

Riparian and Habitat Recovery

Funding Guidelines



Australian Government

National
Landcare
Program



NSW
GOVERNMENT

Local Land
Services

Supporting the recovery and restoration of threatened ecological communities and species after the 2019/20 bushfires.



The impact of the 2019-20 bushfires on flora, fauna and landscapes of the NSW North Coast region was an unprecedented event, with many threatened species having a significant proportion of their habitat affected.

Support for wildlife and habitat

Assistance is available to help landholders and community groups protect and restore waterways, wetlands and habitats impacted by these fires.

Funding of up to **\$18,000 per landholder** (not per property) is available, and standardised costings for project activities have been used for consistency.

These are designed to cover the cost of the materials, contractors, and equipment. Applicants are expected to provide in-kind contributions, such as labour to erect fences or plant trees.

The interactive map on the funding website indicates eligible project areas within the North Coast Local Land Services region.

The Riparian and Habitat Recovery project is delivered by North Coast Local Land Services and supported by the Australian Government's Bushfire recovery package for wildlife and their habitat.

Project Focus

The project is focused on the recovery of nationally threatened species and ecological communities listed under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

Threatened Ecological Communities include:

- Lowland Rainforest of Subtropical Australia
- Coastal Swamp Oak of NSW

Threatened species include but are not restricted to:

- Spotted-tailed Quoll, Koala, Rufous Scrub Bird, Long Nose Potoroo, Eastern Freshwater Cod
- Dorrigo Daisy, Banyabba Shiny Bark, Dwarf Heath Casuarina.

Priority will be given to projects that benefit multiple species or Ecological Communities. An indication of the benefit your project can offer can be seen in the interactive project mapping tool provided.

Sites affected by the 2019/2020 fires will be prioritised. However, all properties in the North Coast region that support the target threatened species and their habitats are eligible. In addition, refuge habitat areas which are unburnt adjacent to fire affected areas, will also be eligible for funding.

Partnerships or collaborative projects between neighbouring landholders are encouraged, though applications and funding amounts would be treated separately per landholder.

Eligible Lands

Eligible lands must be located within the North Coast Local Land Services region and be the following tenure:

- Private land
- Travelling Stock Reserve's
- Council managed lands

Please note written permission of the land owner, where that is not the applicant, will be required.



Eligible Activities

Eligible activities include:

- Restoration of target threatened ecological communities and or remnant habitat using a range of techniques, including weed control*, regeneration and re-planting of endemic native vegetation species
- Revegetation and weed control* that links areas of habitat
- Waterway and habitat fencing that better manages stock access to riparian zones
- Off-stream stock watering points where fencing impacts stock access to watering points within waterways
- Minor gully erosion and sediment control works.

** some weed control works may require permits or special conditions when working in sensitive areas.*

! Please note that proposing an eligible activity does not guarantee that your application will be successful. Your project will be assessed against the criteria in this document along with your proximity to the fire scar. Your project will need to meet a minimum benchmark and be compared with other applications.

Ineligible Activities

Activities that are not eligible for funding include:

- Fencing, other than that, needed to exclude stock from rivers and water bodies
- Works that are considered the regular standard obligation of a landholder e.g repairs and maintenance
- Retrospective works (i.e. works already completed)
- Irrigation systems or dams for irrigation
- Sediment extraction
- Large scale erosion control works
- Activities related to consent conditions on pre-existing Development Applications or other Local, State or Federal Government Orders

Delivery

Subject to skills and experience, private land managers may use the grant to purchase materials and deliver the project themselves. Alternatively, land managers may wish to use the payment to procure materials and labour from a licensed contractor.

Ability to deliver works before 30 April 2022 is critical with final reporting by 15 May 2022. Proof of works, including photos and mapping, will be required. Successful applicants will receive an upfront payment of 50% with the remaining 50% payment upon completion of all funded works and on the provision of evidence.

Funding recipients must be willing to allow a site inspection(s) by North Coast Local Land Services staff.

The following table provides guidance on how eligible works components will be valued and funded through the application process.

