



Naturally Yours

The official newsletter of Tamar NRM - Autumn 2018

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City of
LAUNCESTON



World Wetlands Day



Tamar Island Wetlands Centre and Parks & Wildlife again hosted this iconic annual event on 2nd February 2018. Bringing the importance of wetlands to the attention of the public, via stalls and tours, World Wetland Day has regularly attracted around 500 visitors.

This year included the added attraction of having Costa Georgiadis (Gardening Australia), boosting the day's experience for the hundreds who attended. West Tamar Council also deserves credit for helping make Costa's visit a reality.

Tamar NRM supported the day with interactive waterwatch and frog making tables, where the kids could be inspired to think about the critters that inhabit wetland habitats.

Wetland Centre volunteers are to be congratulated for a well organised event that included taking people on guided walks, a BBQ on Tamar Island, QVMAG displays with Simon Fearn, skulls and scats display, enviro-friendly art and craft workshops, Tasmanian Aboriginal art workshop, saltmarsh displays by NRM North, birdwatching, and a stall by Tamar NRM's newest working group, Plastic Free Launceston.



Cover Photo - Native Mountain Pepperberries (*Tasmannia lanceolata*) the subject of the "Growing the Growers" forum in March.

Coordinator's Corner

Biosecurity remains the key in preserving our native flora and fauna. Tamar NRM acknowledges the efforts and dedication of Biosecurity Tasmania (BT) and community volunteers to take the fight up to would be invaders.

Recently Tamar NRM has worked with BT to assess the presence and extent of a serrated tussock weed infestation and instigate control measures near Mount Direction. Knocking down an emergent weed threat before it establishes just makes good sense.

With people and food supplies ever mobile around the world and Tasmania a popular holiday destination, more invaders in the form of weeds, insects and diseases will inevitably get through and impact on the environmental, social and economic aspects of our way of life. No one will be immune.

The threat to fruit growers from the recent Queensland fruit fly outbreak in the north will cost millions to rectify, and BT has had to mobilise all of its resources in response. Time will tell if we have acted quickly enough and dedicated sufficient resources to deal with the outbreak.

It's going to take a team effort to deal with biosecurity into the future and no one agency has the capacity. Public education and enforcement, while essential, can only go so far.

It may well be time to see how community volunteers, reimbursed for their costs, and shorter term paid causals can be better utilised, upskilled and mobilised at short notice, to conduct surveys and work side by side with agency staff to help manage emerging threats such as the fruit fly outbreak.

Greg & Gill

Walk and Talk with Costa

Community Landcare and Friends

"If you control the catchment at the top, then you don't have all the problems down in the wetlands having to deal with all the sediment load that gets washed off the slope. It's a wonderful way to explain to all generations in the community." Costa Goriadis.

Seizing the opportunity presented by Costa Georgiadis being in town for World Wetlands Day, Tamar NRM and Landcare Tasmania organised a "Walk and Talk with Costa" day on Thursday 1st February to share his passion and enthusiasm for community action and Landcare and with local Landcare and Friends groups involved in managing and improving parks and reserves.

The visit showcased community tree plantings and gardens at Youngtown and Punchbowl Reserves.

We took Costa along to Youngtown Regional Park to view the Tamar NRM / Youngtown Primary / City of Launceston plantings that span over 7 years. He was impressed that a ridge top piece of land had been turned into an ecosystem services area with trees and shrubs holding the ground steady with grasslands allowing the native grasses to grow and recolonise.

Costa said *"I saw a project where it is beautifully articulated that, this is what we did in 2010, this is what we planted in 2012, 2014, 2017 and now we are going to do some planting this year."* *"And when you can take other people from your school or Landcare group along, and they can see what's been going on, and you see the growth and you see the impact that a little bit of time has, that then gives you the chance to tell the story of the importance of the work".*

Youngtown Primary School, were the winning school in the 2017 Tasmania Landcare Awards and now finalist in the 2018 National Landcare Awards.

A visit to Punchbowl Reserve allowed the group to inspect the community gardens and a community BBQ provided an opportunity for local Landcare and Friends groups to talk about their projects with Costa.



The interview Costa did at Punchbowl Community Garden with Fred Hooper from ABC Radio on Thursday 1st February can be heard on the following link (Courtesy of the ABC).

www.tamarnrm.com.au/category/notice-board/

The event was jointly organised by Tamar NRM and Landcare Tasmania. Thanks to Rod Knight and Peter Stronach of Landcare Tasmania, Youngtown students Caidyn, Riley and teacher Tim VanWinden, City of Launceston Council Parks staff and the Friends of Punchbowl Reserve volunteers Brock Kerslake and Lyn Mockeridge.



2018 Sustainable Living EXPO Sat. 6th October

In 2017, Tamar NRM ran the inaugural Sustainability Energy Expo at the Albert Hall, Launceston, attracting over 1,100 people. In 2018, it is our intention to expand the event to a broader sustainable living theme. This will provide an opportunity for businesses, companies and organisations with products and services related to sustainable living, renewable energy, energy reduction and sustainable design to be showcased to the general public. Various presentation venues and over 50 booths will be available for sponsors, exhibitors and expert speakers to provide a one-stop-shop for attendees wanting to learn more about how they can reduce their footprint, save money and improve their health and that of the environment that supports us all.

