

## WHY PREVENT STOCK ACCESS TO WATERWAYS?

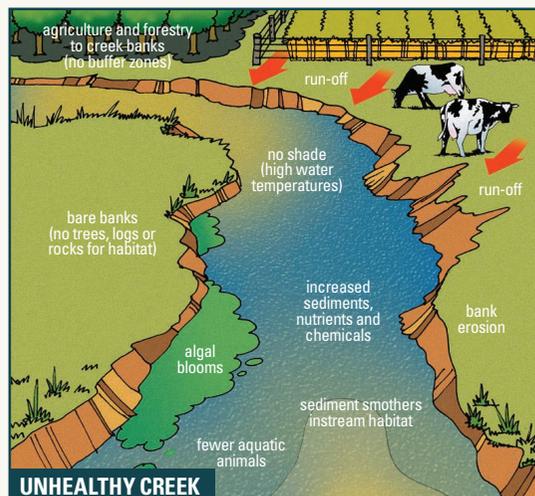
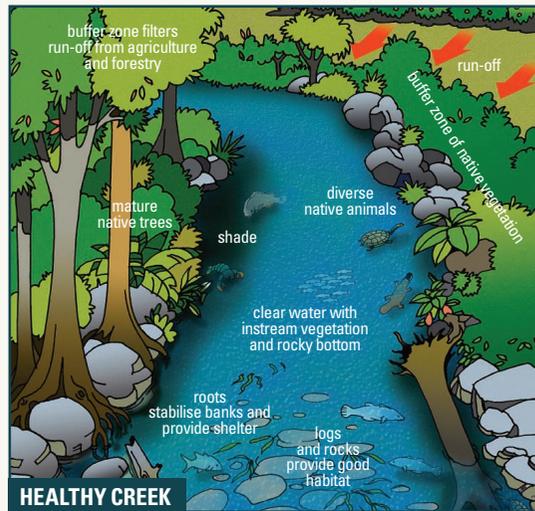
Preventing stock access to waterways is an integral part of good land management. It helps protect:

- the **health** of our waterways
- our local **drinking water supply**
- land and vegetation adjacent to waterways.

## WHAT CAN LANDHOLDERS DO?

Landholders can prevent stock access to waterways by:

- **fencing off** waterways
- providing stock with an alternative drinking **water supply**
- providing adequate **shade** for stock in paddocks.



## REGIONAL DRINKING WATER CATCHMENTS

A catchment is an area of land that feeds rainwater into a creek, river or other water body such as a dam. If that water is used for drinking, the catchment is known as a drinking water catchment.

Rous County Council has three main functions: bulk water supply; weed biosecurity; and flood mitigation. It is the regional water supply authority supplying drinking water in bulk to the local government areas of Lismore (excluding Nimbin), Ballina (excluding Wardell), Byron (excluding Mullumbimby), and Richmond Valley (excluding Casino).

This water is sourced from three key drinking water catchments including the catchments of Rocky Creek Dam, Emigrant Creek Dam and the Wilsons River Source as well as a number of groundwater sources.

Rous County Council manages these drinking water catchments to ensure the quality of drinking water for over 100,000 local people.

## PROTECTING OUR WATERWAYS IS A SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

Protecting our drinking water catchment is a responsibility Rous County Council shares with industry, businesses, landholders, communities and individuals.

Every control measure counts and contributes to the quality of drinking water supplies in the long term.



# MANAGE LIVESTOCK

## in and around waterways to protect drinking water



*“Eventually the water that runs off a drinking water catchment area will be consumed by people. The activities of local landholders directly influence our community’s drinking water supply.”*

## FURTHER INFORMATION

For information about managing your farm to protect water quality including fencing, protecting or restoring vegetation and financial assistance opportunities available contact Rous County Council, your Local Land Services or Landcare.

## CONTACT US

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## HEALTHY CATCHMENTS = QUALITY WATER

- ❓ Do you manage property in a drinking water catchment?
- Ⓐ If so, you have a duty of care to protect water quality.
- ❓ Do you have livestock with uncontrolled access to waterways?
- Ⓐ If so, livestock accessing waterways can seriously contaminate waterways.



