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Latest news from the REC

- The NSW Roadside Environment Committee (REC) once again will sponsor the NSW Roadside Environmental Management Award as part of Local Government NSW's 2015 Excellence in the Environment Awards. The REC encourages NSW local councils to nominate for the award with entries due in September.

Squirrel Glider habitat feed trees propagation underway

Seed propagation is underway at Weddin Community Native Nursery in Grenfell after a busy summer of identifying and collecting local seed from Acacia (wattle) and other native shrubs from roadside reserves and Travelling Stock Routes. The seeds from almost twenty species of native plants were collected which were then cleaned and prepared for sowing into forestry tubes and trays.



Once the plants are grown they will be planted at specially selected sites along the non-operational rail line between Cowra and Young to help improve habitat within remnant woodland vegetation by increasing the amount of forage plants for threatened Squirrel Gliders.

Squirrel Gliders have a diet of nectar, pollen, insects, manna and Acacia gum, and some studies have found that one of the most important food sources for

most months of the year, particularly during winter, is nectar and pollen from flowers of Eucalyptus and Acacia plants, making this portion of the project extremely important in sustaining the local Squirrel Glider population.



For more details contact Amber Grant, Environmental Manager, Country Regional Network on (02) 4028 9409



Northern Territory roadside vegetation incident costs DoI

The Northern Territory Department of Infrastructure (DoI) has been fined \$20,000 after a Government-commissioned contractor felled trees at a sacred Aboriginal site. The trees stood on either side of the Coomalie Creek crossing on the Batchelor Road.

The Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority (AAPA) lodged a complaint against the DoI, The DoI pleaded guilty in court and were fined for working on a sacred site in contravention of Section 34 of the Northern Territory *Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act*.

The AAPA has the power to bring prosecutions which can result in fines and/or imprisonment for desecration of sacred sites.

"The damage was caused by a contractor acting on behalf of the DoI," AAPA said in a statement.

It also said its investigation had been conducted "with the full co-operation of the DoI".

"During this investigation, discussions between this Authority and the DoI have been constructive at all times, and have opened up dialogue about streamlining of processes between the agencies," AAPA said in a statement.

The maximum fine for an organisation desecrating a sacred site is up to \$282,000.



Photos from a local resident showing the trees before (left) and after (right) the work by a pruning contractor (Supplied: Leanne Mehaffey)

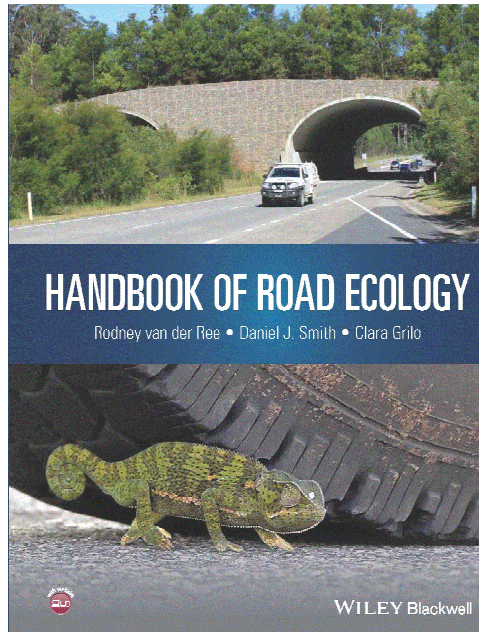
Source: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-03-30/nt-department-fined-over-murderous-trimming-of-sacred-trees/6359970>

The Handbook of Road Ecology

The Handbook of Road Ecology, edited by Rodney van der Ree, Daniel J. Smith and Clara Grilo (to be published by Wiley-Blackwell in June 2015).

This authoritative volume brings together some of the world's leading researchers, academics, practitioners and transportation agency personnel to present the current status of the ecological sustainability of the linear infrastructure – primarily road, rail and utility easements – that dissect and fragment landscapes globally. It outlines the potential impacts, demonstrates how this infrastructure is being improved, and how broad ecological principles are applied to mitigate the impact of road networks on wildlife.

The handbook is a comprehensive summary of approximately 30 years of global efforts to quantify the impacts of roads and traffic and implement effective mitigation. It is essential reading for those involved in the planning, design, assessment and construction of new roads; the management and maintenance of existing roads; and the modifying or retrofitting of existing roads and problem locations.



This handbook is an accessible resource for both developed and developing countries, including government transportation agencies, Government environmental/conservation agencies, NGOs, and road funding and donor organisations.

The Handbook of Road Ecology:

- Includes contributions from authors originating from over 25 countries, including from all continents.
- Summarises important lessons in each chapter, and includes lists of further reading and thoroughly up to date references.
- Highlights principles that address key points relevant to all phases in all road projects.
- Explains best-practices based on a number of tried and tested international case studies.
- Has 'stand-alone' chapters, but they also build upon and complement each other; extensive cross-referencing directs the reader to relevant material elsewhere in the book.

Further information about the book is available at www.handbookofroadecology.org

Reconstructing Western Sydney Grassy Woodland at a substation

Earth Repair & Restoration Pty Ltd specialises in the restoration of Endangered Ecological Communities particularly in Western Sydney. In May 2012, the company was commissioned by Endeavour Energy to restore a small highly disturbed Cumberland Plain Woodland bushland remnant at the West Liverpool Zone Substation, Hoxton Park.

This remnant was very small (approximately 0.3 Hectares) and contained relatively healthy examples of four native trees: Grey Ironbark *Eucalyptus crebra*,

Grey Box *E. moluccana*, Forest Red Gum *E. tereticornis* and some Paperbark *Melaleuca decora*.