Tamar NRM will engage an events coordinator to develop, sell and organise the 2018 Sustainable Living Expo centred around the Albert Hall which has been booked for Saturday 6th October. Activities are likely not to be restricted to a single day or a single venue, and we are exploring the possibility of regional events in the lead up to the Expo at Albert Hall.

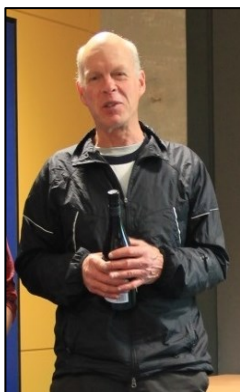


"Our aim is to create an event that fosters direct interaction between exhibitors and participants, where companies and organisations can showcase the products and services that are leading the way in sustainability. Through the experience, consumers will be better placed to make cost effective, smart, sustainable living choices."



The Sustainable Living Expo will:

- Present the benefits of sustainable building design and sustainable living.
- Showcase sustainable living options to reduce costs and benefit the environment.
- Demonstrate energy saving technologies and options for homes, farms and business.
- Show the pathways to converting to sustainable energy sources.
- Promote local business and local knowledge.



Bruce Jackson, pictured left being thanked for his contribution as chair of the Sustainable Living Working Group, has relocated to Hobart and therefore resigned from the group.

The working group is looking for a new chairperson. If you or someone you know is interested please contact Gill at Tamar NRM on 6323 3310.

2018 Sustainable Living EXPO

Sponsors & Stall Holders Registration of Interest

Tamar NRM are keen to hear from business community groups and individuals who want to be part of the October 6th Event.

A range of sponsorship option to promote your business or enterprise!!

Ask for the early bird Prospectus Specials.

Ragwort Raid 2018

January 2018 saw the 19th Tamar Region Ragwort Raid kick into action with community groups, Landcare groups, volunteer fire brigades, landholders and the general public joining together to keep Ragwort at bay.

Volunteers travel 819 kms of roads in their own vehicles at their own expense. Tamar NRM ran 4 Raids but volunteers were still pulling Ragwort in February near Ben Lomond and at Brady's lookout, travelling considerable distances to deal with infestations. Greater understanding of the potential for Ragwort to become a serious issue for the region motivates Landcare groups, Friends groups and landholders to target the weed when they see it.

Jill Jones, Environment Extension Officer, State Roads, sent a letter of thanks. In the letter Jill said:

"The longevity of the "Raid" really is a great example of community commitment and direct action which benefits the wider community."

It was pleasing to see West Tamar Councillors Richard Ireland and Peter Kearney attending the West Tamar "Raid". Our Weeds Working Group chairman John Thorp attended most raids as a volunteer and contributed a great deal of local knowledge about Ragwort biology and past infestation locations.

There are a surprisingly large number of residents from our municipalities who target Ragwort. These people often start as Ragwort Raid participants or are inspired through our public weeds education program. We acknowledge and thank the contribution of community groups and landholders who control Ragwort on an ongoing basis.

The event is underwritten by City of Launceston, West Tamar and George Town Councils, with specific funds provided again this year by the Royal Automobile Club of Tasmania (RACT).

Groups involved in the Raid:

- West Tamar Landcare
- Friends of Punchbowl
- East Tamar Landcare
- Lilydale Landcare
- Piper's Brook Fire Brigade
- Piper's River Fire Brigade
- Hillwood Fire Brigade
- TNRM Green Army Team



The 2018 Ragwort Raid Final Report is on our website under the "Reports" tab.

Ragwort Raid – report from a newbie

On January 21st I duly turned up at Winkleigh Hall for my Ragwort Raid duty, suitably clothed and protected. I had no idea it would be so competitive – the 2018 Ragwort Olympics.

I jumped into a car with total strangers who quickly became my team mates in the search for the dreaded Ragwort – but there was even tension in our car – who would be the first to spot the elusive Ragwort?

Being new, I was at a disadvantage – my team members knew where to look, they had their own special spots but after a while I was tuned in and was able to score a few firsts. The aim was to bring home a bigger bag than the other teams although we knew little about the opposition. They went into huddles and then disappeared in various directions – heading off to what they thought were more lucrative spots. Were they right? – we'd only find out when we returned to base.

The rules were tough – we were not allowed to enter private properties, even though there were large stands of juicy Ragwort. The property owners will be contacted later to suggest they remove it and Tamar NRM will assist if needed. Some plants were just inside the fence – we didn't actually set foot in the property, just hung over the fence with other team members holding onto our ankles. Might need to refer that to the 3rd umpire, but it was all in a good cause.

Back at the depot we enviously compared other, fuller bags – I guess my team had me as a liability! Compensation for not winning was a BBQ and an opportunity to compare stories with the other teams – who had obviously cheated – or maybe, just maybe, they were better at it.

West Tamar Councillor, Richard Ireland

We would like to thank RACT for again supporting this event.

"The RACT is delighted to support Tamar NRM and again be part of this unique annual event. It's terrific that the raids not only eradicate a weed but also involve so many members of the community," Will Oakley, RACT's Community Manager

Queensland Fruit Fly



The following information has adapted from DPIPWE Website.

What is the Issue with Queensland Fruit Fly?

Queensland Fruit Fly has recently been detected in Tasmania. Queensland Fruit Fly can physically damage fruit and some vegetables. It also has the potential to significantly restrict trade of fresh Tasmanian fruit into valuable markets in Australia and overseas. If left unchecked, the presence of fruit fly in Tasmania will have negative effects for many growers and the whole state economy.

