



August 2019 Edition 39

In this issue

- NSW Linear Reserve Environmental Management Forum
- Council Roadside Reserves Grant in final stages
- Forum on Wildlife Crashes in the ACT & NSW Region
- Working to better understand TSR cultural heritage
- Wildlife on Roads book
- Roadside wildflower meadows are springing up across the UK
- Planned roads could imperil Florida's panthers

Latest news from the REC

The REC will again sponsor the Roadside Environmental Management Award as part of the 2019 Local Government Excellence in the Environment Awards.

The awards will be announced on 3 December at Bicentennial Park, Sydney. More details at <https://www.lgnsw.org.au/events-training/environment-awards>

NSW Linear Reserve Environmental Management Forum



The NSW Roadside Environment Committee (REC) organised and ran a state-wide linear reserve environmental forum held on Wednesday 21 August 2019. The forum venue was the Aerial Function Centre, University of Technology, Sydney.

The forum theme was 'Linear Reserves: Linking People, Nature and Infrastructure' with a broad range of initiatives presented from linear reserve managers and researchers across NSW. Several projects from across tenures including roadsides, travelling stock reserves, rail corridors and utility easements were presented.

Keynote speaker Dr Peter Spooner of Charles Sturt University presented on 'Linear reserve management: past, present and future directions'. The other keynote speaker, roadside environmental management trainer Pat Connor, presented on 'Putting environmental management into practice'.

One hundred people attended the forum from 52 organisations including local councils, government agencies, private industry and NGOs. Two participants came from New Zealand, and several from interstate.

According to participant feedback a feature of the forum was the opportunity for networking and discussion. Most participants also liked the diverse range of environmental management activities highlighted during the forum.

A report on the forum including a summary of participant feedback is available by contacting the REC Executive Officer, Neil Dufty ndufty@molinstewart.com.au



Mitchell Judd (RMS) presents at the forum (photo: Jenni Kremer)

Council Roadside Reserves Grant in final stages

The Council Roadside Reserves grant, funded by the NSW Environmental Trust and managed by Local Government NSW (LGNSW), is now in its final stages. With over 1,000 roadside assessments undertaken and many plans and policies written it has been fantastic to see how well the funded councils have progressed in integrating roadside reserves into their strategic planning systems. LGNSW will prepare a number of case studies to highlight the key achievements of these great projects, as well as finalising resources to assist councils in managing their roadside reserves. For more information on the project visit the LGNSW [website](#).

LGNSW has held workshops to provide training and assistance to council staff. Rapid Assessment Methodology (RAM) and EcoRoadside App workshops were held in Penrith, Wagga Wagga and Parkes, with one final workshop scheduled for Bingara. These have been well received with 29 council staff from 18 councils being trained to assess their roadside areas using the Rapid Assessment Methodology and capturing this data through the EcoRoadside App. For more information on the RAM: <https://www.lgnsw.org.au/policy/resources-and-case-studies-0>

The integration of natural assets into council asset management systems was a key focus of two recent workshops held by LGNSW, in collaboration with the Hunter Joint Organisation and Port Stephens Council. The workshops involved 12 councils from the region and were attended by 25 council staff as well as staff from Roads and Maritime Services (RMS) and Department of Defence. The workshops involved identifying roadside asset types, developing asset management objectives and discussing natural asset valuation. The next stage of this project is the development of natural assets templates and guiding documentation which will be available to all councils.

For more information contact CRR Project Officer – Kathy Godfrey
kathy.godfrey@lgnsw.org.au or 02 9242 4053

This project has been assisted by the NSW Government through its Environmental Trust.



