



Tamar NRM

February 2014

'Naturally Yours'

Welcome to 2014 and our new President - Roger Tyshing (see page 2 for a profile and photograph).

What's on soon:

Trees for Shelter, Timber and Profit

Friday 28th February 2014

9.00am - 4.00pm

Frankford & Hillwood (Batman Bridge)

Topics include:

Selecting trees for both sites & markets – eucalypts, pines & cypress

Production, economic & environmental benefits of shelterbelts

Cost & returns from small scale tree growing

Managing trees for wood & other benefits

Integrating shelterbelts into farms

Harvesting trees

places are limited...RSVP is essential...contact 6323-3310 or email: amanda.bruce@launceston.tas.gov.au

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Craig Williams
Executive Officer

Mike Poole
NRM Facilitator - Tamar
(Monday & Tuesday)
Denis Giasli
(Wednesday, Thursday & Friday)

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International Women's Day Event

'Celebrating the Environment'

- Hands Together: Rural & Urban Women Supporting Each Other

Friday 7th March 2014

10.00am - 3.00pm

Windsor Community Centre, 1 Windsor Drive, Riverside

RSVP: 3rd March - 6323-3310

or email: 'ME' (amanda.bruce@launceston.tas.gov.au)



welcome

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Roger completed year 12 in 1978 in Melbourne. As soon as his last exam was over he headed to French Island where he had a multitude of short term jobs. He tried Uni in 1980 before realising he really never wanted to study again, which he more or less hasn't for any extended period of time. Mid 1980 he hit on the idea of starting up his own business mowing lawns and gardening. When someone asked if he did landscaping, he foolishly replied, looking the person directly in the eye, "Of course!" His thinking at the time was "What could possibly go wrong?" He proceeded to spend the next 18 months going slowly broke.

Fortunately, in 1982 he started working for a tree surgery company. This was his lucky break and 9 months into the job, started working with one of the best tree surgeons in the business. By 1984, he had left the company and started his own business and within 2 years was employing up to 5 people and taking on the big and dangerous trees around the Dandenong Ranges.

In 1986 he was electrocuted while pruning a tree under high voltage wires, causing him to rethink what he really wanted to do. Since he was 12, Roger had wanted to farm. Growing up in the middle of Melbourne he had no idea how he was going to do this. Luckily he'd made good money this time in his tree surgery business and in 1987, in partnership with his mother, bought a 240 hectare beef and sheep farm at Liena, Tasmania. Over the years the sheep were dropped, cattle numbers increased and enterprises such as seed potatoes and contract calf rearing were introduced. Roger and his mother sold the farm in 2000.

Roger and his young family moved to Launceston and he has worked in Agricultural extension, Agripolitics, in the community sector, and as a project officer for a range of projects. For the last 7 years, he has been working as an Education and Training Adviser to the Agriculture, Horticulture and Conservation and Land Management sectors, dispelling the urban myth that he can't stay in a job for more than 2 years.

Roger believes in making a positive difference wherever he can and brings to our Board, experience in governance, strategic planning, facilitation and training through his active involvement over the years, in numerous local organisations and committees, including being a current board member of TL3 (an organisation focussed on facilitating great outcomes for young people) and Migrant Resource Centre.

Roger says he looks forward to meeting the many people who have worked with and supported Tamar NRM over the coming months. He believes there are some great opportunities ahead for Tamar NRM and sees as its strengths its enviable grassroots community linkages, its proven ability to get work done on the ground, its culture of innovation, community consultation and delivering measurable value in the projects it undertakes.



New President...Roger Tyshing

practical biochar workshop

Biochar has been described as:

“the single most important initiative for humanity’s environmental future. It allows us to address food security, the fuel crisis, and the climate problem, all in an immensely practical manner” - Prof. Tim Flannery, Australian of the Year 2007.

The biochar conversation has been running in Australia, Tasmania and the Tamar Region for a number of years now. The result to date being a range of research projects around the country (of varying sizes and complexity) generally looking at how the application of biochar can improve growth and yield for a range of crops and agricultural produce. Although on the world stage we are well behind the eight ball with the research and application of this technology and new emerging technology.

The conversation was continued at a public information session on Friday 29th November 2013 and was followed with a more detailed workshop Saturday 30th November. The presenters at both events were Dr Paul Taylor (author of *The Biochar Revolution*, with Tasmania as his last stop after four months of workshops and presentations around the world) and local expert, Frank Strie (consultant with Terra Preta).

