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Latest news from the REC

The NSW Roadside Environment Committee (REC) will be soon developing its Strategic Plan for 2020-2023. The REC was established in 1994 by the NSW Government in recognition of the environmental values of linear reserves. It is an umbrella body of linear infrastructure managers and environment organisations that promotes and coordinates leading practice in linear reserve environmental management across the State.

Please contact the REC Executive Officer if you have any ideas or actions that should be considered in the new Strategic Plan.

COVID-19 and linear reserves



Whilst the world agonises through the COVID-19 pandemic, there is plenty of evidence that natural and cultural environments are being given a reprieve due to human lockdown restrictions.

In China and India - two countries with high urban pollution levels - there have been marked improvements in these levels due to the lockdown of industry and travel.

In some high density tourist locations there has also been significant environmental improvement. For example, in Venice the water quality of its canals has greatly improved.

It is difficult to say if NSW's linear reserve environments have also fared well during the crisis. However, with restricted regional movement there is some anecdotal evidence to say there is less litter along the roads. Also, there appears to be less illegal firewood collection along roads and in travelling stock reserves which unfortunately commences as the weather starts to cool.

We are unsure if there has been less road kill of animals, although this most probably is the case due to less traffic.

Any respite to human impact would be beneficial after the hammering that some NSW linear reserves took earlier in the year due to the bushfires (see February 2020 edition of the REC Newsletter).

Update on the Council Roadside Reserves Project

In December 2019, Local Government NSW (LGNSW) held a one-day training workshop in Albury to share the learnings of the Council Roadside Reserves (CRR) project. Attendees were introduced to the resources and how they can assist councils to plan for and manage environmental management outcomes in their roadside reserves. Staff from Albury, Murrumbidgee, Berrigan and Coolamon councils as well as DPIE staff, LLS staff and members of the CRR Advisory Committee all attended the training.

The workshop received positive feedback from all involved and the intention was to undertake additional workshops this year. Unfortunately due to COVID-19, this is no longer possible. We are, however, continuing to develop the CRR eLearning program, which will provide on-line training opportunities. This will be available on the LGNSW website in July.

The eLearning program will provide a number of modules stepping the learner through concepts such as:

- What is a roadside reserve?
- What legislation applies?
- How to assess the conservation values of roadside reserves, including how this may inform their management?
- What are the environmental considerations and planning requirements when working in roadside reserves?

In addition to the eLearning project, LGNSW will also have a number of resources available on its website including the Council Roadside Environmental Management Framework (CREMF), Roadside Vegetation Management Plan template, Rapid Assessment Methodology Guide, Natural Asset Templates and a range of environmental assessment resources including REF templates. Watch this space!

Council Roadside Reserve Conservation Values on SEED

Roadside reserve conservation value data is now available on The Central Resource for Sharing and Enabling Environmental Data in NSW (SEED) for 18 NSW local government areas. Based on surveys funded through the CRR project, and undertaken using the rapid assessment methodology, this data shows where the high, medium and low conservation value roadside reserves occur in these local government areas.

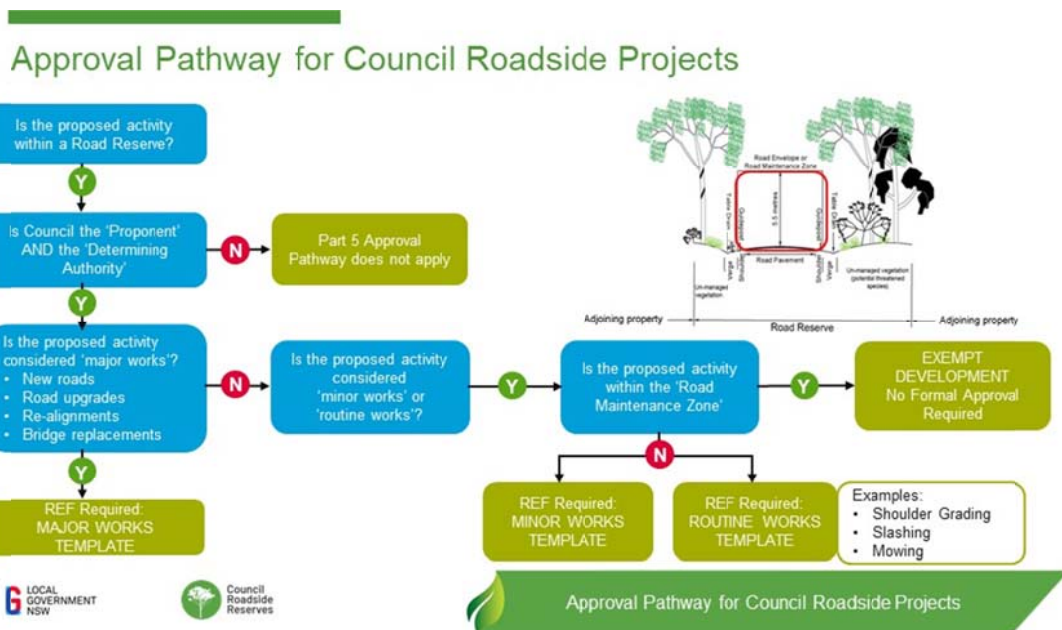
<https://datasets.seed.nsw.gov.au/dataset/nsw-council-roadside-reserves-conservation-values>

