



Newsletter September 2011

FROM THE PRESIDENT

In this newsletter is a notice of Coastwatchers AGM. Tracy Rich will be presenting an update on the many happenings in Eurobodalla and our region resulting from the Sustaining our Towns project.

A nomination form for the Coastwatchers Committee 2011-2012 is included and I encourage members to consider nominating for one of the positions. We welcome new Committee members who are willing to share a variety of necessary tasks.

A glance through the headings in this issue illustrates the wide range of issues that are of importance to Coastwatchers. A variety of skills and environmental interests among Committee members is needed to develop the fresh ideas that are so important to Coastwatchers' effectiveness in protecting the natural environment of Eurobodalla.

Sheila Monahan

WE NEED YOU

Unless we get some new people willing to help on the committee it is very likely that Coastwatchers will have to be wound up. We have been operating with reduced numbers on the executive meaning that the remaining members have been overworked. There will be even fewer next year if we don't get some new faces. **PLEASE CONSIDER NOMINATING** We are looking for someone to learn to be Treasurer and people good at communication. We would love to have some younger people, especially someone who would be happy to be our social networker, others who have contact with teens or young adults, and those interested in fundraising – you may be able to help on an irregular basis but not want to attend all committee meetings.

PLANS FOR MORUYA SUSTAINABILITY NETWORK / HUB

Thanks to the support of Sustaining our Towns, Fiona Whitelaw (who spoke at our last meeting) has been appointed as the new researcher working on the establishment of a sustainability network in Moruya. Fiona will produce a feasibility study early next year and develop some on-the-ground plans that will be ready to go.

The network will consist of a cluster of enterprises based on the principles of sustainability. The aim is to identify and capitalise on opportunities related to local food production and the re-use of waste materials, especially those in the building industry.

There will be a diverse collection of small and large scale enterprises including training workshops, artisan studios, local food processing organisations and telecommuting centres. The resulting tangible ideas and enterprises will utilise the resources, strengths and skills of the Eurobodalla community.

Coastwatchers has been a supporter of this initiative from the start. It is exciting to see such progress towards getting the Moruya network up and running.

Sheila Monahan



HELP KEEP THE BOTANIC GARDENS

Council is to hold a workshop about the Eurobodalla Regional Botanic Gardens on

Tuesday 18 October at 1.30pm at the Council Chambers.

This follows continual questioning by Cllr Allan Brown who would like to see Council drastically reduce funding for the Gardens, or eliminate it altogether. **Please try to attend – your show of support will make a difference.**

LEP AT LAST

The long delayed Draft Local Environmental Plan is now on exhibition for comment until **14th October**. **This important document will have a major effect on how the Shire is developed in the years ahead.**

Unfortunately, a very vocal and belligerent group of landowners and developers do not want to be told what they can do with their land. Despite the majority of residents in other surveys saying they value the shire's environment and want it protected, it is likely the noisy ones will get their way unless everyone acts.

Council is already considering changing all E3 zones on private land to RU2 (see what that means below) and environmental protection will be reduced even further if all rural land is zoned RU1 as some landowners are demanding. Map overlays showing habitat corridors and threatened species may also be removed.

Yet the (NSW) *Local Government Act 1993* requires councils 'to properly (manage) ...in a manner that is consistent with and promotes the principles of ecologically sustainable development'...'having regards for the long term and cumulative effects of its decisions.'

Council is asking you - Which zone?

In considering which zone is most appropriate the following questions are provided for your consideration.

- 1. What is the primary focus/use/value of the land in its current form?*
- 2. What characteristics or constraints does the land have?*
- 3. Which zone if applied meets the relevant planning legislation, including State and Regional planning policies and subregional strategies?*
- 4. Which zone if applied ensures the land focus/use/value and zone intent is not diminished by inappropriate application or by permitting incompatible uses?*

Questions 3 & 4 are particularly important. Answer on line at www.esc.nsw.gov.au (there is a link on the home page) or email: council@eurocoast.nsw.gov.au or post your comments to Council at PO Box 99, Moruya NSW 2537.

It is understood that the final draft Community Strategic Plan ('Vision 2030') can also still be commented on, and should be. As the LEP and 'Vision2030' will not be directly linked for some time, it is important that the precedence of Vision2030 is recognised and the limited safeguards it implies are not further diluted.

