

Biodiversity
Conservation
Trust

Understory

NSW BCT Newsletter | August 2019

Understory August 2019

bct.nsw.gov.au

email: info@bct.nsw.gov.au | phone: 1300 992 688

[f](#) @NSWBCT [t](#) @BCT_NSW



Welcome to the second edition of *Understory*, the BCT's newsletter for our private land conservation agreement holders. *Understory* is published three times each year and contains information about biodiversity conservation and the BCT's programs. We also share landholder stories, guidelines and other BCT news.

Since the last edition of *Understory*, the BCT has continued its work in encouraging and supporting private landholders to participate in biodiversity conservation. The tradition of private land conservation in NSW has a long and proud history with the voluntary and dedicated efforts of landholders and community groups, and the BCT in its partnerships with landholders, farmers and landcarers is continuing this important work.

Early in July of this year the NSW Minister for Energy and Environment, the Hon Matt Kean, visited the property of Greg and Lyn Rummery who hold a conservation agreement with the BCT. The Minister announced our most recent private land conservation outcomes.

So far, 136 landholders have signed or plan to sign a conservation agreement with the BCT, creating conservation areas across more than 29,000 hectares. The BCT is investing more than \$91 million to support these agreements. Landholders with funded agreements are typically being paid between \$21 and \$423 per hectare per annum to manage these conservation areas.



River in Walgett, NSW.
Photo by Colin Elphick Carter

Supporting *you* to protect biodiversity on *your* land.

Other agreement holders are eligible to apply for the BCT's Conservation Partners Grants.

Our new and existing agreement holders are assisting to protect and manage many unique landscapes, threatened ecosystems and habitats for native plant and animal species on private land. More details of the outcomes of these new conservation agreements can be found on our website at www.bct.nsw.gov.au.

One of our important goals is promoting public knowledge, appreciation and understanding of the value of biodiversity and the importance of biodiversity conservation. Our Biodiversity Conservation Education Strategy sets out some key projects to achieve this.

We want to acknowledge and celebrate the experiences of our landholders. If you have any stories or information to share or know of a BCT landholder that might be interested; please get in

touch through our inquiry phone number or email address at the bottom of this page.

I hope you enjoy this second edition of *Understory*, and we look forward to continuing to work with our landholders throughout the rest of the year as we expand on our important private land conservation achievements so far.



Paul Elton
Chief Executive Officer

A note on 'Country'

Traditional Custodians identify landscapes that they have a cultural affiliation with as 'Country'. Country plays an essential role in determining lore, kinships and roles and responsibilities, and for many Traditional Custodians, it also reflects their identity as individuals and as a community. Seasonal indicators on Country inform Traditional Custodians when to fish, hunt, burn or undertake ceremonies. BCT acknowledges the Traditional Custodians across NSW and the importance their cultures play on Country in maintaining a balance with our ecosystems.

Cover image
Granite boulders at Geebung Flat, NSW.
Photo by Stuart Cohen

BCT News



Photo by Colin Elphic Carter

Minister's Visit to Walgett

On Thursday 8 July 2019 the NSW Minister for Energy and Environment, the Hon. Matt Kean, visited one of our newest agreement holders in Walgett, in northern NSW. The landholders: Greg, who is an experienced agronomist; and Lyn Rummery, gave Minister Kean a tour of their property. Members of the BCT's Northern Inland team were also there to meet Minister Kean and speak about our involvement in conserving the property's biodiversity.



The Rummery's property holds spectacular biodiverse woodland, forest and floodplain and is particularly vital in the area due to the current lack of water in the landscape.

The Rummerys have been offered a conservation agreement with the BCT after their successful application in the BCT's North West Plains Conservation Tender. Their property will now be protected for the term of their agreement, and the Rummerys will receive annual payments for their conservation efforts. As the agreement is on the title of the property, even if the property changes ownership, its protection is maintained, and any

future landholders will continue to receive the annual payments.

