

8 ASSISTANCE

For many people, camphor laurel control is a big job. The good (and bad) news is that you are not alone and if you work together with other people with the same problem you can achieve a lot more. Landcare is an excellent example of how people can combine their efforts to achieve excellent results. The following chapter gives information about Landcare as well as a number of funding opportunities available for camphor laurel control. Remember it is always good to seek advice as new funding opportunities continue to become available (see 8.2.16 regarding future sources of funding). The North Coast Regional Funding Compendium, available from DLWC Grafton, will be updated regularly as new sources of funding become available.

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8.1 Landcare

Landcare groups are community groups that are usually established by people with a common concern about the quality of land or water in the local area. There are over 400 landcare, bushcare, dunecare and coastcare groups on the NSW North Coast. They vary in size from 5 to over 100 people and are currently working on private property, roadsides, parks, schools, crown land, national parks and elsewhere.

Are there groups already working in my area?

There is bound to be a landcare group or 2 working near you. Projects being worked on vary from weed control, gully stabilisation, property management planning, seed collection, plant raising, replanting and many others. Help your local group or another group that is working on a project that you support. Contact the Regional Landcare Facilitator (see below) to find out what groups are working near you.

How do I form a new landcare group?

Contact the Landcare Facilitator Ms Lindy Brown on (02) 65631212 or your nearest Department of land and Water Conservation office or Greening Australia.

What should I do once the landcare group is formed?

- Observe what is happening in the local environment, catchment and community.
- Talk to others in your local community about common land and water degradation concerns and the benefits of working together to solve them.
- Call a public meeting so that people in the local area can become involved and help solve any problems.
- Seek advice and any assistance from local landcare and bushcare coordinators, landcare groups, Greening Australia, community nurseries, Councils, noxious weed officers and other government departments such as NPWS, DLWC, NSW Agriculture, NSW State Forests and environmental groups.
- Do a short course through Farming for the Future, TAFE, Tocal or Universities. The range of courses available is excellent and in some cases can be tailored to your needs.

What about insurance?

\$10 million public liability insurance cover is available from a number of insurance companies for only approximately \$100 per year, which includes the cost of an annual report. Contact your local landcare coordinator, DLWC etc.

How do I obtain funding?

Apart from opportunities that may be available within your local community, numerous other opportunities are listed on the following pages.

Adapted from various Landcare NSW publications and L. Brown (pers. comm.).

8.2 **Funding opportunities**

A variety of funding opportunities are available to help manage camphor laurel and other threatening weeds. Funding should be sought for higher priority areas before lower priority areas. Some funding opportunities include:

8.2.1 **Camphor laurel stem-injection kits/backpacks and / or spears**

Land occupiers or Landcare group members can now hire herbicide stem-injection kits from many North Coast Weed Control Authorities. The previous Tweed CMC purchased several kits for use by Landcare groups. In some areas, landcare groups / landholders have to have completed a Farm Chemical User's Course before hiring / using the kits.

8.2.2 **Environmental Trust Grants**

The amount of funding available through State Government Environmental Trust Grants has doubled since 2000. Funding is available for a range of projects focused on:

- Restoration and rehabilitation projects from \$5,000 to \$100,000 by community groups;
- Environmental education projects from \$5,000 to \$100,000 by community groups;
- Research projects from \$30,000 to \$300,000 over 1 to 3 years by universities or other research institutions in-conjunction with community groups;
- Environmental projects by all other groups including Government departments;
- Eco-schools grants. Grants of up to \$1000 for as many as 80 schools each year for use in native plant growing projects.

Closing date for applications is generally in **July**. Successful applications will most likely be announced around December, with projects to commence after February the following year. Further information and guidelines for applications are available from the Grants Administration Officer on (02) 99955369 or from the EPA's website

<http://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/envtrust/>

8.2.3 **Natural Heritage Trust**

The Federal Government's Natural Heritage Trust (NHT) makes funds available for environmental enhancement, restoration and rehabilitation projects each year (2001 is planned to be the last year) under several different programs. These include:

Bushcare. The main funding opportunity for community based environmental restoration / rehabilitation projects involving camphor laurel. ***Projects must be for environmental restoration etc. and not just weed control.***

Funding is not available for restoration projects that include a significant proportion of camphor laurel control in areas where it is **declared noxious** (see chapter 4.1). Funding is available, however, for projects in these areas that involve the control of "environmental weeds" followed by encouragement and planting of native vegetation.

Projects are more likely to be funded if they are driven by the community (preferably with a community group as the applicant); have clear (preferably visible) benefits to the public; enhance / establish bushland corridors; are linked to native vegetation / enlarge remnants; raise community awareness, and; include the planting of local native species. Funding must be matched \$1 for \$1 by the applicant (can be "support in kind"). Applications close in February and are usually announced in the following November. Contact your Bushcare Coordinator, Catchment Management Board coordinator or Environment Australia on 1800 671717 for more details.

