

WILDLIFE LANDS AUSTRALIA

THE NEWSLETTER OF HUMANE SOCIETY INTERNATIONAL'S WILDLIFE LAND TRUST

ISSUE TWO 2008

Our Mission

Wildlife Land Trust Australia exists in order to protect wild animals by preserving their habitats and by providing them sanctuary within those habitats.

As we go to print on the second edition of "Wildlife Lands" Australia, there are now 20 sanctuaries in the Wildlife Land Trust (WLT) network, with a further 8 property owners considering joining our growing ranks.

The interest and enthusiasm of a range of landholders has been extremely encouraging, as the diversity and range of habitats builds upon the conservation value of the WLT. Since our last (and first) newsletter the following sanctuaries have joined the fold: **Cheryll Williams and Tony Young** and their 46 acre "Licuala Rainforest Refuge", which abuts the Daintree National Park in Queensland; **Donna Stepan and John Kosseck** and their 196 acre "Sleepy Burrows Refuge" near Canberra; **Jens and Lisa Stephan** who own the 150 acre "Jaloran Wildlife Refuge" in southern New South Wales near Cooma; **Lyn Childs** in Queensland, north of Bundaberg owns the coastal 100 acre "Roost" sanctuary; **George Sives** owns a 40 acre sanctuary near Toowoomba in Queensland; **Ian and Mandy Gunn** own the 111 acre coastal sanctuary "Windabandi" near Melbourne; **Robbie Swan and friends** own both the 240 acre "Funny Farm" and the 330 acre "Brindabella Wildlife and Wilderness Reserve" near Canberra; and **Trish Cunningham** owns the seven acre "Andelaine Sanctuary" near Tamworth in New South Wales. You can see a map of all of the WLT's sanctuary members on page 4.

We have been very happy to help a

Our Goal

To see the protection of one million acres of wildlife habitat across Australia in the Wildlife Land Trust sanctuary network.

number of WLT sanctuary owners gain advice on planting and weeding programs and also on legal options to improve the protection status of their properties. It is clear however that getting good advice quickly on habitat management or legal issues is not always easy, and we are hoping to do our best to improve matters for our WLT members and any other interested parties. You will see inside that we have been very fortunate to gain some broad guidance from the Environmental Defender's Offices in Sydney and Brisbane about national opportunities for legal protection, and from Alison Elvin at NaturalCapital and Graham Fifield at Greening Australia on weeding and replanting programs.

Our intent however is to further refine and develop these advices to be of more specific and direct use to our WLT members, and will keep you in touch with progress. But meanwhile, we will advise individual sanctuary holders to the best of our ability. We also plan to develop a generic "action guide" to help those sanctuary owners who have complained of the threatening actions of illegal shooters.

We also hope to start a WLT electronic chat room soon, where we will be encouraging WLT members to discuss any management issues that are of concern to them. In the longer term, we hope that this chat room can be extended to all WLT sanctuary owners around the world.



The WLT is an integral part of HSI's habitat protection program activities across Australia and globally, and we warmly welcome all new WLT members, and congratulate them on their commitment to wildlife conservation in Australia.

Michael Kennedy, Director, WLT.

Messages from WLT SANCTUARY OWNERS

Each issue of “Wildlife Lands” will bring short messages from the Wildlife Land Trust’s new and existing members, expressing their views and thoughts as wildlife sanctuary owners and managers:

Lisa and Jens Stephan

“Jaloran Wildlife Refuge” New South Wales



We joined the WLT because its goals were exactly in line with what we were already doing, and already believe is for the best. When we bought the property, we spent a long time cleaning it up - taking rubbish out of the grasslands and woodland areas. We took down the long stretches of barbed wire, and opened up a few fences, to allow safer passage of wildlife between the neighbouring Reserve on one side of our place, and the river on the other side. We planted over a thousand native seedlings, in grow tubes, along irrigation dripper lines, to control erosion and expand the vegetation corridor down to the river, where animals come to drink.

We regularly see wombats, kangaroos, lizards, skinks, snakes, and many varieties of bird and insect life. We discovered a den of feral kittens once, and with the help of our neighbours,

tried to get them used to handling and people, and find them homes. Our most recent news is the discovery a couple of months ago of a resident koala! There it was, sitting perched high in a tall tree, oblivious to us on the ground, taking photos (of its bum) through the leaves! The kids called it “Lightning” (I think because of its speed (or lack thereof) not because of its precarious proximity to the highest point of the tree in a storm!). We’d like to formalise our commitment to the animals, raise people’s awareness, and see more sanctuaries in our area, and so joined the WLT.

