

# FoC NEWSLETTER

*Friends of the Colo, Inc. (FoC) 2011 Issue 11/01*

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## THE PRESIDENTS REPORT

Hi Everyone,

Thanks to all members of the committee for their contributions to the group, and to Keirilee and the National Parks and Wildlife Service. FoC has just completed the second year of its current Environmental Trust grant. The tedious task of completing the interim report has been completed, this year by Andy, and it is ready to submit. During the last year of the grant 37 FoC volunteers were involved in ten different field activities, totalling 30 days. This resulted in 1 460 hours of volunteer contribution, which if valued at the arbitrary rate of \$30 per hour, equals a value of \$43 800. Seen against a grant expenditure of \$5 815, this can be seen as great value for the Environmental Trust. The FoC model (of being self funding and self managing), is one that is now being successfully used by other *Adventure Conservation* groups in Australia, notably Willow Warriors Inc. and Wildcare SPRATS and other groups in Tasmania. We now enjoy exchanges of volunteers and knowledge with these other groups and this has lead to some exciting new remote area volunteering opportunities for several FoC members.

Recently, FoC experienced its first serious accident. This is outlined further on in this newsletter. The incident almost claimed my life and it is only because of the actions of the six other people in the party that I am writing this message.

The result was so very nearly different and I would like to thank and pay tribute to the rest of the party on that day – Phill, Helen, Ken, Alexa, Tony and Bob. While risk can never be entirely eliminated from remote area trips (or even life generally) FoC takes its responsibility for volunteer safety very seriously. To this end, our procedures and equipment used are being reviewed, especially with regard to trips using Packrafts (which are generally great fun).

Finally, we especially thank Keirilee and the NPWS for the excellent 10th birthday party and cake for the Friends of the Colo. NPWS congratulated Friends of the Colo *for achieving 10 years of mapping, treating and monitoring black willow along the Colo and sub catchments. Friends of the Colo volunteers have eradicated the majority of the ecosystem transforming black willow. As dedicated volunteers they have aided NPWS in tackling other weeds such as lantana, cape ivy, tree of heaven and many other weeds over the past 10 years.*

**Carol Isaacs, FoC president, March 2011.**



# Willows in the news.

## **This is great news for willow whackers !**

*CSIRO News Flash: Water savings from willow removal. Removing willows growing in the stream bed of creeks and rivers could return valuable water resources to river systems, new CSIRO research has found.*

*A CSIRO study into the water use of willows found more than five and a half megalitres of water could potentially be saved annually per hectare of willow canopy area removed, where trees were in-stream with permanent access to water.*

**Read more at: <http://www.csiro.au/news/Water-savings-from-willow-removal.html>**

## Very rare plant- *Gyrostemon thesoides*

*“Natural habitat along rivers has in many places been degraded as a result of changes in land use and the spread of exotic weeds”*

*Gyrostemon thesoides* (Broom Wheelfruit; GYROSTEMONACEAE; Brassicales; previously *Didymotheca thesoides*. This is an endangered shrub which grows on hillsides and riverbanks. Within NSW it has only ever been recorded at 3 sites: near the Colo River, Georges River and Nepean River. The species has not been recorded from the Nepean and Georges Rivers for 90 and 30 years respectively, despite searches. It also occurs in Western Australia, South Australia, Victoria and Tasmania.

The most recent sighting was of a single male plant near the Colo River within Wollemi National Park.

Just a little bit of history: The gyrostemon was found on 28 Feb 2004 by Tony Rodd, a Friends of the Colo founding member, who had worked at the Royal Botanical Gardens for many years. He could find only one lonely male at Colo Meroo (this plant needs both male and female to reproduce). As seed for this plant could have been deposited at Colo Meroo during a flood, it is likely found higher up in the catchment as well. This is something for FoC to be aware of. However, it is such an obscure little thing that us finding it would be a lucky chance.



Photo: Tony Rodd

Some facts about this plant:

- It grows on hillsides and riverbanks and may be restricted to fine sandy soils.
- It is a fire-opportunist, with recruitment occurring from a soil stored seed bank following fire. Adult plants are killed by fire.
- Plants reach maturity in less than a year and plants are presumably short-lived.