For more information

Hard copies of the LEP documents and maps can be viewed at Council's main office 8.30am-4.30pm weekdays. Local libraries have hard copies of the text of the document and the library computers can be used to see the maps.

To see all the details on the internet go to www.esc.nsw.gov.au and choose "On exhibition" from the right hand column. The maps are interactive and if you download and print the "Map Assistance" document you will have all the reminders on hand to make things easier. Fact Sheet 2, "Maps", gives you the abbreviations for all the overlays. For example, the land zoning map is LZN and the map showing natural resources sensitivity and biodiversity is NRS.

Your committee will be putting in a submission for Coastwatchers so, as early as possible, **please let us AND COUNCIL know the things you think are good or bad about the plan**. It is likely to be in force for a long time.

Jenny Edwards

MORE ON PLANNING

'NSW Planning Review – two NSW Government meetings have been arranged for the public at the Batemans Bay Soldiers Club on 25 October 2011 starting at 3pm and 6pm. More details on these and how else to contribute can be found at: www.planningreview.nsw.gov.au/Home/tabid/77/Default.aspx.

What do the zones mean?

RU1 Primary Production

This Zone allows sustainable use of the land primarily for most kinds of commercial primary industry. Environmental protection works; extensive agriculture; home-based child care; and home occupations do not need consent. However, just about any other use except forestry, hotel or motel accommodation and serviced apartments may be allowed with consent.

RU2 Rural Landscape

This zone is for rural land used for commercial primary production that is compatible with ecological or scenic landscape qualities that have been conserved (often due to topography). It may apply to land that is suitable for grazing and other forms of extensive agriculture, or intensive plant agriculture (such as 'viticulture'), but where the permitted uses are usually more limited and differ from RU1 land due to landscape constraints such as steep slopes, heavy vegetation, poor soils or rocky areas. This zone is not to be used where the main purpose of the zone is to protect significant environmental attributes or to provide for rural residential accommodation.

E3 Environmental Management

This zone is generally intended to be applied to land that has special ecological, scientific, cultural or aesthetic attributes, or land highly constrained by geotechnical or other hazards. A limited range of development including 'dwelling houses' could be permitted. This zone might also be suitable as a transition between areas of high conservation value and other more intensive land uses such as rural or residential.

COASTAL MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CMAC) UPDATE

The first meeting of the newly constituted CMAC was held in September. The new members, representing five geographical areas across the Shire were introduced and welcomed. These positions came about because of the Committee restructure and the replacement of community representatives, including that of Conservation currently occupied by Coastwatchers. Our three-year tenure will end in September 2012. This, along with the hard-won limited 'environmental' representation on the CRG and the line being taken by Council and others re the LEP, strongly suggests the down-playing of the extremely important place care of the natural environment has in achieving an acceptable future for the shire and region

A briefing was given on the background to coastal processes and coastal management in NSW and the background and purpose of the CMAC. This included an explanation of coastal management, local initiatives and future plans, and information on projects already completed and on exhibition. An update on lake openings was followed by a round table discussion and the opportunity to raise issues affecting members' respective groups, to air local concerns about the coastal management process and to highlight local risks needing further studies.

The Interim Sea Rise Level Adaptation Policy adopted by Eurobodalla Shire was considered by one representative to be "draconian" and too prescriptive. It was erroneously claimed that Eurobodalla is the only Council to have adopted such a Policy. Further questions regarding the SLR Policy were taken on notice.

Other issues were the marina redevelopment and the need to dredge the bar and the five-year review of Batemans Marine Park. CMAC members were encouraged to make submissions to the Review and also to the current Marine Parks Independent Scientific Audit. Oyster leases within the marine park and the important role Landcare could play in mitigating the impacts of sea level rise were also discussed.

The aim of Eurobodalla Shire Coastal Hazards Scoping Study was to provide an assessment of which sites require an immediate, or short-term management response for either the updating of existing hazard studies or for commissioning new studies. It will also guide funding priority requirements to complete updated assessments of coastal hazards, including sea level rise, to inform risk management strategies for the area.