Since joining WLT, we’ve had an exciting email exchange with some WLT owners up in the Daintree, with their flying fox rescue, and have seen their photos, which we have thoroughly enjoyed! Way to go, everyone!

Cheryll Williams
and Tony Young

“Licuala Rainforest Refuge”
Queensland

Licuala Rainforest Refuge is named for the unique fan palm forest that lies on this precious block of land. It covers around 18 hectares and we have found at least seven species of plants that are rare, endangered or listed as vulnerable. In addition we have cassowaries regularly visiting, and are assured that there are striped possums and even the rare Lumbholtz kangaroo around the area. Tony and I are keen on Wildlife Rescue, which is why it is so good to be allied with HSI as we feel this gives our site an extra measure of protection.





Lynn Childs
"The Roost" Queensland

The Roost is fast becoming a rare commodity as an absolute beachfront property with 95 acres still left undeveloped on the Queensland coastline. The property is unique in this area for its flora communities and species from its mixed Eucalyptus/ Livistonia Open Forest, to its Complex Nototphyll Closed Vine Rainforest, and Coastal/Dune Casuarina Open Forests plant communities. It resides in a very unique eco-system of an acid freshwater wetland environment adjoining a totally secluded coastal beach representing the second largest turtle nesting area in mainland eastern Australia. It (along with a dozen other properties) also provides a valuable pocket-type corridor between Deepwater National Park and the Estuarine Conservation Reserve and between Deepwater Creek and the Pacific Ocean.

The Deepwater Creek Wetlands was registered by the Australian Heritage Commission as 'a significant reference site as an Acid Freshwater system of which Deepwater creek and its tributaries is one of only a few remaining coastal Acid Freshwater systems left in a natural condition in Qld'. Whilst this property is 'selectively' restricted from development under the Queensland Vegetation Act, it still does not have

any legal protection from future development in terms of big bucks. Due to the nature of these coastal properties and the increasing land value that they attract, there is no system set in place in all three Government sectors to prevent and protect the Australian Coastline from the ravages of development. Rates and land taxes on private properties of high escalating land value ultimately gives way to development and destroys some of the most unique and significant coastal environments that this country inherits, of which most has been lost.

The Roost has been in our family for the past 27 years in which it was found for the purpose of protecting and enjoying the rare beauty of its diversified aspects of nature without human imprints. Our family has always recognized the significance and importance of nature and the deep inner connection to nature that is vital to our existence in all aspects. With the ever increasing pressure of coastal development rapidly encroaching, it has become vitally necessary, and it's time to place this property under the Wildlife Land Trust with the intention to permanently protect it legally for the future as what may become one of the last Australian Coastal private properties still left in its original pristine condition.

Anne-Marie Dineen
and Joe Schick

"Oakview Wildlife Refuge" Queensland

We joined the Wildlife Land Trust to have our property recognised as a wildlife sanctuary, to protect it from future overgrazing and logging and to protect the existing wildlife and their habitat, along with conservation of all the wild plants. Some of our planned projects include: controlling weeds such as cats claw using biological methods; remove barbed wire fencing and replacing with 4 strand plain wire to reduce risk of injury to wildlife; fencing along our boundaries to keep out neighbouring cattle who at present are causing erosion and damage in our rainforest gullies; having a fire management plan; constructing aviaries for injured and orphaned possums and birds; and constructing a quarantine pen for macropods.



Wildlife Land Trust's **AUSTRALIAN NETWORK**

The location of the current 20 properties in the Wildlife Land Trust's growing national network of wildlife sanctuaries.