Standardised Costings

ITEM	PRICE	UNIT
Round 1 Chemical weed control - Low infestation	\$300.00	Ha
Round 1 Chemical weed control - Moderate infestation	\$500.00	Ha
Round 1 Chemical weed control - High infestation	\$1,000.00	Ha
Round 2 Follow up chemical weed control – all infestation levels	\$300.00	Ha
Mechanical weed control	\$1,000.00	Ha
Conventional fencing	\$8.00	Metre
Electric fencing	\$5.00	Metre
Improvement to existing fencing	\$2.00	Metre
Seedlings (tubestock) for revegetation (minimum density of 500 per Ha)	\$3.50	Number
Corflute guards	\$3.50	Number
Off-stream concrete watering trough	\$500.00	Number
Poly pipe roll (100 -15 metres)	\$100.00	Number
Coir logs (3m)	\$50.00	Number
Jute matting (25 metre roll)	\$150.00	Number

How to Apply

Take some time to think through your project and planned works. You will be required to provide site photos and prepare a map of the project site using the online mapping tool. Previewing the application form and collecting the necessary information is recommended before submission. If you have technical difficulties or require more information, a project officer can assist you, if needed.

The steps involved are:

1. Read these guidelines to see if you and your proposed works are eligible
2. Review your site eligibility using the online map (link and map instructions on the funding page)
3. Map your project using the tool in the online map (link on the funding page)
4. Complete an Application form online and submit by **31 August 2021**
5. Applications are then assessed against criteria detailed in this guide and other proposed projects. If deemed successful, the following steps will occur:
 - a) If approved for funding, a Service Agreement (contract) will be prepared.
 - b) Once it is signed by LLS and you (and the land owner if you do not own the property concerned), you will need to invoice North Coast Local Land Services for the initial 50%. The final 50% can then be invoiced upon completion with associated evidence, pending inspection of works.

Distribution of funding will depend on the overall level of interest and allocation will be prioritised to achieve best overall outcomes for the focus species and their habitats.

i You can access the online form on the North Coast LLS website. You can preview all questions without submitting. Please note incomplete applications do not save and you will have to complete and submit your application in one go.

Aboriginal Heritage

Where a project involves ground disturbance, the North Coast Local Land Services team will undertake a desktop record search to ensure the works will not impact any known Aboriginal heritage sites. Should any Aboriginal heritage sites be identified, this will be discussed with the North Coast Aboriginal Heritage Officer. In most cases, no change will be required. However, in some cases, changes will be necessary. These changes may involve relocating affected works to another part of the property or more significant changes in rare circumstances.



Photo: Rufous Scrub Bird - Saving our Species program, Glen Trelfo

Management Agreement

To receive funding, all successful applicants will be required to enter into a **Management Agreement (contract) with North Coast Local Land Services for 5 years**. The Management Agreement will detail the landholder's responsibilities for the project, such as what works are to be undertaken, completion dates and maintenance requirements.

Works Permits & Licences

Depending on the works proposed, a range of permits or permissions may be required. If successful, the cost of obtaining any permit is to be paid by the landholder and must be finalised before works commence. Potential permits and licenses include:

- Local Council (For land zoning and to determine if development applications are required)
- The Natural Resource Access Regulator (for the approval of controlled activities on waterfront land including the bed and bank of any river, lake or estuary and all land within 40 metres of the highest bank of the river, lake or estuary and/or to report suspicious activity): www.industry.nsw.gov.au/nrar
- Department of Primary Industries (Fisheries & Marine Parks) www.dpi.nsw.gov.au
- Transport for NSW (if the works are associated with boating activities or may affect navigation) www.transport.nsw.gov.au
- Crown Lands (For approval of works including Land Owners Consent and Crown Lands License) www.industry.nsw.gov.au/lands
- Local Land Services (Native vegetation on rural land) www.ils.nsw.gov.au

Applications close
31st August 2021

Check your eligibility and complete your application online at:
www.ils.nsw.gov.au/regions/north-coast/financial-assistance

Contact Us

If you have any questions or require further information please call your nearest Local Land Services Office on **1300 795 299**



Photo: Long Nose Potoroo - Saving our Species program, Sharon Wormleaton

Coir Logs & Sediment Control

- Coir Logs are rolls of organic fibre (e.g. coconut) enclosed in a robust mesh and installed in disturbed areas using stakes
- Coir logs can be used to prevent the risk of soil erosion of recently disturbed creeks and gullies and facilitate the establishment of ground covers to rehabilitate the area
- Use additional placement of material at the toe of the bank to prevent the occurrence of erosion immediately adjacent (uphill) to the logs
- Cut stakes level with coir logs to reduce risk of flood debris wrapping around the stakes

include slope, soil texture and erodibility, drainage area, bank height, adjacent land use and existing vegetation.

