



Tamar NRM

february
2013

'Naturally Yours' ...community

I have asked myself this question many times over the years - what makes up Tamar Natural Resource Management?

And I sit and ponder (and you know pondering hurts...a lot) but once it bounces around in there the answer comes to me in a blinding flash (now you know why I wear dark glasses indoors!) -

...our community members are the life blood of our organisation -

what we do can only be done with your help...

Our organisation wants to show how much we value and appreciate community supporters and so we organise many and varied events/activities throughout the year.

But this time we are not inviting you to an event...this 'Naturally Yours' edition would like to celebrate community so please sit back with your choice of cuppa and let the stories unfold before your eyes...enjoy, enjoy, enjoy...

[I love reading other people's stories and delving into their lives for a short time - you know there are so many stories out there but never enough time to read them all.]

AB



stories...

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"excellence in natural resource management"



Tamar NRM is supported by

world wetlands day 2013

Once again a great community day was had at Tamar Island Wetlands Centre on World Wetlands Day (Saturday 2nd February).

Over 200 members of the community turned up making the day a great success. Several volunteers at the Wetland Centre also played crucial roles in its success. They helped with setting up, packing up, cleaning up, running activities and answering questions to help visitors get the most out of the day.

Activities included:

Face mask making and mural painting for kids

Water bug catching and identifying for all ages

Gambusia tank and Gambusia catching

Live snake display with interactive talks

Raptor (bird of prey) talks

and

An artist in residence

With all that going on a steady stream of people interested in what was happening at the Wetlands Centre were told about the Gambusia history and many other wetlands stories. The community left the day with more knowledge about invasive species and how they can help us to look after the environment.

Many thanks to all the volunteers, the community who turned up on a Saturday - the day was made great by everyone, even the weather was on our side.

Grant Scurr
Gambusia Project Officer



Grant Scurr (above) talking about species you might find in the wetlands to an interested community member and (right) World Wetlands Day presentations

War against weeds

We are in the midst of a long dry summer, and some areas have been impacted by fires, what can be guaranteed is, when it does rain we will see an enormous proliferation of weeds on both private and public lands; some sadly may think this is no big deal.

To put this into perspective it is worth remembering weeds cost Australia over A\$4 billion dollars every year in control and lost production, this huge cost is borne by us - the community.

Since the arrival of Captain Cook and the first settlers with their crops and ornamental plants, more than 28,000 exotic plants have been brought into Australia, a few accidentally but most deliberately. Now, more than 2,500 species of introduced plants are established in the wild that are surviving from the coast line to the mountains and invading everything inbetween including some waterways.

In the Tamar Region past estimates have put the cost of lost production from weeds at two million dollars a year. If we measured the control costs, the loss of biodiversity, human health impacts, and social issues the dollar losses would be immense.

Clearly weeds have a financial impact on the whole community as well as the impact they have on the productive and environmental landscapes.

This is probably why when the community are surveyed on NRM or Landcare issues weeds are nearly always prioritised in the top three.

There has been a long history of community weed awareness in the Tamar Region with local farmer groups, environmentalists, Landcare groups, community groups, and groups of groups who for a long time, prior to 1995 were fighting weeds. In 1995 the Tamar Valley Weed Strategy was developed by the community as a platform to bring all the landholders including Local and State Government together to fight weeds along more strategic ideas. I can confidently say this community based approach worked - it worked well, and is still working.

Eighteen years later the Tamar Valley Weed Strategy is still going albeit it has morphed into the Tamar NRM Weeds Working Group (WWG). This group still has the same stakeholder mix and still characterised by community engagement, on-ground action, education, extension, and the use of decision support tools. At present Mr John Thorp with many years of consulting and weed work at both the local and national scale is Chairperson of the group.

So the question has to be asked has eighteen years of the community working on weeds in a co-ordinated way actually achieved anything? I think the answer is a resounding **YES**. We have three very engaged councils (Launceston City, George Town & West Tamar) and a well-informed community that have a range of tools who are continually working on weeds in their area with great success. I feel confident enough to say we have seen in the Tamar Region an increase in community understanding of weeds and more importantly a reduction in Ragwort, Paterson's Curse, Gorse, Pampas Grass, Blackberry, Serrated Tussock, Boneseed, and Bridle Creeper.

