

NORTH KATOOMBA CATCHMENT PRIVATE LAND RIPARIAN REMEDIATION

overview of the project

The North Katoomba Catchment Private Land Riparian Remediation project, conducted by Blue Mountains City Council, targeted private landholders whose properties were known to be causing sedimentation and weed infestation on public land downstream. The project's overall aim was to decrease the sources of possible reinfestation of weeds on public land, improve water quality and expand habitat links by managing the catchment as a whole through targeted on ground works and education.

Ten landholders were invited to participate in riparian rehabilitation, including erosion control works, weed removal, fencing and planting of riparian vegetation. A series of 'Mountain Living' workshops were attended by 50 residents from within the North Katoomba Catchment. The workshops assisted landowners to better manage their land and minimise future environmental damage by providing training on weed control, erosion, property planning and developing local networks. This project led to the establishment of two new Landcare groups in the area, and connections being made between landholders and Bushcare volunteers.



Residents were contacted to attend the Mountain Living workshops

how the project was carried out

The Katoomba Creek Weed Management Plan written by Council in 2004 recognised that privately owned land was having an impact on the North Katoomba Catchment due to weed infestation, loss of riparian habitat and stream bank erosion. Ten high priority properties were identified and the landholders were encouraged to participate in the project. Financial assistance for materials and labour to fence creek banks, control weeds and reinstate native riparian vegetation was provided by Council. Six of the ten landholders chose to participate in the project. Site visits were organised to provide on-site advice, develop property plans and train participants in bush regeneration techniques.

In addition, 1800 residents within the catchment were contacted through a letterbox drop to attend the Mountain Living workshops. At the two day workshops, participants created individual property plans that mapped weeds and stormwater, and linked this information with the overall health of the catchment. Individual site visits to participant's properties provided site specific advice and training. The workshops also covered topics such as waste avoidance and recycling, composting and worm farming, organic gardening, weeds, habitat creation, riparian vegetation and creek bank stability, water saving practices and non-toxic cleaning. To encourage involvement in these workshops participants were provided with a voucher to purchase native plants and a compost bin from local suppliers.

outcomes now and in the future

Through this program landowners became empowered to better manage their land and reduce environmental damage. This was achieved through the provision of training, development of property plans and connecting those involved with the project with local volunteer organisations such as Bushcare and Landcare.

Strong relationships have developed between Blue Mountains Council, residents, the local Catchment Management Authority and other agencies including Sydney Water and Roads and Traffic Authority. This has resulted in additional funding being made available by these organisations for further targeted riparian restoration works in the area.

benefits, challenges & lessons learned

This has been a successful project that has provided training and empowerment for residents to conduct rehabilitation work on local creek lines and reduce the impact of weeds and erosion on downstream wilderness areas. As a result of increased work in the targeted areas there has been a decrease in the weed population and stream bank erosion. The 950 plants established in the riparian zone on the high priority properties during this project will provide additional native habitat and link up natural corridors along the riparian zone as they mature.

One of the challenges for this project was the extensive time required to negotiate the details of the work to be carried out on the high priority sites with landholders and ensuring that the agreed works occurred. In future projects of this nature additional time and resources will be allocated to ensure this is adequately planned for.

One of the lessons learnt during this project was that in the cool climate of the Blue Mountains, weed control work is more effective in spring at the beginning of the growing season, as the weeds are more obvious. On ground works should be scheduled to occur during this period.