



Upper Deua Catchment Landcare Group Inc.

Araluen Creek Restoration Project

Community Newsletter

June 2022

General Meeting

The next general meeting of the UDCLG will be held on **FRIDAY 17th JUNE** 2PM at Robyn’s Cafe, Majors Creek Mountain Rd. Join us for project updates and planning. New members always welcome.

Araluen Creek Restoration Project

The Araluen Creek Restoration Project is funded by the Bushfire Community Recovery and Resilience Fund through the joint Commonwealth/State Disaster Recovery Funding. The project aims to deliver in stream works that will support the creek and its environs into the future.

Onsite Construction Delay

Soil Conservation Service construction work has been postponed until Spring. The remediation of the 13 sites will deliver stability, reduce sediment movement, control erosion and future bank collapses.

Who’s who in the Araluen Creek Restoration Project – Cath Harrison

Cath Harrison is the Upper Deua Landcare Community Liaison Officer. This role involves producing the monthly newsletter, liaising with stakeholders, preparing media releases and in general keeping on top of all aspects of the project.

Cath is co-ordinating orders, deliveries, preparing plant species list, tubestock orders for re-vegetation, tanks, troughs, fencing to exclude livestock from the project sites enabling for successful remediation, she liaises and works with participating landholders to ensure the project is positive and a beneficial experience.

Cath says: I love the Araluen community and I love this kind of work, being part of such a dedicated group and a very worthy environmental project. We have a lot of damage to fix in the creek and the 13 sites set for remediation will secure positive outcomes for the environment, water users and landholders in the lower catchment.

Since the 2019-2020 Black Summer Fires we are up to flood number 14 and 1,000mm’s of rainfall already this year. So it’s critical for our community to pull together, identify the problems and do the work, just like we are now and attract further funding to enable us to continue into the future.

Cath is also an ‘unofficial’ historian and documenter for the project, often found on site taking lots of photos: tanks being delivered, before and after photos of erosion control measures, workshops. Cath has been a member of the Upper Deua Catchment Landcare Group since its inception in 1996. She is custodian of many photos of the rich history of this Landcare Group and the valley.



May 2022. Cath in the background taking photos at the Soil Erosion workshop.

Cath says “fixing only one section of the creek is a band-aid. We need to unite and do the whole





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creek, from the top of the escarpment down to the Araluen Creeks confluence with the Deua River. It's a massive job to fix the damage after being dry for so long, then being burnt followed by numerous flooding events. Our poor old valley has been through the wars in the last couple of years. It's up to us now to try and fix it.

Vegetation of Sites & Volunteer Assistance to Plant Trees

Re-vegetation of the sites will be rescheduled for a Spring planting with 1,500 native species to get in the ground post construction. The group will be calling on volunteers to assist in this task. Further information will be circulated as we progress.

Note: Volunteers are required to be a member of the group for insurance purposes.

Workshop No 3 Weed Management



WEED MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP

SATURDAY 25TH JUNE

9:30-2:30PM
ARALUEN CREEK, ARALUEN
(DIRECTIONS GIVEN UPON RSVP)

Register your interest to
Clare Henderson 0412 425 665 OR
upper.shoalhaven@gmail.com

At this workshop weed management experts, Apical, will outline restoration, remediation and weed eradication processes and principles.

They will also provide practical demonstrations of weed removal and bush regeneration on site along the Araluen Creek.

The focus will be on – African Boxthorn, Broad-leaved Privet, Small-leaved Privet and blackberry.

Techniques will address management and control measures for different stages of growth – seedling through to mature plants.

Morning tea and lunch provided.

This workshop is part of Upper Deua Landcare's Araluen Creek Restoration project.



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Practical Soil Erosion Techniques Workshop – 28 May 2022

The Upper Shoalhaven Landcare Council Soil Erosion Workshop as part of the Araluen Creek Restoration Project, gathered about 15 people to hear Andy Taylor of Local Land Services share practical advice on controlling small-scale soil erosion with simple techniques.

We then 'walked the talk' and installed some practical on-site soil erosion measures on a patch of seriously degraded land that was previously mined for gold. Erosion control ingredients included coir logs, jute mesh, mulch, found materials like rocks and branches as well as elbow grease, and Andy's extensive experience of how to fit them together to make water work for you.

A key element of the Araluen Creek Restoration project is landholder and community engagement to expand understanding of soil erosion restoration and remediation measures. The overall aim is building resilience back into our landscape.