*“It’s always amazing to find out about the often hidden/overlooked value of our disappearing threatened plants. This plant may well be scientifically/medically valuable and it’s just possible that the plant also contains specialised cancer inhibitors. One character common to many members of the order (Brassicales) to which this plant belongs is the production of glucosinolate (mustard oil) compounds. Brassica vegetables contain high concentrations of glucosinolates that can be hydrolyzed by the plant enzyme, myrosinase, or intestinal microflora to isothiocyanates, These are potent inducers of cytoprotective enzymes and inhibitors of carcinogenesis”.*

### *What needs to be done to recover this species?*

*“Continued degradation of its natural habitat poses a threat to the likelihood of the continuing survival of *Gyrostemon thesoides*”.*

Locally, the best overall management approach would be to search for and locate more plants, remove existing threats (largely lantana, trad. and tobacco bush) and monitor before and after fire. A low-intensity burn practice is least likely to destroy the seed bank. The implementation of lantana and tobacco bush control using bush regeneration techniques is planned and consistent with the “*Colo Meroo Precinct Bush Regeneration Plan*” (Carol Isaacs, 2002) and Wollemi NP POM (2010 – in prep.) – *use of fire in affected weedy habitat unlikely to further disadvantage the species”.*

This location is even more important as the other locations may even be extinct. *If found* again a monitoring program should be implemented. (pre and post fire). See

<http://www.threatenedspecies.environment.nsw.gov.au/tsprofile/profile.aspx?id=1038>

# **RIVER HAZARDS**

## **Friends of the Colo Serious Accident**

Saturday 26/2/2011

On Saturday February 26 a party of seven FoC volunteers was travelling in one person Packrafts down the Colo River, within Wollemi NP. This was day two of a three day trip to manage weed issues between Woolshed Gully (about 800 m upstream of Boorai Creek) and Canoe Creek. While negotiating a small and seemingly innocuous rapid, the last raft in the group, paddled by the trip leader, Carol Isaacs, was sucked into a 'strainer' (where the water was straining down between rocks) at the top of a small (less than 2 m) waterfall. Much of the water was going under the rocks. The raft was slightly soft, as some air had earlier been let out of it when the party was stopped in the sun. Carol was pinned by the deformed raft and sucked into and down the hole. This happened out of sight of the party, as the view was obscured by a large rock. Luckily Carol's loud cries for help were heard but she was below the water before the first helper arrived.

Carol could see and feel hands, arms and legs as someone tried to pull her out but the force of the water was too great. The bung of the raft came out due the force and Carol dropped from sight under rocks and under water. Eventually, a member of the party went to the bottom of the small waterfall, pushed his head in under the water and, on opening his eyes, could see Carol firmly wedged amongst rocks. With a great deal of frantic effort and much physical force the party managed to haul Carol free and lift her seemingly lifeless body onto a nearby rock. She was completely blue but when a member of the party commenced expired air resuscitation (EAR) she regained consciousness after three breaths. CPR was not needed; Carol was able to sit up and quickly regained a more normal colour.

Carol had held her breath till she passed out and remembers suddenly dropping down before passing out. The next thing she can remember is waking up, as if from an anaesthetic, with a pleased face close to hers saying, "she's breathing." Carol was moved to the river bank but was experiencing pain in her back, knee and ankle, as well as feeling very tired. The Personal Locator Beacon (PLB) was activated and a rescue helicopter arrived in approximately 40 minutes. Carol was packaged up in a stretcher and taken by helicopter, with her husband and both backpacks, to Westmead Hospital. She was discharged after three nights. As she had held her breath till she passed out no water had entered her lungs and x-rays, scans and tests revealed no significant damage and no amnesia (apart from the

unconscious period). While she has some soft tissue damage, Carol is now making a good recovery.

*The 3 photos below show Carol immediately before the accident and the small drop where the accident occurred, from both the top and the bottom.*



All members of the party were interviewed by senior DECCW/NPWS staff and a full report prepared. As well, Friends of the Colo are reviewing their safety procedures. It is fortunate that this incident had a happy ending and we must be grateful to the rest of the party for their swift action and knowledge of what to do when under extreme pressure.

## Health on the River

The inherent dangers of bushwalking and water based trips in wilderness settings are apparent to most of us. In the last year two other possible dangers have become apparent in the Colo River catchment. These are the risks of being infected with Giardia or Ross River fever.

One case of Giardia was confirmed by pathology following the Colo Colossus trip in November 2010. Heavy rain occurred early on during this 7 day trip. Much soil and other surface matter were washed into the rivers, making them very muddy. In fact, they were so muddy that this, along with a raised water level, meant the party could not wade along the river for some of the walk. The start of this trip was not far below the popular and well used campsites at Newnes and also of a popular canyon area. All of these circumstances could have contributed to the presence of Giardia in the water. Since then, several trips have been conducted on the Colo River and most (but not all) people on these trips have drunk untreated water from the river, with no reports of ill health. These trips have generally been further downstream of popular recreation and camping areas and not immediately after heavy rain. It remains a personal choice as to whether or not to drink untreated water but it would seem wise to be careful after rain when there is obviously matter washed into the watercourses and when you are not far from areas with a heavy human use.