This just does not happen because someone waves some fairy dust, and by magic it happens...it happens because the community want it to and there has been a constant support structure for the last eighteen years generated from the previously known Weed Strategy group to the recently formed WWG. This allows communities to get on, to take ownership of an issue and do their own thing.

'War against weeds' continued

It is always worth going back in history to see what activities have been undertaken:

1. Forming the Tamar Valley Weed Strategy,
2. Getting schools to breed and release ragwort flea beetles and Gorse Bio Control,
3. Annual Ragwort Raids where 1300 km of road verge on the East and West Tamar are cleared of Ragwort in one day - this is done with the community and the Tasmanian Fire Service. Ten years ago we would fill a 10 tonne truck from just the East Tamar - now we barely fill a ute,
4. Visiting schools doing presentations on inappropriate plants in an urban environment,
5. Best Practice Willow removal South Esk and Pipers Rivers,
6. Weed mapping in the Pipers Catchment,
7. Weed removal in the Blessington area,
8. Involvement in eradicating Pampas Grass from the Tamar Region,
9. Weed projects on public and private land in all three council municipalities involving different groups and all our community Landcare Groups,
10. Localised weed plans for Kelso Greens Beach and George Town coastal areas,
11. Annual Boneseed Blitz with up to 30 activities facilitated each year,
12. A range of field days and forums in urban, rural and coastal areas,
13. Declaring with Local Government the Tamar Region a Serrated Tussock Free Zone,
14. Dissemination of WoNS best practice manuals,
15. Trials on both bio control and chemical applications to control weeds, and
16. Trialling splatter gun and chemical rates for Boneseed.

The list could go on and on, however, the secret to our success is an engaged, well informed community coupled with a philosophy of actually doing something in a strategic way not just talking about it. It is very easy, and convenient for many to sit around doing plans, making excuses, setting up committees, writing glossy brochures etc. but sadly this does not kill weeds.

It needs to be remembered we all have a role to play when it comes to weed management. I urge you to become involved - don't wait to be asked - take a personal leadership role and do something as long as it reduces weeds. There will be a positive outcome.

Lastly, a big thank you to those in the community who have in the past and are still waging war against weeds and winning.

Ian Sauer
President, Tamar NRM



Photo (left) - a dedicated community member assisting with the removal of Boneseed and (right) - the dreaded Boneseed



Why do I ride a bike?

...thoughts by Malcolm Cowan, member of Tamar Bicycle Users Group (TBUG)...

I've been riding for about 20 years after getting into triathlons and competitive riding. Things changed when my wife decided riding a bike through Laos would be a good idea so my focus has changed to touring, commuting, promoting and advocating for bike riding as a sustainable form of transport through our Tamar Bicycle Users Group.

I think this Word Cloud constructed using the one word responses from bike commuters in San Francisco sums up the feelings of many bike riders – the more responses, the larger the word -



There are many compelling reasons to reduce the Tamar Region's dependence on individual motor vehicles and to increase the level of physical activity generated by bike riding and walking.

Increasing pedestrian and bike riding traffic and the use of public transport will have positive environmental impacts. According to the Cycling Promotion Fund, cars produce an average of 0.3 kg of CO₂/km travelled compared with negligible emissions from cycling. Therefore substituting cycling for driving saves approximately 0.3kg/km. This relates to around 1 tonne of CO₂ per annum for a cyclist commuting 255 days a year from Youngtown to the CBD.

**Why do I ride a bike? ...continued
(Malcolm Cowan)**

The Heart Foundation’s Tasmanian Cardiovascular Disease 2011 Fact Sheet states that 76% of people in Northern Tasmania have low levels of physical exercise. Bicycle riding can easily provide the 30 minutes of activity per day recommended for good health. Tasmanians generally have one of the highest levels of cardiovascular disease in the country according to the Heart Foundation.



Increasing the movement of people by foot or bicycle will significantly lower the cost of public funding for the building and maintenance of infrastructure. The population of Launceston and the Tamar Region is growing, increasing the demands on roads, bridges, parking and related infrastructure. Much of this infrastructure growth can be accommodated by improved bicycle and pedestrian access into and around Launceston. Increasing the level of bike infrastructure is very cost effective. The Regional Bicycle Network currently being developed will assist in the integration of local council and DIER road and trail development.

Bicycle parking costs a fraction of on-street and multistory off-street car parks and bicycle and pedestrian cycleways and bridges are far more cost effective to design and build than conventional roads and bridges.



