

NVCA News

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NVCA Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting of the NVCA will be held on February 27th, 2011 at 11am for an 11.30am start. The venue is The Coach House Inn (used to be the "Top Pub"), in High Street, Bowraville. All members are invited.

Council Matters from Councillors Paula Flack and Anne Smyth

(Opinions contained in this report are those of Crs Smyth and Flack & not necessarily of Nambucca Shire Council)

On stream dam is now formally off the agenda. Meanwhile the **off stream dam** planning is proceeding with the Water Steering Committee overseeing the process. Environmental management plans are to be prepared based on EIS findings. Clearing of dam site is to commence early next year with State Forest NSW logging first. Habitat boxes will replace any hollows identified in the pre-clearing surveys. Environmental (low) flows in river are to be protected, but details have not been sorted out yet in terms of how long pumping for filling dam and topping up can continue into low flows.

Rainwater tanks rebates are not being taken up very quickly. The re-voted budget of \$54K is to be redirected to Council buildings for rainwater tanks and water saving devices. Macksville Senior Citizens Centre, Council admin., building and Macksville Aquatic Centre are the most likely first facilities to benefit. Good for council to seen setting an example.

Community survey completed - consultants surveyed 400 residents by phone. The report is available on council's website. Question re reducing the number of councillors from 9 to 7 drew mixed response - 47% against and 43% for. Result not conclusive enough to hold a referendum. Crs Smyth and Flack oppose reducing councillor numbers as savings are outweighed by negative impacts including reduced representation, greater workload for active councillors, less diversity of opinions and less opportunity for new councillors to be elected. Environmental monitoring and protection declined in importance by 6.2% from 2007 results - a surprising result and the highest decline in importance of any facility or service. This result deserves further consideration. However, in the matrix component, environmental monitoring and protection was identified as of 'high importance but low satisfaction' as it was in the 2007 survey.

Macksville River Street foreshore redevelopment plan still to be determined following strong community opposition to the proposed removal the mature kaffir plum and fig trees. Councillors have resolved to receive a scale map of existing park for comparisons with the concept plan and to enable consideration of options (including retention of the mature shade trees) and community input over the Christmas break. A further report and inspection is expected in late January.

Scotts Head Reserve and Caravan Park Master plan is still ongoing. Crs Ainsworth and Court have put forward their own layout versions. Despite being opposed by some councillors due to no prior notice or community consultation, council resolved to put these to the Land and Property Management Authority (LPMA) seeking agreement to discuss them at a General Purpose Committee meeting. LPMA have agreed to discuss them but only with the Mayor and General Manager, refusing to meet with council in an open meeting. A most unsatisfactory outcome on all levels.

Boultons Crossing primitive camping ground is no longer viable following gazettal of the adjacent Gagaal Wangaan National Park, as there is insufficient minimal area to satisfy statutory requirements. The reserve is also very rundown and needs approx \$200k of repairs and upgrade to bring toilet block/facilities up to standard. Council, as trustee can't afford this. Interestingly Council and Committee of Management never received approval to operate camping ground in the first place. LPMA as property owner will decide fate as it is crown land. General Manager recommended National Parks and Wildlife Services (NPWS) take over management of the camping ground as part of the NP operations, which would enable it to meet statutory requirements but the Committee of Management objected. If LMPA agree to this proposal, then facilities would be upgraded at no cost to ratepayers and primitive camping can continue.

Joint Regional Planning Panels (JRPP) are trying to give back some planning responsibilities after forcibly removing them from local government, but only to give responsibility to staff and not for councillors in open meeting. Council resolved to tell Department of Planning (DoP) they will accept the offered DAs back but councillors will decide if they will delegate determination responsibilities to staff NOT the JRPP as DoP has stipulated.

Tewinga piggery water monitoring is ongoing – no results available as yet. Odour pollution logs are coming in regularly from affected neighbours. Next council budget will consider professional odour monitoring.