Updated information from DPIPWE

The Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment (DPIPWE) has formally declared Control Areas to restrict movement, transport and supply of fruit and vegetables that host fruit fly to reduce the risk of transporting fruit fly to different areas.

Eradication, surveillance and management of waste and risk produce activities remain ongoing within the areas where fruit fly has previously been detected in the State. There has been no change to the current Control Areas in northern Tasmania (see map) or the Furneaux Group Islands. No detections of fruit fly or larvae have been made outside the current Control Areas.

Ongoing surveillance by DPIPWE staff and vigilance by local community around current infected sites has made larvae detections near the George Town and Spreyton detection sites (March 16). A larvae detection was made near the Flinders Island Lady Barron site on March 21. At the other detection site within the Northern Tasmania Control Area, there have been no further detections for 28 days.



Help protect Tasmania from Fruit Fly

If you are in the Control Zone:

- **Do not remove fruit fly host produce out of the Control Area.**
- **Please do not move home grown fruit from your property.** If you grow fruit and vegetables in your backyard, do not sell or give it to people while restrictions are in place. This will reduce risk of it being transported outside, or to areas uninfected within, the control area.
- Inside the Control Area ensure all rotten, fallen or remains of host produce are double bagged and then placed in general waste.
- Host produce grown inside Control Areas cannot be sold at roadside stalls or markets either within or outside the Control Areas.
- Be aware that by picking blackberries, wild apples or other fruit along roadsides or other public land in a Control Area, you could be spreading fruit fly. Host produce foraged by people within the control areas must be consumed or processed within the Control Area.
- If you live within a Control Area, host produce purchased from major supermarkets can be taken to your home for consumption. However it should not be moved from your home to outside of the control area.
- Work and School lunches: Fruit cut up into fruit salad and sliced home grown tomato in your sandwich is fine. You should not transport whole home grown host fruit from your property
- Obey airport and roadside signs and use fruit disposal bins provided when leaving the Control Area.
- Report all suspect produce to **Biosecurity Tasmanian** on 03 6165 3774.

Queensland Fruit Fly Continued

Fruit Fly host produce includes:

apples, apricots, bananas, blackberries, capsicum, cherries, figs, grapefruit, mangoes, mulberries, nashis, nectarines, oranges, peaches, pears, plums, raspberries, strawberries and tomatoes.

Minor host produce includes lemons, limes, quinces, pumpkins and walnuts.

Excess Host Produce:

- You can process your excess host produce by bottling, freezing, fermenting or stewing.
- Large quantities of excess fruit and vegetables can be buried or double-bagged.
- Excess produce should not be composted as fruit fly larvae can survive this process.

For latest fruit fly information including a full list of host produce and maps of the Control Area visit www.dpipwe.tas.gov.au/fruitfly

Host Produce Disposal

All host produce is required to be double bagged. Place produce inside a plastic bag, seal that bag then place inside another bag and seal, this can then be disposed of in general waste bins.

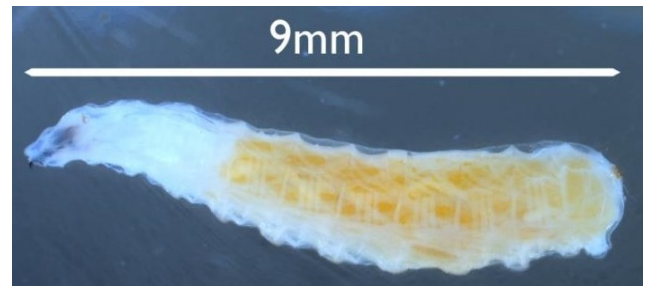
Host produce must not be composted or disposed of in greenwaste as fruit fly larvae can survive the composting process.

If disposed in large skip bins we ask that the lids be kept closed and it is arranged that they are emptied regularly.

What to look for?

Wherever you live you should always be vigilant for signs of fruit fly or their larvae.

A mature fruit fly is around 7mm long and is reddish brown with some yellow markings. Fruit fly larvae look like blowfly maggots. Mature larvae are 8-11 mm in length and approximately 1.5mm in width. They are usually easy to see in the flesh of the fruit. You are more likely to see fruit fly grubs or maggots than actual flies.



What to do if you find fruit fly on your property?

If you think you may have fruit or vegetables infested with fruit fly, please call Biosecurity Tasmania on **6165 3774**. Our officers will talk to you about what to do next. If possible, take a photo of the fruit showing the larvae or flies and secure the fruit in a resealable plastic bag or container so larvae or flies cannot escape.

Producers, Growers and Transporting

Restrictions apply for transport and disposal of host produce out of and through the control zone. Please contact Biosecurity Tasmania for detailed information on these restrictions.

Fruit Fly Assistance Package

An assistance package for businesses impacted by the detection of fruit fly in Tasmania in January 2018 has been announced. The package includes:

- Financial assistance for those in the Control Area suffering significant financial hardship resulting from implementation of fruit fly prevention measures.
- Assistance with the costs associated with meeting fruit fly treatment requirements.
- Industry assistance to help source new mainland markets for producers within the Control Area.
- Assistance to help with changes that may be required for packaging.
- Assistance with fruit clean up and disposal
- Reimbursing costs incurred by industry groups assisting with the response.