Minister Kean used the opportunity to announce the BCT's latest tender outcomes from our Conservation Management Program, which are available on our website, and expressed his enthusiasm for our programs and partnerships with landholders.

Conservation Champions

Conservation Champions is a significant BCT educational project being rolled out over the state. Tailored to children in years 5, 6, and 11, it encourages students, through hands-on experience, to reflect on the importance of biodiversity. Students work with our landholders, ecologists and educators out in the field on private land. They learn about why biodiversity is important from a global perspective, for the local landscape and for sustainable farming; and see how landholders are actively protecting biodiversity through agreements with the BCT.



Photos on this page by Colin Elphic Carter

A Trip to Western NSW

In April of this year some of the BCT team took a trip to south western NSW to investigate the unique challenges and opportunities for private land conservation in this area.



The BCT met with Aboriginal communities and agencies in the region to discuss agreements that can protect and enhance under-represented landscapes and cultural values on private land. One of the many highlights was a tour of Tar-ru Lands with the Barkindii Traditional Owner group who outlined their aspirations for managing the important piece of land along the Murray River.

The Western region covers 42% of NSW (more than 32 million hectares) and consists of approximately 95% uncleared landscapes, although it is impacted by domestic, feral and native herbivore grazing. Agricultural production includes grazing, dryland agriculture, and irrigated agriculture.

Aboriginal communities make up approximately 13% of the Western NSW population, and consist of

around 19 Traditional Owner groups, and the area is home to many highly significant cultural sites.

BCT staff visited two of the largest conservation agreements in the state, Nanya Station and Scotia Wildlife Sanctuary, together 140,000 ha of high conservation value Scotia Mallee country. Nanya Station is managed by Federation University and Scotia by the Australian Wildlife Conservancy. Both properties are great examples of the benefits of long-term conservation management for protecting highly valuable landscapes.

Western NSW has a rich and diverse Aboriginal involvement in conservation and land management, and under Native Title claims, Aboriginal land management may play a greater role in conservation within the region.

This trip was a great opportunity to engage with some of the Aboriginal community and agencies in the region to discuss agreements that can protect and enhance wetland and riparian biodiversity and cultural values on private land.



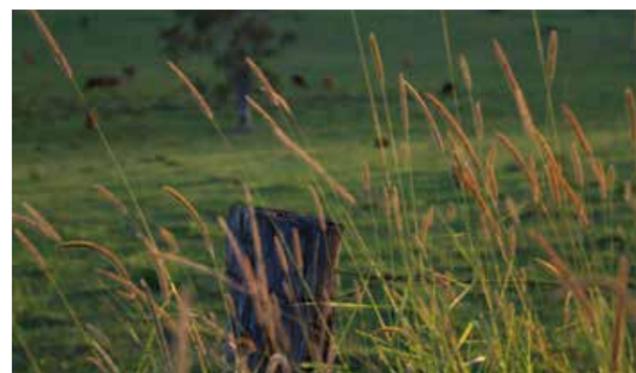
Photos on this page by Darren Chong

Applying for grant funding

If you have an agreement with us and do not receive annual funding, you may be eligible to apply for a grant.

The BCT offers grants through our Conservation Partners Program, which are used to assist with conservation management and improving biodiversity values. For example, if you have a weed outbreak or problems with feral species, and need financial assistance to manage these to ensure a healthy and biodiverse landscape, contact us to see if you are eligible for a grant. You can also apply for grant funding to support the installation or repair of fencing to exclude stock, or the management of pests. Grants range from \$2000 to \$15,000 per year for up to three years, depending on your type of agreement and other eligibility criteria.

For more information visit the Conservation Partners Grants page on our website or contact us using the details at the bottom of this page.



Grant relief for Quoll Headquarters

Recently devastated by fire, Quoll Headquarters, a 164-hectare property just north of Tenterfield, is under an in-perpetuity conservation agreement with the BCT. Its owner Steve Haslam has recently been successful in applying for a Conservation Partners Grant, which has given him the funds to install new fencing to protect his conservation area.