Council has adopted a **Community Engagement Strategy** to guide how it consults with community regarding

preparation of the Community Strategic Plan. This plan aims to identify the Shire's aspirations and priorities for the next 10 years. A series of focus forums are planned for March 2011 covering Aboriginal community, access, community services, economic development, environment, senior citizens and youth. It is proposed to conduct the first council meeting of each month at 6 venues around the shire from Feb to July 2011, as part of this strategy.

*With best wishes for a happy, safe and peaceful festive season
from Councillor Anne Smyth and Councillor Paula Flack.*

Vision and leadership needed for NSW to become clean, green state

The NSW State Election provides the ideal opportunity for a new era of investment in a healthier, more resilient environment for the benefit of nature, the economy and society, according to NSW's premier environment groups. The Nature Conservation Council of NSW, National Parks Association, Total Environment Centre, Blue Mountains Conservation Society, Colong Foundation for Wilderness and the Wilderness Society have launched a visionary agenda for the 2011 NSW election, *Natural Advantage*.

Voting and polling patterns suggest Australians care deeply about our environment and are prepared to vote for parties with strong environmental policies. If the trend continues, the environment could become a key election decider for the people of NSW. Already public polling in NSW shows broad and enduring community support for action to protect the environment.

"Voters in NSW are ready to support political leaders who recognise that investment in the environment now is vital for the long-term sustainable growth and prosperity of NSW," said Nature Conservation Council of NSW, Chief Executive Officer, Pepe Clarke. "NSW's leading environment groups are calling on all political parties contesting the election to show bold leadership to reduce carbon pollution and restore our natural environment to health," he said.

"The *Natural Advantage* agenda outlines an achievable path for restoring our environment, from revitalising our once-great river systems, cutting carbon pollution and growing jobs through more recycling to better protection against the risks of coal seam gas and longwall mining and other extractive industries," said Total Environment Centre, Executive Director, Jeff Angel.

"The prospect of resolving the long-standing conflict over forest management in Tasmania provides hope for new discussions and agreement between stakeholders for a transition to a sustainable forest future in NSW," said The Wilderness Society, NSW Campaign Manager, Belinda Fairbrother.

"We've identified the best opportunities for a lasting environmental legacy in NSW, the community is on side, all we need now is the political will to make it happen," said National Parks Association of NSW, Executive Director, Kevin Evans. - *Nature Conservation Council - Pepe Clarke 0402 325 471*

Energymark leaders needed

Want to be an energy and climate change leader in your community? Get involved in Energymark and help create a sustainable future - reduce your carbon footprint, lower energy usage and save on power bills.

The program brings people together in small groups to learn about energy and climate change issues, and discuss what they can do to make a difference.

You don't need to know a lot about energy and climate change to participate. This could be your opportunity to learn about these issues and how you and your group can have a reduced impact on the environment.

Volunteers are needed to lead Energymark discussions in New South Wales. To register visit [NSW Energymark Registration](http://www.nswenergymark.com.au) - www.csiro.com.au

Help create a world-first – The Sydney Marine Park

Thank you for supporting our successful campaign to block a five year moratorium on the creation of new marine parks and sanctuaries. We couldn't have done it without you!

We're now ready to build on our win with a renewed campaign for the creation of a Sydney Marine Park.

Sydney's harbour and coastline are home to an extraordinary diversity of marine life – seahorses, turtles, dolphins, penguins and more than 580 species of fish – a greater variety of marine creatures than is found in all of New Zealand's waters.

Sydney's unique marine environment deserves world-class protection. Establishing a Sydney Marine Park can provide improved conservation for marine life, while encouraging Sydneysiders to continue enjoying their world-renowned beaches and harbours.

Sydney Marine Park would be the world's first marine park in the heart of a major city, providing a welcome boost to the local economy through tourism, boosting fish stocks and reflecting our love and respect for the ocean.

There is overwhelming scientific and community support for the creation of marine parks that strike a win-win, balancing uses like fishing with a series of protected sanctuaries where marine life can breed and thrive undisturbed. - *Ben Birt, Marine Campaigner, Nature Conservation Council of NSW*

Holiday at Home

The Our Living Coast project has expanded the National Parks (NPWS) *Discovery* summer program with additional tours in the Coffs Harbour, Bellingen and Nambucca shires.