Tamar Region Councils



It was fantastic having Costa Georgiadis at the Windsor Community Precinct on February 1st as part of his visit for World Wetland Day. Sharing his wisdom with fellow garden lovers of all ages in the Community Garden, around the Australian Plant Society of Tasmania's propagating facilities and on a guided walk of our native plant trail.



He was very impressed with the set up and that there is access to community facilities, sporting grounds and a fantastic community garden all in one area.

Most of all he loved the Tasmanian native "botanical garden" that showcases a wide range of native Tasmanian plants, how they can be used in a garden setting and to protect the Tamar estuary and wetlands and the fantastic sculptures created out of recycled materials by Tony along the walk, including the bird hide.



Over the last six months staff from QVMAG, along with City of Launceston and Tamar NRM, have been undertaking biodiversity surveys in Havelock Street and Carr Villa reserves to better understand of what inhabits the council's Green Zones. This information will be fed into the National Values Atlas, which before the surveys had few records in these areas, to better inform planning and management decisions.

"In short, after just a few hours field work, we have increased our records from just a handful of species to over 200." David Maynard, Curator Natural Sciences, QVMAG.

Some interesting finds were: Eastern and Green Rosellas paired up in the same nesting hollow; comparatively rare flower wasps which pollinate specific orchids; a number of yet undescribed invertebrate species; endemic flightless stag beetles which won't last long in these small patches if logs of various ages aren't left for their habitat and Long-nosed Potoroos caught on motion camera, explaining what all the diggings were from.



The George Town Coastal Communities Management Group is the key driver and network for coastal communities of Bellbuoy Beach, Beechford, Low Head, Lulworth, Bellingham, Weymouth Tam O'Shanter and Hillwood.

George Town Coastal Communities Action Plan is the key reference for on-ground works implementation.

These Coastal Communities join with the George Town Council, Parks and Wildlife Service, Crown Land Services and Tamar NRM in making things happen.

The Action Plan is a non-statutory document that aims to preserve the natural values of the George Town coastal region by addressing management issues in a coordinated and systematic manner. The Plan, Action Plan update and Summary Document are all available off the Tamar NRM website under "Reports".

The GTCMG would appreciate hearing about any new works or initiatives for coastal protection and enhancement.

The Weymouth coastal community, concerned about erosion of the Pipers River near the public car park, have formed a task forces seeking funding and approvals as it has become an urgent issue impacting on the safety of residents and visitors to Weymouth. *(See article on page 17).*

Tamar Agriculture in Focus



Blessington Pastures Field day

Tasmania is ripe for significant increases in agricultural income and to maximise the net returns of farmers through better pastures and pasture utilisation. Tamar is delivering a project via demonstration and field days to exhibit how that can happen. The Tamar Valley represents approximately 10 per cent of the state's agricultural land.

Meat and Livestock Australia (MLA) has teamed up with Tamar NRM and farmers to fund a three-year project through its Producer Demonstration Site (PDS) initiative, aimed at increasing farm profitability of red meat by more than 10 per cent, through better pasture management and utilisation.

'Elverton' at Blessington is one of the Pasture Demonstration sites and location of a successful field day on March 20, with around 50 landholders attending. Experts were on hand to discuss practices for pasture and other improvements that will add to more efficient production.

The Chairman of a Tamar Valley ag-focused technical working group formed to drive the project, Piper's Brook farmer Mr Ian Sauer, said "producers witnessed first hand excellent examples of pasture management and the early results of the improved pasture paddocks showed over twice the productive output. The results speak for themselves. Sharing the successes and the challenges with a broader group of Tasmanian famers is what the project is about".

Tamar NRM's consultant to the project, Eric Hall, TP Jones agronomist, Iain Bruce, and property owner, Ian Dickenson, all presented their perspectives to the attendees.

The project will continue until June 2020 and a spring workshop is in the planning at a second PDS at Beaconsfield.

Results and analysis of PDS paddocks is posted on the Tamar NRM website under the "Reports" tab.



Backyards to Broadacres

Backyards to Broadacres Workshop/Field Day Series 2017-18

We have just completed the last workshop under the current funding stream, but intend keeping ag-focus workshops running under the Backyards to Broadacres banner. The field day/workshops series presented innovative and forward-looking solutions to the issues affecting agriculture in the Tamar Valley and was well supported with 234 people attending field days and forums on the 10 themes below:

- Theme 1: Soil Biology and Health
- Theme 2: Pasture Management
- Theme 3: Animal Health / Livestock Production
- Theme 4: The Blank Slate - Developing a Property with Sustainable principles in Mind
- Theme 5: Data to Decisions
- Theme 6: Benefits of Biochar, Beetles and worms in Sustainable Farming Systems and Gardens
- Theme 7: Pasture Trials & Management
- Theme 8: Trees on Farms
- Theme 9: 30 years a Tree Grower - Rowan Reid
- Theme 10: Growing the Growers Finding your Niche, New Opportunities for Native Produce

The technical working group advised on workshop design and field sites to improve management practices and increase production of locally produced food, fibre and forestry products.

The themes were chosen after consultation with stakeholders and our technical reference group.

Partners included RM Consulting Group (contracted to deliver four workshops), Australian Native Foods and Botanicals, Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture, Australian Agroforestry Network, Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers (Tamar Valley Branch), three Tamar Councils and a number of Landcare groups.