Training for local council staff provided through the Council Roadside Reserves Grant

Forum on Wildlife Road Crashes in the ACT & NSW Region



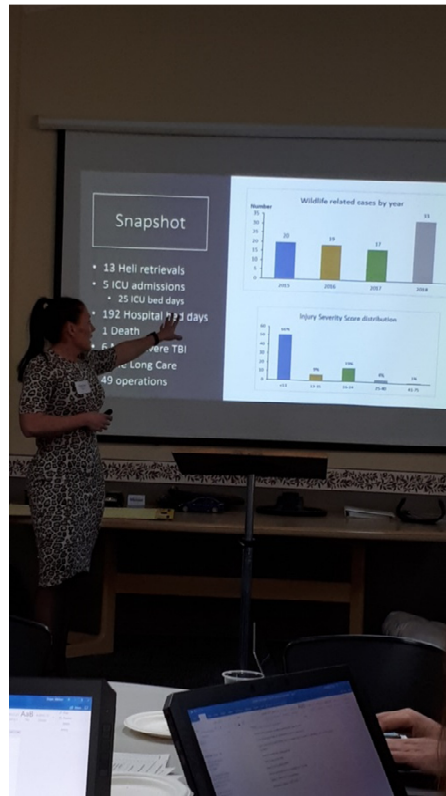
The ACT Chapter of Australasian College of Road Safety (ACRS) held a forum on 24 July about wildlife road crashes in the ACT and NSW region. The forum aimed to explore the issue from perspectives of local stakeholders, identify strategies for reducing the impact of wildlife collisions and encourage collaborations on the issue.

Presentations at the forum included:

- ACT Trauma Services presented trauma numbers and costs including doubling of trauma cases in 2018.
- ACT Parks and Wildlife - noting the number of Ranger attended kangaroo callouts doubled in 2018 up to 4,225.
- ACT Road Safety noting the Monaro Highway with greatest number of animal collisions.
- ACT Conservation Research Unit – provided a comprehensive account of its research and policy regarding protection of endangered ecological communities and research on factors influencing wildlife collisions.
- Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council – provided results of data analysis covering 10 years of reported animal road crashes for six local government areas surrounding ACT and showcased mitigation strategies in two road new road constructions to reduce animal crashes.
- Insurance Australia Group (IAG) provided an insurance perspective including cost of crashes by animal and crashes more prevalent on ‘non-highway’ roads.
- Snowy-Mountain Regional Council – provided details of the wide variety of animal crashes in its LGA including brumbies and wombats.
- Pedal Power ACT – surveyed its members and found magpies and kangaroos to be main animals involved in collisions with cyclists.

Further strategies identified included improving reporting of incidences and data collection, sharing of resources and evaluating mitigation strategies. Driver education was highlighted including promoting factors involved in animal collisions and noting actions drivers can take to avoid collisions. Encouraging driver awareness and familiarity with vehicle technology including ABS was noted. A paper on the forum outcomes will be published in ACRS Road Safety Journal.

For further information on the forum contact Eric Chalmers chalmers@netspeed.com.au or Jo Wilson-Ridley joanne.wilsonridley@qprc.nsw.gov.au



Dr Rebekah Ogilvie, Clinical Assistance Professor at University of Canberra, who presented for ACT Trauma Services

Working to better understand TSR cultural heritage

Local Land Services is working with Central West Indigenous-owned businesses to improve local traveling stock reserves (TSRs) and better understand their cultural values.

First Peoples Solutions, a Central West-based Indigenous business, has been working on Mary Gilmore Way TSR near Grenfell to improve the native vegetation and record some of the cultural elements of the site.

This project is an example of the Local Land Services Reconciliation Action Plan in real life and builds on the principles of NAIDOC week, said Land Services Officer, Stephen Pereira.

“The Mary Gilmore Way TSR work is an opportunity to partner with Indigenous businesses and help share cultural understanding with our community,” Mr Pereira said.

“That’s a really positive result for all involved.”

First Peoples Solutions provides land management and maintenance work, and also runs an essential oil business.

Their work with Local Land Services has mainly been to thin invasive white cypress pine, said First Peoples Solutions Director, Phil Thompson.

“Once the dense pine is opened up, grasses can re-establish, and ants, beetles, lizards and birds can return,” Mr Thompson said.

