

NVCA News

NOV/DEC 2015



www.nvca.org.au ~ nvca@nvca.org.au ~ PO Box 123, Bowraville NSW 2449 ~ # 6/2015

**The next NVCA meeting to be held on
TUESDAY, 9TH FEBRUARY at 10.30am will be the
NVCA's ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

and the venue is Girralong.

Following the AGM will be a brief general meeting then a shared lunch.

Bring a chair or cushion, a hat and lunch to share.

Meet at 656 North Arm Rd, Bowraville at 9.30am to car pool.

For more information: email nvca@nvca.org.au All members are welcome to attend.

NVCA's Forest Information Stalls proving a success

The decision to hold forest information stalls at local markets instead of the planned Up-Market Market, is proving to be successful. Combined with the main aim of raising public awareness of the State Government's plan to create an Intensive Logging Zone from Grafton to Taree, the sale of donated goods is raising much needed funds for NVCA's Forest Campaign.

Also the NVCA has gained several new members directly from talking with our passionate forest campaigners Paula and Lyn. Welcome to those new members.

The Forest Campaign Raffle is also doing very well thanks to 'Raffle Seller Extraordinaire', Georgie. The raffle will be drawn on Saturday, 6th February 2016 at the Valla Beach Community Market.

Good quality saleable items are still needed for the fundraising table running in conjunction with the Information Table. Tickets are available for the NVCA Forest Campaign Raffle and bookings can be made for a future Tag-along-forest tour. If you have items to donate for the fundraising table please email georgetteallen@bigpond.com for Valla area, lynorr@iinet.net.au for Nambucca, and for Macksville or Bowraville email tisw3ndy@gmail.com - *The NVCA Committee*

NVCA Newsletter gives way to Facebook

In the New Year NVCA will be revamping its presence on facebook with an up-to-date informative page designed to let members know what is happening now, giving members a chance to join in if they wish or to just observe.

The NVCA News is still looking for someone to take it on and turn it into their own project. I have compiled the newsletter for the last 10 years and think it's time for someone fresh to take over. If you are interested email nvca@nvca.org.au - subject: *newsletterperson*.

Until a new compiler of the NVCA News comes along, bulletins will be sent out, when required, letting members know of membership renewal time and upcoming events.

Thank you to those who've assisted me in making the NVCA News interesting and relevant, especially Paula who has fitted into her busy schedule, the job of writing and supplying the Council Matters for each issue as well as forwarding information on environmental issues that come to her attention. Also thank you to those of you who have sent me positive messages about the NVCA News throughout my time of putting it together. - *Wendy Wedge*.

NVCA Forest Working Group active

The NVCA Forest Working Group, consisting of Paula and Lyn as leaders with interested NVCA members and concerned members of the public, has made several field trips into Buckrabendinni State Forest and Oakes State Forest to monitor logging operations and to record sightings of endangered flora and fauna.

A meeting in November with Forestry Corporation to discuss a proposed Rusty Plum Flora Reserve has been considered 'not economic' to log by Forestry, and has been spared from the last round of logging at least. Congratulations and thanks to all who helped on the field trips and in many other supportive ways. There is a need to have an ecologist visit the area and write a report about its values so we may be able to have this area protected long term.

Due to new volunteers expressing an interest in these field trips an Orientation Day is being planned for some time in the New Year.

Council Matters - December 2015 by Cr Paula Flack

Nambucca Shire Council is celebrating **100 years of local government** this year with the launch of a book *The Evolution of Community – Nambucca Shire Council, the Centenary History 1915 – 2015*, written by local author Carroline Rhodes. The book and a centenary calendar are on sale at the Council office and shire libraries. To top off the celebrations, Councillors and staff attended the last meeting dressed in 1915 attire and dined on traditional 1915 fare afterwards.

Nambucca Shire Council is one of only 41 NSW local governments found to be **'Fit for the Future'** in the IPART review of the State Government's unpopular and piecemeal review of Local Government. What that means in terms of amalgamations and Joint Organisations is anyone's guess, but suffice to say Council staff have worked extensively to jump the many hurdles thrown in front of Council by State Government as the review goal posts keep shifting and shifting again. Anyone would think that State Government was trying to get rid of local grass roots democracy ...did I say that out loud?

