

April

Free

Village Eco News

A publication of Bangalow Land and Rivercare.

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Going



Going



Gone

NSW Regional Forests Under Threat

by Dawn Lotty

Australia's native forests are among the nation's most important natural assets. The Australian public has a right to expect that the most up-to-date information will be used to manage these irreplaceable assets.

Conservation groups and concerned citizens have rallied to actively oppose the State governments decision to renew the 20-year-old Regional Forest Agreements (RFAs) without reviewing any evidence gathered in the last two decades.

First signed in the late 1990s RFAs were an attempt to balance the needs of the native forest logging industry with conservation and forest biodiversity.

It is now proposed to renew the agreements for another 20 years yet much of the data on which the RFAs are based are hopelessly out of date, incomplete and comes largely from 1990.

Yet it is increasingly apparent that other economic and social values of native forests are greater than pulp and wood. For example a hectare of intact mountain ash forests in Victoria produces 12 million litres more water per year than the same area of logged forest.

What is clearly needed are new, thorough and independent regional assessments that quantify the full range of values of native forests.

Landcare Working Bee

Our team of friendly volunteers work every Saturday morning, weather permitting from 8.30am to 10.30am rotating through the various sites around Bangalow. All welcome.

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This was before key issues with climate change began to emerge and the value of carbon storage in native forests was identified; before massive wildfires damaged hundreds of thousands of hectares of forest in eastern Australia and before the recognition that in some forest types logging operations elevate the risks of crown-scorching wildfires.

The information also predates the massive droughts and changing climate that have affected the rainfall patterns and water supply systems of some Australia regions.

It's also arguable whether the current RFAs accommodate some of the critical values of native forests because their primary objective is promote pulp and timber production.

Another critical issue with the existing agreements is the availability of loggable forest. Past over-harvesting means that much of the loggable forest has already been cut.

NSW conservation groups are united in believing that the only way forward is to ban logging, prohibit burning and clearing, increase penalties ten fold, undertake widespread rehabilitation and reintroduce third party appeal rights for all public native forests.

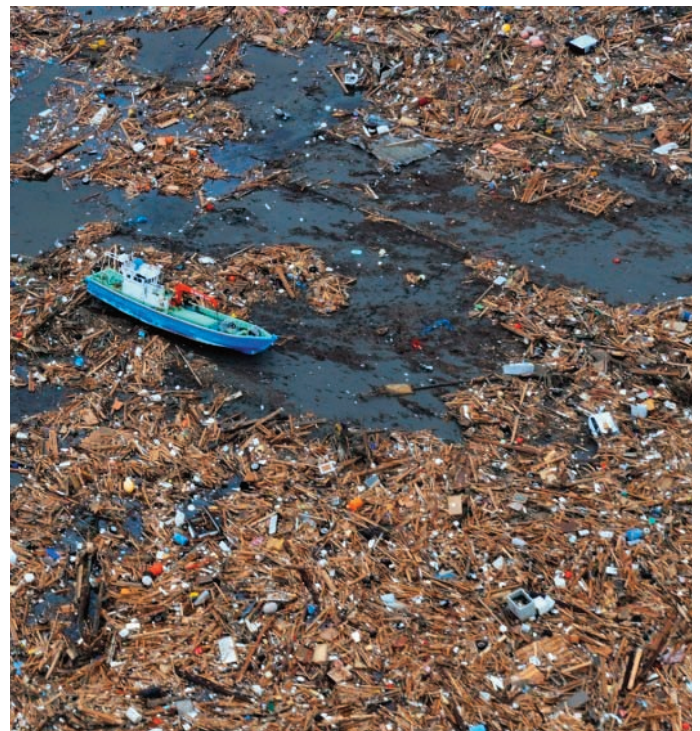
Till now the state Labor opposition and The Greens have refused to approve the RFA and two community groups The Animal Justice Party and The North East Forest Alliance have been holding demonstrations outside Thomas George's Office at Lismore to raise public awareness of the issue.