<https://www.stockandwaterways.com.au/section-5-riparian-fencing/>

Fencing

Uncontrolled stock grazing in riparian land can lead to loss of topsoil, excessive run-off, bank erosion, damage to in-stream and wildlife habitat, loss of productive land and reduced water quality.

Fencing to control stock access to riparian areas should be constructed a minimum of 10 metres from the top of the bank; You should build your fence as far from the waterway as possible. Appropriate setbacks will depend on the size of the waterway. A minimum average of 10 metres from the top of the bank is required for each bank. Setbacks will not be less than 10 metres from the top of the bank at any one point. Larger waterways will require setbacks of at least 20 m from the bank for each side. A greater distance may be required where the bank is eroding and where periodic flooding occurs especially lower on the flood plain. Projects with larger riparian setbacks will score higher.

Site characteristics should be considered. These

Table 1: Recommended Planting Densities

PLANT DESCRIPTION	PLANTING DENSITY
Shrubs, large tufted graminoids and large herbs	2 plants per square metre
Medium tufted graminoids and medium herbs	4 plants per square metre
Small graminoids and small herbs (includes prostrate groundcovers)	6 plants per square metre

Planting densities will help to:

- Ensure relatively dense plant cover across the site
- Minimise competition from weeds, and
- Compensate for plant stock losses from natural plant death or damage from animal

Revegetation

Any plantings along riparian lands must use locally sourced endemic native species and should aim, if possible, to cover both banks adjacent to the waterway.

All revegetation activities funded by North Coast Local Land Services must achieve and maintain at least 70% survival over the life of the management agreement. Stock exclusion fencing must be installed where stock could potentially access the site.

Revegetation activity will require a minimum of three different species and growth forms to ensure the biodiversity value of the site is improved. Appropriate planting densities will depend on the site condition, location and aim. For example, is the purpose of the plantings for stabilisations, habitat enhancement or both?

Overall, revegetation works should aim for an average overall density of 3 to 4 plants per square metre. The following densities should be used as a guide to achieve this:

As a rule, revegetation projects will require 500 seedlings per ha but not as an even distribution.

See below figure for example of appropriate densities. Contact your local Landcare Group or Council for suitable species for your site.

Rivers and Creeks

If planting trees and shrubs only, select 20-30% trees (50-100/ha), 70-80% shrubs (approx. 500/ha). If planting groundcovers, plant larger tussock grasses approx. 1m apart and scatter smaller groundcovers in gaps. Allow 2- 5 m between trees, with clumps of shrubs between.

Tall Open Forests

If planting trees and shrubs only, select 30% trees (approx. 150/ha) and 70% shrubs (approx. 350/ha). If planting groundcovers, these can be planted densely in gaps. Plant trees 10m apart with clumps of 5-20 shrubs between, and groundcovers scattered in gaps.

Leaving logs, dead and fallen timber provides important habitat for many creatures. It is important to consider providing areas with these characteristics in various conditions, from heavily shaded to wet areas as this will also encourage biodiversity. Essentially fallen timber should be left to decay naturally where it lies.