This project is supported by funding from the Australian Government



Tassie Pepper features strongly at "Growing the Growers" Field Day

On the 8th March, Australian Native Foods & Botanicals (ANFAB) and Tamar NRM partnered to bring together growers, aspiring growers, chefs, wholesalers, retailers and boutique producers to showcase exciting developments and possibilities of the burgeoning native food and botanicals' sector as well as exploring niche markets. The day included a farm visit to Bronzewing Farm (Native Mountain Pepper producer) in the morning then speakers at Tailrace Centre in the afternoon.

The event focussed on growing and marketing of Australian native edibles and medicinals, research, cultivation, product to plate and export as well as cultural issues with an indigenous perspective presented by Kris Schaffer. The event was part of a national roadshow supported by the Australian Government-based Farming Together program and Tamar NRM's federally funded Backyards to Broadacres Program (NLP Sustainable Farming Small Grants).

Native Mountain Pepper (*Tasmannia lanceolata*) grows from sea level to mountain tops in Tasmania and presents a new cropping option for those wanting to get into native foods and botanicals production. While south eastern Australia has the plant occurring naturally as well, Tasmania is "pepper-central" and demand is outstripping supply.

Speakers included Dr Chris Read of Diemen Pepper, who has worked for many years in the areas of essential oils and floriculture, as researcher, technical adviser and practitioner. He currently operates a mixed horticultural enterprise on his coastal property near Hobart.



Above: Andrew Rath explains his propagation techniques at Bronzewing Native Mountain Pepper Farm

Tasmanian bushfoods expert and horticulturalist Kris Shaffer of Five Kungkas talked about cultural significance and respectful harvesting while Dr Finbarr Hogan (UTS terrestrial ecologist) spoke about sustainable farming. ANFAB director, Marianne Stewart, covered off on the domestic and export market opportunities and the role of ANFAB as the peak national industry body representing the interests of people and businesses involved in the native food and botanicals industry – traditional and new indigenous plant products.

York Town based distiller, Philip Ridyard, from Strait Brands is also championing indigenous Tassie ingredients, including sloe berries and hazelnuts in their vodkas and gins. The company produces Native Mountain Peppery Vodka and an award-winning "Straits Brand" Dry Gin made from an organic lemon infusion, as well as the world's only hazelnut gin.

The visit to Andrew Rath's Bronzewing Farm at Underwood, was a clear highlight. This farm has produced Native Mountain Pepper since February 2011 and aims for an expected yield of dried Tasmanian DEVIL Mountain Peppercorns® of 2000 kg/year. They plan to have 5,000 native pepper trees in production producing 10 tons of raw berry product by 2021.

The 35 attendees all had an interest in native food production. Some had already commenced businesses in Tasmania and needed to know more about commercial production or sensitive wild harvest of produce. Yolla farmer and fledgling pepper producer Prue Reddish said "I really need to get that industry input on how to pick quickly and how to make sure I get the best quality product. So that's why I'm here today, to see how they do it".

You can hear the ABC Radio coverage featuring speakers Dr. Andrew Rath, Dr. Chris Read, Kris Schaffer, Marianne Stewart, Greg Lundstrom and a number of attendees at:

<http://www.abc.net.au/radio/programs/tas-country-hour/mountain-pepper/9543356>

Greens Beach Fire

Tamar NRM has partnered with TFS Bushfire Ready Neighbourhoods, with help from Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife and Fuel Reduction Unit, to complete a bushfire survival and planning workshop series at Greens Beach. Over 50 residents of Greens Beach and Kelso were involved in learning about fire and biodiversity, fire behaviour, landscape scale management, bushfire property preparedness, ember attack, bushfire ratings and developing a survival plan. Feedback from participants was overwhelmingly positive with many feeling much more comfortable with preparing their property to reduce fire risk and what they will do should a fire threaten their homes.



Useful Bushfire Preparedness and Planning Information

With Bushfire season drawing to a close, many of us have escaped the effects from out of control fires. However, autumn and winter are not the time to be complacent about your Bushfire safety.

Bushfire Ready Neighbourhoods and Tamar NRM have been delivering bushfire preparedness forums and workshops within the Tamar to at risk communities and encourage everyone who lives in or near the bush to consider your Bushfire planning.

"Know your risk, make a plan" is what we want you to think about.

Bushfire Ready Neighbourhoods has an extensive website, filled with a wide range of planning and preparedness documents to assist you. We recommend you visit the website and learn about creating defendable spaces, Nearby Safer Places and property preparations.

www.fire.tas.gov.au/brn

Burning to Plan Workshop July 20-21 Registrations open



Wanting to use fire as a tool to manage ecological health or protect built, environmental and/or agricultural assets from fire?

After the success of our Burning to Plan workshop last year Tamar NRM and TFS Bushfire Ready Neighbourhoods are holding another 1.5 day Burning to Plan workshop.

The workshop is open to landholders state wide, and will be held at the Tasmanian Fire Service Northern Region HQ Launceston.

Participants will develop a fire plan for their own property using photos, maps, fire history, vegetation, fuel loads, topography, etc. Experts will be on hand to assist with concepts and questions.

Topics include:

- Some key ecological principles
- Legal requirements (focusing on covenants)
- Fire behaviour and Risk mitigation

Participants of the Burning to Plan workshops will be given priority at a "Planning to Burn" workshop in spring, providing on ground practical advice on how to light and extinguish a planned burn safely.