Council will appoint a consultant to complete the updated coastal hazard assessments before CMAC meets again in November. The next important step will be the preparation of the Coastal Zone Management Plan (CZMP).



A photographic record of erosion and recession of the eastern Long Beach dune highlighted the need for a further study. The site was identified by the Vulnerability Study (1996) as being at risk of coastal hazards. The Scoping Study (2010) identified Long Beach as an immediate priority for updated coastal hazard investigations, due to the level of risk associated with the number of assets potentially impacted in the short and longer terms.

Reina Hill

Erosion and recession eastern dune Long Beach

MARINE MATTERS

NSW Marine Parks Scientific Audit Committee – This committee is currently examining the domestic and international commitments to conserving marine biodiversity, and the scientific data to see how effective marine parks are in meeting these and other threats to marine life. It will recommend ways to increase the cost-effectiveness of marine park zoning arrangements; improve the design and management of marine parks; fill information gaps hindering decision-making on marine parks; make recommendations on how all current potential threats to the marine environment could be effectively addressed and which bodies or agencies would be most appropriate to address them; and make other recommendations related to achieving better management of the NSW marine environment. **Submissions are being taken until 30 Sept 2011** and can be lodged on line via a form on the website www.marineparksaudit.nsw.gov.au. The website also has more information

The politics – Meanwhile the very minor minority party, the Shooters and Fishers, which holds the balance of power in the NSW Upper House, is boasting that it will get fishers back into sanctuary zones.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Thank you to all those members who have already renewed. Only 21 still to come.

Cheques or money orders should be made out to --
The Coastwatchers Assoc. Inc and posted to
The Treasurer, PO Box 521, Batemans Bay 2536

Or you can pay by EFT or direct deposit to

Bank : IMB Ltd
BSB: 641 800
A/C Name: **The Coastwatchers Association Inc.**
A/C No: 200 271 714

Please tell the bank to say who it is from on their statement and it helps if you email our book-keeper to let her know too
b-kidd@bigpond.com



Raised nest at Batemans Bay marina

SHORE BIRDS ARRIVE EARLY

Many birds are already nesting on the beaches but are facing a difficult season. The rainy weather and some big swells have changed the beach profiles over the last few months. Most of the south coast estuaries are open and many beaches are heavily eroded with sand cliffs along the back. Not very good for Hooded Plover nesting as they cannot easily get from the nest to the tidal area to feed, or into the vegetation to hide their chicks. Volunteers are already active erecting nest cages, sand bag walls, fences and signs.

The first Pied Oystercatcher nests of the season were found Burrill Lake, Batemans Bay Marina and at Durras Lake Entrance. The Little Terns have not yet arrived from Asia and Northern Australia but should start migrating along the east coast to our area next month. Sooty Oystercatchers will also be nesting on offshore islands from November to February.

A new fox control technique using specially trained dogs is being used to find fox dens near the beaches. Keep an eye out for threatened shorebirds and please report any sightings to :

Jodie Dunn, Shorebird Recovery Coordinator, National Parks & Wildlife Service
Ph: 44549516; Mob: 0427012960 Email: jodie.dunn@environment.nsw.gov.au



Bolt & Eco fox den detection dogs

CANBERRA CLIMATE & FORESTS FORUM

The Forum, organised by Mike Thompson, was well attended and got good coverage in the media. Dr Brendan Mackey told of new studies published in *Science* showing how forests store even more carbon than previously thought. Plantations are now maturing and can supply all our wood needs, they are profitable (unlike the NSW native forest industry which is heavily subsidised by taxpayers) and it makes economic sense to use native forests for carbon storage. However, this message is not getting through the even more carbon dense heads of our politicians.

INCREASED LOGGING THREAT TO EUROBODALLA NATIVE FORESTS

Native forests in the Southern Forestry Region, including our Eurobodalla forests, are experiencing a greatly increased woodchipping/logging onslaught. This is because Forests NSW has basically run out of trees to log in the Eden region but supply must be maintained to the South East Fibre Exports chipmill (SEFE) near Eden.