The data complements the Local Land Services conservation value data for travelling stock reserves, which is also available on SEED.

<https://datasets.seed.nsw.gov.au/dataset/travelling-stock-reserves>

For more information contact CRR Project Officer – Kathy Godfrey
kathy.godfrey@lgnsw.org.au or 02 9242 4053

This project has been assisted by the NSW Government through its Environmental Trust.



REF approval pathway

Exciting additions to the management of Travelling Stock Reserves managed by Local Land Services

Travelling Stock Routes (TSRs) are a network of Crown reserves used for moving or grazing stock around the state. There are currently more than 6,500 TSRs on Crown land in NSW covering an area of approximately 2 million hectares, the majority of which are managed by Local Land Services.

Whilst TSRs are widely recognised as important and valuable public assets, a recent review of TSR management across the state highlighted the need for change. In response, Local Land Services developed a state-wide plan of

management that reflects community feedback. The plan is supported by a number of “best practice toolkits”.



Travelling Stock Reserves State-wide Plan of Management is a single state-wide plan of management across NSW to ensure the future management of TSRs aligns with Indigenous, conservation, livestock, production, recreation and community priorities. The plan establishes a consistent approach to the management of TSRs by Local Land Services that reflects the community’s expectations and creates a contemporary approach for the future management and viability of TSRs in NSW. Access the Plan at <https://www.lls.nsw.gov.au/help-and-advice/growing,-grazing-and-land/travelling-stock-reserves>

Local Land Services has developed a TSR State Classification Map to inform the community of the classification of the Local Land Services managed TSRs in NSW. Every effort has been made to ensure the TSR data is accurate as possible. Access the Map at <https://trade.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=dd585551cd5c4320bfcd2d671d8f2364>

As part of the TSR Plan of Management, Local Land Services has committed to develop and maintain a Best Management Practice Toolkit for TSRs. The Toolkit will be used as an information and knowledge sharing resource. Several of the Best Management Practice Toolkit items have been funded by NSW Environmental Trust Linear Reserves Project including:

- Best Environment Management Practice Tool Kit for TSRs will be used to help consistently determine the conservation value of individual TSRs and identify management practices that maintain or improve biodiversity conservation outcomes.
- Monitoring and audit strategy provides a framework to assist Local Land Services to monitor, evaluate, report and improve TSR management outcomes.
- Ten regional vegetation guides are available on the Conservation of TSRs webpage. The guides describe vegetation formations, endangered

ecological communities and site managed species in each region to enable rapid assessment of the potential status of native vegetation in the field.

Access these items at <https://www.ils.nsw.gov.au/help-and-advice/growing,-grazing-and-land/travelling-stock-reserves/conservation-of-tsrs>

Have you seen this plant? Parthenium weed



NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI) is urging the community to be on the lookout for parthenium weed, *Parthenium hysterophorus*, following confirmation of recent incursions in Forbes, Walgett, Muswellbrook and Engadine (the first recorded incursion in NSW east of the Great Dividing Range).

Parthenium weed invades pastures and crops and poses a significant biosecurity risk to NSW. Widespread in Queensland, parthenium covers an area of 18 million hectares in central areas of the state, causing millions of dollars in damage to livestock and cropping industries. The weed can also cause severe allergic reactions in people, including dermatitis and respiratory problems.

Notably the Forbes, Walgett and Muswellbrook incursions were all initially identified on roadsides, while in Engadine it was discovered on a parcel of vacant Crown land emerging from a compost heap. It is likely that the weed was brought into NSW in contaminated soil attached to trucks and machinery, seed, grain and hay.

DPI is encouraging the community to be on the lookout where:

- there is lots of bare soil (roadsides, poor pastures)
- new soil or compost has been delivered
- earthworks have taken place
- hay, grain or bird seed has been fed to livestock or chickens.

People who suspect they have seen parthenium weed should not attempt to treat or dispose of this weed but instead note the location and call the NSW Biosecurity Helpline, 1800 680 244, NSW DPI, Local Land Services or their local council with the details for identification and assistance.

