



K2C Groundcover Newsletter

Issue No. 10, December 2011

Dear K2C Partners and Associate Members,

I am very proud to say, K2C is really tracking well as you will discover from this Xmas edition of Groundcover.

There have been a couple of recent highlights that include meeting the NSW Minister for the Environment, Ms Robyn Parker and holding a highly successful and timely Carbon Farming Workshop with Murrumbidgee Landcare Inc.

2012 will see us devoted to our new (two year) project entitled- Monaro Landscape Connectivity while we wind up our commitments to the Atlas of Living Australia project. All this and more in this edition.

*Wishing you a relaxing Xmas and New Year,
Geoff Robertson, K2C President*

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K2C is a partnership of 11 government agencies and non government groups. If you are a landholder and are looking for incentives or advice contact details can be found on the last page of this newsletter. Please also visit www.k2c.org.au

K2C meets the Environment Minister



On 31st October 2011, K2C met the Minister for the Environment, the Hon. Robyn Parker, when the NSW Government had a Community Cabinet meeting in Queanbeyan.

Geoff Robertson and Lauren Van Dyke had a relaxed and informative conversation with the Minister about K2C and its role in the Great Eastern Ranges (GER) Initiative. She said she would like the opportunity to open the next K2C Fair that we plan to hold in 2012.

Then on Friday 16th December 2011 in Sydney the Minister made the exciting announcement that her Government had approved funding of \$4.4m. for the next four years for the GER Initiative. Part of this funding will be used to support the Facilitator role and the delivery of projects in K2C. This is certainly great news and will provide a sound base for K2C into the future. *Photo: Hon Robyn Parker.*

Carbon Farming Workshop brought the crowds

Sixty Monaro region landowners recently attended a carbon farming workshop held in the shearing shed at the picturesque Micalago Station. See story Page 2.

Photo: Attendees listening to key speaker, Doug Alcock, DPI, Cooma



Carbon Farming Workshop brought the crowds

Tony Robinson

Murrumbidgee Landcare and Kosciuszko to Coast organised the day with five expert speakers delivering on the complexities of climate change and the Government's recent carbon farming legislation. For the Monaro, the main opportunities under the Carbon Farming Initiative lie with the sequestration of soil carbon so the workshop was centred around this aspect.

To begin the day Dr Janette Lindesay, Deputy Director, ANU Climate Change Institute, gave an extremely clear and balanced presentation on the science behind climate change and why governments around the world are moving toward reducing the carbon dioxide emissions that are largely responsible for driving global temperature increases.

This was followed by a presentation by Mr Doug Alcock, Livestock Officer, NSW DPI, Cooma, who took us through a series of four modelled scenarios on the effect climate change is likely to have on the seasonal weather patterns on the Monaro and the impact this is likely to have on pasture growth and production. Although there were a range of predictions depending on the model used, it is likely that winter temperatures will be warmer with increase pasture growth. But despite this three of the four scenarios indicate overall carrying capacities would decline.

An understanding of the nature and dynamics of soil carbon was expertly explained by Ms Susan Orgill, Soil Project Officer, NSW DPI, Queanbeyan. A range of factors such as soil type, fertiliser use and vegetation strongly influence the retention of carbon in the soil, which has important implications for those interested in taking advantage of the government's Carbon Farming Initiative program.

After lunch and a short farm walk, Ms Sarah Bellamy, Assistant Director, Land Sector Policy, Department of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency, Canberra, adeptly steered the participants through the rules and regulations governing carbon farming. Concepts such as additionality and permanence were explained as was the process for participation in the scheme, which is voluntary.

The final speaker of the day was Mr Peter Holding, a farmer from Harden and a member of the Climate Change Champion Program. His message was clear. Do your research, work out your own position and don't panic or rush into any agreements. His view was that the costs don't appear to be ruinous and quite possibly the carbon trading issue may eventually provide an asset for ones farm. He had done calculations for his own property and was reasonably confident that he could profitably store carbon in the soil, gain tradable credits and not compromise his current farm productivity.

