrate each year between there and South-eastern Australia, where they spend our summer. Neville has also spotted a pair of the recently listed endangered species, Painted Snipe, on the saltmarsh flats immediately north of the Rebel Flying Club, and more recently in the wet pasture opposite. Another migratory wader, the Sharp-tailed Sandpiper has been seen wading in small flocks in this same area.

More good news for Kooragang Volunteers and wildlife:

Kooragang Volunteers and the Society for Frogs and Reptiles were recently successful in obtaining Envirofunding to continue revegetation works on Ash Island. The grant is called *Restitching the Quilt: Adding to the Hunter's Riparian Habitat Mosaic*. The habitat patches will consist of pond and terrestrial habitat (including planting 3000 wetland plants) covering 1ha for Green and Golden Bell Frog (*Litoria aurea*) and 3000 plants covering 3ha to expand remnants of lowland floodplain rainforest, containing the endangered vine, White Cynanchum (*Cynanchum elegans*), and melaleuca heathland. These patches of habitat will have different but complementary structures. This will help support a large number of species and individuals in the Hunter estuary.



Green & Golden Bell Frog

Kooragang now a project of the Hunter-Central Rivers CMA:

The official day on which the Hunter Catchment Management Trust metamorphosed into the Hunter Central-Rivers Catchment Management Authority was 23/1/2004. Like all restructuring there have been some plusses and minuses involved. Happily, being a project, the Kooragang Wetland Rehabilitation Project has remained largely unaffected by the change.

Updated contact details:

Postal address: Hunter-Central Rivers CMA, Private Bag 2010, PATERSON, NSW 2421

Email addresses: all follow the same formula as sue.rostas@cma.nsw.gov.au

Website: www.hcr.cma.nsw.gov.au/kooragang

10th Anniversary of the Kushiro Wetlands – Kooragang and Associated Wetlands Sister Wetland Relationship:

A delegation of three Japanese officials visited Newcastle and Port Stephens to reaffirm the Sister Wetlands agreement made 10 years ago. Their brief visit over the weekend of Sunday, November 7th, involved a mayoral reception, tours of wetland areas of Port Stephens and the Hunter River estuary, a formal signing ceremony and wetland workshop at The Wetland Centre. Agreements were made to continue to exchange research findings, information, visits etc.



President of Kushiro International Wetlands and Mayor of Kushiro, Yoshitaka Ito flanked by HCRCMA Chairman, Wej Paradice (left) and CEO, Glenn Evans (right) at the signing at The Wetlands Centre .



Orchid situations:
The locally rare *Dockrillia linguiformis* orchid has been found on Ash Island. It flowered spectacularly this year (see photo).

Introducing our new volunteer co-ordinator:

The Wetlands Centre and the Kooragang Wetland Rehabilitation Project were successful in their joint application for a volunteer co-ordinator to work 50% of the week at each site.



Lyn Lambert has been appointed and is looking forward to meeting you all in the New Year. Lyn will take on the roll of helping to co-ordinate volunteers. She may be contacted at KWIC on Thursdays and Fridays on 4964 9308.

Ready Jetty Go!

Some may remember five years ago we announced with excitement the procurement of sponsorship for a jetty to be placed on the north arm of the Hunter River at Riverside Park on City Farm. The jetty would be the only comfortable point of disembarkation between Newcastle and Raymond Terrace. Well, that was before the proposals for first `Kooragang International Airport', then `Austeel' appeared on the scene. Add to this a bit of to-ing and fro-ing as the design had to be revised for disabled access, additional funding found, design approved, tenders found etc etc ...You can imagine then, our surprise and great delight on Friday 6th November when we received a phone call to say construction was starting the next working day! The construction of a pontoon and adjoining gangplank took less than two weeks. We are now waiting for the land to dry out a little more before creating an all weather pathway from the carpark to the jetty. Next job will be to secure funding for some landscaping and visitor amenities at Riverside Park. Already fishermen have given it their seal of approval. The trick will be to ensure that's all they leave!



City Farm Jetty, linking land and river visitation and adding to the amenities of the North Arm of the Hunter River.

Green Corps making a difference at Kooragang:

A team of ten young people has been working on site since July planting some 7000 trees and shrubs primarily down along Dead Mangrove Creek, building foot bridges, spraying the noxious plant, Alligator Weed plus tidying up around a number of key visitor facilities. In addition to work on Kooragang, the team has constructed and landscaped a playground and planted trees at the Worimi LALC property, Murrook.



Estuary Tours – summer of `04/'05

The dates are:

- Tues. 25 Jan. 9:30 am (bird expert, Alan Morris)
- Thurs. 24 Feb. 9:30 am (bird expert, Alan Morris)
- Sat. 12 Mar 10:30 am (bird expert, Alan Morris)
- Sat. 26 Mar 9:30 am

Email Sue at sue.rositas@cma.nsw.gov.au
or ring 4964 9308 for details and bookings.

Bush Regeneration Days

Wednesdays – any time between 8am and 2pm
(tools and ice cold water supplied, BYO lunch)

Community Garden on City Farm days

Tuesdays and Fridays – any time between 8am and 2pm
(tools & ice cold water supplied, BYO lunch)

Kooragang Sunday Volunteer Days 2005

DATE	TIME (am)	CAR PARK	TYPE OF ACTIVITY (MAP REF.) – see map below
January 16 th	8:30	Estuarine Interpretive Centre (Radar Blds)	Mangrove plucking and juncus removal along Milham Ponds (1)
February 20 th	8:30	Riverside Park	Planting 750 trees & shrubs (2) (Restitching the Quilt)
March 20 th	9:30	Old Dairy	Planting 750 trees & shrubs (3) (Restitching the Quilt)
April 17 th	9:30	Weather dependent	Planting 750 trees & shrubs (4) (Restitching the Quilt)
May 15 th	9:30	Weather dependent	Planting 750 trees & shrubs (5) (Restitching the Quilt)
June 19 th	9:30	City Farm	
July 17 th	9:30	Scott's Point	Planting 750 wetland plants & grasses (6) (Restitching the Quilt)
August 21 st	9:30	Scott's Point	Planting 750 wetland plants & grasses (6) (Restitching the Quilt)
September 18 th	9:30	Scott's Point	Planting 750 wetland plants & grasses (6) (Restitching the Quilt)
October 16 th	9:30	Scott's Point	Planting 750 wetland plants & grasses (6) (Restitching the Quilt)
November 20 th	8:30	City Farm	