During April 2010 we learned that DECCW/NPWS had had mosquitoes at the Wheeny Creek camping area tested and the presence of Ross River fever was confirmed. While this site is well downstream in the catchment this is no reason to suppose Ross River Fever is not present elsewhere along the river. Following the April Colo Colossus trip one member of the party experienced symptoms consistent with those of Ross River fever and within the known incubation period. However, no blood test was undertaken so no conclusive diagnosis was made. Not everyone who is infected with this virus will develop symptoms but about 30% of people infected will develop a flu-like illness with joint pains, rash and fever, within 3 to 11 days. Other symptoms can include swollen and stiff joints and a general feeling of being unwell, tired or weak. Ross River fever is spread by mosquitoes and is not spread from person to person. There is no specific treatment and the best prevention is to avoid being bitten by mosquitoes. More information is available at <http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/factsheets/infectious/rossriver.html> and [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ross\\_River\\_fever](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ross_River_fever).

# WILLOW STATUS REPORT FOR THE COLO CATCHMENT

**The primary treatment of crack willows in the Wolgan River sub catchment was completed in Oct 2010.**

There are still some white willows on private land on Capertee creek but they are at low risk of spreading. **No willows** found from the end of the Wolgan fire trail to the Wolgan – Capertee Junction and on the Colo River to Wollemi Creek, Boorai Creek and Canoe Creek, monitored by trips in 2010 and 2011.

Canoe Creek to Bob Turners track was monitored in February 2010 where four black willows were found three of which were between the King Rapid and Bob Turners track.

**Bob Turners to Colo Meroo** was last monitored in October 2010 and **no black willows** were found.

**Colo Meroo to the Putty road** was monitored in November and the side lagoons were monitored in May and June 2010. Black willows are still being found and treated in these sections of the river and in the lagoons and so more work is needed to find the seed source. Some of the black willows have survived the original treatment and have themselves produced new seed.

**Colo Meroo to the Hawkesbury junction** still needs to be monitored as a number of willows have been found and treated along this section in 2010. This includes Wheeny Creek and the side lagoons and creeks on both sides of the river at Upper Colo.

## WOLGAN VALLEY CMA Grant

### **Final Report Project Evaluation**

June 2009/ Nov 2009 / Sep 2010.

#### **Improvements evident:**

**No willows** and fewer patches of black berries.

There is some regrowth of blackberries upstream of the Wolgan Colliery ford and there are also some that need respraying from there down to Newnes.

The seed bank along the river is strong and diverse. Phragmites reeds appear to be taking over when the willows and blackberries have been removed particularly in the area around the junction of Barton Creek and the Wolgan River treated in 2006-07.

There is however bottlebrush and eucalypts coming up in galleries on the exposed sand banks.

Friends of the Colo will be going to Capertee Valley in May and will go to the Wolgan Valley on the way up and check the 1.6km between the Colliery Ford and downstream end of Koopartoo for any surviving willows.

*See Program of Activities for more details.*

# FOC WILLOW AND WEED CONTROL PROGRAM

## NEWNES

Sat 18 Sep – Sun 19 Sep 2010.

**Planting:** 150 seedlings of mixed species of local provenance (purchased from Lithgow Community Nursery) were planted between the 'Wolgan Valley Colliery' ford and the downstream boundary of the Koopartoo property.

**Wolgan willows:** Altogether 10 crack willows were found and treated on the Wolgan. All previously-treated willows were found to be dead.

**Capertee Creek willows:** the party treated 20 mature suspected *Salix alba* (white willow) in a side creek upstream of Newnes. These were all in the national park. There are around 10 more of these willows on private property up stream.

The weather was excellent and the river water was cold but tolerable for wading. It was also an excellent social weekend and the camping was enjoyable.



## CAPE IVY AT GIRRIBUNG CREEK

Aug 6 2010.

The Cape ivy patch at Girribung Creek was checked during the course of a 19 day (private) bushwalk, crossing Wollemi NP from north to south.

To make the trip easier food drops were carried into and hidden at three locations along the route. As the walk in took 14 days and the walk out took a further 5 days, this route is not recommended for future trips! During the trip, the weather was varied and included lovely warm days, cold wet days and high winds. The Colo River was flowing strongly and water levels slightly high (but not enough to cause a problem).