For those wondering what biochar actually is and how it is used in the agricultural industry I will attempt a very simplified breakdown but suggest conducting your own research or even better contacting the Tamar NRM office where we can direct you to the two workshop presenters and maybe organize a few more workshops in the near future.

Biochar is quite literally the charcoal remains from burning wood (or other plant products) then incorporated into the soil to raise the carbon content and to enhance the soil characteristics. However, the burning part of the process is conducted in a controlled environment (where heat and gases such as oxygen etc are regulated) that produces **char** that retains the structure of the material being burnt (instead of being turned to ash).

If you can remember back to school and looking at plants under the microscope you will recall the honeycomb structure that is present - it is this structure and the unbelievably huge surface area in the structure that makes biochar such a valuable resource for the agricultural industry. The best results come from when the biochar is 'charged' usually with the application of compost. The charged biochar is then incorporated into the soil where it gives a number of positive effects - it enhances the soil structure, helps to retain and transfer water, holds nutrients and enables nutrient transfer. In fact the uses for biochar go beyond purely addition to the soil.



Dr Paul Taylor



Frank Strie

and

biochar... 30th Nov



Biochar can be used to help clean and also purify waste (such as sewerage) and new studies are showing that when biochar is added to feed in the aquaculture industry they are getting amazing increases to the size and weight of the fish (it is expected that this would also be the case for traditional stock).

Biochar is an involved subject that has centuries of history and as can be the case we are finding a traditional practice with enormous benefits enabling high yield while retaining our natural resources.

The workshop held on Saturday 30th was a detailed exploration in the various methods for the production of biochar. It looked at the theory and possibilities for how the char can be applied in the backyard garden, on a farm, in aquaculture and even by councils in waste management. The attendees came from all around the state and varied from keen gardeners to farmers to industry and government representatives and the discussions through the workshop ranged from a small scale backyard application (both production and use through to research trials and on farm application).

With the theory concluding shortly after lunch we travelled to Frank Strie's property to see the impressive results in a local vegetable and fruit garden where biochar had been applied to the garden as part of the normal composting/fertilising process - the vegetables were huge and the fruit was already showing a bountiful harvest so early in the season. The process of charging the char was demonstrated along with the application process.

To conclude the day a pathway forward was constructed that will continue the conversation, provide research opportunities, increase the knowledge and experience in the Tamar Region and broaden the exposure of the community to the practical application of biochar technology. At the close of the workshop a study tour was being formulated by interested farmers to visit some biochar units on the mainland, individuals had purchased small kilns for use in their backyards and to begin their explorations to the wonders of biochar, people had purchased the biochar 'bible' (Paul Taylor's book) to increase their own knowledge and the community knowledge about biochar. Tamar NRM is committed to continuing the discussions, bring experts to the Tamar Region lending their experience to the community and to submit project ideas for funding involving biochar research and trials, and especially to aid in the dispersal of information for the community about biochar and other related subjects.

If you wish to purchase a copy of Dr Taylor's book *The Biochar Revolution*, want further information about biochar or wish to request further workshops, please contact the Tamar NRM office.

Craig Williams
Tamar NRM

sea scouts 'landcare' for plants...

On the weekend of 7th and 8th December 2013, nineteen scouts and ten keen parents and leaders followed the lead of the **West Tamar Landcare Group** and helped revegetate some of Megan and Peter's 'Stoney Brook' fragile river bank in Exeter. In all, we contributed to the planting of close to 300 native shrubs. Trevallyn Sea scouts focus on water skills year round and environmental awareness can sometimes go by the way side. This week-end aimed at giving our youth (and adults!) a chance to engage with a selection of local community groups involved with our natural environment. After a generous and authentic Australian BBQ at Stoney Brook, we headed off to set up camp on Keith and Megan Darke's property at Flowery Gully.

Keith and Megan offered us, once more, a perfect and sheltered campsite close to their dam. Soon after tents were erected, all scouts were in or/and above water under leaders' supervision. It was then time for a **Bushfood** presentation by Kris Shaffer who highlighted the resourcefulness of our natural environment. Nonetheless, we quickly identified that we would have to rely on some other more reliable food source for dinner. The last task - before sliding inside our sleeping bag - was to position Tamar NRM's infra-red camera on a wallaby trail, and sure enough an inquisitive wallaby did come and visit!

On Sunday, Ian Norton from **Reptile Rescue** joined us - with a few of his snakes - and offered an overview of snake behaviour focusing on Tasmanian types. The presentation also thoroughly explored what to do if bitten during a bushwalk. All participants were fascinated by Ian's passion and knowledge.

