

# Bass Sydney & Habitat

**Alan Izzard**

Bass Sydney Fishing Club was formed in the early 1980s, at around the same time as Native Fish Australia. As a matter of fact Bass Sydney members were fundamental in starting NFA. Bass Sydney Club, as a branch of NFA adopted the objectives of NFA and added a few more of their own. The main one we are concerned with is:

“To provide any kind of financial or other assistance to, or in respect of, specific conservation projects.”

A saying we have in the club which we firmly believe is “If you take care of their environment the fish will take care of themselves.”

To that end the club gained a grant which enabled the fishway to be built on the Liverpool Weir on the Georges River. Following the success there they then worked on getting a fishway built on the Lane Cove River weir and more recently, working in conjunction with the Parramatta Council and the Parramatta River Catchment Authority, have obtained another grant for funds to help complete the 4 fishways on the weirs on the Parramatta River.

The club was still looking for ways to improve Bass fishing in the Sydney region and in 2003 we received a letter from Greening Western Sydney, which is a part of Greening Australia, asking if we would be prepared to help them gain funds to do some replanting on South Creek, west of Sydney. We asked their co-ordinator to come to a meeting and explain what was required and as a result of that meeting 2 things happened.

1. We co-signed an application for funding which was approved.
2. We were asked if we would be interested in doing a planting on the creek.

We arranged an inspection of the area that was of interest, and as you can see from the photos there is not much vegetation on the banks.



*South Creek 2003*

We agreed to do some work there and returned early the next year with members of the Blue Mountains & District Anglers Assoc. and a couple of Greening Australia (GA) staff. After about 6 hours we had managed to plant 480 plants, all of which are native to that local area.



*South Creek 2004*



*Same place June 2010*

We had another planting in March the following year at another site on the creek. This time we worked to a system with the guys from GA using an auger to drill the holes, saving us a lot of time and hard digging, and with a smaller group we were able to put in as many plants as the previous trip.



*2005 Before*



*2010 After*

Another 2 trips, again to a different spot on the creek, we were able to plant about another 700 + plants. We had arranged for the GA staff to bring along a fire fighter pump and at the end of the day we gave the plants a good watering, we believe that this contributed to a much higher survival rate. A good thing about returning to a previously planted site was that we were able to see how the earlier plantings had survived.

In partnership with Greening Australia we applied for further funding for more plantings on the creek but were rejected, the reason given that the water quality was not good enough to warrant the spending and we should apply again when the quality had improved.

With the lack of funding we were at a loss, so we started to look for other projects. With the BMD&AA we had some contact with NPWS Richmond regarding access to a gate at Yellomundee State Reserve. The ranger mentioned that he had found a patch of Lantana on the banks of the Grose River and that the he (NPWS) did not have the funds to remove it. Both clubs agreed to get in and pull, cut and poison. We achieved this with about 6 days work over several months.



Grose River Lantana removal

At the end we (Springwood & BS) approached the ranger and suggested that we could do some clearing at Yellomundee, on the Nepean River, as well. We saw this as a 2 fold opportunity: clearing the riparian zone of weeds and also ingratiating ourselves with NPWS to gain access to the area more often during Bass season. We started work there in June 2010, and as luck would have there was an indigenous group already working there and we believe that a 4 wheel drive club will also take part.

### **What next?**

We expect with all things going well that the clean up at Yellomundee may take several years. The biggest problem we face now & in the future is funding - we have to rely on Government handouts. I do not know what the costs have been in the plantings we have done but I expect that the seed collection, propagation and site preparation is not cheap.

To alleviate the problem of funding several members of BS have taken courses run by Greening Australia in Riparian Evaluation and Seed Collecting and will soon do Seed Propagation, hoping to make use of these skills down the track with smaller projects, where we will be able to find a site, do an assessment and collect and propagate seeds from the area to replant after weed removal. The good news is that GA staff have promised us some more planting work in the near future. Any volunteers?

<http://www.basssydney.com/>