An alternative route from Girribung Ck to the Colo River, via Woolshed Gully was noted. Although the Colo would still have to be crossed once, the walk out to the Culoul Range could be completed in two days without wading down the Colo. Note: This route was trialled during the November Colo Colossus and found to be quite difficult in wet weather or when the creek in Woolshed Gully was flowing strongly.

**No willows** were found (most of the park traversed is unlikely willow habitat) and only 3 small seedlings/runners of cape ivy were found. These were hand weeded.

**Other weeds:** Prickly pear was noted in a few locations in the northern section of Wollemi NP.

NOTE: This site has since been checked twice more, on the two subsequent Colo Colossus trips. On the last Colo Colossus **no Cape ivy** could be found at Girribung Creek.

## PINCHGUT CREEK TO CANOE CREEK

Fri 27 – Sun 28 Feb, 2010 November 2010

A successful weekend in the Pinchgut-Canoe Ck area - luckily between floods! Checking for and treating willows from the bottom of pass 11 to Canoe Creek, treating Cape ivy near Pinchgut Ck. and tree of Heaven at Pinchgut Ck and Canoe Ck. This was an excellent activity for introducing new members to the rigours of off-track bushwalking in the Colo Country, traversing the river on packrafts, and the sort of weeding work that FOC is undertaking.

**Willows: No willows** were found. Next run of this section could be delayed till 2012/13 *if willows were the only consideration.*

**Cape ivy** The Pinchgut Creek patch was significantly reduced compared with last time (February 2010). Re-treat in autumn 2011.

**Tree of Heaven** 9 stems were treated at the site at Pinchgut Creek, compared with 27 nine months ago. These were all in a previously-missed cluster, one of the stems being 3 metres tall. At the site near Canoe Creek, no stems could be found but 2 new stems were discovered and treated about 40 metres further downstream. Re-visit and treat as necessary in spring 2010/11 or sooner.

## BOORAI CREEK TO CANOE CREEK

Friday, 25 February 2011 Sunday, 27 February 2011

The river was low (1m at Upper Colo) but flowing strongly.

However a high level flood had gone down the river some months prior to the trip which had dropped a lot of sand. This, if anything, made any walking (i.e., up river to Woolshed Gully) easier whilst checking for willows and some follow-up treatment on small patches of tree of Heaven and Cape ivy.

**No willows were found.** This is the **third** successive time none have been found on this section.

**Cape ivy:** none found at Boorai Ck. At the Pinchgut Ck site 10-12 young runners, widely scattered, were found and sprayed.

**Tree of Heaven:** about 11 were treated.

**Other weeds:** as noted in previous reports, wandering Jew/trad. is rampant along much of the river.

# COLO RIVER MONITORING

## Bob Turner's track to Wydongadingo

October 2010



Gary Roberts & Jeff Cottrell monitored 14km of the Colo River between Bob Turners Track and Wydongadingo, looking for black willows and lantana seedlings at Tootie Creek.

**No live black willows were found** and no lantana seedlings were found.

With drier weather and a little more water it is a great day paddle with the packrafts.

The paddle from Bob Turners is a great opportunity to experience the Colo River in the Wollemi NP and to gain experience in Wilderness activities without the commitment of the much longer trip from Canoe creek or Wollemi creek.

This was also a great opportunity to assess the two lightweight rafts. The video camera was taken on this trip but the results were disappointing. However, Jeff managed a "swim" and this was caught on video.

## TOOTIE CREEK Sun 5 – Mon 6 September 2010.

Though we set out in strong wind, it was tolerable in the valley and the weather was actually ideal. We chose to camp in sheltered forest on the bench on the left bank of Tootie Creek as the usual campsite was very windy, and spoiled by campers with poor rubbish management and toileting practices.

A number of small **lantana** seedlings were removed by pulling and some mature plants were found high up on the banks. Once again, the importance of searching for lantana high up, on both sides, is underlined. Binoculars assist in this.

Only several small runners of **Cape Ivy** were found.. This is an excellent improvement.

The large **Tree of Heaven** treated the first time was found to be dead and although not yet in leaf, 12 suckers were found and treated.

**Friends of the Colo, NPWS and contractors have treated lantana sites at Tootie Creek**

## COLO MEROO

Contractors and NPWS are now working on controlling Lantana along the 6km of the river from the Mt Townsend bend to the National Park border at Colo Meroo.