Photos below: Micalago Station and attendees at the workshop



Adopting Indigenous Land Management Practices

Geoff Robertson

As part of the *Monaro Landscape Connectivity project* (see page 4), K2C and partners, the Murrumbidgee CMA (MCMA) and Murrumbidgee Landcare Inc, are offering an opportunity to learn about and possibly adopt Indigenous land management practices.

This follows on from an earlier Friends of Grasslands (FOG) project, funded by the MCMA, under its Community Partnership Grants, on *Indigenous Values in the Landscapes*. That project featured Rodney Mason, Ngarigo elder and landscape and natural resource manager, who provided a series of two day workshops and two half day field trips, on Indigenous language and culture, understanding of country and the resources it provides for food, fibre, medicine and equipment, and Indigenous approaches to landscape management.



Photo: Rod Mason describing the vegetation at one of the recent field trips organised by FOG.

The Monaro Landscape Connectivity project will enable interested landowners to learn about what is on offer, have a property assessment made, and adopt Indigenous land management practices such as the use of fire, replanting of missing plants to build soils and provide food and habitat for species, to move and rebuild soils, and to rebuild natural wicks.

K2C has another grant application in with the Murrumbidgee CMA to develop and test a comprehensive methodology so that the assessment and management actions form part of a management plan to ensure that indigenous values will be managed sustainably. We are waiting to hear about the outcome of this grant application.

For further information, contact Lauren (contact details - Page 15)

Atlas of Living Australia & K2C Project takes off

Lauren Van Dyke

Thanks to the master efforts of the Great Eastern Ranges Director Rob Dunn, K2C has been working in partnership with an amazing bunch of computer wizards on the Atlas of Living Australia (ALA) project for the best part of 2011.



With the new ALA features, K2C is now re-configuring its web home page to house the key buttons that will eventually allow you to connect to the wild and wonderful species present in the K2C region. You can now view and record species including reptiles and frogs and some birds. Eventually there will be live buttons to take you to the plants, mammals, fish and fungi.

While the project is still a work in progress, K2C is keen to develop a species guides and survey forms that can be used to view and record all the fabulously diverse animals and plants found in the K2C region, which is so rich in species due to its having the greatest altitudinal variation in the whole country.



MONARO LANDSCAPE CONNECTIVITY

Monaro Landscape Connectivity Project offers assistance to landholders

What is the Monaro Landscape Connectivity Project?

Monaro Landscape Connectivity (MLC) aims to improve the condition, extent and connectivity of patches of native vegetation across the Monaro region, in the Murrumbidgee catchment area. Interested land managers can also be involved in the application of Indigenous land management practices on their property and participate in digital PlaceStories™.

The project is funded from the Australian Government Caring for our Country program, and is being delivered through a partnership between the Murrumbidgee Catchment Management Authority (CMA), Kosciuszko to Coast (K2C), and Murrumbidgee Landcare Incorporated (MLi).

We have recently run one information night in Bungendore and we plan to run similar events in another five regions across the Monaro.

Please come and meet with us at the Numeralla Folk Festival Markets on Sun 29th January between 1am—4pm. Otherwise contact us directly or keep an eye out for our next information session.

If you have any questions about project eligibility or would like to express your interest in becoming involved, contact: Felicity Collins, Murrumbidgee CMA
T: (02) 6452 4150 / E: felicity.collins@cma.nsw.gov.au

What is the Biodiversity Fund?

As part of the Australian Government's Clean Energy Future Plan the Biodiversity Fund will invest around \$946m over the next six years to help land managers store carbon, enhance biodiversity and build greater environmental resilience across the Australian landscape.

To do this, it will fund eligible land managers for activities which restore, manage and better protect biodiversity on public and private land. It will also provide support to land managers who wish to take advantage of emerging opportunities in the new carbon market. The Biodiversity Fund will provide support to establishing new carbon stores or better managing carbon stores of existing native habitat.

**The Biodiversity Fund 2011-12 application round is now open.
Applications close Tuesday 31 January at 5pm AEDT.**

**For more information and an application form copy the below URL and paste into your search engine :
<http://www.environment.gov.au/cleanenergyfuture/biodiversity-fund/index.html>**



Snakes Alive!



23 - 29 January 2012

10am - 4pm Weekdays, 10am - 6pm Saturday and Sunday
Australian National Botanic Gardens, Crosbie Morrison Building

**Be charmed by live displays of
snakes, lizards, turtles, frogs
and crocodiles.**

Enjoy....