Conserving threatened species on roadsides and TSRs in the Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council area

Article by Alicia Palmer and Rob Armstrong, Department of Planning Industry and Environment, South-east Region

Threatened species staff from the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE) have been assisting Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council (QPRC) and South-east Local Land Services (SELLS) to develop tools required to improve conservation of threatened flora and low-mobility fauna of road reserves and travelling stock reserves (TSRs) in the QPRC local government area.

With a history of low-intensity grazing, and biodiversity values such as large remnants of intact native vegetation with high landscape connectivity, road reserves and TSRs are home to a suite of threatened flora, fauna and ecological communities.

To support the ongoing management of these values, DPIE has provided information on the locations and management of threatened species in these areas guided by desktop review, consultation with threatened species experts and field assessment to create an informative spatial layer and associated technical report. This material outlines known locations of threatened flora and low-mobility fauna within road reserves and TSRs, along with species-specific recommendations for grazing, weed control, access and hygiene.

The analysis ensures that these authorities are equipped to manage the areas with best management practice techniques for the species.

Thirteen threatened flora and one threatened fauna species were identified to have important populations occurring within QPRC roadside and TSR boundaries. This list includes plants such as Araluen gum, black gum, Bombay bossiaea, buttercup doubletail, button wrinklewort, dense cord-rush, hoary sunray, monga tea-tree, mauve burr-daisy, Nerriga grevillea, pale golden moths orchid, pygmy cypress pine, silky swainson-pea and small purple-pea, along with the little whip snake. These findings highlight the significance of managing linear reserve systems for conservation and the important role that effective management of these environments could play in ensuring the survival of NSW threatened species.

SELLS Local Area Manager, Mark Lettfuss, said that “the report and map provides a great resource to help us better manage our TSRs, by identifying where the threatened species are and enables us to implement best practice land management strategies and actions to protect threatened species and biodiversity values while also using the reserves for agricultural and other uses.”

If you would like further information on this process please contact Alicia Palmer at alicia.palmer@environment.nsw.gov.au



The endangered button wrinklewort growing in narrow road reserve (inset: flower) © Rob Armstrong - DPIE

Help Save the Bailey's Cypress Pine



Mature trunk Callitris baileyi, Callitris baileyi cones, Callitris baileyi juvenile (all images provided courtesy of John T. Hunter)

Kyogle Council and the NSW Government need your help to save the endangered Bailey's Cypress Pine (*Callitris baileyi*).

In NSW the species is known from a few small populations in Koreelah National Park, on the NSW/QLD border, west of Woodenbong. However, small pockets of

these endangered trees have been found on private land around Mallanganee, Casino, Lismore and west of Woodenbong. The species also occurs sporadically in south-east Queensland.

The drought has significantly impacted known populations of the Bailey's Cypress Pine, further threatening the survival of the species. This has prompted Council and DPIE to request the community's assistance in discovering new populations of Bailey's Cypress Pine in the Kyogle local government area.

Bailey's Cypress Pine is a tree growing to 18 metres tall, with spreading or erect branches and rough greyish bark. Unlike many other cypress pines, the foliage is green, rather than bluish. Adult leaves are 2-5 mm long and male and female cones occur on the same tree. The species prefers shallow clay soils and is usually found on rocky, hilly areas close to creeks in open grassy eucalypt forest.

DPIE Threatened Species Officer, Richard Brittingham, said "there could be populations of this distinctive tree on roadsides, reserves or on private property so we are encouraging the public to keep a look out and report any sightings. Where new populations are found, funds may be available from DPIE to help manage threats such as trampling and disturbance of the species' habitat."

If you think you have Bailey's Cypress Pine growing on your property or think there are plants growing by the roadside or in parks and reserves in your area, please report it to DPIE by emailing info@environment.nsw.gov.au. Alternatively, you can report potential sightings by contacting Council.

You can find out more about the conservation and recovery of Bailey's Cypress Pine at <https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/threatenedspeciesapp/profile.aspx?id=10131>

First Koala using the Picton Rd Fauna Underpass

A koala has been spotted using a culvert under Picton Road! This is the first evidence of a koala using the culverts and underpasses to cross the road following the installation of fencing along Picton Road to reduce the risk of koala vehicle strikes. The fence directs koalas to existing road culverts and underpasses with this evidence suggesting that it is maintaining connectivity of populations on either side of the road.

Early monitoring since installation of the fencing has also identified wombats, echidnas, lace monitors, snakes, kangaroos and wallabies using the existing infrastructure under Picton Road.