In addition, a Lantana program at Colo Meroo is being undertaken by the **Colo Valley Landcare group.**

This is part of a broader program by **private landowners** in the Colo Valley to reduce the impact of Lantana which will greatly assist in protecting the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area.

It is an example of controlling weeds on the park border to prevent re-infestation of the more remote areas.

There are programs for other weeds, such as **privet, gleditsia, tree of Heaven, Cape ivy and crack willows** in other valleys that adjoin the Wollemi National Park, managed by local landcare groups or the **Hawkesbury Nepean Catchment Management Authority.**

While, with lots of effort, lantana management is an achievable goal, there are many other weeds that are present and at an intensity well beyond control at present levels of effort.

## COLO MEROO to UPPER COLO BRIDGE and PUTTY ROAD 20&21 Nov 2010



**A Black willow and lantana control activity,** conducted by **Willow Warriors.**

A group of 5 students and a supervisor spent two half days with two Willow Warriors / FoC members (Jeff Cottrell and Fred Wood) at Colo Merroo treating Lantana and planting trees with the **Colo Valley Landcare Group.**

The **Hawkesbury Young Landcare Group** are also assisting with the lantana control.

**NPWS** staff were also there doing maintenance work at the Colo Merroo camp site.

On the Saturday afternoon the group paddled from Colo Merroo to the Upper Colo Bridge monitoring the river for black willows and found and treated 10 seedlings.

On the Sunday afternoon they paddled between Upper Colo Bridge and the Putty road but were running late and so did not treat any black willows.



# COLO COLOSSUS

## Colo Colossus 4

Sun 31 Oct – Sat 6 Nov 2010

The aims were: to survey and treat willows along the Wolgan River downstream from Devils Pinch, and the Colo down to Boorai Creek; to treat cape ivy at remote locations on the Wolgan River near Camp Creek, and on the Colo at Girribung Creek and Boorai Creek; to survey and treat tree of Heaven on the Wolgan and Colo Rivers down to Boorai Creek. All objectives were achieved, except that it was not possible to survey for willows for much of the Wolgan below Annie Rowan Creek, as flood waters precluded walking in the river.

**WILLOWS:** Eight willows were treated altogether. The fact that crack willows are still being found in the Wolgan upstream from the Field Officers' Camp partially reflects the relatively low level of attention given to that area in past FOC activities, and highlights the need for further checking before it can be declared 'willow free'.

**CAPE IVY:** Cape ivy was noted (but not treated) at several sites on or near both banks upstream from Annie Rowan Creek. No new patches were found downstream from Annie Rowan Creek. Treatment at known patches was as follows: 1.5 kms upstream from Camp Creek - this patch was found to be further reduced since April, with only 2 small seedlings found. Camp Creek - thanks to very effective prior treatments, including follow up by the Good Bush People in September 2010, this patch was reduced to scattered seedlings and isolated runners. Girribung Creek - new seedlings and a few runners were discovered, despite some hand weeding during a visit in August 2010. Boorai Creek - this patch was reduced to 4 seedlings and one mature runner. Owing to drizzling rain, the seedlings were hand weeded and the runner scraped and painted. The results of cape ivy work are proving the value of frequent and diligent treatment.

**TREE OF HEAVEN:** Limited work was undertaken upstream of Rocky Creek. Below this some 625 stems were treated, at 7 previously-treated sites and 10 newly-discovered sites. Nothing could be found at 14 other previously treated sites. In general there is a continued marked reduction in surviving/emerging stems at sites previously treated. The significant exceptions occur where the site has been subject to recent natural prior disturbance due to flood erosion or tree fall (that is, the process of suckering was occurring regardless of treatment). Total eradication appears to have been achieved at some sites though it is too early to confirm this in some cases.

**NOTE:** Upstream from Rocky Creek, tree of heaven was noted at several places.

**HONEYSUCKLE:** Outbreaks were noted, but not treated.

## *The latest*

## Colo Colossus 5

Saturday 5 March - Friday 11 March 2011 (7 days).

All went according to plan, and it was firmly established that FOC's strategic work on the target weeds is progressing very well.

For the second year, **no willows were found** on these reaches.

**CAPE IVY :** For the first time, **NO** cape ivy was found at Girribung Creek and **NONE** could be found at the site 1.5 km upstream from Camp Creek. At Camp Creek only isolated runners and seedlings were found, not unlike the condition found in November 2010. This is a fantastic result, especially when seen with the fact that **NO CAPE IVY** was found at Boorai Creek in last month's packraft trip from Boorai Creek to Canoe Creek. Complete eradication of at least 4 of the 8 remote sites is definitely within immediate reach, though further visits will be required before any pronouncements of eradication can be ventured.