- seeing and touching live reptiles and amphibians
- learning about rare and threatened species
- kids competitions (for more info visit www.actha.org.au)
- morning and afternoon feeding times
- gifts and souvenirs
- a great educational experience

Cost: \$2 child, \$5 adult (Concession \$4)

Enquiries: e - info@actha.org.au p - 6250 9540

Proceeds fund reptile and amphibian research



Reptiles inc.
CANNONVALE AUSTRALIA



Australian Government
Australian National Botanic Gardens

www.actha.org.au / www.anbg.gov.au

Koala surveys on the Monaro

Geoff Robertson

Chris Allen (Environmental Protection Authority) has devoted much of his life to researching koalas and organising surveys of koalas. In recent times he has focussed on the Monaro. Our last issue of *Groundcover* reported a remarkable discovery of koalas on the Monaro chewing bark.

Chris' Monaro survey is being carried out to learn more about a widely scattered but apparently stable population of koalas persisting on the north-eastern edge of the Monaro. On 29 Oct, my partner Margaret Ning and I joined Chris and Luke McLaughlan (National Parks and Wildlife Service) on a koala survey between Cooma and Numeralla. After walking through some lovely dry forest areas and observing many plants in flower we arrived at the first of the grid intersection sites to be assessed during the day. With my statistical background I was very interested in the survey design, the selection of sites and the methods used to discover the presence and abundance of koalas.

The surveys are important, particularly because fire managers need to know of those areas where there are higher levels of koala activity and be able to factor this information into their fire management plans and take other measures to protect the habitat.

Continued Page 14.



Photo: Margaret, Chris and Luke checking map before going to first site

Koalas in Eurobodalla—volunteers to be subsidized

Keith Joliffe

The Coastwatchers Environment Fund has agreed to subsidize helpers traveling to scat searches and field-based vegetation type inventories, as well as the GIS mapping component of the Eurobodalla Koalas project. Those needing to travel some distance will be paid \$30 per excursion for their transport costs plus \$30 for accommodation, up to a maximum equivalent of five people for ten trips.

During 2012, using a four-wheel-drive vehicle also hired under the funding arrangement, Keith Joliffe will lead the field trips to iconic forest locations around the Eurobodalla, as part of a peer reviewed scientific effort to test the capacity of the Shire's remaining forests to sustain a revived low density koala population. In addition, working mainly from Canberra but occasionally at the coast, Judy Bourne will lead the development of a multi-layered GIS habitat map.

Anyone wanting to volunteer for the fieldwork or the GIS mapping aspect should contact me on mobile 0427 546 156. No prior knowledge is necessary, but willingness to get your hands dirty in the survey technique and a good level of physical fitness are required for the bush outings. The mapping work requires willingness to learn the GIS computer application or to liaise productively with agencies holding databases.

Old Cooma Common Grassland Reserve

Geoff Robertson

Friends of Grasslands (FOG) working bees have now been helping at Old Cooma Common Grassland Reserve (OCCGR), outside of Cooma for over a decade and on Saturday 5 Nov, there was a return to the fray.

When, over ten years ago, FOG decided to apply for a grant for OCCGR, then referred to as Radio Hill, it was known that it was a large area and weedy. In those early days, from a distance, Radio Hill looked like many neglected areas with large areas dominated by woody weeds, especially hawthorn. Closer inspection would reveal large areas dominated by African love grass.

In the initial year or two there was a concerted effort to get rid of woody weeds as well as attacks on African love grass (ALG). Less attention was paid to other weeds. In the beginning with regular FOG working bees and funding to pay for professional weeding effort, a large impact was made on woody weed and ALG.

However, the weeds were not going to give up easily, and when the initial intensive phase was over, the woody weeds and ALG reasserted themselves and were joined by extensive outbreaks of St John's wort, Vipers Bugloss and Lambs Ear. The struggle was a little overwhelming but with grit and determination, an emerging better strategy and added resources, the battle was rejoined.