1. Licuala Rainforest Refuge
2. The Roost
3. Oakview Wildlife Refuge
4. Mt Monty Rainforest Nature Refuge
5. George Sives' Refuge
6. Heather Wood's Refuge
7. Burru Wildlife Refuge
8. Andelaine Sanctuary
9. Curricabark Wildlife Refuge
10. Dianella Sanctuary
11. Sleepy Burrows Refuge
12. Brindabella Wildlife and Wilderness Reserve
13. The Funny Farm
14. Warriwillah Wildlife Refuge
15. Michelago Wildlife Sanctuary
16. Jaloran Wildlife Refuge
17. Corringale Cottage Sanctuary
18. Windabandi Sanctuary
19. Golden Wattle Sanctuary
20. Lyn & Geoff's Refuge

Legal protection **FOR YOUR PROPERTY**

The Environmental Defender's Office (EDO) is a not-for-profit community legal centre that has a national network of statewide offices specialising in public interest environmental law. The New South Wales EDO has a long history of working with HSI and has provided us with advice on many of our projects over the years. Their most recent advice has been on the various conservation covenants available throughout Australia. The EDO provided HSI with a state-by-state summary of all possible conservation options, including those both legally binding over future owners in perpetuity, as well as those that only last as long as you are the owner.

As most Conservation Covenants are entered into by authorities on the basis that the properties they cover have significant conservation values, the EDO have also investigated options for owners in NSW that are seeking to bind the future owners for conservation purposes, even if the authorities think there are insufficient conservation values present. This has only been investigated in NSW, where it appears there is the option of using the Conveyancing Act. The properties that are part of the Wildlife Land Trust (WLT) in America are covered by a covenant that is signed between the Trust and the landowners, and the EDO is also looking into the possibility of establishing a similar legally binding Covenant that could be signed between HSI here in Australia and private landowners.

If you are interested in seeing a copy of the EDO advice, or would like to talk about possible options available for you, call us on 1800 33 737 (free call) or e-mail Michael Kennedy on michael@hsi.org.au.

Protecting threatened habitats **NATIONALLY**

The Coorong, Lakes Alexandrina and Albert (CLAA)



Image courtesy of Averil Bones

Complementing the Wildlife Land Trust program and HSI's conservation and habitat protection aims, we have recently made a scientific application to the Australian Department of Environment and Water Resources to list '*The Coorong, Lakes Alexandrina and Albert (CLAA)*' as a Critically Endangered ecological community under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act)*.

The listed ecological community forms a natural connected wetland system, which is home to numerous wetland dependent species, some of which are classified as threatened under state and/or commonwealth legislation or protected under the Japan-Australia Migratory Bird Agreement (JAMBA) and the China-Australia Migratory Bird Agreement (CAMBA). The CLAA is also included on the List of Wetlands of International Importance under the global Ramsar convention.

The CLAA is a unique Australian wetlands system due to its mosaic of 23 different wetland types ranging from freshwater lakes to estuarine environments. This series of lakes and lagoons are the culmination of the River Murray, which initially runs into Lake Alexandrina (76,000 ha), that in turn feeds Lake Albert (16,800 ha). Lake Alexandrina then drains through five channels that lead to either the Murray Mouth (and Southern Ocean) or into the Coorong Lagoons (47,700 ha). The Coorong is separated from the Southern Ocean by a narrow sand dune peninsula. Collectively the CLAA covers approximately 140,500 hectares.

In addition to providing habitat for a number of threatened species, the CLAA incorporates approximately 262.5 hectares of the critically endangered 'Swamps of the Fleurieu Peninsula', listed under the EPBC Act. The nationally endangered Mount Lofty Ranges Southern Emu-wren

relies on the Swamps of Fleurieu Peninsula for its survival. The Coorong area also supports the world's largest breeding colony of Australian pelicans and is the only annual breeding site in South Australia.

Although there has been substantial habitat decline mainly attributed to barrage operations and clearing of native vegetation, it is the loss of ecological integrity (increased salinity/turbidity and altered flow regimes) of the system that is directly related to receding habitat which is the major immediate concern.

HSI recognises the vitally important role of this area, both locally and internationally, in order to protect Australia's biological diversity and enhance the existing network of protected areas across the country. The WLT members are part of this valuable network of wildlife and habitat protection.

THE TRUST *in Canada*

In Ontario, Canada, the Wildlife Land Trust is also starting to spread its wings. Two properties donated by Brian and Austina Cummings, about three miles apart, one 154 acres and another 160 acres, provide shelter and sustenance to wolves, deer, elk, moose, caribou and coyotes, as well as to smaller mammals and birds, including ruff grouse. Heavily forested with pine, fir and aspen, these sanctuary lands are a welcome safe haven for wildlife in an area where uncut forest is increasingly scarce, due to the presence of several large paper mills.



© iStockphoto/John Pitcher.

