"WCHL News" will be emailed out as usual and is also available from our Facebook group page and on the Brunswick Valley Landcare website. To be sure you don't miss out on events and news from a broader area, please refer to the Byron Shire Landcare and Dunecare newsletter.

Please go to http://brunswickvalleylandcare.org.au/newsletters/ to subscribe or to look up current and archived editions.

Wilsons Creek Huonbrook Landcare News

Whilst 2021 is showing itself to be a 'interesting' year for all our landcarers, we hope that you and your properties have benefitted from extended lockdowns if only from a weed reduction perspective. Being in this valley is indeed a privilege and improving our own local habitats and more broadly those of Wilsons Creek, Huonbrook and Wanganui has become increasingly important to those of us who enjoy living and working and being part of this wonderful community.

In this edition we cover a wide variety of topics including successful grant stories, plans for weed control, homes for Glossy Black-Cockatoos, current Landcare project reports and some great 'before and after' success stories. Hope you enjoy!

Landcare involved with Valley Community Day

A team led by Kamala Rose and in conjunction with The Red Cross had several meetings to set up a **Community Resilience Day**, initially planned for Sunday July 4th, 10am-2pm at the Wilsons Creek Community Hall and then as restrictions hit, postponed to July 31st. The RFS, SES, Brunswick Valley Rescue, our Landcare and the Red Cross were to make presentations and a number of our own who experienced the fires at close hand were to be on a panel to discuss what was learnt for future planning.

Unfortunately with the worsening Covid crisis in NSW, the day had to be postponed however it is hoped that a date can soon be found and the Community get together can happen.

Red Cross have the template to enable us to create our own resilience organisation before stepping away to leave us to run our own show suiting our unique community. When it finally eventuates, please join in to make sure it's a success.

Wilsons Creek Huonbrook Landcare's new grant projects

WCHL NEW ET PROJECT

We are delighted to announce the award of funding from the NSW Environmental Trust's Environmental Restoration and Rehabilitation program of $155,863 for our project "Upper Wilsons and Coopers Creek Catchments: Restoring Rainforest in Times of Change". Over four years, exotic species will be controlled, and 31.8 hectares of native forest regenerated and enriched with plantings on 12 properties. Following 2019 drought and bushfires, we aim for long-term rainforest persistence in the refugial environment of our project area through worksite selection, genetic management and fire hazard removal.

The project will continue rainforest expansion and connection in the surrounds of Nightcap, Mount Jerusalem and Goonengerry National Parks, while also enhancing river connections between the headwaters and the coast.

WCHL has been working on similar projects for more than 25 years. We are now partnering with Rainforest4 Foundation, adding more tree planting and extra volunteer events to our bush regeneration and habitat restoration program. Welcome RF4!

The November 2019 fires brought the threat of climate change right into our valleys and our worksites include directly fire affected vegetation. In addition, we have some broad plans for removing fire hazards, in particular bamboo and Slash Pine. These species have little or no biodiversity value and bamboo carried fires on forest edges at several locations in the recent fires.

WCHL NEW BUSHFIRE RECOVERY PROJECT

Another great project has brought us nearly $40,000 for bushfire recovery. We will build upon our 2020 Landcare Australia funded Rainforest Recovery Stage 1 project, in which fire affected areas were assessed, mapped and early bush regeneration works conducted. We've learnt a lot about the impact of bushfires on our rainforests and in Stage 2, we will continue to manage weeds and regenerate native species. Wildfires in the dry forests surrounding our valleys will spread into rainforest (and human habitation) in the future, so our project includes a start on the removal of highly flammable running bamboo from Koonyum Range. Other fire prevention and management options will be easier once the bamboo is removed.

The Landcare Led Bushfire Recovery project has been supported by the Australian Government's Bushfire Recovery Program for Wildlife and their Habitat.

Left to right: Juvenile, Female, Male Glossy Black-Cockatoo (C)Pam Kenway 2016 birdlifephotography.org.au

HOLLOWS ON THE RANGE FOR THREATENED GLOSSY BLACK-COCKATOOS

In June 2021, the Glossy Black-Cockatoo was voted by the public to become the inaugural winner of the ***Saving our Species Threatened NSW Species of the Year***. Currently listed as vulnerable in NSW, it is likely to soon be relisted as nationally threatened under the EPBC Act.

Glossy Black-Cockatoo numbers have dwindled severely due to land clearing and habitat degradation causing the loss of hollow-bearing trees and stands of their most important food source *Allocasuarina* species. Breeding success is a key limiting factor in population recovery for the Glossy Black-Cockatoo.

When the Mt Nardi bushfire swept through the Nightcap Range in November 2019, the Glossy Black-Cockatoos not only lost large expanses of their food trees but also the old-growth hollow-bearing trees they need for breeding. In NE NSW, only eucalypts older than 200 years of age, eventually develop hollows large enough for Cockatoos to use.

