HOTSPOTS FIRE PROJECT

2011 Australian Safer Communities Awards NATIONAL WINNER

Trunkey Creek Workshop Series Report

Workshop 1 (23/8/2014) and Workshop 2 (20/9/2014)

"Fabulous program. Very informative and a great opportunity to learn about land management and meet our neighbours."

- Trunkey Creek workshop participant

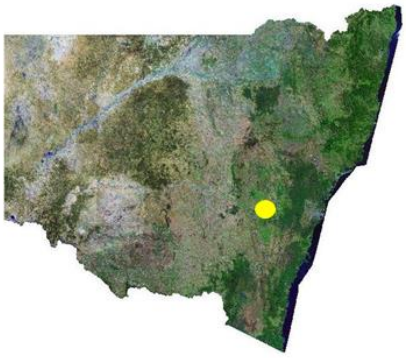
NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE

Nature Conservation Council The voice for nature in NSW

Under the guidance of the nine project partners in the Advisory Committee, Hotspots is delivered through the coordinated efforts of the NSW Rural Fire Service and the Nature Conservation Council of NSW.

Overview of Trunkey Creek area & Hotspots Workshop

Trunkey Creek is situated near the western edge of the NSW Central Tablelands. It is primarily located within the Lachlan Valley with areas to the northeast part of the Macquarie Valley. The area is part of the traditional land of the Wiradjuri people. The remnants of native vegetation surrounding Trunkey Creek are amongst the largest patches in the heavily cleared Central West. These remnants provide corridors connecting the Blue Mountains World Heritage Area through the forests of the Great Dividing Range to scattered remnants on the Western Slopes of NSW.



The main landuses are sheep and cattle grazing, limited cropping, plantation forestry, and conservation and nature based tourism. While mostly cleared, the more fertile soils in volcanic and limestone areas and on lower slopes and floodplains support open Grassy Woodlands and grassy Wet Sclerophyll Forests. Permanent creeks and riverbanks are occupied by River Oak Forest. The ridges and steep terrain support extensive areas of Dry Sclerophyll Forest which is the dominant forest type at Trunkey Creek.

Trunkey Creek is considered high fire risk under the Bush Fire Risk Management Plan, with recent fire to the west of the region in 2013. There is a Strategic Fire Advantage Zone (SFAZ) on the western side of Trunkey Creek with some of the participant properties located within this zone.

Objectives for the Trunkey Creek workshop series

- Discuss strategies to manage fire to reduce risk whilst improving biodiversity and cultural values
- Introduce landholders to fire management planning for their own property
- Address the fear of fire and potential barriers for landholders to conduct planned burns
- Address any confusion regarding procedures and regulations for planned burns

Workshop Achievements

This Hotspots workshop series attracted a mix of participants with 20 Trunkey Creek residents attending. Fire management plans were developed for 15 properties, covering an area of 4577 hectares, of which 2112 hectares were native vegetation. Landowners shared their knowledge and experience of fire and actively engaged in discussions about the role they can play in reducing fire risk while improving bushland health. The demonstration burn worked very well and there was good agency representation at the workshops.

Management Actions Identified & Workshop Achievements

Identified Management Actions for the Trunkey Creek Area

Gang-gang cockatoo

Image: David Cook

This is a list of the types of follow up actions that participants identified as part of their individual fire management plans.

Prescribed mosaic burning

- To reduce risk from Wildfire
- To enhance biodiversity
- To improve agriculture/reduce weeds
- Pile burning to remove existing hazard

Mechanical Clearing

- To improve access (to and from property and to water supplies)
- To create fire breaks
- To maintain asset protection zones
- To improve/clear/create fire trails

Strategic Grazing

- To manage grass fuels in bushland and paddocks

Increase Fire Fighting Capability

- Purchasing new or additional firefighting equipment
- Ensure water supplies are adequate and ready and have RFS compatible Storz fittings
- Join the local brigade to obtain training in fire fighting

Co-operation with neighbours (including agency neighbours)

- To manage fire across tenures with an aim to reduce hazard and reduce excess clearing on individual properties

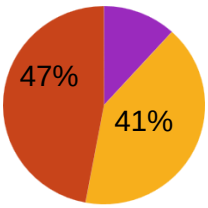
Improve survivability

- By completing Bush Fire Survival Plans
- By assessing existing structures for their ability to withstand bush fire attack by embers and radiant heat
- Improving property access
- Improve access to water supplies such as farm dams

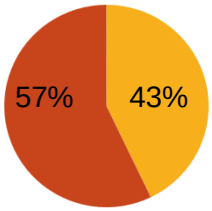
Workshop Evaluation Results

- **71% percent of landholders plan to use fire for biodiversity after attending Hotspots**

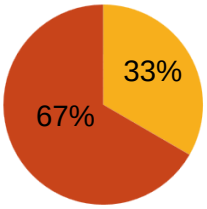
Did this workshop improve your understanding of fire management, and how to manage fire on your property?



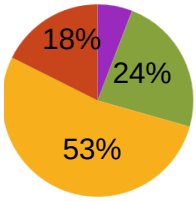
Has this workshop increased your understanding about fire behaviour in the landscape?