A new strategy has clearly emerged. Probably the most important is the fact that Jim Williamson and Margaret Ning have now conducted several three day working bees with Jim undertaking well targeted boom spraying in areas dominated by weeds, especially St John's, and Margaret spot spraying in the high quality grassland areas. This protects the threatened and rare plants - this year the Monaro golden daisy flowering was spectacular. This activity plus FOG's regular working bees is making a difference.

On 5 Nov, the big guns came out, with Jim and I spraying from tanks on quad bikes and Margaret spraying from a tank on the back of her Hilux. June and Bob Wilkinson put on backpacks, while Andrew Zelnik and John Fitz Gerald (FOG's President)

undertook cutting and daubing woody weeds and Trish Williamson used a mix of spraying and picking techniques. By day's end much progress had been made. While absent on this occasion, David Eddy, well known for his grassland conservation leadership on the Monaro, and author of several books on local grasslands, should be mentioned as he initiated this project and has been, together with Margaret and Jim, its mainstay.

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Photo: Jim Williamson, John Fitz Gerald, Andrew Zelnik, Trish Williamson, Bob Wilkinson, June Wilkinson, Margaret Ning on 5 Nov 2011

Grassland restoration and Greening Australia

Geoff Robertson

27 OCT It was a privilege to be invited to the annual meeting of Greening Australia Capital Region (GA) held at the Australian National Botanic Gardens on a pleasant spring evening. A wonderful spread, interesting talks, and a network of many of the region's leaders in ecosystem restoration made the event a very enjoyable and rewarding one.

Peter Davidson, the Chair of GA, spoke of the challenges that GA has faced and overcome. GA is extremely fortunate to have him at its helm. Peter is truly impressive, as anyone who knows him will testify. He has nearly forty years' professional and practical experience in agriculture, natural resource and catchment management at local, state, national and international levels.

Jason Cummings, GA's CEO, who joined the GA team in May last year gave a presentation on GA activities and catalogued its amazing statistics in terms of land restored, volunteers involved, etc. Jason also has a strong background in natural resource management as an academic, consultant and policy adviser, as well as a PhD in ecosystem rehabilitation, and is extremely capable.

The highlight for me was a talk by Paul Gibson Roy from Greening Australia Victoria's Grassy Groundcover Restoration Project (GGRP), which aims at protecting and restoring species-rich native wildflower grasslands that once covered large areas of south-eastern Australia. His team won the 2011 Earthwatch Rio Tinto Prize for Citizen Science - \$25,000 prize.

I have followed Paul's pioneering work on grassland re-establishment for a number of years now, and it is truly amazing.

Seed sourcing has been a key element. Seed is collected from wild populations, ensuring a biodiverse sample is collected. It is then on-grown in seed orchards, and harvested from these orchards where it can be used in restoration work. Now GA at its Aranda base and Scottsdale have established seed orchards for a number of our more rare grassland species.

Good site preparation is also essential. Often the top level of soil is scraped to achieve a significantly reduced weed re-emergence and lower nutrient levels. Paul reported that a large number of grassland species established successfully from field-sown seed mixtures and many have expanded their range over time through recruitment. The project has successfully developed methods that allow for sowing complex seed-mixtures at field scales.

Fascinatingly, Paul reported that now the sites are being repopulated with invertebrates and small reptiles, a great sign of success, and that many sites are now being managed by normal natural resource management techniques such as fire, widely practised in Victoria to manage natural grassland remnants.

The GGRP publishes an electronic newsletter the Grassy Gazette, a great read: <http://www.greeningaustralia.org.au/our-solutions/biodiversity/restoring-grassy-groundcover>.

Too many superlatives! I don't think so.



Getting a Guernsey

Minders of Tuggeranong Homestead

Jenny Horsfield

In November 2011, Minders of Tuggeranong Homestead (MOTH) was gratified to receive the Community award from the National Savewater Alliance at their annual presentation in Melbourne. This award recognised MOTH's role in installing eight water tanks on the property (obtained through a Commonwealth Community Action grant) and also its role as a small but committed community group who is playing its part in the wider effort to increase biodiversity in our native woodlands and grasslands.