Although the weather had turned to light rain by lunch time, most scouts went back for an extra swim or paddle in the dam, and this time brought back bugs which they looked more closely under microscopes. This was a nice way to close a very busy bush-friendly week-end!

The Trevallyn Sea Scouts would like to acknowledge **Tamar Natural Resource Management** (Tamar NRM) for their assistance linking community groups up for this special weekend. Thanks also for the availability of an infra-red fauna monitoring camera.

Our thanks to **RACT Community Fund** for providing \$500 towards the weekend activities enabling young people and their parents to connect with a range of local community organisations.

Nathalie Servant
Scout Parent



Sea Scouts plant natives and learn about landcare - the next generation to help our environment

Photo: Nathalie Servant

raiding ragwort...

Ragwort Raids 2014

The annual Ragwort Raid has been held again this year over the weekend of 18/19th January. Ragwort has been pulled on over 892 kilometres of roadside in the Tamar Region, on both sides of the river. Originally the raid focused on the East Tamar beginning 16 years ago. The meeting place is the Fire Station at Pipers River. Most of the 'raiders' come from the Volunteer Fire Brigades in the area and other volunteers include members of the local community and landcare groups and Tamar NRM.

The Raid was extended to the West Tamar in 2006 based at Winkleigh Hall, and has been successfully conducted every year since. The volunteers on the West Tamar are mainly from the local landcare group, assisted by community members and a valuable contribution from West Tamar Council, who provide a truck for the morning and dispose of the Ragwort at the end of the raid.

Volunteer numbers were down a bit this year, but so was the Ragwort and it is pleasing to see an overall reduction each year.

For those who have not been to a raid this is what happens on the day:

Volunteers meet at a designated place to collect bags to put the Ragwort in and to be directed to a roadside location to pull Ragwort. Everyone returns to the meeting place where the bags are collected for disposal. The work is done and volunteers can enjoy the sausage sizzle and refreshments.

Jayne Shapter
Ragwort Raid Co-ordinator



Our community friends helping with the Ragwort Raid on the East Tamar
Photo: Jayne Shapter



A 'posie' of Ragwort - look for this colour along the roadsides for removal

Ragwort Raids 2014 - update:

Removed from

East Tamar 222km road, 444km roadside

Removed from

West Tamar 224 km road, 448 km roadside

Another fantastic year for our raids
Thank you to all our volunteers who participated
Three cheers for you!

P.S. look forward to seeing you for our 2015 raids

snippets...

A **Harvard Business School experiment** has found that factory workers are more productive when managers can't see them - in a factory where mobile data cards were being made, hanging a curtain to conceal workers from managers' view increased production by 10% to 15% - the curtain prevented distractions and allowed workers to test productivity-boosting ideas before explaining them to managers

Better Business Better Lives 031213

Moon Estates.com is not only selling plots of land on the moon for \$28 but also on Mars and Venus
Smart Company 041213

Australian ocean energy company, 'AquaGen', has patented a new technology called 'RigDrive' - it is able to be retrofitted to existing floating oil rigs - the rigs are transformed from an energy consumer to an energy absorbers as they move with passing waves

The Conversation 251113

In NSW there is nearly 1,000 threatened plant and animal species - the NSW Government is undertaking a version of 'conservation triage' - scarce funding will target species with the best chance of survival - New Zealand has applied the approach successfully over the last 5 years

SMH 141213

David Lindenmayer, an ecologist from ANU, argues that under current species plans many endangered species are merely monitored to death

SMH 141213

Water scientist, Ian Lawrence, says Canberra's network of concrete channels carrying stormwater to the city's lakes are a planning tragedy - they are largely responsible for blue green algae outbreaks and a growing summer stench along the foreshores - he believes broad grassy banks on either side of the channels are a great opportunity for creating wetlands and fixing the problem
Canberra Times 1213

Blue green algae pollution in Lake Burley Griffin regularly prevents international and national rowing, triathlons, marathons, skiing and dragon boat racing on the lake - however, retrofitting wetlands is expensive, involving breaking into the drainage system
Canberra Times 1213

The Royal Flying Doctor Service has again been named the country's most reputable Not-for-Profit organisation in 2013 - it is the third year running that it has ranked first in the annual AMR Charity Reputation Index - there are a range of dimensions including innovation, workplace, citizenship, governance, leadership and cost management
ProBono News 121213

The McGrath Foundation was a close second - it rose 8 places from 2012 - it was viewed as having the strongest leadership
ProBono News 121213

Other charities to fare well included the Guide Dogs (4) - National Breast Cancer Foundation (5) - Fred Hollows Foundation (6) - Starlight Children's Foundation (7) - Beyondblue (8) - the RSPCA (9) - and The Salvation Army (10)
ProBono News 121213

The 2013 Index also showed that environmentally-linked charities generally have lower scores than other sectors, particularly those seen as activists - Greenpeace ranked last in this year's Index, coming in 40th - WWF ranked highest among the "green" charities this year, ranking 25th overall
ProBono News 121213

new study* says that...