Farm forestry. The Farm Forestry Program aims to encourage the incorporation of commercial tree growing and management into farming systems for the purpose of wood and non-wood products, increasing agricultural productivity and sustainable natural resource management. The program is targeted towards utilisation of cleared agricultural land. Contact Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry – Australia on (02) 6272 4904 or forestry.contact@affa.gov.au

Endangered Species Program. Assistance is available to protect species whose survival has been assessed as being under threat (there are 1,100 native species listed on the Endangered Species Protection Act 1992) and includes funding to address key threatening processes (which in some situations may be the spread of weeds). Phone 6274 2512 or visit the website: www.nht.gov.au/programs/esp.html for more information.

National Wetlands Program. Although priorities are given to Ramsar listed wetlands, limited funding (approx. 1% of all NHT funding) is available to retain, restore and raise awareness of the ecological, cultural, economic and social values of wetlands. Phone 6274 2791 for more information.

Waterwatch Australia focuses on community driven water quality monitoring, departmental involvement and info sharing as well as education. Phone 6274 2797.

Farmbis encourages individuals or groups to increase their participation in the farm-based learning activities they identify as priorities. The program is administered by State Governments. Contact NSW Rural Assistance Authority on 1800 678 593 or www.raa.nsw.gov.au

Coastcare. Coastcare supports community groups in coastal areas (up to the limit of mangroves) as well as land managers such as Councils, DLWC, NPWS through advice / funding (through grants) for Management Plans and on-ground weed control / revegetation projects. The program has been funded until at least 2001.

Coastal and Clean Seas Funding. For projects that improve water quality and the coastal environment, particularly within the tidal zone. Funding until at least 2001.

8.2.4 Rivercare

National grants that can be applied for via the standard NHT application forms.

Rivercare grants will not fund standard bush regeneration projects or **removal** of any vegetation from riparian zones. Projects may include preparation of river plans, bed and bank stabilisation and riverbank rehabilitation projects. Funding is matched \$1 for \$1 (which can be in-kind support, e.g labour) by the applicant.

Priority is given to projects in pristine areas followed by projects that address threats to a particular riparian zone (where if nothing was done there would be significantly more problems downstream / upstream etc.) and degraded areas linked to significant areas. Applications close in February. Contact your Bushcare Coordinator, Catchment Management Board coordinator or Environment Australia on 1800 671717 for details.

8.2.5 Stormwater Trust Grants

Set up to oversee the State Government's urban stormwater program, grants have been available over the past 3 years for on-ground works and education initiatives focused on improvements to stormwater quality. It is not known at this time whether the grants will

continue to be available in the future. The grants have been available to community groups, Councils, groups of Councils and state government departments that do not have stormwater management as part of their core business. Grants to the value of between \$25,000 and \$1.33 million have been offered through the scheme.

8.2.6 Conservation Volunteers Australia (formerly Australian Trust for Conservation Volunteers or ATCV)

Conservation Volunteers Australia is Australia's largest practical conservation organisation, managing more than 1500 conservation projects across Australia each year. Projects include tree planting, native seed collection, endangered flora and fauna surveys, and walking track construction and maintenance.

Other programs being implemented include:

- Green Corps, on behalf of the federal government;
- Various conservation programs in schools, TAFE' s and Universities including student talks, field trips and camps, tree planting, water quality testing, seed collection and plant propagation;
- World Conservation Projects where volunteers work on similar projects overseas.

For more information contact them on (02) 95641244 or see the website www.conservationvolunteers.com.au

8.2.7 Green Corps and labour market programs

Green Corps is a six-month environmental traineeship for 17 to 20 year olds. It is managed by Conservation Volunteers Australia (on behalf of the Federal Government), or is sub-contracted to groups such as Environmental Training and Employment (EnviTE) and Greening Australia.

Any private landholder, landcare group or organisation can apply for Greencorps teams to work on their property / project. The applicant (or "Project partner") must supply all materials needed for the job including a trailer if needed. All supervision, training, safety equipment, transport, accommodation and insurance is supplied at no cost to the applicant.

Projects must have environmental benefits, provide learning opportunities and variety for the workers, and consider safety issues. Each project includes 20 '4-day' weeks of on-ground works. New rounds begin every couple of months – it is preferred if detailed proposals are submitted 5 months prior to commencement. The last round (at time of printing) is planned for 5/2002. For more information contact Conservation Volunteers Australia on (02) 95641244 or see the website www.conservationvolunteers.com.au

'*Work for the dole*' aims to give young people work experience in the community. Participants were originally aged 18 to 24 although older people now also participate. Projects are often managed by groups such as EnviTE on behalf of the Department of Employment, Workplace Relations and Small Business.