Many of the Cockatoos decamped to Mt Jerusalem NP. Whilst good stands of food trees are present, sufficient numbers of suitable nest hollows are not, as logging only ceased in 1995. Since 2019, no juveniles have been seen within the flock.

Wilsons Creek Huonbrook Landcare are installing a variety of specialist artificial hollows in carefully selected sites to see if the GBCs will use them. Glossy Black-Cockatoos like to nest near each other

[but not too close in case they squabble], near permanent water for their daily drink and within an easy commute to their food trees.

The Top of the Range Glossy Black-Cockatoo Nest Hollow project brings together a uniquely qualified team of locals; Professor Sarah Legge, a nationally recognised expert in threatened species conservation, NPWS Ecologists Darren McHugh and Justin Mallee and Dr Jo Green.

Leweena Williams, CEO of Tweed Byron Local Aboriginal Land Council and her team of Indigenous Rangers, are partnering us to support this iconic species.

Together, we will harness what we do know about the Glossy Black-Cockatoo and its breeding preferences, offer a choice of artificial custom-made hollows and monitor the results. We hope for a successful breeding event either next year or the one after. At the very least we will add to the pool of knowledge on how to save the Glossy Black-Cockatoo.

The Landcare Led Bushfire Recovery project has been supported by the Australian Government's Bushfire Recovery Program for Wildlife and their Habitat.

Cockatubes from Coast to Coast

Margie Hall

When I first spoke with Francis Smit at SJ Landcare back in March 2021 to price their specially designed and highly successful artificial Black Cockatoo hollows *CockatubesTM*, life seemed 'relatively' normal. I never considered the fact that we'd be bringing them about as far across Australia (from west to east) as is possible, in a pandemic!

When our grant application was lodged in early June, NSW was still free from Covid-19 infections. By late July when we learnt our grant application was successful, in a typical Covid-19 twist the project now looked compromised as Regional NSW joined Greater Sydney in lockdown and every State border closed tight. We were now struggling to freight our Cockatubes from SJ Landcare in Mundijong, an hour south of Perth to us here in Byron Shire.

While the original very high freight cost tripled, no one could give us any guarantee of delivery timing. Freight companies aren't finding it easy at present, especially the smaller ones that we tend to support. Our Cockatubes were made, but not going anywhere soon. Making them here wasn't an option for an affordable price either.

Mundijon, WA to Wilsons Creek, NSW? Only 4,347 km across four states, what could possibly go wrong …

In desperation, I appealed to Northline Freight Services, one of Australia's biggest logistics companies. After all, I only wanted a quote. They listened; said they'd get back to me with a price; then blew me away with their offer to freight our hollows over for free. They'd take them the very next day, see you in a week! I suspect that Francis Smit back in WA is still smiling.

A wonderful contribution to help our conservation work for this iconic threatened species.
Thank you, Northline ☺

Problem species in the Valley

Alligator Weed

Since Alligator Weed was reported in Wilsons Creek earlier this year, there has been little opportunity to search for the origin of the infestation and act to control and eradicate it. Rous County Council, who are responsible for control, have limited resources, even for a major priority such as this one. Covid restrictions have created difficulties.

The weed was found at around the 5th crossing, and other locations nearby. Since its discovery, it has probably spread downstream during the last wet season, and there may be upstream sources. Please check your creek banks and report any possible sightings to fend off major problems for the future.

https://weeds.dpi.nsw.gov.au/Weeds/AlligatorWeed

Bamboo

Thank you everyone who has expressed interest in bamboo management. There is also some interest in Slash Pine removal – more to say another time. We will now prioritise the sites and work out how to allocate present and future funds. As well as helping landholders to do the work effectively and efficiently, we want to have all locally relevant management options compiled for anyone who wants to refer to them and, Covid restrictions permitting, stage some small demonstrations of current and historical worksites.

The fire season brings uncomfortable memories of 2019, and many are envisaging bamboo as a host for a giant grass fire, exploding as the air pockets in the stems expand in the heat. Not good for adjacent native vegetation, not to mention human habitation. While we knew running bamboo was a major concern, it has been surprising how much interest has been expressed in removal of clumping bamboo. Some of these clumps are huge and it is a lot of work and expense to remove them and prevent re-sprouting. So, we encourage everyone, especially new residents, to plan very carefully before planting. Is there a long-term plan for its management, is it appropriately located and is it likely it will ever be used? It may be a problem for yourself or future landholders, so maybe plant a local rainforest tree instead? We hope it goes without saying that running bamboo should never be planted. The current funding straddles two projects –"Times of Change" (four years, ET funded) and Landcare Led Bushfire Recovery (8 months, Landcare Australia and Landcare NSW).

