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Reviving the Ocean Shores Public School Wetland and Nature Trail

Engaging local communities and school students through wetland rehabilitation

Ocean Shores Public School has a School Environmental Management Plan (SEMP) which identifies the revival of the schools nature trail as a priority. WetlandCare Australia will be delivering a Northern Rivers Catchment Management Authority (NRCMA) project during 2010 to coordinate and assist the school in realising this goal.

About the Nature Trail

The nature trail is 200 metres long and runs through 0.68ha of paperbark wetland in the corner of the school property. This small area of wetland also adjoins Billinudgel Nature Reserve and as such has a higher environmental value than its size suggests.



The start of the nature trail where the oval meets the wetland



Ocean Shores Public School wetland area

The site has two Endangered Ecological Communities (EECs) present; "swamp sclerophyll forest on coastal floodplains" and "subtropical coastal floodplain forests". In the past as well as the trail construction some native plants have been planted and bird boxes installed.

Environmental Issues

The wetland has bodies of water which are intersected by the trail and may be causing water flow problems. Invasive weeds are also present (including coastal morning glory, broad-leaved paspalum, and camphor laurel) as well as lantana, a Weed on National Significance (WoNS). The wetland also adjoins the school oval and so receives runoff from the school.



Lantana (*Lantana camara*) – A Weed Of National Significance

This project will involve:

- the development of a **wetland management plan** – this will provide the school with future management options for the wetland and will include a comprehensive flora (native and exotic) list, hydrological assessment, weed management recommendations, revegetation and rehabilitation strategies and nature trail upgrade options.



The hydrology of the wetland will be assessed as part of the wetland management plan

- **Weed control works** arising from the recommendations in the management plan (lantana and other weed removal)
- **Photo point monitoring** – this will be conducted by the school students to illustrate the results of the weed control works and revegetation
- A **community wetland day** – this day will see the planting of 300 native, site appropriate seedlings as well as awareness raising activities for the community, staff and students
- Development of site specific, stage appropriate student and community **educational materials** – in consideration of and consultation with teachers' needs.



The "Engaging the Ocean Shores Public School community in coastal wetland rehabilitation" project of the Northern Rivers Catchment Management Authority (CMA) has been undertaken by WetlandCare Australia through funding from the Australian and NSW Government.

Engaging the Community in wetland rehabilitation

The project will enhance the skills, knowledge and awareness of coastal wetland issues in the Ocean Shores community through the educational activities associated with this project and the community wetland day.



The wetland and nature trail has significant value environmentally and as an educational resource for the community and school.

Implementing the Ocean Shores Public School Environmental Management Plan

The revival of the wetland and nature trail is a key part of Ocean Shores Public School's Environmental Management Plan (SEMP). Activities involved with this project will enhance the delivery of environmental education to students at the school.

The school's Parents and Citizens Association (P&C) are enthusiastic contributors to the implementation of the SEMP and this project. The school community plans to make the nature trail accessible to local students as well as the wider Ocean Shores and Byron Shire community into the future.



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