



'Mountains2Coast' Reserves Proposals

... protect, connect and restore regional forests



Far South Coast 'Mountains2Coast' Proposal outlined over-page (Richard Green photo)

The National Parks Association of NSW, meeting in Coffs Harbour 7-Jul-12, unanimously supported our proposal that NPA **develop a 'Mountains-to-Coast' Regional Landscape Vision of connected conservation reserves - across all land tenures (without fear or favor)**. First submissions will be to 3 Coastal NSW Catchment Management Authorities in September 2012.

M2C proposals: lay the foundation for NPA Reserves Strategy east of the Murray-Darling Basin; support NPA's role in the Great Eastern Ranges (GER); and add to the **National Reserves System**, Wildlife Corridors, Local Environment Plans, Koala Plans, and cooperation with Aboriginal Groups.

NPA community 'Outreach' is enhanced via NCC Groups, Landcare and others within Local Govt. Areas or CMA 'Socio-Ecological Landscapes promoting interconnection between people & nature'.

An NPA/NCC MoU relating to M2C and Forest Policy would maximize synergy in our communities. Related NPA/NCC Submissions on Native Vegetation, Koala & Private Native Forests due 24-Aug

BACKGROUND:

The **Australian Government** has just started outlining their next 5-Year Plan for 'Caring-for-our-Country' programs (including the **NRS**). Next month the AG will specify criteria which Regional CMAs must meet in '**Climate Ready' Catchment Action Plans 2013-2023 (CAP2)** to qualify for future rounds of the Commonwealth's **Carbon- Biodiversity Funds** (NPA's GER funded May '12). Any group application for future funding must relate to Catchment Action Plans accredited in 2013.

M2C was conceived after Ian Pulsford presented on GER 'Ecosystem Services' at the first **National Forests & Climate Forum I** convened in Batemans Bay 13-Aug-10 (attended by Chair of Southern Rivers CMA). After ANU last year, our third is scheduled to be held in **Hobart 1-Mar-13**. This event is sponsored by National Environmental NGOs and NPA Council could join their ranks.

Forest Carbon Offsets, plus GER and CMA 'CAP2s' provide a bi-partisan framework of financial incentives as a new opportunity for negotiations with Governments on protection of State Forests.

Most significant landholders are **loss-making State Forests**, currently being logged and wood-chipped in defiance of biodiversity and forest carbon conservation imperatives outlined globally and in Australia's Climate Commission report entitled 'This Critical Decade'. Tasmania's 'Forest Carbon Study' (July '12) and Tasmanian Forest Agreements beg similar initiatives in other States.

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www.Nature.Net.au **NPA(NSW) State Council Meeting in Coffs Harbour 7th July 2012**



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The **NSW Government '2021 Plan'**'s Natural Resource Management Targets will ultimately need to be reflected in the Coastal CMAs' final CAP2 at a priority, project, local area and regional scale. NPA Far South Coast Branch is keen to engage with our **Southern Rivers CMA** on M2C projects within the context of their '**Far South Coast** sub-regional plan' (Eurobodalla & Bega-Valley Shires)

Also referenced are 7 **Carbon-Biodiversity Fund** 1st round \$15million grants announced May'12 relating to our **NSW Southern Rivers Region** (3 mention **Koala** & 4 **Aboriginal collaboration**).

It helps that NPA is in Partnership with NSW Environment Minister Parker in the Great Eastern Ranges initiative (we Gulaga-Biamanga National Park Board Members are also appointed by Minister Parker). NPA's GER Funding announced May'12 involves Illawarra to the Shoalhaven. Minister Parker asked for submissions by 24-Aug on her '**Forestry and Koalas**' Discussion Paper.

The '**Gulaga-Biamanga Landscape**' is the heart of this **M2C Far South Coast proposal** – spanning both Shires across the Wallaga Lake and Dignams Creek boundary - and spreading far north and south into each LGA. It centrally involves the two Aboriginal-Owner National Park Boards and their joint Draft-Draft Plan of Management (June 2012) has just been submitted to the NSW Environment Minister for approval before going onto a lengthy period of public exhibition.

Wogonga, Merrimans and Bega Local Aboriginal Land Councils are represented on these 2 NP Boards alongside a majority of other Aboriginal Traditional Owner Members. Their Joint NPs' Plan involves their 2 'Hand-Back' NPs and adjacent controversial State Forests (their uniquely powerful NP Leases entitle them to ask to acquire adjacent lands for subsequent addition to the NPs). Minuted first meeting with Forests NSW' Southern Region Manager was promisingly conciliatory. Wallaga Lake State Park (declared in 2010) is another area claimed. No consultation took place.

Koala protection and Forest Carbon Offsets were referenced for further investigation and advice to the Boards. Latest Biodiversity Funds allocated to the CMA & OEH in May'12 by the Australian Government are welcome outcomes, but Gulaga-Biamanga Aboriginal Owner Boards were not consulted in these Grant Applications. Apologies were accepted in June, but the Boards want this situation corrected. In future the authority of the Aboriginal Traditional Owner NP Boards must be formally respected (perhaps an MoU with the Southern Rivers CMA would be a good start?). Jobs, education and mentoring for youngsters of local aboriginal-owner families are a high priority.

In early June, the 2 Boards formally asked me and 3 Aboriginal members to act as their interim representatives to the SRCMA. Newly appointed Board Members may not meet for several more weeks. As NPA/NCC's nominee to the Gulaga Board, I am keeping both constituencies informed. The Southern Rivers CMA is also funded to work on the Bega and Clyde River Catchments. How can we engage with GER via NPA(NSW) as a 'Regional Partner' on our Far South Coast?

Promoting a '**Great Southern Koala Sanctuary**' overlays NPA's Far South Coast M2C Proposal. Local NCC-Member Environment Groups are also keen to combine both in their Forest Campaign. Owing to the dramatic demise of koalas in the south east forests of NSW, it is proposed that NPA submit a proposal to the State and Commonwealth Governments to create this Great Southern Koala Sanctuary from Bateman's Bay to the Victorian Border related to the M2C & GER initiatives.

Hopefully in September, similar NPA M2C Proposals can be sent to the Northern Rivers and Hunter/Central Rivers CMAs. We also engage online e.g. www.yoursaysouthernriverscma.com.au

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