



Upper Murrumbidgee Demonstration Reach

Improving fish habitat and river health in the Upper Murrumbidgee

News from the Upper Bidgee Reach



Thankyou to all our friends, supporters and volunteers for your support in 2014. We wish you a safe Xmas and a happy new year and look forward to working with you in 2015!

2014 is all wrapped up and we are looking forward to **what 2015 will bring...**

The 'reinvigorated' UMDR has now been going for a year and a lot has happened in that time. Some exciting highlights of the year included the making of our UMDR film, the work of our enthusiastic volunteers which have helped us with our adventurous volunteer willow control project, the establishment of the carp trapping trial at Scottsdale Bush Heritage Reserve, the launch of the Feral Fish Scan mapping facility for the upper Murrumbidgee and the gaining of funds to build on riparian restoration works in the UMDR, as well as ongoing support from our key partners to take the UMDR forward in 2015 and beyond.

We hope you enjoy this newsletter which aims to share these 2014 highlights, as well as the projects we have planned for 2015.

For more information, current projects and partners go to:

www.upperbidgeereach.org.au

New steering committee members and creation of stakeholder group to support UMDR governance in 2015

The Australian River Restoration Centre (ARRC) and Upper Murrumbidgee Waterwatch (UMWW) joined the UMDR steering committee in June 2014, while K2C has taken a step back. We thank K2C (who previously hosted the UMDR initiative) for all their instrumental support in reinvigorating the UMDR initiative in 2013-2014 and welcome ARRC and UMWW to our team.

Also supporting the UMDR initiative is a newly established stakeholder group of key catchment partners, including government, industry, interest and non government organisations from both NSW and the ACT. The role of the stakeholder group is to provide input and feedback on UMDR activities. Individual organisations may also be directly involved in projects under the UMDR.



Nathan Smith (of Nathan James Productions) filming material for the UMDR film with Helen Shimitras who is describing riparian revegetation works on her property 'Bumbalong'.

Demo Reach films feature on Finterest

Demo reaches across the country were captured on film in 2014 by the NSW DPI Fish Habitat Action Grant 'Reaching beyond demo reaches' project. Our UMDR film can be viewed on the Finterest website: www.finterest.com.au/demonstration-reaches/



In 2014 our UMDR projects were covered in the media—links to media items (newspaper, radio and TV) can be found on our website.

UMDR funding in 2015 for key projects and support role

We are pleased to say that the UMDR has fared well in 2014 with gaining funding to implement our key projects in 2015. The Capital Region Fishing Alliance (CRFA) has gained funding from the NSW Recreational Fishing Trust to buy equipment for the UMDR Carp Research Project including bycatch reducing carp nets, carp tracking equipment and angler diaries. Major riparian rehabilitation works in the NSW section of the UMDR have been funded by the NSW Department of Trade and Investment (Crown Lands) and South East Local Land Services, to be implemented over two years. The Southern ACT Catchment Group has also gained funding for riparian revegetation works at Tharwa. Funding support for the UMDR Facilitator support role also continues, thanks to Bush Heritage Australia, the Murray Darling Basin Authority and the ACT Government.

For more information, current projects and partners go to:

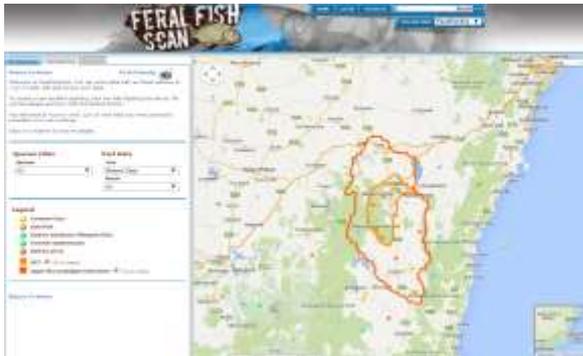
www.upperbidgeereach.org.au

Carp trapping and tracking underway at Scottsdale Bush Heritage Reserve

Bush Heritage Australia are all set to pioneer a new by-catch reducing carp net (designed and built by Qld Fisheries Scientist Andrew Norris) as part of a program at their Scottsdale Reserve to control carp in the Murrumbidgee River in order to benefit native fish conservation. At the same time, Bush Heritage Australia and NSW DPI Fisheries are also conducting a carp tracking study centred around Scottsdale to see how carp move and migrate. This will inform the design of a potential future carp trapping program at the Reserve. The carp tracking devices were installed in the Murrumbidgee River in November.