CONSERVATION GRANTS *Program*

Humane Society International, in conjunction with the Foundation for National Parks and Wildlife, the Paddy Pallin Foundation, and the NSW Department of Environment and Climate Change, has helped instigate a small Private Conservation Grants Program for properties within New South Wales that are covered by a perpetually binding conservation covenant. Developed and administered by the Foundation for

National Parks and Wildlife, this program is designed, through the provision of funding from \$500 up to \$3,000, to enhance the conservation efforts of privately owned properties across the state.

Applications are received on an annual basis up until the end of June and programs of up to 3 years in duration will be considered based on a series of relevant criteria. With a total of \$30,000 available for the

management and improvement of biological diversity, it is hoped that this fund will not only serve to protect and improve a significant amount of properties, but also encourage others to permanently protect their land with a binding agreement. Grant applications for this year have now closed, and new applications will not be received until 2009.



Wildlife Land Trust protects its

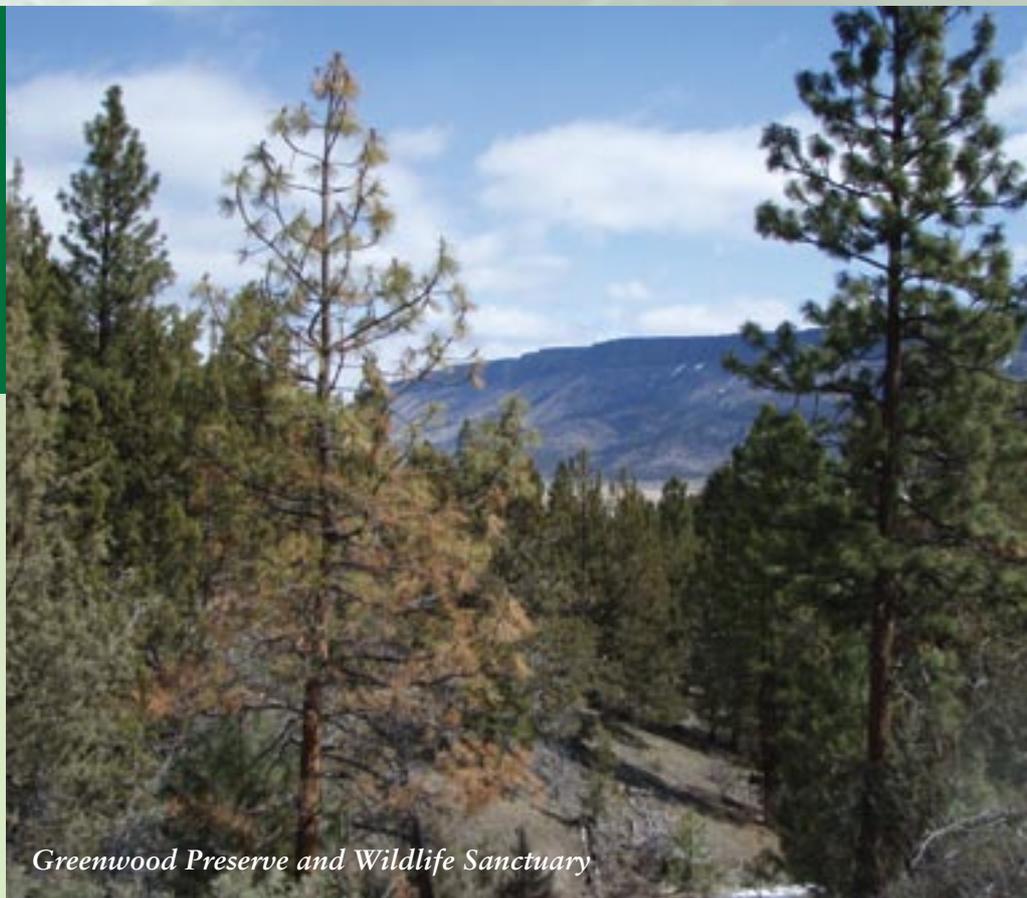
LARGEST U.S. WILDLIFE SANCTUARY TO DATE

The HSUS Wildlife Land Trust has received a donation of 2,271 acres of ranch land in southern Oregon for permanent habitat protection. The resulting wildlife sanctuary is the organization's largest, and its first of this significance to be established in Oregon.

