

Community Restoration Network

BUSH REGENERATION AT LANE COVE NATIONAL PARK

Project Location:

Lane Cove National Park, Sydney, Australia

Project Manager/Coordinator:

Friends of Lane Cove National Park, in conjunction with Park management

Project Duration:

The Volunteer Bushcare Program began in March 1991, but actual restoration activities did not commence until May 1994. These activities have been ongoing since.



Ecosystem to be Restored:

Tall forests along creeklines dominated by Water Gum (*Tristaniopsis laurina*); tall, open forests of Blackbutt/Sydney Blue Gum (*Eucalyptus pilularis*/ *E. saligna*); open woodland and heath on upper slopes

Area to be Restored:

31 high priority sites throughout the Park, with occasional activities on adjacent sites to ensure the longevity of restoration treatments already completed.

Primary Cause of Degradation:

A bushfire in January 1994 swept through the park and burned 332 ha of native bushland. Prior to this catastrophic event, the ecological integrity of the Park had been compromised by anthropogenic pressures related to urbanization and by the proliferation of invasive plant species.

Project Goal:

- Promote awareness of the significance of the Park's unique natural and cultural heritage
- Work for the protection and restoration of the ecosystems of Lane Cove National Park through bush regeneration
- Organise educational activities in the Park

Restoration Treatments Used:

The bushfire was widely acknowledged as a valuable "primary treatment" that eliminated weeds across a very large area of the Park, including moist gullies and highly fertile, weed-dominated urban ledges that had not been subjected to intense fire since the first period of urbanization. Besides killing a substantial proportion of weeds, the fire triggered massive germination from long-buried seedbanks of fire-adapted native species. Thus, the regeneration project was initiated to take advantage of this opportunity and help the natives become established before the weeds could return in even greater proliferation.

19 priority sites were initially chosen for regular weeding by volunteers, and these treatments were carried out over many months. In May 2000, a project was begun to target weed sources in the urban fringes and upper reaches of two small creek catchments whose lower reaches had already been subject to bush regeneration work. This was intended to increase the security of those sites already treated. There is now a total of 31 sites receiving treatment all throughout the valley, both at the bushland/suburban interface as well as at creekline locations within the Park.

Community Involvement:

A Volunteer Bushcare Program was started in March 1991 to conduct maintenance activities within the Park. As the need for more volunteers became apparent, the Friends of Lane Cove National Park was formally established as a committee to organize and recruit volunteers from among local community members. Before the Friends could even begin work, however, the bushfire burnt the majority of the Park in January 1994, and the Friends instead turned their attention to an ambitious regeneration program designed to capitalize on the groundswell of public concern about the Park's future. The Australian Association of Bush Regenerators (AABR) was enlisted to help train small groups of volunteers, and when the park reopened, visitors were recruited to help. 150 people participated in the first public meeting, and there are now 29 regular groups (encompassing more than 200 Bushcare volunteers) working at the Park.

Benefits to Local Ecology:

After more than 10 years of work, conditions at the 31 sites have been converted from medium to very high weed cover (with few natives) to very little weed cover with a predominance of natives.

Directions for the Future:

At the outset of the project, much focus had to be given to adequately training volunteer coordinators to perform site assessments and identify plant species. As a result, no formal monitoring program was developed, and this has limited the degree to which technical insights (and thus adaptive management) can benefit the work being done. As the project continues to move forward, more attention will be given to monitoring.

Funding/Support:

The Foundation for National Parks & Wildlife helped attract donations from various sources totalling AUD\$330,000 to get the project started after the fire. More than AUD\$400,000 has since been raised by the Friends group through membership fees, donations, grants from the local Catchment Management Committee and State and Federal governments. The in-kind support from volunteers is estimated to have a value of approximately AUD\$2 million.

References/Contacts:

Reidy, Margaret, Winkie Chevalier and Tein McDonald. 2005. Lane Cove National Park Bushcare volunteers: Taking stock, 10 years on. *Ecological Management & Restoration* 6(2):94-104.

The Friends of Lane Cove National Park
<http://users.bigpond.net.au/folcnp/>

The Community Restoration Network is a sub-tier of the Global Restoration Network (GlobalRestorationNetwork.org), a project of the Society for Ecological Restoration International.