RSVP essential to organise property maps by 18th June. Contact Gill Basnett 0438 265 792 or gill.basnett@launceston.tas.gov.au.



Focus on Weeds - Gorse

Tamar NRM receives regular enquiries about Gorse (*Ulex europaeus*) and its control, as there are widespread infestations in all three Tamar Valley Councils.

Gorse is a major agricultural weed, and serious infestations of pasture can dramatically reduce stocking rates. Gorse is also a threat to many natural environments such as forests, woodlands, riparian (stream-side) vegetation, wetlands and native grasslands. Other impacts of Gorse include providing shelter for pest animals, and an increased risk of bushfires.

So what is it that makes Gorse so successful? Like many invasive plants and animals they have a wide tolerance range and are adaptable, occurring in fertile soils, light sands, heavy clays and disturbed soil plus a range of rainfall patterns. The plants produce prodigious amounts of seed (a mature infestation can produce up to 6 million seeds annually). The seeds can be shot up to 5 metres when seed pods split and they are also distributed by birds and insects.

As with a number of other highly invasive plants, Gorse seeds have incredible permanency in the soil due to a waterproof waxy coating and can remain active for 30 years. Add to this that a single plant can live for up to 30 years and we have a long term problem that is in need of strategic, concentrated effort in a coordinated partnership approach.

There are two main periods of flowering in Tasmania where the plants are a riot of the bright yellow, late winter to spring and autumn. However, if conditions are right, flowers can be found all year round.

Biological controls

Best used in conjunction with other control methods.

Four biological control agents that have been released in Tasmania are the gorse seed weevil, gorse spider mite, gorse thrips and gorse soft shoot moth,

Further reading on the soft shoot moth

http://www.utas.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0011/373574/Gorse-gorse-soft-shoot-moth.PDF

Central to its management is cooperation amongst landholders, both your immediate neighbours and other land managers nearby. Effective control of the plant and preventing spreading to neighbouring properties requires control within 10 metres of property boundaries, waterways and a number of other measures such as hygiene of farm equipment.

Other considerations include investigating if your Gorse is proving habitat for native species such as small birds, bandicoots and wombats and plan for its removal and replacement with native species in a sensitive manner.

The DPIPW Statutory Management Plan for Gorse seeks containment (Zone B classification) in the council areas of Launceston, George Town and West Tamar.

You can read about the integrated approach you will need to employ to manage gorse at:

<http://dpiuwe.tas.gov.au/invasive-species/weeds/weeds-index/declared-weeds-index/gorse/gorse-control-guide>

http://dpiuwe.tas.gov.au/Documents/Gorse_WMP_2011.pdf

Free advice is available from Regional Weed Management Officers, your local council or Tamar NRM.



Tamar NRM's Works Teams



Tamar NRM's Green Army Team holding up the Landcare Award won by Di from Westbury Landcare in recognition of the work done at Westbury Common.

Our Tamar Meander Valley Green Army Team 2 started in December 2018 and have been working hard in the Tamar and Meander Valleys for the last 3 months.

So far they have worked with Landcare groups, Local Councils, Parks and Wildlife and private landholders to remove Gorse, Blackberry, Willows, Sea Spurge, Spanish Heath, Sycamore, Dock, Spindle, Foxglove, Ragwort, Boneseed, Cotoneaster and any other weed they come across.

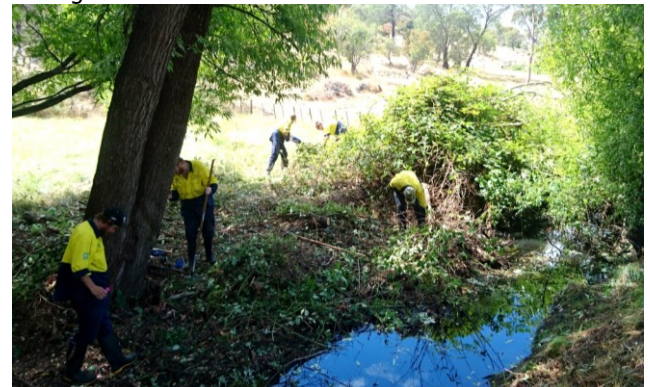
Along with weeding they have undertaken track maintenance at Holwell Gorge, Notley Fern Gorge, Greens Beach, Lulworth, Mt Barrow, Liffey, Kate Reed, Trevallyn Reserve and Lilydale Falls. And, for something a bit different, we have thrown in some fencing and painting. Coming up is planting, lots and lots of planting.



Before:



During:



After:



The Team clearing a stretch of Newnham creek, in Ravenswood, of willows, blackberry and other weeds as well as rubbish. This patch will now be maintained by Ravenswood Men's Shed.

School Tree Planting Opportunities



This year's planting for our 20 Million Trees project will begin in May, due to the need to have all the trees in the ground by mid-June. Again we are opening up the opportunity for school and community involvement in planting seedlings in their local reserves.

As all the plants we have ordered have already been allocated to a planting site, we unfortunately do not have spare plants available for schools.



Council reserves where habitat plantings are being undertaken in May/June 2018 that are suitable for schools groups to be involved are:

- Youngtown Regional Park
- Waverley Lake
- West Tamar - South of Tailrace
- Cornwall Crescent, Newnham
- Exeter
- Kings Meadows Rivulet, Punchbowl.