MOTH (Minders of Tuggeranong Homestead) was founded in 1992 to fight a proposal to subdivide and develop the historic Tuggeranong Homestead in the Tuggeranong Valley in Canberra. The 31- hectare property is now under full heritage protection, thanks largely to the passionate advocacy of the founding members of MOTH.

A small area of Yellow Box/Red Gum Grassy Woodland on the property, and an adjacent Natural Temperate Grassland, are remnants of the original landscape that was typical of this area before white settlement. MOTH, with the support of the Southern ACT Catchment Group, has been involved for a number of years in a long-term project to protect and improve the understory of the woodland, where there are some fine stands of *E. melliodora* and *E. blakelyi*. MOTH has developed a wide network of supporters: in local schools, through a partnership with Price WaterhouseCoopers, and with regular visits from Conservation Volunteers Australia.

Martyn Royds from Braidwood scoops up a Carbon Farming Cocky Award

The 19 finalists in this year's Carbon Cocky of the Year Award all have one thing in common: they mix and match a combination of land management practices to enrich their soils. "This could explain why carbon farmers report higher rates of carbon sequestration in their soils than government research agencies that only ever study the effect of a single practice at a time," says Michael Kiely of awards organiser Carbon Farmers of Australia.

For example, the winners of the Carbon Cocky of the Year Award, Yass district graziers John and Robyn Ive, combine controlled grazing with water-spreading, strategic tree plantings, and soil additives (such as sewage ash and poultry manure). Braidwood grazier Martin Royds, winner of the Best Practice Award, combines grazing management, pasture cropping, and soil treatments, including Biodynamic preparations, compost teas, and worm juice. Spring Ridge mixed farmer Cam McKellar, winner of the Outstanding Leadership Award, combines direct drill, controlled traffic, fish emulsion, humates and molasses/sugar as a microbial stimulant, as well as composting and cover cropping.

Volunteers on Scottsdale runners up in 15th Australasian Vertebrate Pest Conference

Peter Saunders, Bush Heritage Reserve Manager, Scottsdale

Some time ago I nominated all the volunteers working on Bush Heritages Scottsdale reserve for their tireless and continued work on Scottsdale and its rabbits. The award is sponsored by Animal Control Technologies and was announced at the 15th Australasian Vertebrate Pest Conference, in Sydney and they came runners up, which is really good! The volunteers come from Cooma, Moruya, Canberra, Sydney and Melbourne.

It was awarded in recognition of outstanding and significant achievement in the area of practical application of technology to control pest animals at the field level. The award recognises the effort and dedication required at an operations level and the embracing of the battle against rabbits in sensitive habitats.

K2C AGM: President's Report

Geoff Robertson

Much has been achieved by the Kosciuszko to Coast Partnership (K2C) in 2011 to place on a much firmer footing. The K2C committee meeting regularly to guide and develop the organisation and reports on its activities to the partners. The committee has established K2C Incorporated to handle the business and legal side and that is working well. We have applied for many grants and worked to obtain ongoing sources of funding, and we are confident that we have made real progress in this area.

K2C is a regional partner of the Great Eastern Ranges project which currently has five regional partners in NSW with one extending into Queensland. This is proving to be a very valuable alliance with Rob Dunn, its chief executive officer, opening up many opportunities for each partner. GER has strong support from the NSW Government as our recent meeting with Robyn Parker demonstrated.

We held three very interesting forums this year, two devoted to our very valuable work with the Atlas of Living Australia (ALA). Each forum has a closed session for partners to exchange information and ideas, followed by an open session to pursue a topic that is of particular interest to partners and associates and that will help set future directions. We have now opened up K2C to associate members so that we can start to realise our objectives and at the same time recognise and partner with the many agencies, groups, businesses, landowners, scientists and individuals who are working for better conservation and sustainable farming outcomes.

We have formed a number of project groups to roll out the particular projects for which have been funded. We are currently working on our plans for 2012 to ensure that we by the end of the year we have established a sustained program in each of our six target areas, grasslands, woodlands, riparian and wetlands, bush birds, arboreal mammals and threatened forest species and communities, as well as further progressed out Indigenous engagement. By year's end we will also rolled out much of our projects.