Andrew Norris showing Bush Heritage Australia Scottsdale Reserve staff and volunteer how to set up the by-catch reducing carp net which is being trialled at the Reserve.



The Feral Fish Scan website is a mapping tool which allows any member of the community to report carp (and other feral fish) sightings. Go to:

www.feralscan.org.au/feralfishscan

Feral Fish Scan website launched

Many aspects of carp biology are still only partly known for the upper Murrumbidgee catchment. For example, we don't have detailed information on carp hotspots or where they breed, but this information is critical if we are to get on top of the problem. The Invasive Animals CRC has partnered with Upper Murrumbidgee Waterwatch and UMDR to customise their Feral Fish Scan mapping tool to assist the community in the Upper Murrumbidgee to collect carp and other feral fish sightings. This information is much needed to better manage carp in our river systems.

If you can't beat 'em – eat 'em!

ABaker catered the launch of Feral Fish Scan with carp canapes that not only go tongues talking, but had everyone (including ACT Minister Simon Corbell) returning for more. Carp jerky, crispy carp skin with Bredbo asparagus and braised scallops with carp sushimi sauce were created by ABaker Head Chef, Bernd Brademann especially for the event. ABaker, took up the challenge of preparing carp for the event as a way of exploring the links between regional food, feral pest management and native fish conservation.



Above: ABaker owner, Jarrod Deaton (left) and Head Chef, Bernd Brademann (right) discuss the importance of regional food with Minister Corbell. Right: The carp canapes were as tasty as they looked.

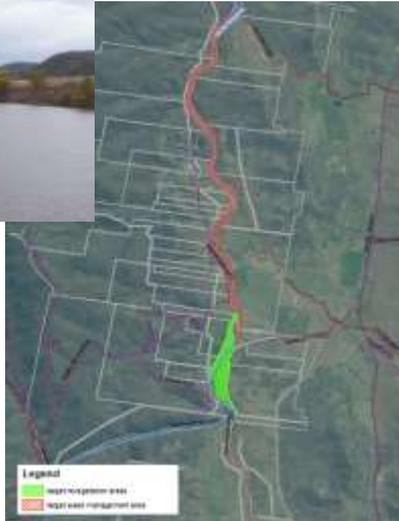
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Above: Planned riparian works at Bumbalong will build on previous willow works (right bank) as well as help control willows which are now encroaching instream (left bank).

Left: Map showing target areas for weed and revegetation works.



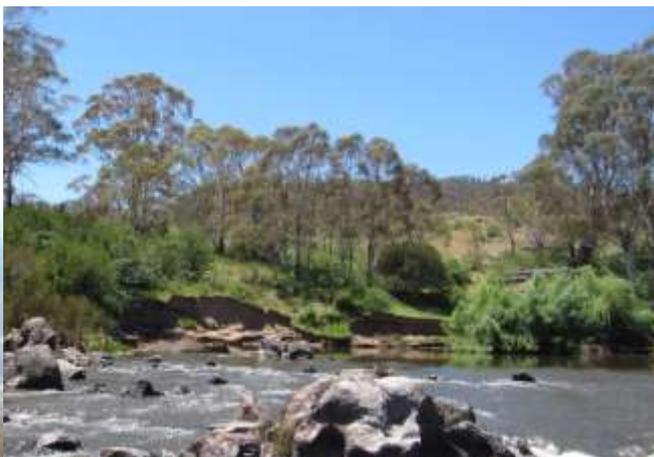
UMDR is the newest addition to **ARRC's 'Rivers of Carbon'** initiative

Funding by multiple partners will be used to rehabilitate the riparian corridor in the Bumbalong Valley with the aim of creating a linkage corridor between the high quality aquatic and riparian habitats of the Colinton and Bredbo Gorges (see map shown on left). The Australian River Restoration Centre (ARRC), will manage the funding on behalf of the UMDR initiative and will work in partnership with landholders to carry out woody weed control and revegetation works following the successful 'Rivers of Carbon' model. Expert advice from SE Local Land Services and Greening Australia will also guide the project.

