



# *In the Valley*

## *Rainforest News and Views*



### **Newsletter distribution**

The Byron Shire Landcare and Dunecare newsletter is sent out electronically every month by Brunswick Valley Landcare and now includes our newsletter as an insert. Thanks to our Community Support Officer Alison for facilitating. A few people have notified a preference for continuing to receive hard copies. We hope no-one misses out, let us know what works for you (email [wilsonscreeklandcare@yahoo.com.au](mailto:wilsonscreeklandcare@yahoo.com.au), write to PO Box 678 or drop off a note at 1016 Wilsons Creek Road, providing address and number of hard copies required, or other suggestions).

Please talk to any new neighbours who would like to be connected. As has been recent practice, newsletters will also be available from our Facebook group page, as well as on the Brunswick Valley landcare website <http://brunswickvalleylandcare.org.au/newsletters/>.

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### **Christmas cheer**

However you choose to celebrate Christmas, to everyone we pass on messages of happiness, goodwill, and fun.

I hope you all treat this time of the year as a chance to remember the good things, support worthy causes for the less lucky, and value time with friends and family.

In our home we are preparing for a colourful tree, some songs, a good feed, and some stress free down-time.

In regards to our lively and lovely valley, remember that we all have the same goal: we all want and work hard towards, a better and healthier landscape and environment, in our valley and beyond.

Wishing you all great holidays, and remember to clean out your chimneys!

## Expressions of Interest for future projects invited

Last year, our committee decided not to apply for further large projects for a while, as our group has had quite a lot on its hands. But it is now time to consider again, with a major Environmental Trust application deadline coming up.

We already have lists of enthusiastic landholders. But please feel free to check in again and give us an update. (We hope everyone understands that not all potential projects will instantly match up with a funding opportunity, and funds are always scarce.)

For future projects, we will be particularly looking out for:

- Forest restoration opportunities that will create large blocks of habitat and corridors (e.g. adjoining National Parks, adjacent to forest on your own or your neighbour's private land).
- Blocks of Lantana or Camphor Laurel (these can be converted to subtropical rainforest using very cost effective techniques).

If you have other ideas, or would like to discuss in a general way (perhaps with a site visit), we would love to hear from you. What assistance or information would assist you?

Let us know by email, phone or in person.

## Bush Connect Project

We are now at the end of the second year of the Bush Connect Project "Restoration and linkage of Wilsons and Coopers Creeks" project.

The year one reporting was submitted to the Environmental Trust in December 2016 and received an Excellent rating for the overall tracking of the project with the comments "Congratulations on a strong first year, the project appears to be going from strength to strength even though only in the early stages."

We are now working on 16 properties in total. Stuart has updated that all work is on track with not as much follow up required over the last few months due to the dry weather but a lot of follow up work will be due to start in the new year.

Last month we had a very successful Landscape Connections field day at Byrangerie Grass Reserve Trust with 46 people attending and 19 children from Goonengerry School- see photo below.

We will be holding another field day next year so if you have any specific interests for speakers please let us know.



## Microbats

Although a while ago now, we are still building on our memoir of the field day we had on 18 August, as part of our NSW Environmental Trust-funded project.

The afternoon before the field day, ecologist David Milledge set up the microbat trap - see picture below. The trap was set up over a water race, a common hunting route for microbats, as they skim a couple feet above the water's surface, collecting insects etc in their path. In addition, the fishing bats, in the genus *Myotis*, catch small fish by raking their feet across the water surface.

David does not take catching these bats lightly, and reinforced that this is only done for scientific study, and recording of the health and number of species in an environment. Amongst the bat species trapped and viewed by the appreciative audience were two threatened species - the Southern Myotis *Myotis macropus* and the Little Bentwing-bat *Miniopterus australis*.

David does not take catching these bats lightly, and reinforced that this is only done for scientific study, and recording of the health and number of species in an environment.

They are resilient little mammals. I know that some of the audience appeared concerned at David's handling of the bats, but we were assured that this level of handling causes no on-going concern for the bats.

Microbats are a valuable member of the local ecosystem, consuming 50% their own body weight of insects each night, including mosquitos, even over 1000 in an hour! Some species are also active pollinators.