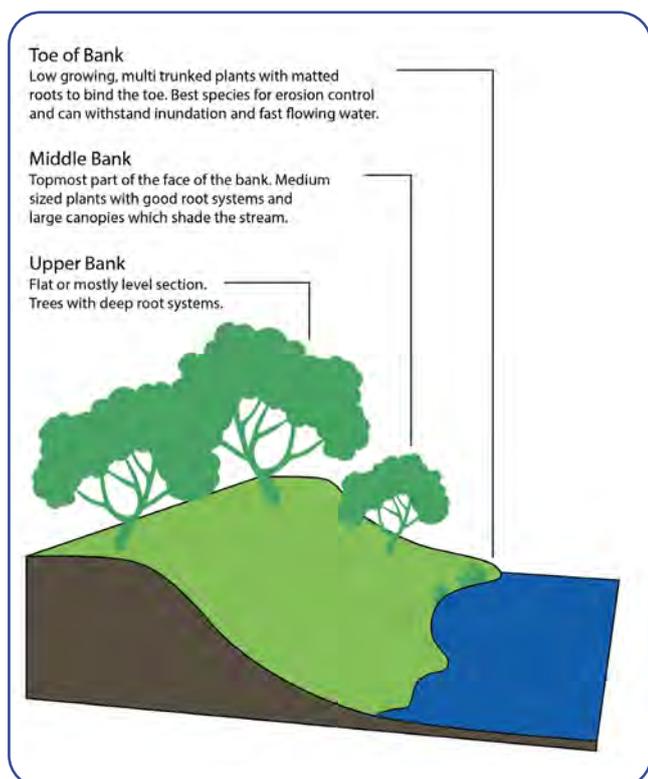


Figure 2. Diagram of riparian zone showing appropriate placement of species in specific location on the bank

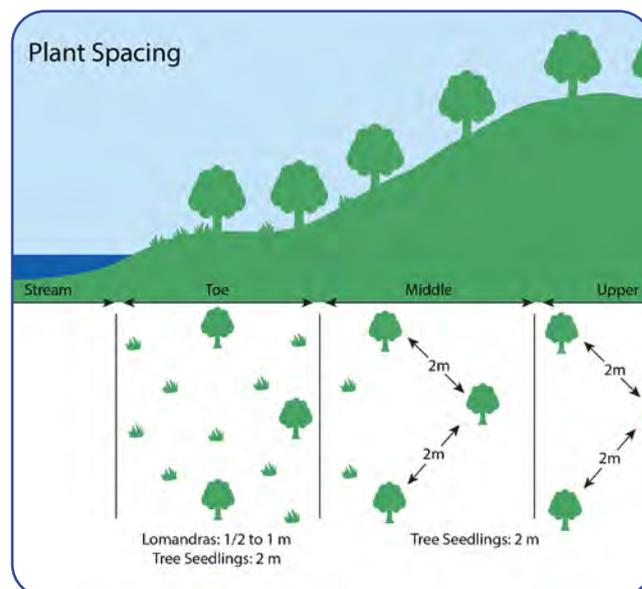


Figure 3: Example of type and density of plantings suitable in the riparian zone

Grazing Management

Livestock will need to be excluded from revegetated fenced areas for the first three years after revegetation occurs. Controlled grazing (short periods in general) may occur after the first three years when soil moisture is relatively low. Appropriate stocking rates must be used to ensure no less than 80% of groundcover is maintained at all times. If tree/shrub damage becomes evident, livestock must be removed immediately.

Fencing

All materials used to construct fences should be in new or good-quality condition. All fences are to include a gate for site/management access. Consistent with wildlife friendly fencing guidelines (view here), bottom wires must not be electrified to prevent adverse impacts on wildlife. It is preferable to not use barb wire at all. A maximum of three strands of barb wire will be allowed but is not to be used on the bottom or top. Placement of fences should be a minimum of 10 m from the top of the bank.

Only fencing relating to the Project site will be eligible. All new and existing fencing at the project site is to be maintained to a stock-proof standard for the life of the agreement.

These specifications should be applied to all fencing projects aimed at controlling stock access.

Table 2: Fencing Specifications

FENCE TYPE	CATTLE	SHEEP
Conventional	7-strand wire	N/A
Mesh	Standard 6/70/30 or 7/90/30 ringlock and plain wire	Standard 6/70/30 or 7/90/30 ringlock and plain wire
Electric	4-strand plain wire with at least 2 electrified strands	5-strand plain wire with at least 2 electrified strands, ensuring that the bottom wire is earthed**

*A common addition to these fence types involve installation of an electrified offset wire. The height of this wire should be about 2/3 the height of the animal to be excluded.