Why do I ride a bike? ...continued (Malcolm Cowan)

In addition to these good health and environmental outcomes, it has been shown that cycling and walking improve levels of community connectedness. Increased bicycle and pedestrian traffic will be good for business in the CBD. Pedestrians and bikes moving through the city at slower speeds will increase slow speed passing traffic with consequent increased exposure to businesses and store fronts.



Launceston has recently been rated as the country’s most “family friendly city” and the increase in the use of bicycles for transport and recreation on the off-road trail network will only increase the “friendliness” of the region - life’s better on a bike!

Join us at www.tbug.org.au or like us on Facebook.

Oodnadatta in South Australia broke its own record for consecutive days over 45 degrees with seven in the New Year period – too hot to pump petrol because it vaporised - residents went to bed after dampening their sheets

SMH 120113

2009-2010 was the most rain-sodden two-year period in Australia’s recorded history

Climate Spectator 070113

Poplar, willow or eucalyptus trees, all used as fast-growing sources of renewable wood fuel, emit high levels of the chemical isoprene as they grow - isoprene forms toxic ozone when mixed with other air pollutants in sunlight

EcoNews 070113

...snippets...

Optus and the Australian Wildlife Conservancy (AWC) and have launched ‘My Wildlife Sanctuary’ a new, interactive Facebook game - players build their own virtual wildlife sanctuary – they attract native Australian wildlife to their sanctuary and create a virtual Field Guide as they go

AWC 121212

Players can share news about a species they have attracted with their Facebook friends and compete with their friends online - as the game progresses, players learn about Australia’s wildlife and are given the opportunity to donate to AWC and support work in the field to save real threatened wildlife

AWC 121212

changing ideas...

...thoughts by Fran Pimblett...

When my father died in 2010 leaving us 4 acres of land on the Tamar River we packed up our home in the city and with a satchel full of horticultural studies and a head full of “sugarplum fairies” we headed out to our new life in the country. Like most “city folk” we had NO idea what we were doing and our initial burst of excited plans hatched over a nice glass of red and a plate full of food sourced from the supermarket 3 houses down from us slowly fizzled and dried up as we were faced with a property covered in 20 years of neglect. Every weed species known to man was present on Highfield gardens. We locked ourselves away and with the metaphorical equivalent of putting our fingers in our ears and closing our eyes to the amount of work required to effect the change that we initially desired we headed back to Polytechnic and added a Diploma in Horticulture and a Diploma in Landscape Design to our satchel. We decided earlier in the picture to change “Highfield Gardens” to “Serendipity Farm”. As 2 penniless student hippies who wanted to effect positive change and work with our property we had no affinity with anything as stiff and foreboding and the sheer serendipity of falling in love with this dry rocky incline slipping down into the river handed us the name on a plate.

Dealing with banana passionfruit 10 metres up into the Blackwood trees and a mass invasion of blackberries was the least of our worries. It soon became more than obvious that it is a lot easier to learn about horticulture than it is to put that education into practice. As novice gardeners who wanted to work sustainably with our property we needed somewhere to start. Aside from copious quantities of online research and through the intensive use of our invaluable local library we needed to be able to talk to people who have dealt with our local conditions. We had dealt with Tamar NRM when we attended a native seed saving workshop in Rowella where we met local property owners interested in collecting, saving and propagating native seed to revegetate their properties. We both enjoyed meeting like-minded people and put our name down on the Tamar NRM mailing list. I noticed a Sustainable Living workshop in one of the newsletters in 2011 and was surprised to discover that the event was free. Ever mindful of the value of free information sessions I headed off, notebook in hand and ready to find out everything that I could about living sustainably in our local area. The workshop was a real eye opener. I realised that there was a wealth of information and networking opportunities within Tamar NRM that I simply wasn't aware of, let alone taken advantage of. I did learn quite a bit from that initial Sustainable Living workshop and one of the most important things that I learned was that there are always sustainable answers to your problems you might just have to think laterally rather than traditionally.