Schools that have been involved so far are: Youngtown Primary, Waverley Primary, Punchbowl Primary, Exeter Primary, West Tamar Primary, South George Town Primary, Port Dalrymple, Tamar Valley Steiner, Trevallyn Primary, Exeter High, Scotch Oakburn College and Newstead College



"This project is supported by funding from the Australian Government."

Coastal Communities Update

At the 17th April meeting of the George Town Coastal Communities Management Group representatives will hear an update on a community driven initiative which is a classic example of people power looking after their own patch.

Daryl Bailey will be presenting on the Pipers River Erosion Project. Grassroots projects have a much better chance of success because they galvanising community support and meet local expectations (see article below).

Facilitated by Tamar NRM, the coastal management group is the key network and driver for the coastal communities of Hillwood through to Bellingham, with the George Town Coastal Action Plan implementation schedule the key reference for on-ground works.

It's pleasing that rejuvenation of group numbers is occurring; of note are Low Head and Beechford showing renewed interest and community energy.

The management group would appreciate hearing about any new works or initiatives you have in mind.



Pipers River Erosion site at Weymouth

PIPERS RIVER EROSION PROJECT

From Daryl Bailey, Chairman Pipers River Erosion Taskforce

A taskforce was set up in 2017 to source funding to specifically deal with the urgent problem of river erosion impacting the river beach which is frequently used by residents and visitors to Weymouth's beautiful beach environment. This is the foreshore area at the eastern end of the public car park. The issue is not a recent one. It has been a concern to Weymouth residents for the past 15 years, with the need for urgent action exacerbated by major flooding and king tides in 2016. Discussion of the issue has been well documented in Weymouth Progress Association minutes and features in the Weymouth section 6.8 of the *George Town Coastal Community Management Plan* (Stabilisation of the mouth of the Pipers River) that

Parks and Wildlife are signatories to. There have been injuries to people accessing the beach and this risk is now increased to those stepping down onto the beach, particularly parents with children and aged and less able visitors. Continual erosion of remnant vegetation and encroachment into the public car park is also an issue.

Sarah Courtney MP visited the site to gain an insight into our proposal to Minister for Primary Industries and Water, Jeremy Rockliff. Letters of support have been received from the Mayor of George Town Council, Councillor Heather Barwick and Tamar NRM. We await the necessary permission from Crown Lands and the Parks and Wildlife Service. In the meantime we have called for quotes to the site using a soft engineering approach, i.e. large sandbags. Engineering plans were drawn up by TOPO Environmental Engineers Qld.

Tamar NRM has provided in-principle support to the Pipers River Erosion Remediation Project aimed at preventing further destruction to the river bank, to the remnant vegetation and to the public car park. We support community efforts to care for their local environment.

Biodiversity Page

The Tassie Platypus (*Ornithorhynchus anatinus*)

by Greg Lundstrom

Visitors to Tasmania may experience their first sighting of a Platypus in the wild. I first experienced this myself on my second trip to Tasmania in the mid 1990s. There is something special about seeing native animals going about their daily routine and something satisfying in knowing that the numbers of such an evolutionary iconic species are still high enough in abundance to enable these experiences, even if it is only a fleeting view of a few seconds.

An egg-laying mammal with a duck's bill – now that's special!

The Platypus is doing OK in Tassie. It has not had its numbers decimated like the devil and wombat and continues to have what experts describe as a common and widespread distribution where access to freshwater habitats, good riparian vegetation and stable earth banks exist. And they can tolerate some level of degraded habitat and occupy farm dams.

Threats to Platypuses:

- Dogs and Cats
- Illegal fishing activities
- Vehicles
- Pesticides in waterways
- Habitat loss
- Litter (especially plastics)
- Mucormycosis disease

Fishing and Netting

In inland waters fishing and netting causes Platypus losses and a major culprit is the "opera house" fold out net in which our air breathing mammal gets ensnared and drowns. Any net with an opening greater than 65mm is a death trap for Platypuses. Recently the outdoor store BCF has withdrawn them from sale, and taken them out of their online catalogue. It is hoped that all fishing supply stores follow their lead.

The state agency DPIPWE has lots of information on its website (including enclosed net restrictions and common Platypus misconceptions). The Platypus is a protected species and illegal netting and trapping is prohibited.



(Photo courtesy of Vivienne Briggs, Friends of Fernglade)

Mucormycosis Disease

The fungus *Mucor amphibiorum* causes skin lesions or ulcers leading to secondary infections and in some cases death. It's only been found in Tasmanian Platypuses and so far not on the mainland. In north central Tasmania, including part of the Tamar Valley, the fungus is at its most prevalent, making the area especially important for community observation and reporting and habitat protection.

You can by reporting any observations of diseased platypuses. If you see diseased or dead platypuses with open sores, lesions or wounds on any part of the body, contact Wildlife Management Branch of DPIPWE. They will need to know the condition of the animal and exactly where you saw it. Ideally they want GPS coordinates (and the datum you are using), or a map grid reference (and the map sheet you are using). Photos are also very useful. If you manage to take a photograph, please include this in your email.