These exciting events increase the always popular *Discovery* summer range of activities.

These include:

6 January Moonee Creek Magic Canoe Tour,
11 January Yariabinni Rainforest Discovery at Yarrahapinni,
12 January Valla Beach Spotlight,
12 January Coast & Aboriginal Culture at Bongil Bongil,
18 January Bello Bats - Flying Fox colony in Bellingen,
19 January Bongil Bongil by Canoe.

Tours are free, with only the canoe adventures attracting a charge. Bookings are essential and numbers strictly limited; please phone the Coffs Coast Area NPWS office on **6652 0900**. Or click [here](#) for the full NPWS *Discovery* program. - www.ourlivingcoast.com.au

GM crops wreak havoc on Aussie farms

GM crops are costing Australian farmers big dollars - whether they choose to grow them or not.

Quintin Willmott in Victoria has grown GM canola for the first time and, a few weeks ago, said it would be his last. The crop behaved unpredictably, costing him an estimated \$30,000.

WA organic farmer Steve Marsh revealed that two-thirds of his farmland is contaminated by someone's GM canola crop. The canola travelled at least 1.5 km and contaminated 220 hectares. Marsh could also potentially suffer huge financial losses, as Australian organic standards don't accept any GM presence.

He is considering legal action, which would be the first case of its kind in Australia. The WA Government showed its bias to the GM industry when the agriculture minister, in response to Marsh, stated that zero percent thresholds are "unrealistic". Organic certifier, the National Association of Sustainable Agriculture Australia (NASAA), is conducting an official investigation. - www.truefood.org.au

You can say NO to Genetically Engineered food at – www.truefood.org.au

Bill S510: US Government try to control what Americans eat

On November 30, 2010 the US Senate passed Bill S510, the Food Safety Modernization Act, giving more government control over what American citizens eat.

In a vote of 73 – 25 the US Senate passed Bill S510 to give the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) more power to police food. The bill was designed to maintain stricter standards in keeping food safe, but also has a few other things in mind.

The bill also increases funding for the FDA, increases FDA inspections, enhances surveillance systems, ensures to protect the food supply against terrorism, and grants the US government new authority over the public's right to grow, trade and transport any foods. Opposition to the bill suggests that the bill may be a guise, created to dismantle the small farm and promote large industry.

The new bill gives companies such as Monsanto the power to monopolise US seed, food supplements, food and farming. It puts US food and farms under the Department of Homeland Security. It ends US sovereignty over its own food supply. It would also allow the government to mandate antibiotics, hormones, slaughterhouse waste, pesticides and genetically modified organisms.

Canadian Health whistleblower Dr. Shiv Chopra warns, "If accepted it would preclude the public's right to grow, own, trade, transport, share, feed and eat each and every food that nature makes. It will become the most offensive authority against the cultivation, trade and consumption of food and agricultural products of one's choice. Opposition concerns were addressed by the Tester Amendment, which states that small farms who make less than \$500,000 a year will be exempt from the same federal regulation.

It may seem like the Tester Amendment is the saving grace of Bill S510, some people believe that the entire bill contains such destructive influence that it may not actually change the underlying corruption of S510.

- By Teena Clipston - www.suite101.com

Bill S510 Recalled for Being Unconstitutional

On December 1, 2010 The FDA Food Safety Modernization Act, Bill S510, was recalled to the chamber because of a constitutional stipulation that was not met in the act.

The Senate had included in the bill a provision that allows the FDA to impose fees on companies. These fees violated constitutional terms that state that all tax must be originated in the House of Representatives.