Forests NSW is calling for registrations of Interest from qualified contractors with at least three years experience in contracting involving the use of heavy equipment (forest, earthmoving or other) to undertake, harvesting of approximately 190,000 cubic metres of log products from Coastal, Foothills and Tablelands forests located generally in the area north of Cobargo, south of Nowra and south of Braidwood. Forests NSW is seeking to engage contractors on a long term basis, with base term contracts of 4 years, extendable up to eight years, being offered to successful proponents.

Additional pressure to log more of our local native forests comes from the fact that East Gippsland native forests, also used to feed the chipmill, are also running out of suitable trees. In fact VicForests has recently announced that it will award only half of the current logging contracts in the latest tender process and in the last few weeks logging trucks from East Gippsland have been seen working up here.

Not only are our local forests being logged unsustainably they are also being logged unlawfully. In recent years community audits have revealed widespread non-compliance with environmental laws in our public native forests. A recent Land and Environment Court judgment found that Forests NSW had manifested 'a reckless attitude towards compliance with its environmental obligations'.

In this situation it is unbelievable that in mid-august the NSW Government decided to decimate the research facility at Forests NSW, with cuts of 1/3 of the jobs. For the ecology group the cuts are worse, with 80% of positions lost. This sad news represents a significant threat to wildlife conservation. With so much of our wildlife relying upon State Forests for its survival, the loss of these ecologists and their expertise from Forests NSW is a tragedy.

Sheila Monahan

DRAFT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND EMPLOYMENT LANDS STRATEGY

Although we did make some provisos, Coastwatchers' submission mainly supported the recommendations to consider expansion of commercial and industrial zones. These are at Vesper St, Batemans Bay; Mogo near the school, North Moruya industrial area; Campbell Street, Moruya; near the school at Bodalla; the Highway side of Dalmeny industrial area; and the hilltop near the Plaza at Narooma.

Those we objected to were:

1. Beach Road Batemans Bay - At the moment the Tourist Information Centre and surrounding area with its trees are an attractive element in an otherwise ordinary landscape along the northern Highway entrance to Batemans Bay town centre. We argued that the priority for developing this site should be low. While the tourism industry remains so important to our Shire this area should be maintained. The heritage value of the old cemetery, difficult topography and need for huge ugly excavations to develop the site for commercial use are also reasons this area should not be high on the list for development.
2. Surf Beach if it means clearing the habitat corridor.
3. Noads Road, South Moruya - Development of this area poses so many risks to Old Man Bed Swamp that it should be reconsidered. The watercourses and floodways across site will make it almost impossible to prevent pollution of the wetland. We are asking Council to publish the full studies showing the drainage and possible pollutants, and allow people to judge what the impacts might be, and if necessary, get an expert's advice. The site is listed as low priority in the medium to long term so it would make sense to leave it out of this strategy and, if impacts are found to be minimal, include it in a future strategy.
Maybe this would make a more suitable site for regional hospital if Moruya Hospital outgrows its land?



We also argued that it would be better to set aside the cleared commercial area at Train St, Broulee for further extensions of Banksia Village. Commercial development is not required there, especially since a supermarket is being built on George Bass Drive at The Moorings, Tomakin. The logical place for more tourist accommodation is closer to the beach such as the Strategy recommends for Coronation Drive.

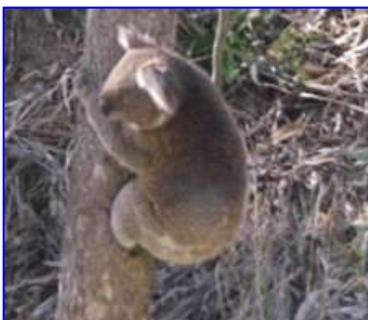
Jenny Edwards

CURF INAUGURAL REGIONAL SYMPOSIUM 2011

CURF = Canberra Urban and Regional Futures

The symposium comprised a day in Canberra and half a day in Batemans Bay, concentrating on government action to build resilience to climate change in the ACT and south-east NSW. Speakers generally came from government and academia, and included the Hon Dr Mike Kelly MP. It was very much related to possible government proposals for adaptation to climate change and relevant actions of government, under the guise of 'adaptive management'. The need to reduce carbon dioxide emissions presumably are the interest of other government departments, although it was emphatically confirmed by Professor Will Steffen, Executive Director, ANU Climate Change Institute, that there is very sound evidence that carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere continue to rise, as are average atmospheric temperatures.