Over the first year of living our new life our ethos changed considerably. The “vision” was once full of English cottage gardens spilling all over the place that steadily evolved into a complete 180 degree turnaround. From a desire for unsustainable lawns, northern climate perennials and annuals and water hungry species I have learned to love my agapanthus lined driveway and the steadfast natives that live on the property. We are about to apply to have the rear acre and a half of our property listed as a “Land for Wildlife” <http://www.dec.wa.gov.au/management-and-protection/conservation-on-other-lands/land-for-wildlife.html> area and the rest of the property as “Garden for Wildlife” <http://www.gardensforwildlife.dpipwe.tas.gov.au/gfw.nsf>.



Steve with our first home grown veggies



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changing ideas...continued
...by Fran Pimblett...

In August 2012 I attended several workshops hosted by Tamar NRM involving sustainable living, sustainable organic gardening with Steve Solomon and a soil workshop. These workshops delivered an incredible range of valuable information that encompassed meshing old school traditionalism with Eco forestry and natural garden and property management. The blend was eclectic and entirely regional and the more I learned about managing our property sustainably the more we were able to apply what I had learned to our situation.

When we started attempting to effect change on our property we had no idea where to start but after attending these workshops we were able to take stock of what we wanted to achieve and work through how to go about achieving our goals. One by one we are ticking off items from our list... weed management, integrated pest management, feeding ourselves from our property, revegetation, water management, soil improvement, minimising fire risk, providing habitat for wildlife, encouraging bees and butterflies into the garden and so much more. Tamar NRM has been the thread that allowed us to knit everything together and gave us the confidence to get going and the direction to head in. In learning how to integrate what I had learned from the workshops and from our prior horticultural studies we were able to look outside the box and see that property and natural resources management are all part of a wider environmental picture and that we all have a part to play in natural resources management and through educating the wider population the message is starting to filter down through the ranks. I, for one, will be attending as many workshops as I can whenever they are offered. I brought friends to the workshops who all took something back to their respective properties and are putting into practice what they learned. Once you start to effect change it is a bit like a snowball rolling downhill, and the end result tends to be bigger than you could ever imagine. As a result of the workshops I have been able to head off and research various natural management techniques that I had been unaware of prior to this point and they were a springboard for us to customise what I had learned into the direction that we want to take our property and our lives.

When we moved to Serendipity Farm I started a blog about what we were doing to achieve our desired results. I documented what we had learned and how we were implementing that knowledge. Please feel free to visit the blog at theroadtoserendipity.wordpress.com to read more about how we are putting the techniques and knowledge that we have been learning into practice. The most valuable piece of information that I have learned from attending the Tamar NRM workshops is the value of community and how we all have a part to play in environmental land management. No matter how big or how small your own piece of property is, there are natural solutions for your own particular land management problems. Tamar NRM gives you the chance to effect positive change on your property and in your lives...what's not to love? I am mindful of the adage "Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day, Teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime". Tamar NRM is all about teaching people to fish and I, for one, am incredibly grateful for their tireless efforts.



Friend or foe when it comes to new veggies!

...more snippets...

Professor Graeme Hugo, director of the Australian Population and Migration Research Centre at the University of Adelaide, says Australia's population growth will mostly be in the numbers of older people and the number of young people won't increase much – he also says that it is a myth that regional populations are declining and that immigrants won't settle outside cities - a third of Australians live outside capital cities and more immigrants are moving to the regions thanks to mining and other industries – while cities were magnets for young adults, once they hit their '30s, people were moving back to regional areas
EcoNews 101212

University of NSW researchers have found that the promotion of Viagra to middle-aged men in China in place of traditional Chinese impotence remedies, including tiger penis, could reduce the slaughter of the animals – 97% of the wild tiger population has disappeared from the world over the last century – only 3,200 remain
Choice 1112

Four entrepreneurial Nigerian teenage girls have invented an electricity generator powered by urine – urine is put into an electrolytic cell, which cracks the urea into nitrogen, water and hydrogen - the hydrogen goes into a water filter for purification, and then into a gas cylinder - the gas cylinder pushes hydrogen into a cylinder of liquid borax, which is used to remove the moisture from the hydrogen gas - this purified hydrogen gas is pushed into a generator - 1 litre of urine provides six hours of electricity - more than half of Nigeria's 162 million citizens have no access to electricity, and even those who do, can't guarantee having power every day
StartupSmart 221112

Coca Cola Amatil invested \$450 million in Australia to make its 600 ml PET bottles with 35% less plastic and a 27% less carbon footprint – this saves 1,700,000 kgs of PET per year - equivalent to the weight of more than 300 African elephants – the carbon foot print is reduced by about 12,000 tonnes per year – equivalent to planting 60,000 trees each year
BRW 261112

