

Bangor Bushfire Recovery Newsletter Issue 6



Local Stories

The Bangor Fire

The ongoing inferno raging towards the terrified town of Napperby.

Humongous flames filled the sky followed by the putrid smoke that covered the area and tried to choke everything. The cows were bellowing on. Dehydrated fire fighters tried everything but the fire was too powerful.

All night the sound of sirens and flashing lights were everywhere, roar of the fire that took the hills and the landscape always expanding.

The wild life ran away desperate to escape crackling fire, getting burnt badly. The bright inferno of a dragon filled the hills. Men were desperate to save their homes and others. The ever changing winds took the fire over the hills, into the Wirrabara Forest, destroying everything. Firefighters were unable to get into the Forest. Livestock were killed and burnt. The petrified animals were unable to escape the oncoming flames. Then the rain came bringing relief to the firefighters for a day, then back to work in the sweltering summer days. The creeping fire was always persistent and on the run. The fire crews, on land and in the air, battling the moving blaze. Then the wind changed and the fire was heading back to Napperby.

The water bombers flew from Port Pirie and went to Napperby to challenge the out of control fire. Seven or eight planes flew back and forward to battle the blaze. Near my house they were flying just over the trees and then coming down low to bomb the fire.

Then at night the fire trucks, lights flashing, were under The Bluff trying to stop the inferno reaching and burning it down. We took a drive to Weeroona Island to take photos of the enormous fire. Then I saw seven fire trucks on the highway heading to the Telowie fire to put it out.

Special thanks to all the CFS volunteers and farmers for their help with fighting the fires in South Australia.

Lachlan McDonald

Fire

In Southern Flinders, summer time,
lightning strikes from blackened sky
howling winds blow hot and dry
caustic breath on wide swept plains.

Lightning strikes from blackened sky
lights the stubble in the fields
within a realm of continual space
to feed upon the undergrowth.

Lights the stubble in the fields
gallops over farmers land
licks the eucalyptus trees
devouring all that's in its path.

Gallops over farmers land
hungry with its burning mouth
finds the frightened wooly sheep
burns the homestead to the ground.

Hungry with its burning mouth
swept along by wailing winds
climbs the hills with rapid speed
leaving nothing in its wake.

Swept along by wailing winds
darkens sky with ash and smoke
finds a forest near a town
spits its embers to the sky.

Darkens sky with ash and smoke
landscape stark with withered staves
devoid of living plant or tree
moves on with unrelenting force.

Jan Weldon-Veitch



FIRE RECOVERY IN AN SA WOODLAND

FIRE Seeds release from pods/stored in soil. Germination is stimulated through exposure to smoke and heat. A thin layer of ash, rich in nutrients covers the ground making a perfect bed for raising new seedlings. ■ Birds and foragers move through the open area finding seeds and insects to eat. Ground living fungi species fruit and start their reproductive cycle. ■ Predators and scavengers capitalise on animals with few places to hide.

1 MONTH Young seedlings cover the open ground, soaking the abundant light, water and nutrients. Species that have not been present for years may appear as the fire initiates their life cycle. Eucalypt species shoot growth from buds hidden under bark and lignotubers under the soil. Other species shoot from roots out away from the main trunk (eg Acacias, Allocasuarina spp.). Ferns and grass trees shoot from burnt trunks, and grasses produce fresh shoots from their bases. ■ Nutrients that are not used by plants are leached into the soil.

A FEW MONTHS Grazing animals are able to move through opened forest feeding on the new shoots. Foraging animals move through open areas browsing fresh foliage and digging for fungi and insects. ■ Predators can select their prey, unable to find cover in the open space.

1 YEAR Development continues with seasonal conditions influencing recovery. Ground cover plants have re-established, protecting the soil from erosion. Plant and animal succession (the altering dominance of species with time and changing conditions) favour different species than before the fire. Competition between different plants is strong in the emerging shrub layer.

A FEW YEARS Fuel Levels are still low and the occurrence of a second fire is unlikely. The number of species has increased since fire event and is still increasing. ■ Animal species which prefer the open habitat created by the fire start to move out as the shrub layer begins to close again.

10-20 YEARS Reaching a transition point, where species that have responded since the fire and those that prefer older habitat can be present. There is enough near-surface and elevated fuel to carry a fire through the under story again. ■ Another fire now, will have a major influence on biodiversity as some species have not produced seed yet. ■ Habitat has recovered for many animal species to return (eg bandicoots).