8.2.8 Special Conservation Scheme

The Special Conservation Scheme is an incentive based scheme aimed at promoting improved land management practices and includes assistance for woody weed control and soil conservation. Assistance is in the form of loans at a fixed interest rate equivalent to 25% below the NSW Treasury Corporation 10 year bond rate at the date of loan approval (rounded up to the nearest half a percentage point). The proposed works must

have a demonstrable and significant beneficial impact on the land, the community and the environment. Phone 6391 3000 for more information.

8.2.9 Land for wildlife

Land for wildlife scheme is a **proposed** voluntary scheme that aims to encourage and assist private landholders to provide habitat for wildlife on their property, even though the property may be managed primarily for other purposes. If it commences, the scheme will be free and will offer advice, newsletters and written publications to landholders involved. *Land for Wildlife* status **would not alter the legal status of the property** in any way. It is proposed that applications can be made through local Councils. For information contact the Land for Wildlife Coordinator on 6665 3133 or www1.tpg.com.au/users/upriver

8.2.10 Threatened Species Network / World Wildlife Fund for Nature

Funding is available for environmental projects aimed at reducing the threats to populations of nationally listed species or remnants of threatened ecological communities through activities such as weeding, population survey and monitoring, fencing and fire management. Application packages are generally available by late April. Contact the Threatened Species Network State Coordinator on (02) 9281 5515 for information.

8.2.11 Voluntary Conservation Agreements

Voluntary agreements between landholders (including Councils) and the Minister for the Environment intended to provide permanent protection for the special “natural” or “cultural” features of an area. Under Conservation Agreements, NPWS may provide assistance to the landholder in the form of fencing materials, plant and animal surveys, stabilisation of works on Aboriginal sites / historic places and specialist advice or other assistance. Rate relief and tax deductions may also be available in some situations. Under Conservation Agreements, land managers are still responsible for weed control. Contact NPWS for more information (see chapter 12.1).

8.2.12 Noxious Weed Declaration

Local Weed Control Authorities (LCAs) apply to have weeds declared noxious to the State Government Minister for Agriculture. As part of the application LCAs must show that they have community support for the declaration (as highlighted in FNCCC 1998) and that adequate resources are available to act upon it. LCAs receive between 20c to the \$ and \$ for \$, depending on the distribution and threat that the weed poses to that and other areas.

Control of camphor laurel in the year 2000/2001 has attracted funding of \$0.30 from NSW Agriculture for every \$1 spent by LCAs. Far North Coast Weeds intends to spend \$9,800 and Clarence Valley Weeds Authority \$2,200 within that period.

When new weeds are declared noxious LCAs usually either reduce the time / resources spent on other weeds or seek additional funds through local Councils.

Noxious weed declaration can have the positive effects of raising community awareness about problem weeds and the threat of enforcement can sometimes be the only incentive that encourages people to control it. Permission is not required from DLWC by persons wishing to undertake control of declared noxious weeds on protected lands (although people are encouraged to still seek expert advice).

The negative side to declaring a weed noxious is that it may be harder to receive funding through the Natural Heritage Trust and some other funding sources for its control, even if

you are a Landcare group. This should not normally be the case, however, as NHT funding is primarily for restoration projects and potential applicants should list “environmental weed control” as only one of the components of the project.

In Coffs Harbour local government area, funding for control and restoration has primarily been through that Council’s environmental levy and hence they do not intend to seek declaration within the near future. Funding of up to \$50,000 per year for 5 years is planned for camphor laurel control and restoration.

8.2.13 Funding for administrative costs

Environment Australia offers between \$2,000 and \$100,000 grants annually towards administrative costs etc. for voluntary conservation organisations to raise community awareness of environmental issues. Applications generally close between **July and September** and maybe announced in November or December. For more information contact Environment Australia on (02) 62742123 or www.environment.gov.au

8.2.14 Theatrical Arts

Australia Council distributes small and large grants biannually to professional arts workers or groups through their Theatrical Arts program. Funds could be obtained to develop theatre in education works for the general community, schools or other groups. Applications generally close in May and November and must include a detailed description of the project and its budget. For more information contact the Theatrical Arts Program of Australia Council on (02) 92159000.

8.2.15 Bushcare fencing incentive scheme

Private landowners in the Nambucca, Bellinger, Coffs Harbour, and Orara or Nymboida section of the Clarence catchments are eligible to apply for a rebate of \$1.20 per metre to fence native vegetation remnants for stock control. The rebate is paid on completion of the fencing and the offer closes in March 2001. Contact Ross Macleay on 6657 2411 or gancoast@midcoast.com.au for further information.

8.2.16 Other funding opportunities

A range of different funding opportunities become available from time to time through government departments such as Department of Land and Water Conservation (DLWC) as well as Landcare coordinators, Greening Australia and local Councils (such as through local Environmental Levies).

A list of funding opportunities “The North Coast Regional Funding Compendium” was being produced by DLWC Grafton (Catherine Hulm, phone 6640 2073) at the time of publication. It will be updated as new sources of funding become available.