**TREE OF HEAVEN:** Work at most of the tree of heaven sites being targeted is also progressing very well, with many sites eradicated or provisionally so.

**GLEDITSIA:** A grove of 10 small gleditsia was found and treated upstream from the end of the management track- A large (25m) gleditsia and a surrounding grove of 10 smaller trees was treated upstream from Myrtle Creek (These trees were discovered in 2010 but not treated.) All previously-treated gleditsia that were encountered were found to be dead.



**OTHER:** The amount of blackberry along the Capertee has been reduced by the December 2010 flood, though this situation may reverse as surviving runners respond to the removal of surrounding shrubbery. The firethorn tree treated upstream from Myrtle Creek in 2010 was visited and found to be dead. The two pampas grass sites treated in 2010 were visited but no sign of them found. The dead stumps had apparently been washed away by the flood. No new pampas was found. Trad (aka wandering jew/creeping Christian) persists along the Capertee and Colo despite the efforts of the December 2010 flood to remove it. A downside is that we may see a new proliferation of weeds in response to the major Capertee River flood of December last. See observations on the December flood below.

1. The absence of cape ivy at Girribung Creek, the most remote site being treated, is very encouraging and supports the rigorous treatment strategy that FOC has been adopting for the last 3 years.

2. Excellent progress has been made on tree of heaven, despite the fact that past treatments on the Capertee have occurred fairly late in the season (April).



*Andy Macqueen (leader), Liz Macqueen, Ken Campbell, Jim Lee, Deidree Noss, Greg Hausfeld, Gary Roberts.*

## OBSERVATIONS CONCERNING THE IMPACT OF THE DECEMBER 2010 FLOOD



In early December 2010 a major flood proceeded down from the upper Capertee River and Coorongooaba Creek. This translated to an extraordinary peak of about 10.5 metres (9.5 metres above low water) at Upper Colo on 5 December. The following impacts were observed:

- Along the Capertee, all small-medium riparian vegetation (to 4-5 metres above low water) has been removed, flattened, or bent double. Generally, only the old casuarinas were completely unaffected.
- Along the Capertee, there seems to have been a net loss of sand. While fresh sand has been deposited along the banks, sometimes high up, there are longer deeper pools in the bed than previously.
- Along the Colo, there has been some impact in vegetation, particularly in the upper reaches, though not nearly to the same extent as along the Capertee.

- The sand landscape along the Colo has been considerably modified, possibly with a net gain in sand. Some previously deep pools have been filled with sand.
- In many places, boulders in the river have been scoured of algae, being polished back to their natural white.
- As mentioned above, the removal of vegetation may provide a window for proliferation of blackberry.
- There is a high risk of fresh appearances of willow, tree of heaven, gleditsia and other weeds within the next year or two, in response to seeds and vegetative material deposited by the flood.
- Although the Wolgan River appears to have experienced a moderate flood, no significant impact on vegetation or sand landscape was observed.





## **WHERE TO FROM HERE?**

Essentially, after 11 years, the current core members are running out of steam (age, time to move on, personal priorities or whatever) and although we still attract some excellent new participants we are having trouble finding people who have the skills, time and will to make a sustained contribution with regard to the planning and leading of activities. Our current commitment to monitoring willows, cleaning up remote cape ivy and tree of heaven patches, managing lantana between Tootie and Mount Townsend Bend, and the cape ivy at the Mount Townsend bend, is not sustainable for us in the long term. Fortunately the load will gradually decrease, as, thanks to our persistence in recent years, we are now having very promising results in terms of actual eradication of cape ivy and tree of heaven at various sites, as well as willows.

Longer term, a simple program of surveying the rivers every 2 years upstream from Bob Turners, and perhaps annually downstream from Bob Turners, should serve to control willows and the other remote nasties. That, combined with the occasional weekend on lantana, may be sustainable for the group such as it is or will be.

In recognition of FOC's limitations and personal aspirations, we made a policy decision at our meeting in March 2010 that, in the case of non-willow weeds, FOC would only concern itself with issues upstream from Mount Townsend Bend, which of course doesn't help with all the non-willow weeds downstream from there. This needs to be the focus of a new drive, a fresh group of volunteers, perhaps attracted and organised under a different model.

In our view, before significant resources are expended on any new suite of weeds, a thorough assessment of its extent, source(s), complementary eradication efforts and likelihood of success should be carried out. Any work then done should be part of an overall plan, rather than a random/ad hoc and therefore most likely futile effort.