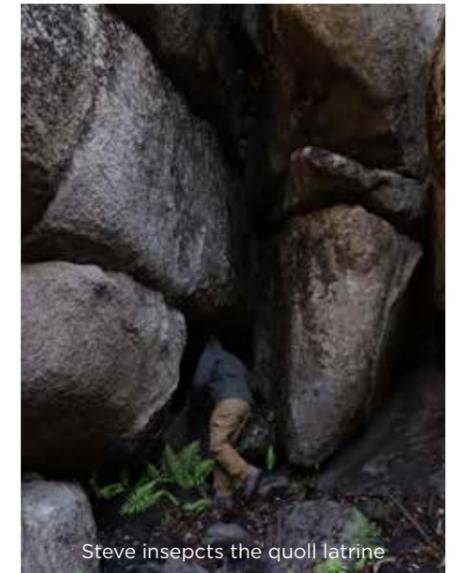
When Steve purchased his property in 2001, it was the back block of a third-generation grazier, which had never seen bulldozers. The property had old-growth forest that was home to a huge variety of native wildlife, especially with its proximity to several national parks. Steve moved in with the primary goal of protecting the spotted-tail quoll, mainland Australia's largest carnivorous marsupial, which is nationally endangered.

"I've always grown up with a passion for wildlife ... I had the chance to buy my little piece of habitat and that really excited me."

Steve's dedication to protecting the spotted-tail quoll is evident in his positivity and persistence after his property was permanently damaged by an uncharacteristic bushfire earlier in 2019. For several months after the fire he watched his beautiful land bounce back, and with the help of camera trapping and his skills in locating 'quoll latrines' he has finally seen the return of this vitally important carnivore.

Steve is keen to start installing his new fencing so he can continue his important work in private land conservation.

"It's a really exciting project for this property and it's great to have received a contribution from the BCT towards that."



Steve inspects the quoll latrine



New growth after the fire

Your Stories

Bushbashing at Glenorie.

Glenorie Wildlife Refuge

Jocelyn Howden's land is part of Glenorie Wildlife Refuge, a small collection of properties on floodplain and breathtaking sandstone ridge top north-west of Sydney. Jocelyn and the other owners dedicate their time and efforts to conserving this important pocket of bush while huge areas just outside their borders are cleared for urban development as Sydney expands.

"Naturally housing development threatens the region, but bushland on the fringe of Sydney is essential to preserve clean air, clean water and natural beauty for the future," Jocelyn says.

Glenorie Wildlife Refuge was formed in 1989 years ago when five families of landowners in Cattai and Glenorie met and decided to conserve a corridor of around 200 acres (80 hectares) of biodiverse bushland. Jocelyn now has two agreements on her land – a wildlife refuge agreement and an in-perpetuity conservation agreement – a decision she made based on suitability for her children's inheritance.

"If they want to divide the property up later there's enough left for them to have an equal share and to still keep the conservation area in place."

An in-perpetuity conservation agreement with the BCT is on the land title, which means the conservation area will be protected even if the property is sold or passed on to new owners. Jocelyn's decision to upgrade the protection of her property has inspired other owners at Glenorie

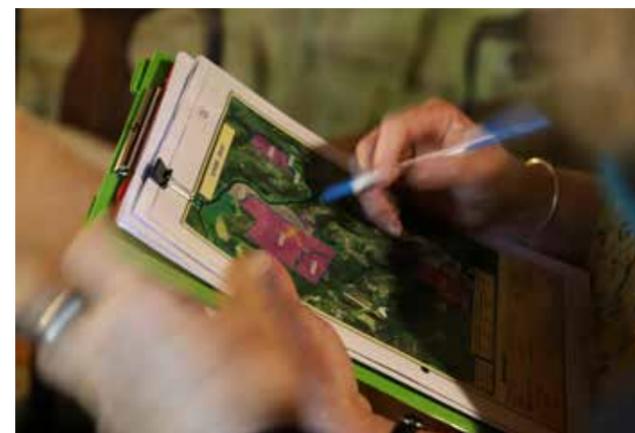


Jocelyn (left) and neighbour Lyn (right) both have BCT agreements which form part of Glenorie Wildlife Refuge



Male king parrot in Jocelyn's backyard

Wildlife Refuge, such as Jocelyn's neighbour and friend Lynn, to look in to the options available to them. If you're interested in upgrading the protection on your property, get in touch by using the details below.