However, the native shrub and ground layer was generally absent and the soil surface was highly compacted with a low organic matter content. This was due to historic clearing for agriculture, recent clearing for the installation of electrical infrastructure and the fact that a layer of coarse fill material and asphalt had been deposited over the topsoil in some areas (probably for car parking).

The project objective was to protect and enhance all remaining plants by ecologically sensitive weed control followed by revegetation with native grasses and forbs indigenous to the Cumberland Plain.

For more details contact Christopher Brogan, Earth Repair and Restoration Pty Ltd, Mob: 0466 560 128 Tel: 9774 3200 Email: chris@earthrepair.com.au; Web: www.earthrepair.com.au



Spreading mulch with a bobcat at the Hoxton Park substation site

Roadside collections returns to haunt family

The common practice of placing unwanted household items out on the footpath for "community collection" has come back to haunt a young family who recently moved interstate.

During the move the family placed unwanted household items such as old vinyl records, children's toys and general bric-a-brac out the front on the footpath in boxes for people to help themselves to. Three days later the items had been removed and the family were happy that their unwanted items had gone to a "good home".



Unfortunately, someone had collected the items, taken what they wanted and then drove out of town to a local Travelling Stock Reserve (TSR) and dumped the unwanted goods into a local creek.

TSR Officers from Riverina Local Land Services found the unwanted items during a routine inspection and during the removal process they discovered personal details which identified the family.

Investigations with the family revealed that they were not responsible for dumping the goods but they were extremely distressed to have what they thought was a charitable deed lead to environmental degradation.

Illegal dumping of household waste costs NSW \$10 million dollars a year to clean up and people found guilty can be fined up to \$5,500.

Source: Riverina Local Land Services April 2015 Newsletter

Are wildlife overpasses of conservation value for birds?

A major conservation objective of wildlife overpasses is to maintain levels of dispersal between fragmented areas of habitat, thereby allowing gene-flow and sustaining population viability of target species.

Researchers Stuart Pell and Darryl Jones documented crossing rates of a range of avian species, of four defined species guilds, over a vegetated 15 metre wide wildlife overpass in suburban Brisbane, south-eastern Queensland, Australia. The overpass spanned a 60 metre wide major arterial road, and linked two areas of isolated sub-tropical eucalyptus forest. Crossing rates of these species guilds were also determined over the major road, and two other high-traffic roads, 20 metres and 90 metres wide respectively.

Species guilds differed markedly in their crossing rates of the overpass, and in their method of crossing. They also differed in their relative ability to cross high-traffic roads of different width.

The results indicate that, although honeyeater and large forest insectivore guilds made extensive use of the wildlife overpass as a foraging resource and as a conduit between forest areas, the conservation value of wildlife overpasses in relation to potential gene-flow lies mainly with the small insectivore species guild, predominantly with forest-dwelling species of lower bodyweight and with flight characteristics not well-suited to sustained direct flight. Differences between species within this guild may be linked to a range of inter-related factors, including flight capacity, habitat use, and evolutionary history.

Overpasses specifically for birds have rarely, if ever, been constructed. It would, however, be relatively simple to incorporate narrow, linear strips of appropriate vegetation strata into multi-purpose overpasses to benefit these target species.

Source: <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0006320715000609>

Threatened Species Summit



On Thursday 16 July 2015, the Minister for the Environment, the Hon Greg Hunt MP, will host the Threatened Species Summit. The summit will be chaired by the Threatened Species Commissioner, Mr Gregory Andrews.

The summit will bring together state and territory ministers, relevant business leaders, scientific and conservation management experts, non-government organisations and others active in threatened species conservation. It will raise the national profile of threatened species and their conservation, explore solutions and promote practical and effective ways of tackling the threats to Australia's animals and plants.

Speakers ranging from local communities and scientists in the field to business people and government representatives will share their experience, plans and solutions. It will deliver tangible results and initiatives to protect animals and plants at risk from extinction.

The summit will reinforce the new national focus on threatened species since the Government appointed the Threatened Species Commissioner. Minister for the Environment, the Hon Greg Hunt MP, will launch a Threatened Species Strategy

at the summit. For the first time ever, threatened species will have an Australian Government policy framework with hard and measurable targets.

Attendance at the summit venue will be by invitation with a live webcast so that anyone in the community can participate and interact. The summit agenda and further information will be available shortly.

Enquiries regarding the summit can be emailed to:
TSSummit@environment.gov.au

iNaturalist

The California Academy of Sciences' online social network for naturalists – iNaturalist.org – recently launched a new series of maps, giving people access to over one million nature observations from around the globe.

iNaturalist creates a living record of Earth's biodiversity by placing contributed nature observations on an online map available to anyone with the internet.

iNaturalist has generated a massive amount of useable scientific data by engaging the public to record their encounters. This provides scientists with a new insight on how the distributions of plants and animals are changing with climate and land use.

Source: <http://www.calacademy.org/press/releases/citizen-science-network-iNaturalist-celebrates-millionth-nature-observation-as-it>

Download the iNaturalist app at <http://greatnatureproject.org/inat-app-promo>

The aim of this newsletter is to share information about the management of NSW linear reserve environments and profile the NSW Roadside Environment Committee (REC). For more information on the REC, including how to develop roadside vegetation management plans, go to:

<http://www.rms.nsw.gov.au/about/what-we-do/committees/roadside-environment-committee.html>

Please contact the REC Executive Officer if you wish to subscribe or unsubscribe.



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