THE CONDITION OF THE ADJACENT LAND AND VEGETATION INFLUENCES RIVER HEALTH AND WATER QUALITY

## THE IMPACT OF STOCK ON WATERWAYS

Livestock that are allowed uncontrolled access to stream banks can directly foul the water with their waste. They also increase soil erosion by over-grazing and forming bare walking tracks and camping areas. This leads to excessive runoff, bank erosion, depleted vegetation, decline in important wildlife habitat, reduced water quality and damage to in-stream ecosystems.

Stock accessing waterways affects **river health** and **drinking water** quality by introducing:

- **pathogens** from stock faeces or stock carcasses, causing an increased risk of disease
- **nutrients** from stock faeces and urine, causing an increased risk of blue-green algal blooms (some of which can be toxic)
- **sediment** from erosion and disturbance of stream banks, which harms aquatic life, clogs streams and burdens the drinking water treatment process.

Furthermore, it is not uncommon for livestock to fall down steep riverbanks or become bogged along the water's edge, resulting in injury or death. This is not only expensive for the livestock owner but can also lead to further pollution of water supplies for downstream users.



1. PATHOGENS, NUTRIENTS & SEDIMENT INTRODUCED TO WATERWAYS AS A RESULT OF STOCK ACCESS 2. OFF-STREAM WATERING TROUGH 3. FENCE PROVIDES A BUFFER BETWEEN WATERWAYS AND ADJACENT FARMS 4. STOCK



# HOW CAN LANDHOLDERS MANAGE STOCK ACCESS TO WATERWAYS?

The simplest and most effective way of regulating livestock access to waterways and reducing grazing pressure on riparian land is to erect a fence between it and adjacent paddocks, in conjunction with providing off-stream watering points for stock.

In managing livestock grazing on riparian land the aim is to maintain continuous groundcover with enough vegetation to protect the soil surface from heavy rain, and to provide a filter for sediments and manure contained in runoff.

Land managers may also wish to establish and protect vegetation for stream bank stability as well as for wildlife and in-stream habitat.

### Protect vegetation along waterways

Healthy vegetation along riparian land is important and protects the health of the adjoining waterways. Vegetation slows the overland movement of runoff water and acts as a filter to trap sediments, nutrients and other contaminants.

The presence of vegetation along riparian land also helps to control erosion, which improves water quality. Water pumped to livestock troughs is of better quality which is better for stock, and water pumped to drinking water supplies will need less treatment and is better for humans.

Protecting vegetation along waterways will:

- slow the overland movement of runoff water
- act as a filter to trap sediments, nutrients and other contaminants
- increase stream bank stability
- decrease stream bank erosion
- reduce risk of stock injury and loss
- increase the value of the property.

### What about weeds in fenced off areas?

In many cases 'crash' grazing of the riparian land will assist in controlling excessive weed growth. The timing, intensity and duration of grazing should be carefully monitored in the first few years in order to determine the most appropriate grazing strategy for controlling weeds and allowing regeneration of native plants on your riparian land.

### Keep calves out of waterways

Farm animal waste (faeces) contains pathogens (disease causing micro-organisms). Faeces from calves in particular contain higher quantities of pathogens. Therefore, priority should be given to keeping calves out of waterways. If pathogens contaminate our drinking water they can cause serious outbreaks of disease.

### Provide watering troughs and shade

Water pumped from a waterway to stock watering troughs is of better quality than river water that stock have been walking or standing in. Better-quality water is better for stock.

Providing a shaded, clean watering trough or providing a watering trough closer to preferred pastures can significantly reduce the amount of time stock spend in unfenced riparian areas.

Adequate shade and drinking water troughs provided on your property also help prevent stock from forcing their way into fenced riparian land.

### Offsetting costs

Assistance may be available to manage livestock in and around waterways to protect water quality. This is because there is increasing recognition that better management of stock access to riparian lands has benefits for the wider community as well as for landholders. Contact your Local Land Services, Rous County Council or Landcare for further information.