The evening following the field day, David made sure to release all the bats back safely to the area from which they were caught, leaving them free to pick up their evenings hunting from the night before.

Microbats are worth supporting and encouraging in your garden. One of the principal requirements for the long-term health of the microbats population is access to roosting. One way to do this is by installing/building a microbat box! The idea of a bat box is to provide microbats with extra accommodation, considering that their natural roosts are under threat due to tree/habitat removal.

The below link is just one example, which offers more detailed insights into Australia's microbats, and some further info on building or buying your own bat box.

[www.milkwood.net/2015/09/21/how-to-build-a-microbat-box/](http://www.milkwood.net/2015/09/21/how-to-build-a-microbat-box/)

If you find a sick, injured, or orphaned bat, do not touch it. Contact your local wildlife care organization: Northern Rivers *Wires* 66281898. They will contact, or put you in contact with, a wildlife rescuer who is trained to handle and care for wildlife.



On the Wilsons Creek Huonbrook Landcare Facebook page, you can find more pictures, videos, and info from the August field day.

## Coral tree eradication project

Thank you to Marg East, the project manager for this project.

The final stage of the Coral Tree Eradication Project that Wilsons Creek Huonbrook Landcare (WCHL) has undertaken over the past 3 years is drawing to a close. Final work is expected to be completed by mid December 2017. We are excited to say that the project has been very successful and estimate that we have achieved a 99% reduction in the coral tree population in our project area.

We are also very pleased to be able to report that we have had wonderful support and assistance from over 96% of the landholders and caretakers in the Wilsons Creek, Huonbrook and Wanganui valleys, who had coral tree present on their land prior to the commencement of the project. Everyone's assistance has been a valued, necessary and integral part of the success of this community project.

Wilsons Creek Huonbrook Landcare (WCHL) would therefore like to take this opportunity to thank you and express our gratitude for your involvement and support of the project.

Just to fill you in - a snapshot of the project;

Project area Our project area included the Wilsons Creek Catchment from the top of Wilsons Creek to the weir (at the top of Lavertys gap) and also the Huonbrook and Wanganui valley catchments (Coopers Ck)

### Timeline

2013 Proposal for grant funding was submitted by Barbara Stewart (WCHL president) to the NSW Environmental Trust (This was the third time Barbara had applied for funding - the previous two times were not successful but persistence finally paid off!)

2014 Proposal was accepted and a grant of \$99,000 was awarded to WCHL to be administered over a three year period - A community information meeting was held and expressions of interest were sort from landholders.

2015 Work commenced in early 2015 and bush regeneration contractors were engaged to carry out the work.

2015-Dec 2017 Work was carried out between November and April each year (Coral tree growing season) to achieve the best results .

### VERY IMPORTANT - PLEASE READ

As with all bush regeneration projects, follow up treatment and work is very important. Where funds have allowed we have tried to return to sites at least once and sometimes twice to check for any remaining live trees that we have missed or pieces that may have reshot however it is difficult in some sites to achieve 100% eradication without returning several times.

We ask all landholders and caretakers to please continue to check their property and creeks for any coral trees, however large or small, into the coming years. There are a few coral trees left in our project area that we have been unable to treat, so continued vigilance will be needed to stop any spread. Small pieces can be taken care of by simply lifting them and stacking above the ground and out of the flood zone to dry out.



Contact for queries or reporting:

Marg East Project Manager

0402513554 - [terrafocus@bigpond.com](mailto:terrafocus@bigpond.com) or

[wilsonscreeklandcare@yahoo.com.au](mailto:wilsonscreeklandcare@yahoo.com.au)

Funded by NSW Environmental Trust

The Facebook logo, consisting of the word "facebook" in white lowercase letters on a dark blue rectangular background.

### **WCHL is on Facebook.**

To become a member of our group, go into Facebook, search for Wilsons Creek Huonbrook Landcare and request to join. Any member can approve you.

Alternatively you can go to the URL

below: <http://www.facebook.com/groups/551428364915585/?ref=ts> Once accepted as a member, feel free to post photos and stories, ask and answer questions and check in regularly

### **Local Contacts**

*Landcare:* Barbara 66840378, Julie 66840242

*Fire Brigade:* David 66840093, Bob 66840181

*Wilsons Creek Hall:* Robyn 66840299

*Wires:* 66281898