Recent bushfire impact on timber bridges on road reserves

Article by Rex Glencross-Grant and John Moore

The impacts of the 2019-20 bushfires in NSW have been described by the NSW Government as “unprecedented in their extent and intensity”. The area burnt was approximately 5.4 million hectares (about 7% of the State), of which about 2.7 million hectares comprised private land, leasehold land, Crown land, TSRs and road reserves. Road reserves accommodate roads and associated infrastructure, including bridges and waterway structures. Many timber bridges, both single and multiple span mostly comprising simple round girders, were damaged or destroyed in the fires.

In Northern NSW, two councils (Glen Innes Severn and Clarence Valley) encountered damage during November and December 2019. One of the earliest bridges lost was the low-level structure over the Mann River at Wytaliba. This was followed by three in Clarence Valley (Clouds Creek, Hortons Creek and Kangaroo Creek). The loss of these structures has been very disruptive and expensive, closing the Armidale-Grafton Road to through traffic between Billys Creek and Nymboida. Side-tracks were installed, but the temporary works were washed away in heavy rains in early February. It is understood that Clarence Valley Council will replace these bridges this year.

The authors are currently collecting data on bridges lost on the east coast of NSW during the last fire season (September 2019 to January 2020). Many more timber bridges succumbed on the South Coast of NSW during January, which have yet to be catalogued and analysed. Current indications are that up to 50 timber bridges could have been destroyed on public roads in NSW, with more in State Forests and National Parks. Whilst much of the remediation work will be funded by NSW State Government bushfire recovery funds, it is nevertheless a significant drain on the public purse and poses a major disruption to regional transport networks.



Low level timber beam bridge with concrete deck burns at Wytaliba, about 50 km east of Glen Innes (Source: Glen Innes Examiner)

New report highlights the concerns of the native seed sector that future demand will be difficult to meet



Our unique native plant ecosystems are critical habitat for native animals and essential in mitigating the impacts of climate change and extreme weather events.

High quality seed from a range of native species is the foundation for restoring many of our threatened plants and natural landscapes, particularly those unable to regenerate after the catastrophic bushfires of the past summer, or that are otherwise especially vulnerable.

The people who collect, purchase and use this seed are a critical part of an industry which faces many challenges, including dwindling seed supplies, continued loss and fragmentation of native vegetation, declining expertise and training, low levels of funding and the increasingly severe impacts of climate change (to name but a few).

To address these challenges, the Australian Network for Plant Conservation (ANPC) undertook the Australian Native Seed Survey in 2016-2017 to better understand the native seed sector and its ability to meet current and future demand.

The Australian Native Seed Survey Report, launched today by the Threatened Species Commissioner Dr Sally Box, details the full results of this national survey capturing the behaviours and views of a wide range of sector participants - which the four authors say are not all encouraging.

'Worryingly, the report highlights the concerns of the sector that future demand for seed will be difficult to meet from the wild' said Martin Driver from the ANPC.

'This is due to the high costs of seed collection and the lack of seed from a broad range of the species that are critical for restoration. The recent bushfires have made this situation worse'.

The report identifies that there may not be enough native seed in many areas to support the large-scale restoration required for landscape recovery. It also outlines many of the issues that need to be addressed in future restoration programs.

Seed production of native seed offers some hope, but currently lacks the capacity

to meet demand.

'Seed production areas (SPAs) are an increasingly important supplier of seed for restoration, landscaping and bush food markets' said Dr Paul Gibson-Roy from Kalbar Resources.

'SPAs are locations where we cultivate native species for their seeds, like agricultural crops. They can produce seed in higher quantities and quality that is much easier to collect than in the wild. Their continued development will be critical to meeting seed needs and preserving wild populations'.

The report's findings and eleven prioritised recommendations will assist governments to develop policies and plans to help the native seed sector grow and thrive, and meet the demand for quality seed into the future. This will ultimately help restore Australia's unique ecosystems and precious threatened plants.

Download *The Australian Native Seed Survey Report* here

<https://www.anpc.asn.au/media-releases/where-will-the-seeds-come-from/>

The Australian Native Seed Survey Report is being released as part of the NSW Government funded Healthy Seeds Project which aims to deliver an evidence-based Roadmap to secure a reliable, genetically-appropriate native seed supply in NSW, and update the Florabank Guidelines for best-practice native seed collection and use. An audit of past and current SPAs has recently commenced under the Project to help guide the establishment of better-funded and strategic SPAs in the future. Find out more here <https://www.anpc.asn.au/healthy-seeds/>

The aim of this newsletter is to share information about the management of NSW linear reserve environments and profile the NSW Roadside Environment Committee (REC).

For more information about the REC: <https://www.rms.nsw.gov.au/about/what-we-do/committees/roadside-environment-committee.html>

Please contact the REC Executive Officer if you wish to subscribe or unsubscribe.