The project's main activity involves some big scale soil erosion measures, big machines and big logs and rocks to stabilize the Araluen Creek and its tributaries. Andy is organising this side of the project. However, as he pointed out at the workshop, while there are different control techniques the process of soil erosion is largely the same whether it is of a large or small scale, sheet erosion or a head cut. Andy was able to demonstrate the principles of erosion using an example of a trickle of water on a vehicle track as we walked towards the main site.

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The area where the soil erosion remediation took place was formerly mined for gold, using dredging or hydraulic mining. The area was left almost completely denuded with no vegetation or topsoil remaining. Mining finished around the 1930s and no remediation was done.

Now, decades later, while there is still a deficit of topsoil, the area is slowly regenerating with some native trees and some grasses. However, there are still points of active erosion and Andy explained it is better to get onto them sooner rather than later, to prevent them becoming larger, more costly issues. And that was the aim of the day, doing things that can be done by hand before you need to do them by machine.

“Water always wins” said Andy many times! However, his mantra was to think like water, think where it will flow, what will make it divert to places where you want it to go, think of ways to slow it down or think of how you can spread it, without creating new erosion points. Also, look more broadly at the site, the answer to preventing more erosion may be simpler than it seems. If you have any questions, contact Andy andy.taylor@lls.nsw.gov.au

His other top tip for livestock producers was: “the measure to address most soil erosion is fencing. Ninety per cent of soil erosion can be fixed by keeping livestock out of areas with erosion issues. It then gives plants a chance to do their bit.”

Click here to read more of Andy’s handy tips and tricks for DIY low cost soil erosion methods or contact clare.henderson@webone.com.au to be emailed a copy.



Workshop group



Andy Taylor. Erosion presentation



Jute matting technique



Coir log, jute matting & mulch demonstration



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Membership

Upper Deua Catchment Landcare Group Inc membership is \$2 annually or \$5 for 3 years. Contact Treasurer, Robyn Clubb to join or check your status. E: clubbr@yahoo.com

Project Information

Cath Harrison, Project Liaison
E: cathharri@gmail.com or P: 02 48464079

UDCLG Executive

President: Tony Peters
Secretary: Penny Hayman
Treasurer: Robyn Clubb

Target Weed of the Month

African lovegrass (*Eragrostis curvula*)

African lovegrass is a hardy, drought-tolerant grass that grows in clumps. It is poor quality feed for livestock and can quickly colonise overgrazed and disturbed sites.

How does this weed affect you?

African lovegrass takes over pastures and disturbed areas. It degrades pastures because it's not very nutritious for livestock. There are seven types of African lovegrass in Australia.

What does it look like?

African lovegrass is a perennial grass that grows in clumps up to 1.2 m tall.

Leaves are: dark green to blue-green

3 mm wide with rolled edges.

African lovegrass has a small, thin structure at the base of the leaf blade. This is a ligule. The ligule has a ring of white hairs.

Stems are: slender, erect sometimes bent at the nodes.

Flowers are: grey or greyish-green when young straw-coloured when mature in groups of 4 to 13 on a spike 4–10 mm long & 1–1.5 mm wide usually present in summer, sometimes present year-round in coastal areas.

Seeds are: about 1 mm long, clustered at the end of the stems in groups 6–30 cm long present on the plant from mid-summer to autumn.

Roots are: fibrous.

Similar looking plants

African lovegrass looks like other perennial pasture tussock grasses. It is difficult to tell native and introduced *Eragrostis* species from each other. Other desirable tussock grasses such as *Poa tussock* (*Poa labillardieri*) also look similar.

Consol lovegrass (*Eragrostis curvula* cv. Consol) is a non-weed cultivar of African lovegrass. It is grown in pastures on sandy soils. The differences between this cultivar and the weed African lovegrass are subtle. It is difficult to tell them apart.

Where is it found?

African lovegrass grows throughout NSW, on roadsides and in grazing land.

African lovegrass is native to southern Africa. It was introduced in Argentina and the United States as a forage plant. It was accidentally introduced into Australia before 1900.

What type of environment does it grow in?

African lovegrass thrives on acidic, sandy soils with low fertility. It is heat and drought tolerant. Frost can damage it, but it regrows in warmer weather

How does it spread?

By seeds

Each seedhead can produce 300 to 1000 seeds. Seeds have high viability in the first year and after 5 years, more than half of the seeds are still viable. Some seed can remain viable for up to 17 years.

Seed spreads:

- short distances by wind
- between paddocks by livestock
- along roads by machinery and vehicles
- in hay and fodder
- by water.



African lovegrass (*Eragrostis curvula*)