House Democrats are using a process known as "blue slipping" to block the bill. Thus, rejecting the bill as law and sending it back to the Senate for another vote. "The blue-slipping procedure, is routinely completed to enforce its interpretation that the House is the sole body to introduce revenue or appropriations legislation. The failure of the House to consider the legislation means it cannot become a law." (*Definition from Wikipedia*)

On November 30, 2010, Senate Democrats sent out numerous press releases praising the passing of the bill, calling it *'the most significant update of food safety laws in over seven decades.'* The Bill returning to the House of Representatives will substantiate a major embarrassment for Senate Democrats.

There are two possible outcomes presented because of this debacle. The bill could be put on hold until the next session of Congress or the issue could be forced in the Senate after the House of Representatives passes a new version of the bill.

Either way, those opposing the bill are thrilled that they may have another chance at killing Bill S510. Although FDA Food Safety Modernization Act BS510, was created to put new regulations on the food industry with the intent to prevent food-borne illnesses, many believe it to be a ruse of the FDA to gain control over the food supply.

The controversial bill may make it illegal to grow, share or trade home-grown food. It may also force small farmers and food processors into burdensome and excessive requirements. It may give large corporations such as Monsanto control over US seed, and put US food and farms under the Department of Homeland Security.

Even though Bill S510 seems to be '*Dead in the Water*', it will reappear again. However, if introduced next year, congress will be very different from the current one. - By [Teena Clipston](#) - www.suite101.com

Good news for Tweed campaigners

At the Tweed Council meeting this week, The Hastings Point DCP was passed, including all details the community wanted, right down to one final wording issue which would have allowed legal circumvention - but we caught that in time. Big loss for unscrupulous developers but a massive win for the community - and our estuary.

Of course the pro-development councilors are furious and have put in a recession motion, but they won't get it passed. So . . . 12 years of campaigning, the last 8 being almost fulltime for a small group, but it's finally over!

- Julie Boyd (Friends of NCEC)

Hope for the environment

You can promote sustainable living practices in your community and protect the environment by joining the HOPE network.

Membership to Householders' Options to Protect the Environment (HOPE) Inc. is free and open to anyone who is interested, including individuals, families, businesses and organizations.

HOPE's principal focus is to minimize waste and to conserve energy and resources by:

- 1) Raising awareness – letting the whole community know about these issues
- 2) Education – giving people suggestions on how to tackle these issues
- 3) Showing – providing practical information on how easily our aims can be achieved

As the need to conserve energy and resources becomes more crucial, HOPE is striving to expand from a local to a national network of members and supporters. You can become part of that network and spread the philosophy of HOPE in your area and beyond.

To find out more about HOPE, including its charter, history, details of Mutual Support Partners, and full contact information, visit our website at www.hopeaustralia.org.au

Endangered animals breeding success in Britain

-10 day old Kalser, a Rothschild's giraffe, went on show for the first time at Longleat Safari Park in Wiltshire - the very day his species was added to the global red list of endangered animals. While at Whipsnade Zoo keepers have unveiled the five-strong first pack of Northern African cheetah cubs ever born in the UK. In their native homeland fewer than 250 are left in the wild.

-For more than 400 years there have been no beavers in Britain – they were hunted to extinction for their fur in the sixteenth century – now, two families, released into the wild last year have produced offspring. Both families have built a lodge and one has had great success building a dam to get food. This has created a new area of wetland in which wildlife is now flourishing.

-In the skies, ospreys have been nesting and breeding for the last four or five years in the Lake District of England, and buzzards and hen harriers are becoming more visible in Northumberland, thanks to dedicated environmental organisations and groups. – *International Express (England)*

NVCA Planning Workshop

The NVCA Executive will be holding a Planning Workshop to explore directions for 2011. The workshop will take place on Sunday, 13th February at a venue yet to be decided. If you are interested in attending please email nvca@nvca.org.au for more information.

NVCA Monthly Meetings

Monthly meetings of the Nambucca Valley Conservation Association Inc. are held on the last Thursday of each month, with the venue for the next meeting usually being decided at the end of each meeting.

The next NVCA meeting will be the Annual General Meeting on 27th February 2011. See 1st article on front page.



Seasons Greetings to all NVCA Members and their Families.

Have a safe and happy Christmas and a prosperous and healthy 2011.