20 YEARS The fight for understory dominance is ending and competition between taller trees and shrubs causes the under story to thin. Most plant species have matured and will be able to reproduce if burnt again. ■ Lichens and mosses have started covering soil, rocks, and fallen timber again. Decomposing fungi proliferate on the forest floor. ■ High levels of fuel has accumulated in the surface, near-surface layers and on tree trunks as fallen dead material builds up, and as bark re-grows. ■ A few species which prefer long unburnt habitat are beginning to return and will increase if the area remains unburnt.

60 YEARS The few species which benefit from a lack of fire now dominate. ■ Fuel levels have been stable for many years. ■ Most plant species have seed stored in the soil or in buds and capsules on the plant. ■ A fire now, will re-start the cycle again.



Firewood for Fund

In an attempt to have something good come of the recent bushfires that have impacted our community, the Department of Planning Transport and Infrastructure (DPTI) have requested help to dispose of the stockpiled wood cleared from the Germein Gorge.

An invitation has been sent out to the district governors of Lions, Apex and Rotary clubs to forward onto their respective sub branches, calling on not for profit organisations to raise funds for the Bangor bushfire victims.

Any not for profit community club that wish to be involved in raising funds for the recovery effort are encouraged to contact Harold Carn from DPTI on 0421 058 066.

First cab of the rank has been the Crystal Brook Apex club who have been busy collecting wood to chop up and sell to raise funds for the victims of the fire.



Further information with respect to the purchase of firewood can be directed to

James Wardle 0407 362 105
from the Crystal Brook Apex club

The majority of the firewood will take 12 months to season before being suitable for burning.

Grants for Community Groups

The Northern and York NRM Board have released a round of grants for community groups affected by the recent fire and flood at Bangor.

More information can be found at:

[www.nynrm.sa.gov.au/Portals/7/DEWNR_NY_Community Grants for Bangor Fire and Flood_ 010514.pdf](http://www.nynrm.sa.gov.au/Portals/7/DEWNR_NY_Community%20Grants%20for%20Bangor%20Fire%20and%20Flood_010514.pdf)

Fire and Rain Photo Display

The Rotary Club of Port Pirie will host an exhibition, Fire and Rain, at the Port Pirie Regional Tourism and Arts Centre on Thursday, 29 May, at 7.30 pm.

Donated Hay Supplies

All farmers who will be requiring hay supplies either now or in the near future please register with Primary Producers SA on 8297 0899.

We would personally like to thank all whom have generously donated.



Donated Posts

Guys from Mid North Shednight have been collecting donated secondhand green posts from kind wineries.

There are posts stock piled at Wirrabara and are willing to deliver more if people would like them. Please call John Polden 0459 501 387 if you would like some delivered.

Bangor Bushfire Community Diary

Council would like to invite anyone who was involved with the Bangor Bushfire to document their experiences and forward them to us to be part of the Bangor Bushfire Community Diary 2014.

Stories are welcome from people who were involved in the recent fires or have been involved in the recovery effort - residents, volunteers, emergency services personnel or anyone who would like to share their story about the fires.

For more information contact Jessie White, Deputy Chief Executive Officer, District Council of Mount Remarkable on 8666 2014.



Useful Contacts

General recovery information

Bushfire Recovery Hotline 1800 302 787
www.sa.gov.au/safiresrecovery

Agistment and Fodder

Primary Producers SA 8297 0899

Business Support and Information

Rural Business Support 1800 836 211
www.ruralbusinesssupport.org.au

Personal Support

The Commonwealth Government's gives some tips on how to best help a person recovering from a traumatic event. www.disasterassist.gov.au
Fact Sheet - Supporting people affected by disaster

Counselling and Support

Country Health SA 131 465
Beyond Blue 1300 22 4636
Youth Beyond Blue 1300 22 4636
Kids Helpline 1800 55 1800
For more information visit
www.sa.gov.au/safiresrecovery

Fencing

BlazeAid (Eugene Ross) 0447 252 931
email: blazeaid.wirrabara@gmail.com
www.blazeaid.com.au

Financial Counselling

Salvation Army Financial
Counselling Telephone
Helpline 1800 007 007

Financial Support

Centrelink
www.centrelink.gov.au

Volunteers

Re-build fences:
BlazeAid 0447 252 931

Tree planting:
Trees for Life 8406 0500