Consumers are buying less, but buying better, according to a new international survey among 6,224 respondents across 6 major international markets conducted in September and October 2012 - according to the survey, the majority of people want more sustainable products but won't compromise on cost and performance
Sustainability.com 271112

The Guardian also says that **PriceWaterhouseCoopers** warns that even if the present rate of global decarbonisation were to double, we would still be on course for 6 degrees Centigrade of warming by the end of the century - confining the rise to 2 degrees Centigrade requires a sixfold reduction in carbon intensity: far beyond the scope of current policies
Daily Soils Digest 101212

In Australia's capital cities cycling numbers are growing in the inner city, but falling on the outskirts – overall, cycling to work has increased marginally but remains low at around 1% of all journeys to work
The Conversation 121212

Companies whose directors include one or more women are 38% less likely to have to correct their financial-reporting figures than firms with all-male boards according to research out of the University of Wisconsin - gender diversity may make a board more open to viewpoints that oppose the CEO's view - it may also encourage a more deliberative and collaborative decision-making process
HBR 301112

Over the past 10 years, the base pay of corporate executives in Australia has doubled – but average weekly earnings of the population has only risen by half and shareholder returns only averaged 30%
SMH 011212

In an innovative approach, Danish Energy firm 'Vestforbrænding' and advertising agency 'Anew' created a free pizzeria whose output depended on the amount of energy being saved by local residents – the less energy they used, the more free pizzas were available - 'Vestforbrænding' customers were sent leaflets detailing 8 ways to cut their energy usage, as well as information about the upcoming pizzeria - the company then worked out how much had been saved and cooked the relevant number of pizzas at its opening night - more pizzas could be cooked depending on the number of 'Likes' the firm's Facebook page received, as well as the number of hits on its energy saving tips webpage
Springwise 051212

Jayne's Wild Garden...

Calytrix

This is a plant that may not be familiar to you. It would be a stunning addition to any garden, native or exotic. One is native to Tasmania - *Calytrix tetragona*. This is a small shrub, growing only 30 to 100cm high. It has narrow, small leaves and a spectacular dense head of starry white or pale pink flowers near the tips of the branches. It flowers from late winter to early summer.

Calytrix prefer a well-drained soil with very little fertiliser. They also like a position in full sun and should be given a light trim after flowering. This will keep the bushes small and compact. The easiest way to propagate this plant is by tip cuttings.

There are around 75 species of this shrub found in Australia, mainly in the southern parts of Western Australia, although there are others found through most of Australia.

The flowers are all very similar, with star shaped five petalled flowers. The colours can vary from pink and white through to red and purple, even yellow.



Calytrix tetragona

Calytrix alpestris



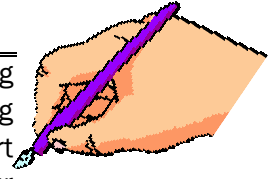
Calytrix alpestris is another species that would grow quite well in Tasmania. It is a native of heathland in Western Victoria and neighbouring areas of South Australia.

Jayne Shapter
West Tamar Landcare Group

Photos by M. Fagg from website:
<http://www.anbg.gov.au/photo/apii/genus/Calytrix>
(anbg = Australian National Botanic Gardens)

TAMAR NRM newsletters can be found on our website www.tamarnrm.com.au

Would you like to contribute an article to our newsletters – we are always interested in receiving news of completed projects funded by Tamar NRM and how they are progressing and being maintained by the landholder or community group. If you have always wanted to write a short story, then grab pen and paper (or as we all now use a computer) and start writing about your project. Please email any article (preferably with an after photo but if you have a before photo of the site, this would be fabulous) to amanda.bruce@launceston.tas.gov.au. It would be great to see how a project started and how it has developed over time.



Next 'Naturally Yours' edition due: May 2013

Stop Press....we need your help....

Tamar NRM would like to get your thoughts on a few things so we have devised a very short 'Communications Feedback Survey'. We ask you to fill it out and return to us by the end of January 2013. The survey is located on our website (www.tamarnrm.com.au) under 'Friends & Organisations' or if prefer ask for an email version from the office.

It will take approximately ten minutes to complete and will give us an insight into what we can accomplish for the community.

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