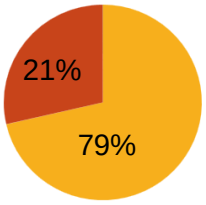
Did this workshop improve your understanding of how to plan for and conduct a safe burn?



Did this workshop give you a better understanding of how to plan for fire in different vegetation types on your property?



Did this workshop inform you about who is involved with fire management around your area, and what they do?



A little | Some | Quite a lot | Very much so

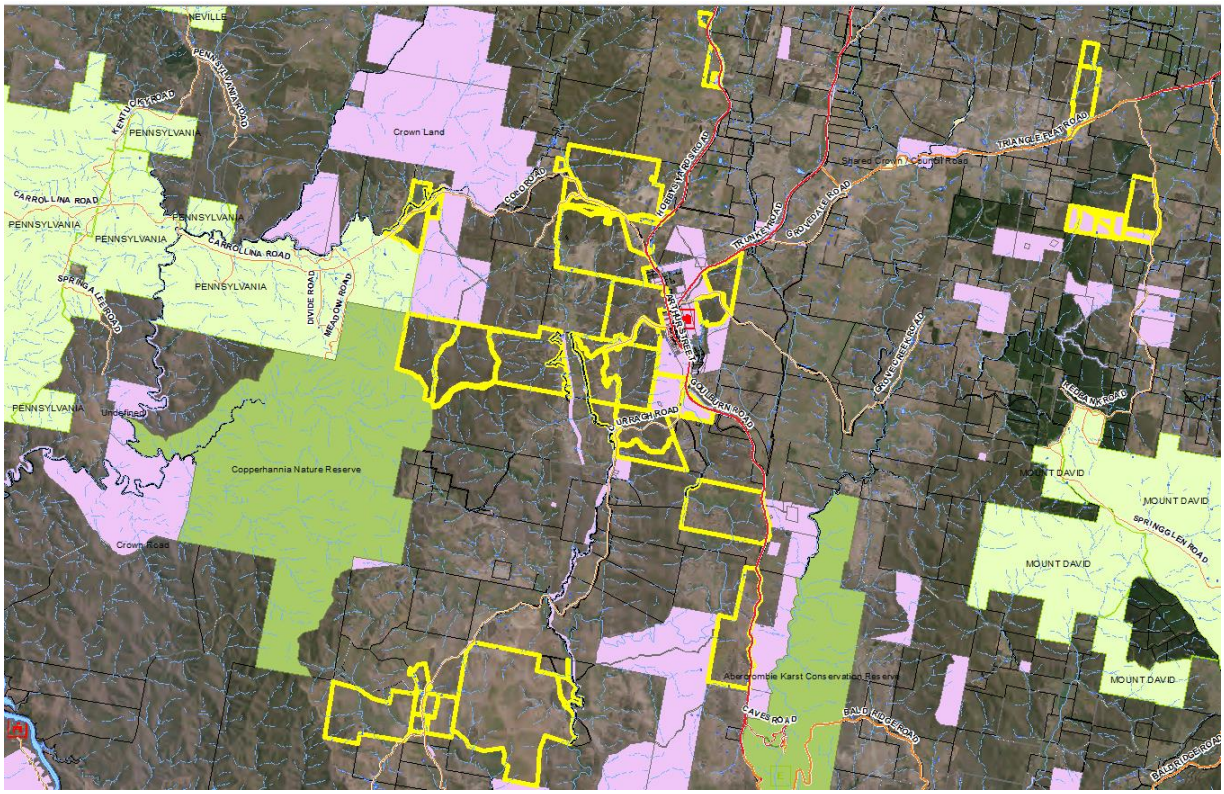
Recommended follow up actions for landowners

This is a list of actions that the Hotspots team recommends to workshop participants as follow up to the preparation of fire management plans.

- Review your Hotspots property fire management plan and contact your local RFS District Community Safety Officer or Hotspots Officer regarding implementing your plan
- Complete a Bush Fire Survival Plan with your neighbours and / or your local RFS Brigade
- Carry out maintenance around assets such as ensuring flammable materials are away from house, filling gaps under eaves, cleaning gutters, pruning overhanging branches etc.
- Consider purchasing firefighting equipment i.e. pump and appropriate hose fittings
- Start a phone tree with neighbours and advise your local RFS Brigade about your emergency response strategy
- Consider becoming a volunteer with your local brigade and take up opportunities for further training. Contact your local Brigade Captain for more details.

Fire Management for the Trunkey Creek area

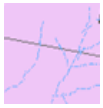
This map was created by NSW RFS in 2014



Map legend

Nature and conservation reserves

Workshop participant property boundaries



Crown land

State Forest

This fire management landscape overview has been compiled by the Hotspots Fire Project. It serves merely as an aid to planning. The information contained herein reflects our understanding at the time of planning. We are learning more about fire and the environment every day and anticipate that some recommendations may change as new information comes to hand. Thus whilst every effort has been made to ensure the information presented herein is as accurate and well-informed as possible, those involved in compiling this plan take no responsibility for any outcomes, actions or losses resulting either directly or indirectly from the interpretation, misinterpretation or implementation. This plan is intended to be used in conjunction with the help of experts and good neighbour relations.

