

Rehabilitation of Crooked River and tributaries, Gerringong

Location: Gerringong, NSW

NRM Region: Southern Rivers CMA

Industry: Dairy farming

Issues:

- Water quality / nutrient runoff
- Animal health
- Riparian vegetation management

Landholder Vision:

- To operate a sustainable dairy farm and protect local water quality

Funding:

- The Australian Government Envirofund is the local action component of the Australian Government's \$3 billion Natural Heritage Trust.



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Small Farms and Rural Living Network

Southern Councils Group

The Project

The purpose of the project is to protect the stream banks and existing riparian vegetation of Crooked River from dairy stock, while managing nutrient runoff and sedimentation entering an important coastal estuary.

The project constructed a 1.1km double strand electric fence to exclude dairy cows from the northern side of Crooked River. Revegetation of the riparian zones included, 500 mixed species tubestock to compliment existing riparian vegetation, and protect significant *Casuarina* regrowth.

Regional Importance

This project supports key objectives of the 2003 Crooked River Estuary Management Plan. Some of the key issues raised in the Management Plan, included:

1. Due to the basaltic soils in the catchment there is a high potential for nutrient input through erosion and sedimentation;
2. Damage by unrestricted livestock access to drainage lines; and
3. Damage by noxious and environmental weeds.

The Management Plan, highlights that Crooked River and the associated wetlands are considered an area of regional significance as they are home to several endangered, threatened and rare species of plant, bird, frog and insectivorous bat.

Planting and Results

An initial planting was completed in Autumn 2007, using a variety of species, including *Eucalyptus robusta* (Swamp Mahogany), *Eucalyptus botryoides* (Bangalay) and *Melaleuca stypheloides* (Prickly-leaved Paperbark).

A Conservation Volunteer Australia (CVA) international team was available to undertake the majority of the planting during spring 2007.

Unfortunately, with consistent flooding during late 2007, approximately 40% of tubestock were killed or damaged.

Successful follow up plantings have occurred and significant natural regrowth of *Casuarina cunninghamiana* (River Oak), *Phragmites australis* (Common Reed) and *Tetragona tetragonoides* (New Zealand Spinach) is occurring across the project site. This illustrates the benefits of fencing and protecting riparian zones.

Additional Projects

A project is currently being developed with neighbouring landholders to fence, revegetate and remove Coral Tree, Privet and Lantana along a 300m section of Crooked River, located in the upper catchment area. This will build on previous work completed by the Southern Rivers CMA and create a linking corridor from the escarpment to the Crooked River Estuary.

More Details

For more details about this project or to plan your own revegetation project, contact Andrew Britton, Small Farms Coordinator on (02) 4232 3200 or email

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Landholder Geoff Bailey inspecting fencing along Crooked River prior to planting.



Revegetation of a major tributary of Crooked River in Autumn 2007.