Funding for the works has been provided by SE Local Land Services and the Department of Trade and Investment (Crown Lands). Funding has also been applied for under the NSW Environmental Trust grant program for further revegetation works.

Looking after our rivers- is everyone's business!

Riparian rehabilitation works in the UMDR aim to encourage the investment of all partners, including landholders, over a number of years. This approach is all about sharing a common vision for the river, everyone working together to achieve our vision, and making sure we maintain (and perhaps even add to) works over the longer term.



This active streambank erosion site on the Murrumbidgee River at Bumbalong was eroded by flood events in the last years, but will now be stabilised.

New erosion site to be stabilised at Bumbalong as part of ACWA initiative

Funding provided by SE Local Land Services will also be used (by the ARRC) to stabilise a newly established and active streambank erosion site in the Bumbalong Valley. The streambank stabilisation works will contribute to achieving the ACWA initiative's mission to improve water quality (turbidity) in the upper Murrumbidgee catchment. This project is an example of how the ACWA initiative, through the work of its partners, is addressing both existing as well as newly establishing erosion sites in our catchment.

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Casuarina Sands Fishway upgrade

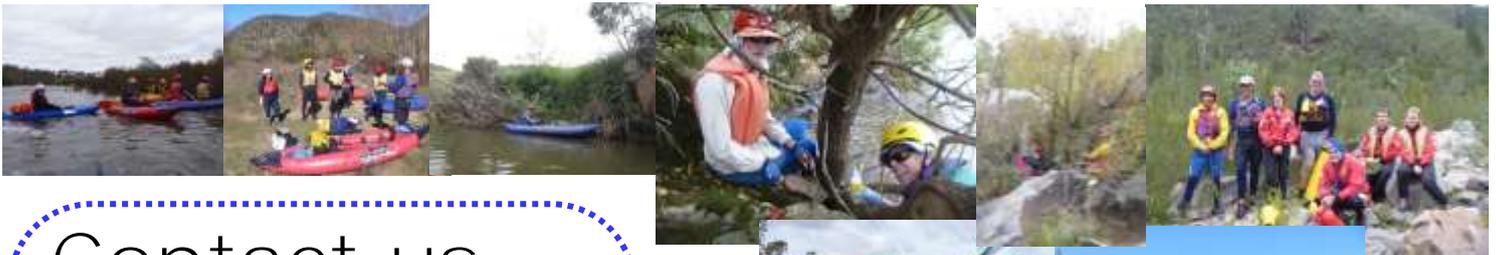
The UMDR has received funding from the Murray Darling Basin Authority to commission an assessment of the Casuarina Sands Fishway by well known fish expert Martin Melan-Cooper in 2015. The vertical slot fishway stopped working effectively after a flood event which changed the Murrumbidgee River's channel morphology. The assessment will provide options for 'upgrading' the fishway so it can once again provide fish passage upstream for fish such as Murray Cod and Macquarie Perch.



The effectiveness of the Casuarina Sands Fishway (shown above) was affected by a flood event, which scoured out the river bed below the structure.

Thankyou to all our adventurous canoeing volunteers.....

The UMDR has greatly benefitted thanks to the work of our adventurous canoeing volunteers who have helped map and control instream willows in our reach....(see below). For more project info, please go to our website.



Contact us

UMDR Facilitator: Antia Brademann
mob: 0429 778 633
e: facilitator@upperbidgeereach.org.au

UMDR Project Manager: Peter Saunders
mob: 0407 700 431
e: psaunders@bushheritage.org.au

web: www.upperbidgeereach.org.au



(A full list of project partners is on our website)