“It has been amazing how quickly bird life has returned — we’ve returned to the site two weeks after the initial thinning to find yellow-breasted robins return.

“Insects in particular seem to benefit from thinning, which has a flow on effect on the environment.

“For example, we are working on a mining site near Dubbo. The thinned sites have more ant nests, which in turn benefit an endangered lizard which feeds on them.”

First People Solutions uses the thinned white cypress pine biomass to extract essential oils to use in its Native Secrets essential oils range.

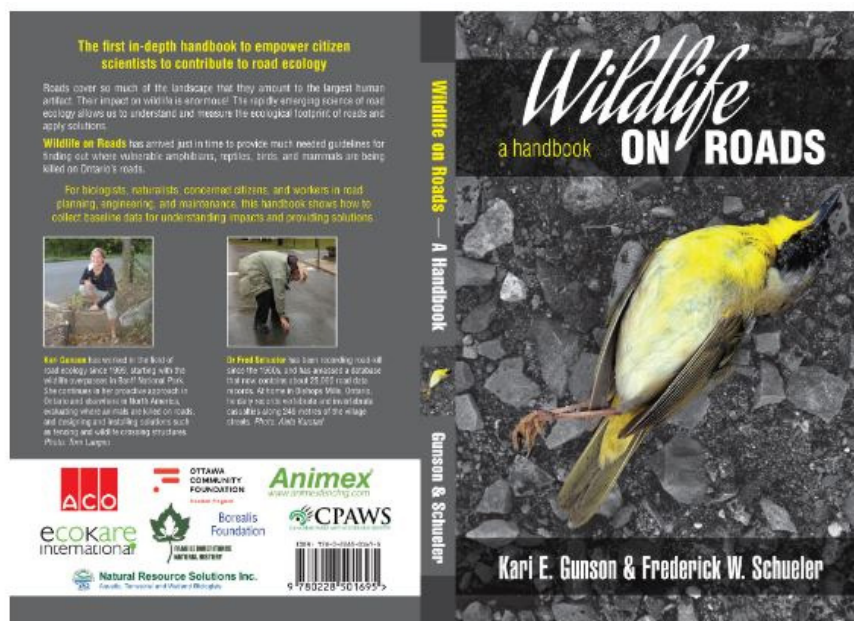
The TSR project has also seen local Indigenous people invited on site to learn more about the area’s values.

“Senior Wiradjuri Elder Peter Peckham works with us as a cultural advisor and plays an integral role in meeting protocols and cultural responsibilities,” Mr Thompson said.

“Some of the local community joined Peter on site to understand how to identify cultural assets. For us, it’s about working with the local community and helping share knowledge.”

Source: Central West LLS website <https://centralwest.lls.nsw.gov.au/resource-hub/media-releases/2019/working-to-better-understand-tsr-cultural-heritage>

Wildlife on Roads book



Wildlife on Roads, authored by Kari E. Gunson and Frederick W. Schueler, is a road ecology handbook to use for road mitigation planning for wildlife.

This handbook is ideal for naturalists, students, and citizen scientists who would like to collect accurate and complete wildlife on-road data for application to mitigation planning. However, professionals and practitioners will also benefit as well.

The book is organised by vertebrate group: amphibians, turtles, snakes and lizards, mammals and birds and a data management section. Each vertebrate chapter first describes what makes this group of animals vulnerable to road-kill and what information is important to collect. Following these literature reviews, the diagnostic features, in context of road-killed carcasses, are outlined for each family and species groups that are thought or are known to be vulnerable to road-kill. These same animal groups occur world-wide. The handbook also features an iNaturalist project where concerned citizens can deposit and download their data from Ontario.

The species essays focus on vertebrates found in Ontario, but because the book is organised from higher to lower taxa (Class-Order-Family-Species) and why these animal groups are susceptible to road mortality there is something to learn from this in all parts of the world. Many of the road behaviours of Ontario's species such as freshwater turtles, apply to regions where these animals occur. This handbook can be a model for other regions as well. There is also extensive literature reviews and case studies that focus on citizen science data collection and applying mitigation solutions that are applicable world-wide.