Every time I mention weeds in this article, 10% of people will stop reading it

I bought my first house (in Sydney) in 2004 and in doing so for the first time became the proud owner of my first garden. It's not that I didn't have a garden as a child, it's just that it wasn't my garden, it was mum's. I hadn't been encouraged to help with it and to be frank that was fine with me.

So we'd just bought our first house; this old 1930's, two bedroom fibro, in a nice leafy suburb. The place needed a fair bit of work, but it was the right price, it was close to a park that we liked and even though it was on the corner of the main road, there was this nice line of trees along that boundary that made the place much more secluded than it would have been otherwise.

Soon after moving into the house we had some friends around for a house warming barbeque and one of them pointed over to that lovely line of trees and said 'You know they're weeds, right!'

'Weeds, what are you talking about?' I replied 'Weeds are the yellow and white flowers that grow in the front lawn and those little spikey things that get stuck on your clothes. Trees can't be weeds... can they?'

It turned out that my lovely line of trees was made up almost entirely of privet, which is one of Sydney's worst noxious weeds and up until that point in my life I did not know that trees could be weeds. I was embarrassed, I'm still embarrassed. I was so embarrassed that I started reading up on all things gardening. Eighteen months later I had become an avid amateur gardener, the row of privet had been replaced by a row of grevilleas, the front garden was starting to take shape and I had enrolled to study horticulture. My NRM journey had begun... kind of.

Like all respectable Horticulture students, I started studying with the intention of becoming a Landscape Designer. In the first year we had a single, semester long subject on Weeds. The teacher was an engaging fellow; nice, funny and extremely passionate about the subject. This guy was so passionate about weeds that when we asked what he had done during his holidays, he had been traveling through South-East Asia looking at the world's largest Alligator weed infestations. This guy was so fascinated by weeds that he actual went traveling around the world to look at them. Despite his best efforts, despite him being charismatic and interesting, nobody left that class with the intention of become a Weed Management Professional, myself included. Because weeds are not interesting.

It wasn't until I shifted into Conservation and worked for several years as a Bush Regenerator that I realised I had entered the Weed Management profession. In other words I fell into it, or to be more specific, it had been sold to me as another story, a prettier one.

Turns out I was wrong, weeds are more interesting than I though. Like many things in life, the more you get to know something the more interesting that thing becomes. It's not that weeds aren't interesting, it's just that... they aren't glamorous. The more I learnt about nature, the more I learnt about life and as I spent more and more time in the bush I soon realised that weeds are one of nature's biggest threats. If I really wanted to have a positive effect on protecting our natural resources (something a little more substantial than signing an online petition) there was and is a real opportunity do something, something tangible, on the ground, to affect change, to be a proper custodian of our land. So I got out there and I started doing it.

***Any reference to a 'study' in the title of this article is entirely fictitious, in a vain attempt at humour.**

Denis Giasli



Boneseed Control on Egg Island
Photos: Mandy Smith, DPIPWE

contact: 6323-3310

·Naturally Yours·

remember 'what happens in a veggie garden'...

Have a look at our
December 2013
newsletter for the
photos from previous
months...

Sue Woinarski has continued the pictorial tribute to her home garden - here is December 2013 through to February 2014.



Left - Garlic harvested and Right - Sugar snap peas podded



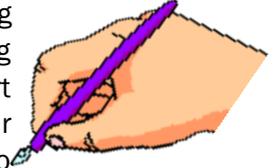
Left - Purple peas podded and Right - Lettuce flowered



Left - Celery flowered and Right - Tomatoes outgrew their protective covering

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 2014

Tamar NRM likes you, our wonderful community friends, would you please like us on Facebook...



Tamar NRM is on Facebook - to view it and please 'like us' just click on the following link: <https://www.facebook.com/#!/pages/Tamar-NRM/251475738210175?fref=ts> or go to our website: www.tamarnrm.com.au and go from there.

p.s. you can look at this page even if you do not have a Facebook account