Looking over the agreement



An old sign at Glenorie

The birding Guppys

Sarah and Micheal Guppy live at Ballara, a 20-hectare property near the town of Moruya on the south coast of NSW. Half of the property was originally bought in 1973 by Stephen Marchant, Sarah's father, who was an amateur ornithologist. Stephen channeled his knowledge and experience into the property, and completed a comprehensive nine-year study on the breeding biology of the resident woodland bird population.

The Guppys took over Ballara in 2004, to find that Stephen's survey site was completely overgrown. After discovering remnants of his tracks, they began to think about repeating the bird study, 30 years later. Though it wasn't really what they had in mind for their retirement, the more Sarah and Micheal saw of the beautiful woodlands and its avian residents, the more they were persuaded that they had been presented with a unique opportunity.

In 2006 the Guppys began the mammoth task of repeating Stephen's study, spending hundreds of hours banding birds, finding nests, and assigning pairs to each nest. They identified 29 native bird species such as the Superb fairy-wren (*Malurus lambertii*), Sacred kingfisher (*Todiramphus sanctus*) and Spotted pardalote (*Pardalotus punctatus*). In 2012 a conservation agreement was approved, and by 2015 around 150 nests a year were recorded over 10 breeding seasons.

Together with Stephen's study, the Guppys developed a 17-year data set explaining the importance of climate and rainfall on the breeding activity of woodland bird communities in south-eastern Australia. Sarah and Michael feel very reassured knowing that this special ecosystem will remain protected in-perpetuity under their conservation agreement with the Biodiversity Conservation Trust.

Contact the BCT using the details below to read the Guppys' research paper in a journal compilation by Birdlife Australia.



Michael and Sarah Guppy

Properties for sale



Picola - \$ 1,300,000

SOUTHERN NSW
Approx. 25km west of West Wyalong

- | Broad acre cropping and grazing
- | Rural conservation
- | Agriculture



Pretoria - \$ 690,000

NORTHERN NSW
Centrally located between Tamworth, Gunnedah and Quirindi

- | Mixed farming
- | Lifestyle/weekend getaway



Mount Olive - contact sales manager

SOUTHERN NSW
Approx. 25km north east of Narrandera

- | Cropping and grazing
- | Rural conservation
- | Agriculture



Mulunga - \$880,000

NORTHERN NSW
40 minutes' drive to Tamworth

- | Large lifestyle block/hobby farm
- | Rural conservation
- | Architecturally designed home

For all enquiries about BCT rural land sales, contact our Property Sales Manager Chris Perceval on 0437 147 611.



Photo by Colin Elphic Carter

BCT Board Members

Hon. Robert Hill AC | Chairperson
Virginia Malley | Deputy Chairperson
Renata Brooks | Member
Duncan McGregor | Member
Hon. Gary Nairn AO | Member
Russell Taylor AM | Member
Dr David Freudenberger | Member
Dr Neil Byron | Member

BCT Executive

Paul Elton | Chief Executive Officer
Carolyn Davies | Director Programs
Alan Goodwin | Director Regional Delivery

Thank You

The Biodiversity Conservation Trust gratefully acknowledges all those landholders who have shared their stories for this issue and for past communications.

Thank you to those who have supported the BCT through its start up, and to the many landholders who have told their neighbours, friends and family about us. Together we can work to protect biodiversity on private land in New South Wales.

**Did you enjoy this issue of Understory?
Please remember to recycle or pass this
on to friends and family.**

Understory August 2019 Edition

bct.nsw.gov.au

email: info@bct.nsw.gov.au | phone: 1300 992 688

[f](#) @NSWBCT [t](#) @BCT_NSW