Council has resolved to apply to State Government for a permanent licence variation for the **Bowra Dam**. If approved, council will be allowed to retain a percentage of the rainwater that collects in the dam during high rainfall events, rather than having to release it all into the downstream watercourse as per the current licence. This will mean less pumping from borefield aquifers and reduced negative environmental impacts.

Council has engaged consultants to undertake a feasibility study into the **dredging of the lower estuary of the Nambucca River**. This misguided exercise has been pushed by a pro-dredging lobby wanting access for bigger boats in the lower river. Council has previously investigated the shoaling of the Nambucca River which has a history of dangerous river mouth conditions and shifting ocean sands in the lower estuary. Studies have shown that this is the natural condition of our river which has been influenced to some degree by the various training walls built over the years and that only minor dredging (if any) may be beneficial in front of boat ramps. There is no environmental benefit to the river from dredging, in fact it would damage sea grass beds and fish habitat. If dredging were to occur, it would require ongoing dredging to maintain a deeper channel at enormous cost to ratepayers for the benefit of a few. What really stinks is that Environment Levy money has been used for this new study. Community consultation is scheduled for early 2016.

Cr Flack has once again raised concerns at the reduced **ranger hours** (two rangers now down to one) and the lack of an environmental compliance officer. Increased ranger hours are needed if only for the summer season to minimise illegal rubbish dumping, littering, illegal beach driving etc.

Council has adopted the **Coffs Coast Region Resource Recovery & Waste Management Strategy 2015-2027** and once the other two alliance partners have done likewise, implementation of the Strategy will commence in conjunction with partner Councils, Coffs and Bellingen.

Council has received \$43,500 from Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) to match equal Environment Levy funds for Nambucca River **bank restoration projects**. It has also received funding to bolster \$32,150 to commence the Nambucca **EcoHealth River Monitoring Program**.

The draft Development Control Plan (DCP) for a **service centre development at the Valla Urban Growth Area** next to the new highway at Boggy Creek will shortly go on exhibition for public comment.

On exhibition now and available to view at libraries, councils offices and on councils website
www.nambucca.nsw.gov.au

- **Planning Proposal Nambucca LEP 2010** Amendment No 14 to permit seniors housing at 24 Coronation Road, Congarinni North and rezone parts of the land from RU1 Primary Production to E2 Environmental Conservation.
- **Local Roads and Traffic Infrastructure Developer Contribution Plan 2016**
- **Dawkins Park** Macksville Landscape Enhancement Draft Concept Design

Opinions expressed are those of Cr Paula Flack and not necessarily those of Nambucca Shire Council

Logging rules 're-write' a sham

It took a freedom of information request, by the North Coast Environment Council, but the Environment Protection Authority have finally released the membership of the Threatened Species Expert Panel advising on the re-writing of the logging rules for public forests.

The documents show that far from being independent experts they are Government employees, dominated by current and former employees of Forestry Corp.

The EPA has refused to release any of the panel's recommendations on the grounds that they "reveal or tend to reveal the position that a particular Minister has taken, is taking or will take on a matter in Cabinet".

This confirms our impression that the EPA's re-writing of the rules covering logging in State Forests is an overtly political process being run by the Forestry Corporation. It is no wonder they are resisting our attempts to find out what the panel's recommendations were.

We know now, that the Expert Panel includes 13 people, not the 20 claimed by the EPA on their website. The claimed independent experts are ex-Forestry Corporation employees. The EPA's representative even worked for the Forestry Corporation until recently.

The EPA's sham Threatened Species Expert Panel had three workshops in Sydney in March 2014. The first 'workshop' was a Forestry Corp employee sitting down with someone else from the Department of Primary Industries, to decide the fate of Koalas. The second was dominated by current and former employees of Forestry Corp. The two zoologists from the North Coast Office of Environment and Heritage withdrew from the meeting. The third workshop dealt with flora.