Wildlife Management Branch

Phone: 03 6165 4305

Email: wildlife.reception@dpiuwe.tas.gov.au

You can read more about this amazing mammal on the Parks and Wildlife Service Website:

<http://www.parks.tas.gov.au/?base=4789>

Biodiversity Page

Long - nosed Potoroo (*Potorous tridactylus*)

by Gill Basnett

During recent biodiversity surveys at Carr Villa Flora Reserve with QVMAG and City of Launceston, we noticed diggings, a lot of diggings. They didn't look like echidna or bandicoot and there was a distinct lack of rabbit droppings to have been made by them. So who was the culprit? I set up our three new motion cameras to find out, and this is what we found, Long-nosed Potoroos.



Long-nosed Potoroos are widespread in Tasmania, but their range has significantly reduced on the mainland due to the added pressure of foxes. They are found in a wide range of habitats but need a dense understorey for protection during the day, where they sleep in a nest of leaves, and eucalypts because the fungi they rely on is associated with eucalypts.



They are very partial to underground fungi (thus the digging) but will also eat seeds, roots, bulbs and insects. Although common in suitable habitat, potoroos can be negatively impacted by the clearing of bush. Early regrowth is less suitable for their needs, maybe due to lack of shelter and food. Loss, changes and fragmentation of habitat and introduced predators could have significant impacts on potoroos populations in Tasmania like they have had on the mainland.

Unfortunately for the potoroos, and other native inhabitants of Carr Villa, we also caught this on camera! Cats, along with dogs (not allowed in the reserve, but often seen being walked off-lead through the park), regularly prey on potoroos. You can help protect the native wildlife in our urban reserves by keeping your cat contained and dog out of no-dog areas.



Ecosystem Engineers

(Adapted from Trish Fleming article in "Losing Australia's diggers is hurting our ecosystems" in *The Conversation*.)

Potoroos, along with other species such as bettongs, bandicoots, echidnas and even wombats disturb the soil through nosing about, scratching, digging and bulldozing the ground when foraging for food or digging nests and burrows. This activity can improve the soil health by mixing in organic matter and nutrients or trapping organic matter and seeds in the depressions. They can break up hard soils making it easier for seedlings to grow and water to penetrate. For example echidna foraging pits have twice the water infiltration of undisturbed soils.

Digging mammals spread important mycorrhizal fungi across the landscape. These fungi help plants to increase their absorption of nutrients and deal with our nutrient-poor Australian soils.

Many of these important symbiotic fungi produce fruiting bodies below ground, and probably rely on digging and mycophagous (fungus eating) animals to distribute their spores across the landscape. It is likely that the loss of these animals may therefore also indirectly lead to loss of some of these critical fungi.

Digging mammals can also reduce the amount of combustible plant material within a landscape, possibly altering fire regimes.

Coming Events Tamar NRM

For more information view our website: www.tamarnrm.com.au or www.facebook.com/TamarNRM15

Planning to Burn Workshop July 20th - 21st

**Tasmanian Fire Service Northern Region HQ
Launceston**

Participants will develop a fire plan for their own property using photos, maps, fire history, vegetation, fuel loads, topography, etc. Experts will be on hand to assist with concepts and questions.

Bookings Essential by 18th June: Gill Basnett
Phone: 6323 3310 or 0438 265 792 or
Email: gill.basnett@launceston.tas.gov.au

Plastic Free Launceston - One Less Plastic Bag and letter writing Workshop

**Sunday 15th April and 20th May 3pm
Launceston Grammar Junior School. 10
Lyttleton St East Launceston**

One Less Plastic Bag workshop is the 3rd Sunday of each month. You are warmly invited to come along and sew, cut, stencil or iron. If sewing is not your thing, help us write positive letters to businesses, government, community groups, school...inviting them to join us and get behind Plastic Free July 2018.

Support our Working Groups:

Weeds Working Group

Chair: John Thorp (0419 323 400)

Sustainable Living Working Group

Chair: Vacant (expressions of interested welcome)

George Town Coastal Management Group

Chair: Ian Sauer (0407 046 346)

Tamar NRM Contacts

postal: PO Box 396, Launceston TAS 7250

phone: Office 03 6323-3310

mobile: Gill 0438 265 792; Greg 0438 642 112

events co-ordinator: Roger 0448 666 500

email: tamarnrm@launceston.tas.gov.au

web: www.tamarnrm.com.au

facebook: www.facebook.com/tamarNRM15

Other Events

Australian Plants Society - Launceston Autumn Native Plants Sale

Max Fry Hall, Trevallyn

Saturday April 14th, 10-00 - 4.00

There will be expert help with selection and growing hints.

NRM North Giant Freshwater Lobster Information Day

3 May 2018 9:00 am - 1:00 pm

Learn about Giant Freshwater Lobster with expert Todd Walsh, its habitat and the opportunity to get involved in a volunteer survey effort. Places limited
RSVP: NRM North 6333 7777 Enquiries: Alison Hugo

Cat Tracker Australia

It's Not Too Late To Get Involved in the Cat Study

Cat owners in northern Tasmania still have time to get involved in the University of South Australia's new national Cat Tracker study, which went live in December.

If you live in Westbury, St Marys, Exeter or Launceston, they are particularly keen for you to participate.

Cat Tracker will follow the day-and night-time movements of up to 1400 cats nationally to deliver valuable information for cat owners to care and manage their pet cats.

For more information visit their website

<https://www.discoverycircle.org.au/projects/cat-tracker/>