

THE MEMORY LINE



Artists
Jennifer Turpin & Michaelie Crawford

Date
1996

Description
Environmental artwork for the 'Restoring the Waters' rehabilitation project, 2.7 km long x 4 m wide x 1 m high

Materials
Rye corn grass.

Location
Clear Paddock Creek, Fairfield, Sydney

Client
The Australian Conservation Foundation and Fairfield City Council

Architect
Schaffer Barnsley Landscape Architects

Award
1997 Award of Excellence AILA NSW and ACT groups

The Memory Line environmental artwork was a 2.7 kilometre long band of rye corn grass that marked the original course of Clear Paddock Creek, Fairfield. It was a temporary, signature artwork for "Restoring The Waters", an environmental rehabilitation project of the Australian Conservation Foundation with Fairfield City Council. The project aimed to restore Clear Paddock to the natural system it was before being turned into a concrete storm water canal in the 1970's. As an environmental artwork, *The Memory Line* highlighted the 'poetics of place' and helped to reinstate a balance between nature and the suburban environment.

The Memory Line was both a growing ecological and cultural memorial to a lost natural environment, and a poetic imagining of the future. As the rye corn grass grew from seed, a sense of transformation and wonder at natural processes was reinvigorated. The sea of tall grasses billowing in the wind was reminiscent of the swelling of a rippling river in a storm.

Remembering the original creek was the first step on a positive and creative path to restoration. By marking what had been lost from communal memory in a creative and poetic act, *The Memory Line* marked the beginning of a community's ecological healing process.