Brian Versey



BRIEF UPDATE ON KOALA PROJECT

Project coordinator Keith Joliffe, Mobile 0427 546 156

(Below are a few highlights from Keith's report – If you do not receive Coastwatchers' email news then read the rest of this very interesting document on our website www.coastwatchers.org.au)

A recent survey found there are between five and fifteen koalas active at the Northern end of Kooraban National Park bringing them across the Bega Valley Shire border to the Eurobodalla.

The next South Coast surveys should cover remaining Kooraban National Park sites, Tinpot (Nature Reserve and private lands), Gulaga National Park, Bodalla State Forest and private forests around Wandella. **Volunteers are needed to help with the smaller surveys.**

Keith Joliffe participated with National Parks and Wildlife staff in the Numeralla survey of 1st September. Koala occupancy of Crown Lands in the Numeralla area is higher than the occupancy rate on the coast. **Anyone interested in volunteering on the**

Monaro even for one day, should contact NPWS koala survey officer Chris Allen on 0417 231 477. Surveys are currently every Thursday.

Senate Inquiry - For a national update on the status of koalas search the web for proceedings of the Senate Inquiry, or access the submissions at http://www.aph.gov.au/Senate/committee/ec_ctte/koalas/submissions.htm

Dr Alistair Meztler (UQ) recently remarked to the Senate Inquiry: "...these [South East NSW forests] koalas are probably the most critical population in Australia in the sense that they may represent one of only two reservoirs, very small ones, of what is the native genotype of all of the Victorian and South Australian animals left..."

Andrew Constance MP - Eurobodalla Koalas project volunteers Jody Warren and Keith Joliffe had a worthwhile meeting with Andrew Constance MP and Councillor Keith Dance on 2nd September. Two main topics were discussed. The first was Councillor Dance's proposal that impositions applied to farmers under the Threatened Species Act be set aside where koala habitat has been conserved, to encourage private landholders to declare their habitat and play a joint role with National Parks and Forests NSW in translocating koalas from overpopulated island colonies interstate. The second was a request from Keith Joliffe for the NSW Government to indicate its strategic intentions for koala conservation, so the Eurobodalla volunteer initiative can work with that knowledge.

GIS habitat/corridor map - Project volunteer Judy Bourne will soon begin constructing the GIS habitat/corridor map. Council has much of the information but says it lacks the resources to assist but the hard pressed Office of Environment and Heritage personnel at Narooma have offered to help Judy out with data when she starts.

Birdland and East Lynne - Judy and Keith gained knowledge from Karen Best at *Birdland Animal Park* (where captivity-bred koalas survive on nine browse species) then examined koala history and glider habitat around Mark Fleming's property near Cockwhy Creek, including the adjacent State Forest.

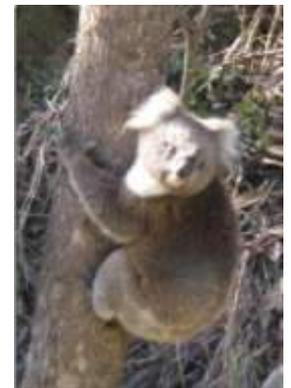
Field kit - Coastwatchers now has a koala field kit ready for use when enough volunteers are available to do some Eurobodalla scat searches.

Queanbeyan OEH - Keith requested a meeting with the Queanbeyan Office of Environment and Heritage Landscape Planning and Assessment personnel so Eurobodalla Koalas project volunteers can gain some knowledge at the OEH's more strategic level. In concert with Eurobodalla Shire Council's Natural Resource Planner Paula Pollock, seeking a joint funding program is one related ambition.

Funding requests - Coastwatchers has so far lodged three funding requests for the Eurobodalla Koalas project. Two were unsuccessful and the other is unlikely to get approval. The project is seeking funds or in-kind help mainly to cover software, training courses, transport and accommodation costs for volunteers and university students doing field projects. To undertake our full 2012 koala program, about \$9,000 would be needed. If government and private funds are not forthcoming by the end of this year, the Coastwatchers Environment Fund will be asked to contribute part of the budget so at least some of the work can begin.