Our work with ALA has been very exciting and we are currently developing a K2C Atlas which will enable our partners and associates to record flora and fauna species in the region and to record information about their favourite places and projects. This should greatly increase the access to information on species, cultural and physical landscapes, and sustainable farming practices and greatly increase our scientific contribution. We will also be in a position, hopefully, to assist groups to develop their own tools using the ALA.

To incorporate the K2C Atlas we are redesigning our website and we beg your patience as it will take some time before the new website becomes fully operation. Thanks to Marion Benjamin for her assistance.

A recent coup was to get up a carbon farming workshop, which over 60 people attended. We considered that despite our other heavy commitments, this was an emerging issue that we needed to get our heads around and to provide this information to our farming community.

We have started to roll out our landscapes connectivity project, with the first information session held recently in Bungendore. This project will roll out funding opportunities to conserve our grasslands and woodlands and to open up Indigenous natural resource management opportunities.

Currently, we are considering extending our borders and your views on this would be welcome.

This is our tenth issue of *Groundcover*. It will continue to come out three times per year and we hope that our partners and associates will use it to publicise what they are doing and that readers will find it of great interest and value to them.

These achievements have stretched our capacity and forced us to be adaptable. We have been very fortunate to continue to secure the services of Lauren Van Dyke as our facilitator who does amazing work to facilitate our efforts. Her efforts are matched by many volunteers who give their time freely.

K2C Boundary

Geoff Robertson

K2C is considering expanding its border to include the SE corner of NSW to include the southern Monaro and the far SE coast. It has also been asked to play a stronger role in the area NE of the ACT. This piece is solely concerned with the SE extension. Views of partners and associates are invited on this issue.

The obvious limiting factor is K2C resources and to date our most active work has been in the Murrumbidgee corridor between Canberra and Cooma. That is about to change as we will expand our direct activities beyond this corridor under our new Monaro Landscapes Connectivity Project.

Also, we are tentatively considering holding our third K2C Fair at Braidwood or Bungendore.

Some dot points to consider in thinking about an expanded K2C boundary:

- Several of our partners and associates are actively involved in the SE corner and south Monaro and there may be opportunities to provide letters of support for their ventures and even to assist in other ways including publicising activities of partners and associates.
- We can readily expand our evolving K2C species Atlas to cover the expanded area.
- Canberra in many ways is a regional capital for the south Monaro and the SE corner and people in these areas look to those closer to Canberra for assistance.
- We have had a large number of inquiries from this region and the nature of the vegetation and fauna is essentially the same as that which is included in the K2C region.

We will also explore with our partners how we might undertake greater activity in the area NE of the ACT.

Your feedback on expanding the K2C boundary is welcome. Please contact Lauren (contact details Page 15)

Seven K2C targets—a snapshot

Geoff Robertson

K2C has seven target areas that are its key focus. These are grasslands, woodlands, small bush birds, arboreal mammals, valley floor riparian areas, wetlands and bogs, and threatened species and ecological communities in forests. Each target covers different parts of the landscape, although there is some overlap.

Our Monaro Landscape Connectivity Project, with partners Murrumbidgee CMA and Murrumbidgee Landcare Inc, will provide us with a focus on grasslands and woodlands and Indigenous land management practices. In the past there has also been a strong emphasis on bush birds with our bird surveys running now for four years with Greening Australia and the Canberra Ornithologist Group .

Once established, our K2C Atlas will enable us to do much more in each of our key targets. Partners and associates, for example, will be able to record important K2C places and the location of rare and threatened species and communities. We will also use the website and *Groundcover* to publicise the various efforts to protect and recover these areas.

We also encourage our partners and associates to bring to our attention ways in which we can address each of these targets in the coming year or two.

Redeveloping the K2C website

Geoff Robertson

The K2C website is undergoing many changes,. Thanks to Marion Benjamin from the Murrumbidgee Landcare Inc we are initiating the following changes.

The first changes will add a set of button for species in the K2C region, which are in the left hand column of our home page. Check on buttons for reptiles and frogs and birds and you will be able to see what we are doing. The prototype for reptiles is well established (see news item on reptiles) and birds is being developed. Our next steps will be to add plants and mammals. These changes are coming about because of our work with the Atlas of Living Australia.