** Long grass may short-out fences, so the site will require regular maintenance

*** Plain wire is encouraged. A maximum of 3 barb is allowed provided it is not placed at the bottom or top.

Exceptions include:

- Fencing erected on flood-prone land will determine the most appropriate number of wires to control livestock and minimise flood damage to fences

www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fishing/habitat/rehabilitating/habitats/fencing-riparian-zones

Weed Control

Control of weeds are limited to the stock excluded project area and an adjacent 50 metre buffer. Applicants and land managers should be aware of the potential priority weeds in the area and should be able to identify them. The Weeds of North Coast NSW and NSW WeedWise can help prepare your application and weed control approaches. Carefully planning activities onsite can reduce the spread of weeds in an area. The life cycle of weeds, particularly seeding, should be considered when planning works. Chemicals used to control invasive weeds must comply with all relevant legislation and, where required, be labelled for use near waterways. When using herbicides, you must read the label on the container and follow the manufacturer's instructions. Great care should be taken before exposing highly erodible soil. There are also requirements under the Pesticides Act 1999 and the Pesticides Regulation 2017 to keep records of pesticide use and for pesticide users to undergo training.

Method

Control option considerations depend on site-specific values, conditions and weed species. Projects will be funded for Chemical and Mechanical methods to control weeds:

Chemical Control:

- Several chemical control options are available for the management of invasive weeds. The most common are Stem injection, Cut and paint, Foliar spray and Stem scrape

Mechanical & Manual Control:

- Use of machinery for clearing weeds is to be limited to where use is appropriate and is to be in accordance with manufacturer instruction for safe use of equipment and appropriate permits. In the riparian zone works should occur when water and soil moisture levels are low (e.g. winter or spring) and prior to all other activities.

Infestation Level

Determining the level of invasive weed infestation at your site will provide essential information for your management plan and allow you to better budget. Take time to inspect and understand the level of threat present at your site that may impact on the natural assets present.

Low Weed Infestation

- Native plant species are the majority vegetation type present. There is a low-level presence of weeds which may or may not threaten or impact the site's biodiversity
- A targeted low level of intervention may be required to prevent the potential impact of weeds to the natural assets present (e.g. chemical control using spot or foliage spray methods)

Moderate Weed Infestation

- Native vegetation is in average condition. There is a moderate infestation of weeds which if left unmanaged will impact the level of quality of the site.
- A medium level of intervention is required to prevent further deteriorate of the site's natural assets (e.g. targeted chemical control using spot or foliage spray or mechanical / manual control using cut and paint or stem injection methods).

High Weed Infestation

- Native vegetation is in poor condition. Weeds are the dominant vegetation with minimal presence of native plant species. Without major management the site will continue to decline
- A high level of intervention is required to restore the site's biodiversity and improve connectivity to natural assets adjacent to the site (e.g. Mechanical control using machinery including harvesters or excavators followed by foliage spray)



Monitoring

Monitoring of revegetation sites involves the recording and analysis of observations over time and is an important aspect of any project. Monitoring allows project managers to:

- See what is happening at the site
- Identify the need for any further maintenance, such as weed control or any replanting requirements in relation to plant losses.
- Provides continued learning to improve current or future projects, and
- Assists in determining the success of the project It is essential that monitoring begins at the start of the project, during the planning stages, as this allows for the collection of baseline data. It is also important to ensure the monitoring program is not subjective and easily repeatable so it can be carried out by different people over the life of the project.

One of the simplest ways to monitor a project is through photographs. A fixed location must be set up to ensure the same area is photographed over time. These photographs can then provide a record of changes in the vegetation. The photo monitoring point must be recorded and marked, along with the camera settings used. When selecting a photo monitoring point, the future growth of vegetation must be considered, this is particularly important when planting trees as the photo point should not be blocked by future tree growth.

Photo Points

- Set up at least 2 photo points, from the northern side (facing south) of the area of interest and take annual photos of the site
- More photo points may be required to document funded on ground works
- Photos should be taken prior to works being undertaken, at completion of works, then annually at the same time of year over the course of the five-year agreement
- Mark the location of each photo point on a map, landscape photo, or aerial photo along with arrows showing the directions in which to point the camera
- Mark each photo point location with a stake, flagging, or other identifying marks such as corner post of fences. If your photo points are in riparian areas, set the locations 5-10 metres (roughly 15-30 feet) back from the stream bank edge to avoid complications resulting from bank erosion or high water
- Photos will need to be easily found for future effort. Save the images in a consistent, designated location that is labelled in an easily identifiable folder (e.g. Projectname/Sitelocation/PhotoPoint/Date)