

# RESTORATION AND REVEGETATION OF A DEGRADED CREEK LINE

## overview of the project

This project was undertaken by Pretty Beach Public School, a small school on the New South Wales Central Coast, to restore a creek line on the periphery of the grounds as part of their Environmental Management Plan. Staff and students achieved this objective by removing a weed infestation from the creek, clearing rubbish from the creek bed and revegetating the banks with riparian plant species selected by their own research.

The school had already been carrying out regeneration work on adjacent bushland for many years, and had constructed a bridge over the creek. This project extended their regeneration program and was a continuation of their work on habitat management and biodiversity. The whole school community was involved in the project, which enhanced the environment and supplemented the learning program.

## how the project was carried out

The students planned and implemented most of the project themselves, with some help from community groups and a bush regeneration expert. They conducted an environmental audit on World Environment Day that showed the creek line was an area of low biodiversity. The restoration plan was designed to address this problem, and increase native biodiversity in the area.

The rubbish in the creek bed consisted of old building materials, metal fence pickets and chicken wire. This rubbish made access to the creek difficult and dangerous. A local builder used a bobcat to remove this material, which could not be removed by hand. The students used a steam method to eliminate weeds in preparation for planting. With the help of a bush regenerator, 100 native seedlings donated by Gosford City Council, as well as plants purchased from the budget were planted at the school. Students from all classes were rostered to water and care for the seedlings once they had been planted. The school Environmental Committee monitored progress and published reports on the school's web site and in the newsletter.

## outcomes now and in the future

Apart from creating a pleasant and environmentally healthy site, the restoration of the creek bed had several outcomes for the teaching and learning program. The environmental management aspects of the project benefited work in the curriculum areas of Human Society and its Environment and Science. The monitoring and reporting done by the students helped to improve communication skills by contributions to the web site and the newsletter. The involvement of various groups and organisations outside the school was an outcome that extended to the whole community, as it promoted awareness about the environmental issues of biodiversity, waste and revegetation.

Work will continue on the project in the future, as the creek bed will need an ongoing program of weeding and watering to ensure that the native plants become the dominant species. A roster has been established to ensure that future maintenance work is carried out. Throughout the project, links were established with a neighbouring school and this will encourage continuity of the project.



Clearing and revegetation work in progress

## benefits, challenges & lessons learned

The students and staff at Pretty Beach improved the degraded natural environment along a local creek bed. Their work created a potential habitat for native animals by replacing the weed infestation with riparian plant species. It also provided a space that could be used as an outdoor learning centre in the future. All sections of the school community benefited by extending their problem solving and planning skills, and the outside community improved their environmental knowledge and awareness.