We have also added a series of buttons in the right hand column of our home page for K2C projects, K2C places, K2C profiles, K2C programs and K2C Indigenous engagement. The projects, places, and profiles buttons will open up databases for users to view and learn about the projects that K2C, or its partners, or associates are involved with, what is happening on the many K2C places (e.g. reserves and private properties) and their contribution to sustainable farming and conservation, and K2C profiles of groups and individuals and their contributions within the region. The K2C program button will lead to a description of K2C programs, activities and information on how to use and add to the K2C calendar of events. The K2C Indigenous participation button will lead to a page describing what K2C is doing to promote Indigenous engagement.

If you have any ideas on any of these issues, and/or if you can help, please let us know.

Reptiles & frogs in the K2C region

Geoff Robertson

Our first task in the K2C - Atlas of Living Australia project was to develop a test site for frogs and reptiles. Check out our website and click on the reptiles and frogs button.



Photo: Delma inornata - posted by Joe McAuliffe on K2C ALA Reptiles & Frog site.

The next page will open up a series of buttons on frogs, snakes, turtles, geckos, skinks, dragons, legless lizards, monitors. Click on any button, e.g. legless lizards (such as *Delma inornata*) and you will see the beginning of our comprehensive guide of reptiles of the K2C region.

At the time of writing, you may also be asked to view records. However, to do this you need to register. This is an easy process and when you receive a response you can add your own records and view all the sightings that have been entered onto the database. When adding your own records you can choose between a casual observation or a multi-observation form. We can tell you much more, but for now just have a go!

The reptile and frog site is still experimental, i.e. not in full production, but if you experiment with it, you will be able to see its potential as an educational and scientific tool.

This site has been developed with the assistance of the ACT Herpetological Association, the University of Canberra, Applied School of Ecology, NSW Office of Environment & Heritage, and the ACT Government, illustrating how we see the K2C partnership working.

In future we will be promoting the K2C reptile and frog atlas. It will be possible for individuals to send in photos if they do not know what the species is, and we will, with our access to our experts, tell them. We will moderate data to ensure its accuracy and transfer it to the ALA database also. Over time we will be adding other species, work on birds is underway, and hopefully helping other groups to set up their own atlases.

We could also tell you a lot about the ALA itself, but hopefully you will discover that for yourself.

K2C Associate Membership grows

Groundcover

The Kosciuszko to Coast (K2C), a partnership of eleven natural resource management agencies and community organisations, has growing quickly by the addition of 600 Associate Members, comprising agencies, groups, landowners and families.

While K2C has been building its support base for many years now and building up the list of supporters who have been receiving *Groundcover*, K2C recently created Associate Membership and all its supporters have been made Associate Members for 2011-2012 and 2012-13. An email was sent to all its supporters telling them of this news, with an opt out option. In addition, K2C has been advertising availability of Associate Membership to all those who support our objectives, and has been receiving a steady stream of applications.

According to our President, Geoff Robertson, "This is a very pleasing development. Previously, many of our supporters felt that while they supported K2C, they did not belong to K2C. Now they belong and can feel a sense of ownership and responsibility, and a sense that they may contribute. Some of our associates may wish to play a passive role, just keeping in touch, and that is fine. Many of these people will be practicing sustainable farming and conservation practices in their own way or actively participating in the activities of our partners or associates. Others will want to be more involved and we will need to find creative and effective ways to facilitate that involvement. Already, we are activity developing projects and ways to develop our services to our partners and associates."

Geoff added "Associate Membership is free, but we welcome donations which for now unfortunately do not attract tax deductibility - we are working on this. Some generous donations are helping us to keep afloat until some promised funding kicks in. We will need to demonstrate that we use these funds effectively."

K2C Associate Members

Landholders, businesses, agencies & conservationists, this is an opportunity for you to work with us as an Associate Member to achieve better farming and conservation outcomes in the K2C region.

K2C works with Associate Members to promote them, and to provide them with information and assistance.

To check out how you might become an Associate Member, please check out our 'Members' tab on our website. If you are an Associate Member already but want to ensure that K2C has sufficient information on you, you might also want to complete and return the Associate Membership form.