University of Wollongong - An agreement has been signed with the University of Wollongong for Keith Joliffe and potentially other qualified Coastwatchers members to co-supervise up to 5 Bachelor of Environmental Science students doing their final year field projects in 2012. We offered a selection of 16 possible project topics related to Eurobodalla koalas. **Any Coastwatchers member interested in this exciting arrangement should contact Dr. Joliffe on 0427 546 156. You could be involved in the academic work, in the outdoor field activities, in providing routine Coastwatchers work experience for the students, in providing billeted accommodation, or providing four-wheel drive transport etc.**

Oral history - A reminder that anyone with koala stories from the Eurobodalla's past should **convey them to our oral historian John Clement on 0418 296 570.**



NEWS IN BRIEF

Dargues Reef mine - The NSW Planning Assessment Committee approved the gold mine without even including conditions to resite the potentially dangerous tailings dam. Opponents, including Eurobodalla Shire Council which is concerned about the safety of our water supply, are considering a challenge in the Land and Environment Court.

Bunnings at Surf Beach - Coastwatchers tried very hard to obtain protection for the forested habitat corridor near the tip at Surf Beach. However, a development application to clear the land to allow for the building of a Bunnings Warehouse and other bulky goods stores has just been exhibited.

Tomakin saltmarsh to suffer? – Council has approved the building of a small supermarket beside The Moorings, George Bass Drive, Tomakin. The site is currently being raised with enormous amounts of sand to get it above the predicted sea level rise mark. Coastwatchers urged Council to ensure drainage from the proposed parking area did not pollute the river and to fence off the saltmarsh on the other side of the road to prevent people using it as a shortcut to the store. The saltmarsh is part of the land owned by the caravan park so much will depend on the co-operation of those owners.



Above - Degraded saltmarsh



Left – Supermarket site being raised

hcove Road

Long Beach – the current proposal is a big improvement on the much larger original one. We like to think our submissions to the Independent Review Panel on Sensitive Urban Lands may have persuaded them to recommend the less intensive use.

Wharf Road land advertised for sale – For over 20 years we have had to object to unsuitable development proposals for this land on the northern shore of Batemans Bay, that is so vulnerable to coastal inundation and erosion. On 17 Sept it was put up for auction so we suspect this will mean the fight will continue.



DO YOU KNOW SOMEONE WHO MIGHT LIKE TO BECOME A MEMBER OF COASTWATCHERS ?

Please invite them to join.

You or they can download an application form from our website www.coastwatchers.org.au

or

Phone 4471 5032 or 4473 6204 and we will post you one.

TAX DEDUCTIBLE DONATIONS

Thanks to all those members who have made a donation to our Environment Fund. The money is very much appreciated as it will help rebuild our finances after an expensive year. Since grants are so hard to get we rely on your generosity to help pay our printing costs and to fund special activities such as the Koala Project.

Tax deductible donations of \$2 or more can be made by --

Cheques or money orders made out to
The Coastwatchers Assoc. Inc Environment Fund and posted to
 The Treasurer, PO Box 521, Batemans Bay 2536

Or you can pay by EFT or direct deposit to

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Please tell the bank to say the **name of the donor** on their statement. It helps if you email our book-keeper to let her know too
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Website www.coastwatchers.org.au



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COASTWATCHERS COOPERATE WITH THE FOLLOWING GROUPS:

- Broulee Community Association
- Congo Area Association
- Eurobodalla Landcare / Dunecare
- Friends of Durras
- Friends of the Eurobodalla Regional Botanic Gardens
- Long Beach Landcare
- Maloneys Residents Association
- Nature Coast Marine Group
- South East Region Conservation Alliance
- Tomakin Community Association
- Tuross Lakes Preservation Group

Coastwatchers is a member of -
The NSW Nature Conservation Council
Conservation Council ACT Region and
Climate Action Network Australia



Coastwatchers

Eurobodalla's environment and climate action group

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For more information, or to subscribe, send a message to
coastwatchers@netspeed.com.au

COMING EVENTS

- Sun 25th Sept – CW stall at Moruya bike event
- Sun 2nd Oct – Art on the Path, Broulee 8am-noon
- Sat 15th Oct – CW AGM, Tomakin Hall, 2pm
- Tues 18th Oct – Council workshop on Botanic Gardens 1.30pm