Visit <https://eco-kare.com/> to find a description of the book, to buy a book from the on-line store and to subscribe to monthly progress articles about the 'Wildlife on Roads' program by email.

Roadside wildflower meadows are springing up across the UK



Since the end of World War II, [97% of the UK's wildflower meadows](#) have been dug up or destroyed. Just like the flowers that they feed on, insect pollinators are in trouble, with one third of the UK's wild bee and hoverfly species showing [declines in their numbers](#) since the 1980s. Clearing grassland for farms

and using harmful chemicals such as pesticides on crops has driven many pollinator species to this state, but these insects are essential for growing many of the UK's favourite crops.

According to Olivia Norfolk, Lecturer in Conservation Ecology at the Anglia Ruskin University, 'one way to protect our pollinators is to change the way that our roadsides are managed. Some country lanes are bursting with blooms, but the majority of road verges in the UK are cut to within an inch of their lives. Regular mowing is needed to ensure drivers can see clearly on sharp bends and junctions, but neat and tidy roadsides leave nothing for pollinators to eat'.

She added, 'sowing wildflower seed mixes and reducing how often verges are mowed can transform barren stretches of motorway into colourful meadows filled with the pollen and nectar that bees and butterflies currently struggle to find. Bees don't seem to be put off by the traffic noise and their numbers have been shown to increase dramatically on verges that are cut no more than twice a year'.

Source: 'The Conversation' <https://theconversation.com/roadside-wildflower-meadows-are-springing-up-across-the-uk-and-theyre-helping-wildlife-in-a-big-way-120014>

Planned roads could imperil Florida's panthers



In a major push for development earlier this year, the Florida state government approved the construction of three toll roads in three different sections of the state. The legislation, signed by Governor Ron DeSantis on May 17, is known as M-CORES—the Multi-use Corridors of Regional Economic Significance program. It was put forward by Senate President Bill Galvano and quickly approved by the legislature on May 1.

Those who advocate for the wildlife corridor and animals such as panthers generally oppose the project, though some environmentalists are being included in the process: Each corridor has a task force assigned to study the issue, help propose a route for the road, and the like.

"Growth needs to accommodate our state's green spaces," says Jason Lauritsen, who will participate in one of the task forces as the head of the non-profit Florida Wildlife Corridor, which lobbies for the protected network of wild lands.

Panthers used to roam throughout the Southeast USA, from Louisiana to South Carolina, and all throughout the Florida peninsula. Aggressively hunted, they hung on only in the wetlands of South Florida. In 1967 they were listed as an endangered subspecies, by which time there were only about 20 left.

But thanks to conservation efforts, such as the protection of areas in the wildlife corridor and the construction of wildlife underpasses, they've rebounded to a population around 200 - and in the last few years, have expanded their range northward.

Jaclyn Lopez, an attorney, urban planner, and Florida director for the Center for Biological Diversity, says that the corridor areas in the undeveloped northwest and southwest don't need any more roads - and thus the organization will not participate on the task force. "We have to draw a line in the sand."

Others don't want to come down hard on one side or the other before the process has begun. As with other participants, they feel it's better to be heard and be a part of the discussion, than not be there.

Source: Excerpts from National Geographic article
<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/animals/2019/08/florida-toll-road-threatens-wildlife-panthers/>

The aim of this newsletter is to share information about the management of NSW linear reserve environments and profile the NSW Roadside Environment Committee (REC).

For more information about the REC: <https://www.rms.nsw.gov.au/about/what-we-do/committees/roadside-environment-committee.html>

Please contact the REC Executive Officer if you wish to subscribe or unsubscribe.



NSW
Roadside
Environment
Committee

For more information contact:
Neil Dufty - Executive Officer - (02) 9354 0300
ndufty@molinstewart.com.au