K2C Annual General Meeting — update



Groundcover

The recent K2C Annual meeting and K2C Partners Forum was very well attended with almost all representatives from the 11 partners in the room together. The K2C Committee was elected and the positions are now taken up by the following people:

President—Geoff Robertson

Vice President—Tom Baker (new)

Secretary—Rainer Rehwinkel

Treasurer—Tony Robinson

Committee—David Eddy, Kathleen Harvey, David Hilhorst (new)

We welcome the new members on the K2C Committee.

The K2C Incorporated Committee (K2C Inc) is still in need of two more committee members. K2C Inc is the financial arm of the K2C Partnership and was established to manage funds according to the rules of an incorporated body and for that to happen a new committee was necessary. Please put your hand up if you would be interested in being on this committee. No long meetings.

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At this first site, an initial tree was selected and then the 29 trees, above a minimum size, nearest to it. All species of tree were selected and Chris explained how koalas might use each species. We look for evidence of their presence. The key method is to carefully remove the fallen bark from the base of each tree to a one metre diameter looking for koala scats (poo). Margaret, somewhat experienced in this work was the first to find scats. Once a scat has been found, one can move onto a new tree. Excitement rose and more scats were found. The tally was six by Margaret, five by each of Chris and Luke, but none by me.

Chris explained how the koalas in this area have quite distinct behaviour. The area can only support a few scattered koalas but he considers that the population is stable and slowly increasing.

After lunch we went to our second site, again through some interesting forests, and even though I had found no scats in the first survey, I knew I would in this site. Unfortunately, the second site turned out not to be a habitat site.

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Compared to ten years ago, what has been achieved? Woody weeds have been largely reduced and while they still emerge en masse, few can be seen rising above the height of the grass. ALG is well under control. Lamb's ear storks have largely disappeared. While areas outside the reserve glow yellow with St John's, no yellow is found in the reserve. Hopefully the blue flower of the vipers' will no longer be seen. It looks like what a natural temperate grassland should look like. However, the effort will need to be constant.

Cooma Council weeds unit has also played an important role. It has organised funding for some professional weeding and purchase of herbicide. The Murrumbidgee CMA has also provided great assistance by providing \$5,000 through its Community Action Grant to fund FOG's purchase of herbicide, lunches for volunteers etc. Well done OCCGR organisers and volunteers!

Adapted from article first appearing in the Jan-Feb 2012 issue of the News of Friends of Grasslands.

K2C Groundcover Newsletter of the Kosciuszko to Coast Partnership

The newsletter aims to:

- Bring you news on what is happening in the K2C region on: Grasslands, woodlands, riparian areas, wetlands and bogs, Small bush birds, arboreal mammals, & significant forest species.
- Inform you on K2C support and involvement in Indigenous engagement and report on what K2C Partners and Associate Members are up to.

This is your newsletter. Please let us know what you are doing?

Feel you can help K2C ?

K2C would gratefully welcome your volunteer support.

Here are some practical examples of areas in which we could well do with some volunteer help.

- * Newsletter preparation
- * Website / database updates
- * Organising field days, Partners Forums
- * Next 2012 Open day
- * Massaging shoulders

Please contact Lauren if you can commit some time.

Lauren Van Dyke

K2C Facilitator and Newsletter Editor

To enquire about K2C, its projects, this newsletter or how to become involved, contact Lauren on :

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Kosciuszko to Coast Partners are:

ACT Govt- Parks, Conservation and Lands – www.tams.act.gov.au

Bush Heritage Australia – www.bushheritage.org.au

Office of Environment and Heritage – www.environment.nsw.gov.au

Friends of Grasslands – www.fog.org.au

Greening Australia Capital Region – www.greeningaustralia.org.au/community/capital-region

Molonglo Catchment Group – www.molonglocatchment.com.au

Murrumbidgee Catchment Management Authority—www.murrumbidgee.cma.nsw.gov.au

Nature Conservation Trust of NSW – www.naturetrust.org.au

Southern Rivers Catchment Management Authority—www.southern.cma.nsw.gov.au

Upper Murrumbidgee Landcare Committee – www.umlc.org.au

Upper Murrumbidgee Catchment Coordinating Committee – www.umccc.org.au

K2C Partnership is proud to be part of the Great Eastern Ranges Initiative—www.greateasterranges.org.au