Vegetation and State Wide Fire Interval Guideline

These are broad scale guidelines and local features and local vegetation disturbance regimes need to be considered when planning for the implementation of fire.

Vegetation Formation	Vegetation Class	Ecosystem types (species dominance)	Statewide Fire interval guideline Max	Min	Comments
Wet Sclerophyll Forest (grassy subformation)	Southern Tableland	*Eucalyptus bridgesiana* Apple Box *E. dives* Broad-leaved Peppermint *E. viminalis* Ribbon Gum	10	50	Occasional intervals greater than 15 years may be desirable. Crown fires should be avoided in the lower end of the interval range
Dry Sclerophyll Forest (shrub/grass subformation)	Southern Tableland	*E. macrorhyncha* Red Stringybark *E. rossii* Scribbly Gum	8	50	Occasional intervals greater than 25 years may be desirable
	Western Slopes	*E. dealbata* Tumbledown Red Gum			
Grassy Woodland	Southern Tableland*	*E. bridgesiana* Apple Box *E. blakelyi* Blakely's Red Gum	5	40	Minimum interval of 10 years should apply in the Southern Tablelands area. Occasional intervals greater than 15 years may be desirable
	Western Slopes*	*E. albens* White Box *E. melliodora* Yellow Box			
Forested Wetland	Eastern Riverine Forests	*Casuarina cunninghghamiana* River Oak	7	35	Some intervals greater than 20 years are desirable. Protect riparian areas and riverbanks from fire.
		* Denotes Endangered Ecological Communities listed under the NSW TSC Act			

Please Note: Notations in black are listed in the Bush Fire Environmental Assessment Code for NSW, 2006, and those in Blue are recommendations based on the Scientific Committees Determinations, Species Recovery Plans or Priority Action Statements, Threat Abatement Plans and Key Threatening Processes relating to the Threatened Species Conservation Act, 1995.

Threatened Species

*Fire management recommendations are based on the assumption that the species are being managed in an intact or near intact landscape. Variation in management requirements will be necessary when dealing with disturbed landscapes. It is important to follow up on local knowledge in support of better management decisions.

Status	Fire Ecology (management requirements)*
Booroolong Frog *Litoria booroolongensis* (Endangered)	No burning within 100 m of streams. No slashing, trittering or tree removal
Gang-gang Cockatoo *Callocephalon fimbriatum* (Vulnerable)	Protect hollows
Brown Treecreeper (Eastern subspecies) *Climacteris picumnus victoriae* (Vulnerable)	No slashing, trittering or tree removal
Speckled Warbler *Pyrrholaemus sagittatus* (Vulnerable)	No slashing, trittering or tree removal
Barking Owl *Ninox connivens* Powerful Owl *Ninox strenua* (Vulnerable)	No burning around known nesting sites at any time. Protect hollows. Apply low intensity, mosaic pattern fuel reduction regimes. Retain large areas of native vegetation, especially those containing hollow-bearing trees that are used as nest sites
Diamond Firetail *Stagonopleura guttata* (Vulnerable)	No slashing, trittering or tree removal
Spotted-tailed Quoll *Dasyurus maculatus* (Endangered)	Protect hollows
Koala *Phascolarctos cinereus* (Vulnerable)	Apply low intensity, mosaic pattern fuel reduction burns in or adjacent to Koala habitat. Retain suitable habitat, especially areas dominated by preferred feed-tree species. Avoid crown fires in known habitat
Eastern False Pipistrelle *Falsistrellus tasmaniensis* (Vulnerable)	Protect hollows. No removal of trees
Little Bent-wing Bat *Miniopterus australis* (Vulnerable)	No fire around known roost sites. Utilise buffer around known roost sites
Common Bent-wing Bat *Miniopterus schriebersii* (Vulnerable)	No fire around known roost sites. No slashing around maternity caves
Large-footed Myotis *Myotis adversus* (Vulnerable)	No fire around known roost sites. No removal of trees
Hoary Sunray *Leucochrysum albicans* var *tricolor (*Endangered*) *Cth EPBC Act	Little known fire response. Transient seed bank may place it at risk from inappropriate fire
Fragrant Bossiaea *Bossiaea fragrans* (Critically Endangered)	Only 13 plants known. Fire responses poorly known. Probably an obligate seeder. Seedling recruitment in interfire intervals is likely to be limited
Black Gum *Eucalyptus aggregata* (Vulnerable)	Unknown
Robertson's Peppermint *E. robertsonii* ssp. *hemisphaerica* (Vulnerable)	No fire more than once every 5 years. No slashing, trittering or tree removal
Grassy Box-Gum Woodland Critically Endangered Ecological Community	

Please Note: Black text is derived from RFS Codes of Practice. Blue text is derived from relevant Recovery Plans, Priority Action Statements, Scientific Committee Determinations, Commonwealth and State Government conservation management publications and expert input.

Workshop Contacts

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Hotspots Fire Project Partners