The property was originally acquired in 1995 by an aerospace engineer interested in creating a nature preserve. During the first decade of this project, the owner's efforts were focused on planting some 4,400 trees. Gradually, a growing awareness of the wildlife diversity on the property evolved into a quest for a land protection group that specialized in habitat conservation. This quest was underscored by a recognition of the rapid loss of habitat as population growth and commercial land development soared in the West.

"Finding an organization both to serve general conservation purposes and to provide a wildlife sanctuary was not an easy task for the owner and took several years to accomplish," says Robert Koons, Executive Director of the Wildlife Land Trust. "Our niche, as the only national organization that prohibits recreational and commercial hunting and trapping on its sanctuaries, offered the donor the opportunity to fulfill his key goals."

The Greenwood Preserve and Wildlife Sanctuary represents a mosaic of valuable wildlife habitats, from talus slopes and seasonal ponds to sagebrush-dominated shrub steppe and juniper woodlands. More than 411 wildlife species have been sighted



Greenwood Preserve and Wildlife Sanctuary

on the property or may occur within its boundaries, including 4 amphibians, 15 reptiles, 310 birds and 76 mammals. Among the latter are pronghorn, elk, black bears, badgers and the elusive mountain lion. The preserve also contains three year-round sources of water – a rarity in the West, and critical for wildlife.

Another important benefit of protecting this property is that it may also serve as an important wildlife corridor for animals moving between vast private and public lands in the region, including those managed by the Bureau of Land Management and the adjacent Fremont National Forest. Such habitat linkages are increasingly recognized for their importance to species that need big wild spaces for their survival. "There

are not that many remote spots left in the country," noted the donor. "As the urban interface encroaches on the animals, what are they going to do?"

Future management of the Greenwood Preserve and Wildlife Sanctuary will require a team effort. "We are the owners of the property," says Koons, "but the Southern Oregon Land Conservancy also holds a conservation easement." The Wildlife Land Trust seeks cooperative partnerships with land management agencies, neighbouring cattle growers, and other interested parties. "Collaborative efforts are central to the success of any significant conservation project, including this one. We thrive on such partnerships," Koons concludes.

AN INVITATION *to join us*

Originally the brainchild of The Humane Society of the United States in 1993, the program has expanded to encompass several overseas locations including Canada, South Africa, Belize, Indonesia, Romania and Jamaica. With the start of the program by Humane Society International in Australia in 2006, the Wildlife Land Trust (WLT) has grown from two to twenty sanctuaries, with another eight in various stages of registration. Scattered throughout New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland and Tasmania, these property owners are committed to protecting and preserving the natural habitats on their sanctuaries.



Photo courtesy Nick Edards

WLT accepts properties of all sizes and shapes and currently consists of sanctuaries that range from six to six hundred acres. Several of the properties in the network are home to rare and endangered flora and fauna and the habitats that support them encompass everything from farmland to rainforests. We are keen for your "bit of bush" to become part of the international network of sanctuaries that covers eight countries and protects more than 1.8 million acres. We are particularly keen to hear from HSI supporters with properties in the west, south and north of Australia.

What can you do now?

You can go to www.wlt.org and have a look at what many like-minded people have been doing around the

world to protect wildlife and habitats. In the Australian section of this site, if you have an interest in registering your property with the WLT, you can download a PDF application form that you can send directly to us in Sydney.

The benefits of joining the Trust include a 'letter of agreement' which spells out our joint commitment to protecting wildlife, a certificate of membership, a guide to managing your property, regular newsletters, access to our WLT group website, signs for your property and further advice on stronger protection methods for your property.

You will also become part of a worldwide network of like-minded sanctuary owners.

There are no legal obligations or costs implied in joining the WLT, which is entirely voluntary, and would not conflict (but complement) any existing or future agreements you might enter into to protect your land. We very much hope that this new initiative will be attractive to you, enabling you to let the wider-world know what good conservation work you are undertaking for wildlife and habitats in Australia.

If you would like to talk about this invitation directly, please call Michael Kennedy on 1800 333 737 or email him at michael@hsi.org.au.



Humane Society International Inc.

PO Box 439 Avalon NSW 2107 Australia
Ph +61 2 9973 1728 Fax +61 2 9973 1729
Email admin@hsi.org.au www.hsi.org.au
Email michael@hsi.org.au www.wlt.org/australia.asp