It's shocking that the EPA are now proposing to remove the need to do pre-logging surveys to identify and protect core habitat for Koala, Spotted-tailed Quoll, Squirrel Glider, Golden-tipped Bat, Brush-tailed phascogale, Hastings River Mouse, Rufous Scrub-bird, Albert's Lyrebird, Marbled Frogmouth, Giant Barred Frog and many other threatened species," said Dailan Pugh of the North East Forest Alliance.

"The Forestry Corporation has long-resented having to protect threatened species because they mean less timber and now the EPA's stacked process is set to deliver what they want. This whole sham process is driven by a desperate hunt for timber to meet unsustainable wood contracts," Mr Pugh said.

"Given that the EPA are proposing zoning over 140,000 hectares of north-east NSWs forests for widespread clear-felling and to allow intensification of logging elsewhere, while at the same time reducing streamside protection buffers, they should be **increasing protection for threatened species** not removing them! These are not actions of a genuine environmental protection agency, this is state sanctioned environmental destruction," Ms Russell said. - *Susie Russell, NCEC, November 2015*

EPA fines Forestry Corporation \$15,000 for erosion incident

The NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA) has issued Forestry Corporation of NSW (FCNSW) a \$15,000 penalty notice for a major erosion incident in Tuckers Nob State Forest, near Coffs Harbour.

FCNSW undertook a clear-fell operation on a native forest plantation from September to November 2014, followed by plantation re-establishment works which continued until late February 2015.

EPA North Coast Region Manager Brett Nudd said "FCNSW had failed to implement effective erosion and sediment control measures. FCNSW did not pay adequate attention to likely rainfall and soil loss risks in its harvest and re-establishment planning in the Tuckers Nob native plantation. The timing of plantation re-establishment coincided with the time of year when you can expect high rainfall events in the area. This exacerbated the risk of soil washing into tributaries leading to Never Never Creek."

Records show that approximately 220mm of rain fell over 2 and 3 February. This led to surface run-off which carried sediment into the Never Never Creek. FCNSW estimated that more than 100m³ of sediment washed into the Never Never catchment. However, the EPA's investigation suggested that the volume of sediment entering the waterways would have been significantly higher than FCNSW's estimate and has issued FCNSW a \$15,000 fine for polluting the Never Never Creek.

The EPA's investigation found FCNSW did not have appropriate mitigation measures in place to reduce erosion risks, and that risks were not adequately considered in harvest or re-establishment plans. The EPA concluded that FCNSW had failed to deliver appropriate due diligence in its forestry operations.

Members of the public with concerns about environmental incidents should call the 24-hour Environment Line on 131 555. - *EPA Media release: November 2015*

Action launched against whaling in the Australian Whale Sanctuary

EDO NSW is again acting on behalf of Humane Society International (HSI) in court proceedings against Japanese whaling company, Kyodo Senpaku Kaisha Ltd (Kyodo).

In January 2008, we successfully represented HSI in long-running Federal Court proceedings which resulted in the Court declaring that Kyodo was breaching Australia's federal environmental law by whaling in the Australian Whale Sanctuary in the Australian Antarctic Territory. The Court granted an injunction to restrain Kyodo from further breaches of the Federal environment law.

Following the Court's ruling, HSI representatives travelled to Japan and served the injunction on Kyodo. Despite this, Kyodo has continued its whaling activities in the Australian Whale Sanctuary. No enforcement action was taken pending the outcome of the International Court of Justice hearing into Japan's whaling program.

In March 2014, the International Court of Justice found that Japan's whaling program was not in accordance with scientific research programs provided under international law and ordered Japan to cease its whaling program. However, in October 2014, Japan announced its intention to recommence whaling under a new program that it again claims is for scientific research.

With Japan's whaling program due to recommence now, HSI is now seeking to enforce the 2008 injunction. HSI applied to the Federal Court in September 2015 seeking orders that Kyodo is in contempt of the 2008 injunction by continuing to interfere with and kill whales in the Australian Whale Sanctuary. - edonsw@edonsw.org.au

Forestry Tasmania's failings show NSW barking up the wrong tree

Recent media coverage detailing Forestry Tasmania's dismal audit by the Forest Stewardship Council clearly highlights the folly of the NSW government's ongoing 'remake' of the Integrated Forestry Operations Approvals (IFOAs) says the National Parks Association of NSW (NPA).

Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification is the international standard used to identify products from well-managed forests. Certification is highly sought after by the native forest logging industry as it seeks a social license for logging operations that environment organisations across Australia condemn as highly destructive.

Forestry Tasmania's chairman, Bob Annells, told the Tasmanian parliament that the FSC audit highlighted three areas where Forestry Tasmania needed to clean up its act:

1. The ongoing clear-felling of old-growth forests;
2. Protection of threatened species habitat, including the swift parrot and;
3. The methodology used to identify threatened species habitat.

But what relevance does this have for NSW? Lots, according to NPA Science Officer, Dr Oisín Sweeney: "As part of the IFOA remake the NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA) engaged the Forest Practices Authority of Tasmania (FPA) to be a supposed independent reviewer of the IFOA remake."

"Given that the FPA is the Tasmanian regulatory body which has overseen the continued logging of old-growth forest and the disastrous decline in swift parrot numbers, how on earth does it make sense to seek their advice as to how to regulate logging in NSW?"

"A field assessment of the IFOA remake by an independent ecologist concluded that the remakes, which will shorten the logging cycle to between 7 and 10 years, would 'result in the implementation of virtual plantation forestry' and will 'most likely result in the eventual loss of most of the habitat attributes providing resources essential to the life cycles of threatened species'. Not surprising when you consider the FSC audit in Tasmania."

"We think the citizens of NSW would be horrified if they knew this was in store for our public native forests and the animals that live in them" Dr Sweeney said.

National Parks Association CEO, Mr Kevin Evans said "environment groups in NSW are united in their opposition to native forest logging because they know it's environmentally reckless."

"You can put lipstick on a pig but it doesn't fool anyone. This FSC audit calls the industry's bluff: FSC accreditation isn't possible for the native logging industry because it's simply too damaging to our forests. The IFOA remakes are an attempt to legitimise the mining of timber from public forests to meet over-estimated timber quotas."

"The public doesn't want wood products that cost the lives of koalas, gliders and quolls. The public wants peace of mind that their wood products come from well-managed sources."

"A look at time-lapse images on Google Earth is horrifying. Logging in NSW is not 'selective' or 'sustainable'. It's clear-felling, pure and simple. It's scary to think the IFOA remake will make this worse."

"If this happened in Indonesia or the Amazon people would be shocked. Why do we let it happen here? It's time to end this madness and complete the transition to plantations" Mr Evans concluded.

- Dr Oisín Sweeney, National Parks Association, Science Officer.

Global Village of Alternatives a Huge Success

Real solutions to climate change are everywhere according to the citizens who attended the 'Alternative' COP21. 28,000 people visited 11 thematic zones of the Global Village of Alternatives in Montreuil, in order to discover the real solutions to the climate crisis, as part of the Citizens Climate Summit.

Visitors were able to discover in a festive ambiance more than 275 climate friendly, solidarity building, life choices, as well as the battles with climate killer projects, from 20 countries.

Visitors experimented, played, debated and chatted while exploring the streets and squares of Montreuil, Paris, free from vehicles for the weekend.

Shortening the food supply chain, eco construction, fablab for electronics amateurs, bicycle repair workshop, a 100% renewable electricity provider, local currencies, citizen finance, solar cookers... but also street theatre and live bands sketched an enduring conviviality and solidarity in the streets and squares of Montreuil. The 28,000 visitors of the Global Village of Alternatives addressed a powerful message to the negotiators at the COP21 summit. - <http://alternatiba.eu>

NVCA MEETINGS are usually held on the 2nd Tuesday of each month however, with so much happening at the moment this is subject to change, as is the venue.

For information about meeting dates, times and venue please email nvca@nvca.org.au

Season's Greeting

To all NVCA members and their families. Wishing you all a Happy, Healthy and Safe Christmas and New Year.