**Wilderness Walkers Needed!**-to treat weeds in the Wollemi. If you are an experienced wilderness walker who would like to do something positive to maintain the environment of this wonderful area, please get in touch with Andy Macqueen ([andymacqueen@gmail.com](mailto:andymacqueen@gmail.com)).

The same goes for FOC's other activities — whether the easier weekends dealing with cape ivy or lantana further down the Colo, or the more adventurous lilo or pack raft trips upstream.

See the Activities Program for details.

## **What else can you do?**

**Volunteer:** There is a fabulous autumn volunteer weekend weeding event coming up at the end of April at Jenolan Caves and also a new Wombeyan Caves Odyssey in May (very exciting).

See the FoC Program of Activities for details

## **Have your say:**

### **Caring for our Country**

Ever wanted to have your say (vent) about the caring for our country (federal) funding for the environment. Well here is your chance. So go and get yourself a log in and provide some feedback. Also send it out to your group members so they can provide feedback. We need to let the decision makers know we are out there willing to provide input. We hope you can join us in the discussion – but be quick, the **discussion closes on 20 May 2011.** <http://caringforourcountryreview.com.au/>

## **PUBLICITY for Landcare**

### **Network Ten**

Filming with Willow Warriors went well on the Wingecarribee River and in the canyon.

The story will go to air on the new 6PM with George Negus news show on network Ten.

### **ABC LandLine:**

**“The Hawkesbury Source to Sea” journey**

Reporter Sean Murphy from ABC Landline filmed a paddle through the Hawkesbury Nepean Catchment with Willow Warriors, Hawkesbury Nepean CMA staff, Hawkesbury Young Landcare, Illawarra Young Landcare and Macmasters Beach SLSC in February 2011.

The film is going to air on Sun 27 and Mon 28 March.

It can also be seen over the web on Iview

<http://www.abc.net.au/iview/#/news>

The story was about Landcare in the Hawkesbury Nepean Catchment. As well as visiting one of willow warriors sites we visited a nutrient smart farmer, aboriginal landcare group, community landcare/bushcare group, bass fishing club members doing native fish surveys, an oyster farmer, a prawn fisherman, a sea grass protection research project and a Hornsby Council water quality testing project.

We would love to have visited more sites and places we past

# FoC PROGRAM of ACTIVITIES

## April-Nov 2011

### Notes on Activities

1. All dates may be subject to change. Please contact the activity co-ordinator at least 2 weeks prior to the activity to let them know you intend to participate. You should then confirm the arrangements (location and times) with the co-ordinator two days prior to the activity.
2. To attend any activities inside a national park you must have signed a NPWS Volunteer Agreement. This is to ensure the volunteer is covered by the respective personal injury insurance policies.
3. Frequently, trips additional to those listed will take place at short notice. Keep in touch with one of the coordinators listed if you want to be sure not to miss out.
4. Remember that places on wilderness activities are limited and are allocated on a "first come/first served" basis, at the same time as ensuring that the right balance of skills is represented in the party.

*Please note the paddling trips may be brought forward if there is rain in the catchments or additional trips may be scheduled. Please let the organiser know of your interest in paddling any of these river sections so they can keep you informed of changes.*

### **9-10 April: Colo River at Tootie Creek (M)**

Stop the advance of lantana further into the wilderness! Walk the T3 track to the Colo River near Tootie Creek for the ongoing mop-up of lantana in the area. Camp in delightful surroundings. The walk is on a track and only takes 1.5 hours, but involves 500 metres of steep descent/ascent. Limit 12.

Map: Mountain Lagoon.

Andy Macqueen [andymacqueen@gmail.com](mailto:andymacqueen@gmail.com) Ph 4757 1083

### **NPWS Activity:**

#### **30 April -1st May 2011 JENOLAN CAVES**

All food and accommodation is provided, nocturnal native fauna spotlighting or maybe even a cave tour.....all in exchange for just two days weeding and treatment of Sycamore Maples and other cold-climate weeds.

Contact [trish.kidd@environmet.nsw.gov.au](mailto:trish.kidd@environmet.nsw.gov.au) NPWS Oberon Ph: 6336 1972

<http://xa.yimg.com/kq/groups/3488164/718546064/name/Flier%20April-May%2011.pdf>

### **14-15 May: Colo River at Mount Townsend Bend (M)**

A medium overnight walk to the Colo River at Mount Townsend Bend, with the primary purpose of checking and treating the much-diminished cape ivy patch. The walk in is only 2 hours, but be prepared for a steep 400 m descent, no track, and a wade across the river. Those not involved in cape ivy treatment will be exploring for other weeds further up the river. Camping is on a beach, with shared dinner. Limit 8.