For further information both these organisations can be contacted on:

<https://www.animaljusticeparty//.org>
and

<https://www.nefa.org.au>

also on Facebook and Twitter@forest4ever



The Great Pacific Trash Vortex

The Vortex, first discovered in the 1980's in the north Pacific between California and Hawaii, is now estimated to take up an area several times the size of the country of France.

It has been calculated that there is six kilos of plastic for every kilo of natural plankton along with other slowly degrading garbage swirling slowly around like a clock, choked with dead fish, marine mammals and birds who get snared. Some plastics in the gyre will not break down in the lifetime of the grandchildren of the nearby land based polluters.

About 80% of the debris comes from land-based activities in North America and Asia. The remaining 20% comes from boaters, offshore oil rigs, and large cargo ships that dump or lose debris directly into the water. The majority of this debris—about 705,000 tons—is fishing nets. More unusual items, such as computer monitors and LEGOs come from dropped shipping containers.

The seafloor beneath the Vortex may also be an underwater trash heap. Oceanographers and ecologists recently discovered that about 70% of marine debris actually sinks to the bottom of the ocean.

There is now concern that a similar trash vortex is developing in the Pacific off the eastern shore of Japan.

Source: Greenpeace, National Geographic Society.

Plants You Might Not Know Are Weeds

by Liz Gander

Most of us know a weed when we see it... right? Wrong. Weeds come in many shapes and sizes, not all of them obvious. Most of us know the common weeds like dandelions and soursobs but what about the pretty garden plants that you can buy in your local nursery that can become bushland monsters? Here are 6 that you might not know about:



Agapanthus. Every flower head produces dozens of long, black seeds that can easily spread into bushland via wind and waterways.



Gazania. The seeds are spread by wind, water and illegal dumping.



Taro. Sold as an aquarium plant invades our creeks and threatens our Platypus habitat.



Duranta. Highly poisonous to pets, children and some parrots. The long thorns can cause dermatitis. The seeds are spread by bats, birds and water.



Viburnum. Spread by birds, water and dumping. Every root nodule can become a new plant.



Lantana. Spread by seed and layering. Also eaten by birds and some mammals.



Who's hens actually have the freedom to move?

'Free Range' are you being egg-sploited?

by Liz Gander

I can't understand why anyone would pick up cage eggs these days, you would have had to be living on Mars to not be aware of how cruel battery farming is for chickens.

Buying from the farmer's market or farm gate is egg-cellent but many people don't have that option. So we do the right thing or at least we think so and pick up 'free range' eggs.

Everything has standards but it seems to vary greatly what can be called 'free range' when it comes to our eggs. Most supermarket eggs labeled free range are 10,000 chickens per hectare which is shoulder to shoulder, free range? You must be yolking!

The better ones are 1,500 per hectare but reading the boxes can be miss-leading, some producers don't want us to know the truth.

CHOICE has given us a quick and easy way to know what we are buying. A free phone app that quickly scans the image on the top of the

carton and gives a rating of eggs-actly how free the mother chooks are. If the brand is not in their system they ask you to take a photo and send it to them so they can add it to their database.

Free range eggs are more eggs-pensive but are we getting what we pay for? Nothing speaks like money so let's send the farmers a clear message by not paying top dollar for non-free range eggs.

Find the App Store, download '**CluckAR**' to your smart phone and simply scan each box and find out which of these is 'Free Range'.

I'm not eggs-aggerating, you'll be eggs-static.



Planting Koala Habitat Trees

Over 75 residents from across the Byron Shire planted nearly 1,400 trees on Saturday 24 March to create a Koala corridor across Hilary Herrmann's property west of Tristania Street to Dudgeons Lane at Bangalow.

They were joined by Tamara Smith MP, Jo Green from Byron Shire Council and Bangalow Koala's President Linda Sparrow.

Further planting will take place this month.

Village Eco News

Our aim is to inform, interest, amuse and educate our readers on all things environmental. We welcome you to submit your contributions or to subscribe to this free Newsletter send your name and email address to:

bangalowlandcare@gmail.com

Please pass this publication on to your family and friends. Receiving our Newsletter online will help to save the environment we work to preserve.



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