

Media release for Hovells Creek Landcare Group Erosion Control Field Day

Giant slug in the Lachlan River

Hands up who knows about the giant slug in the Lachlan River? It's 150km long and made of sand and sediments between Hovells Creek near Wyangala dam and Cottons Weir at Forbes. And it's getting bigger every year. It comes from erosion gullies on properties along the river and its tributaries and has filled in all the fish and platypus refuges and Murray Cod breeding holes along this stretch.

Hovells Creek Landcare Group (HCLG) is holding an Erosion Control field day on 29th May in Darbys Falls to showcase what they have been doing about the problem in their area. HCLG is proudly supported by the NSW Environmental Trust to do erosion control earthworks on eight properties over two years to keep the sediment and water runoff from leaving the properties. This builds on a 2019 project generously funded by Central Tablelands Local Land Services for works on three properties.

HCLG Chair, Gordon Refshauge, said "this project is the first in our long-term vision to address an important regional issue which impacts not just threatened species, river health and water quality but also productivity within the catchment". "The Hovells Creek catchment is steep, hilly country above Wyangala Dam" he explains. "We experience significant erosion problems when heavy rainfall events follow extended dry when minimal groundcover can be maintained. This results in soil washing into the river which causes Lachlan river-bed sediment problems downstream. So, there is a whole of catchment impact. Furthermore, actively eroding gullies lose sand and sediment all the time and constantly feed the system. This is an issue for all water users"

Peter Kirwan from Soil Conservation Service (SCS) estimates that the sediment load leaving these eight properties alone is between 1250 and 2400 tonnes per year.

The current project is supported by a grant from the South East Local Land Services to fence, seed and plant around the earthworks to stabilise them and keep stock out. It is being done in collaboration with the SCS in Cowra who are doing the works and has been supported by Hilltops Council doing flood mitigation works along Frogmore Rd.

The field day will include a talk from Peter Kirwan about different kinds of erosion, control options and costs and a slide show of some before and after pictures of erosion control works done by HCLG members over the last 20 years. It will run from 8.30am to 1.30pm at two properties and morning tea and lunch will be provided. Cost is free for HCLG members and associates and \$10pp for others.

Places must be booked for catering purposes by Monday 24th May. For location details and bookings, please email Robin at isohclg@outlook.com or leave a message with your details on 0409 972 700.