Map: Mountain Lagoon

Carol Isaacs [carofe@bigpond.net.au](mailto:carofe@bigpond.net.au) Ph 9639 9509

### **20-23 May: Capertee National Park – Willows and social (E)**

Willows whacking on Saturday 21 and "Being Alive" party/BBQ on Saturday night. Limited accommodation available in farmhouse/cottage/shed, otherwise camping. More details provided later to those who contact Carol – email preferred. Andy will coordinate the checking of the Capertee River, below Coorongooaba Creek, on Sunday.

Carol Isaacs [carofe@bigpond.net.au](mailto:carofe@bigpond.net.au) Ph 9639 9509

### **22 May: Capertee River (E)**

Check for willows along 5km of the Capertee River below Coorongooaba Creek. Walking in the river unavoidable.

Andy Macqueen [andymacqueen@gmail.com](mailto:andymacqueen@gmail.com) Ph 4757 1083

## **NPWS Activity**

### **21st and 22nd May: WOMBEYAN CAVES 'Weed Whacking'**

**Inaugural launch** — a two-day weekend session treating woody weeds and vines (lower slopes and valley floor) impacting upon the unique karst values of Wombeyan Caves. Overnight accommodation and all meals provided. Enjoyable, informative weekend, complimentary cave tour, easy terrain.

Contact [trish.kidd@environmet.nsw.gov.au](mailto:trish.kidd@environmet.nsw.gov.au) NPWS Oberon Ph: 6336 1972

<http://xa.yimg.com/kq/groups/3488164/718546064/name/Flier%20April-May%2011.pdf>

### **24 July: Boorai Creek (MH)**

A day walk in the heart of the Wollemi Wilderness, with the aim of checking on the vestiges of a small cape ivy patch. A big day out involving 14kms on track and 500metres down and up, BUT you get to relax on the river for 2 or 3 hours.

*Andy Macqueen* [andymacqueen@gmail.com](mailto:andymacqueen@gmail.com) Ph 4757 1083

### **6/7 August: Putty Valley car camping (E)**

Join us for a convivial car camp and campfire on private property in the Putty Valley. Do some easy weed control work or simply relax.

*Carol Isaacs* [carofe@bigpond.net.au](mailto:carofe@bigpond.net.au) Ph 9639 9509

### **11 September: Pinchgut Creek (H)**

This is a long and adventurous day walk to Pinchgut Ck on the Colo R. to treat cape ivy and tree of heaven, using two different passes. 500 metre ascent and descent; no tracks; steep terrain and rock scrambling involved.

*Andy Macqueen* [andymacqueen@gmail.com](mailto:andymacqueen@gmail.com) Ph 4757 1083

### **15/16 October: Colo River at Tootie Creek (M) Lantana**

Stop the advance of lantana further into the wilderness! Walk the T3 track to the Colo River near Tootie Creek for the ongoing mop-up of lantana in the area. Camp in delightful surroundings. The walk is on a track and only takes 1.5 hours, but involves 500 metres of steep descent/ascent. Limit 12.

Map: Mountain Lagoon.

*Ian Partridge* [ian@p-sys.net.au](mailto:ian@p-sys.net.au) Ph 9427 2249

### **29 Oct-4 Nov: Colo Colossus Wolgan River to Culoul**

Wilderness walkers wanted!

Join in this wonderful journey through magnificent gorges, and do a little feral plant control along the way.

This will be the 6th event of a biannual exercise aimed at keeping willows and other serious weeds out of the Capertee and Wolgan Rivers, and the upper part of the Colo. There is no track, and participants can expect lots of wading and rock-hopping. Experience in multi-day off-track wilderness trips is essential. Limit 8.

Maps: Mount Morgan, Six Brothers.

*Andy Macqueen* [andymacqueen@gmail.com](mailto:andymacqueen@gmail.com) Ph 4757 1083

### **19-22 Nov: Canoe Ck to Bob Turners**

Travel the Colo gorge from Canoe Creek to Bob Turners. On the way check for willows, tree of heaven and cape ivy.

For experienced wilderness walkers and paddlers. We will be travelling on pack-rafts, with rock hopping necessary around rapids. Steep 500m descent but easier climb out on track. Limit 8.

*Carol Isaacs* [carofe@bigpond.net.au](mailto:carofe@bigpond.net.au) Ph 9639 9509