Bush Regen. in general! (from someone who is learning the hard way)

Recent reports on large scale Landcare projects have shone the light on key aspects of any bush regeneration project, whether they be on a broad landscape scale or on individual properties.

Many property managers will be familiar with a weed control or planting project that hasn't gone to plan and whilst weather conditions and other of nature's little bombshells may have been partly or solely to blame, there are some key underlying aspects to bush regeneration projects that should be considered. It is undeniably a shame when property managers throw their hands in the air and say that it's all too much!

Landholders having a clear plan

Whether an area chosen is small or large, how does it fit in to the surrounding area and the property in its entirety? Whilst projects will have physical boundaries, what's happening outside those boundaries (weeds, water flow, canopy cover etc) will have some bearing on success. It's easier to develop a site when it's part of a bigger picture plan.

There's an article on developing a property management plan next up in this edition. Keep reading!

Scale of project can be small – effect is cumulative and over time

In much the same vein as the earlier point, bush regeneration mistakes are often due to taking on too much. Earlier editions of this newsletter have made the point regarding lantana removal. Lantana in place represents a relatively stable environment and it's removal, whilst necessary for bush regeneration, creates significant soil disturbance and what comes up next may be worse and more difficult to control. Coupled with canopy change (for example through camphor removal), this could well mean a project that doesn't meet its objectives due to poor planning and biting off too much in one go.

Plant ID (weeds and natives)

This is a critical aspect to bush regeneration projects, not only in the initial identification about what has to go but also over time to see what's coming up! This relates to weeds in situ and arriving in numbers after soil disturbance and also very much to the natural regenerative ability of the site. What seeds are in the seed bank will often determine bush regeneration activities over the period of the project. Being able to spot and recognise both weeds and natives is crucial and this is where professional assistance is often required.

Introduced weeds or native? Answers at the end of the newsletter.

Quality monitoring sites

Being able to track bush regeneration projects over time isn't solely a requirement of funded projects but invaluable as a measure of success and tracking activities. See some 'before and after' shots later in this edition. We often forget to take photos before we start although many property managers will also say they have plenty of 'before' shots right now! In regard to setting up monitoring points, the experts say;

- mark your spot with a post or star picket,
- looking downhill is better than uphill and
- include a distinct feature (Tree, hill, fence line).

Professional advice

Many property managers quail at the thought of involving professionals due not only to cost considerations but also to outsiders 'imposing' decisions. Yes, it does cost and one might not always agree with all the advice however some professional assistance on all the aspects mentioned here might just mean the difference between success and failure. Having your own plan and working with professional bush regenerators on key aspects might well be the way to go!

The valley, showing Wanganui on the lower edge, Huonbrook top left, Upper Wilsons up the top and Wilsons Creek heading down to the lower right.

SETTING UP A MANAGEMENT PLAN

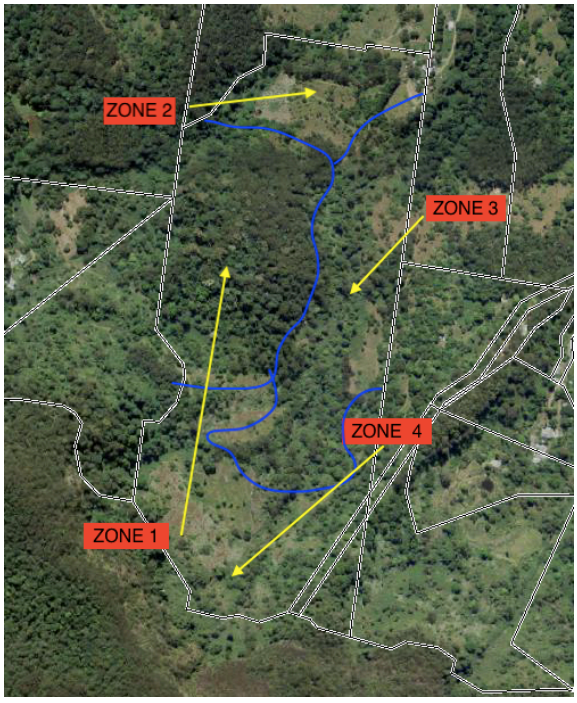
Peter Hall

Early on in our time in the Valley on the property, we were incredibly naïve about bush regeneration and what should be done on our place. Now, only slightly less naïve, we have a better idea thanks to having developed a management plan. Getting one prepared came about through quizzing professional bush regenerators about what we should be doing next and always getting the same answer – what's in your management plan? Subsequently, there were offers of preparing one but we decided to have a go ourselves despite seeing the size of multi-page examples from other places!

What to include? Here are some aspects that we included:

1. INTRODUCTION
2. AIMS and OBJECTIVES (including restoration strategy)
3. PROPERTY HISTORY (we found some historical photos illustrating prior use)
4. PROPERTY DETAILS (including general map)
5. SITE DESCRIPTION (including topographic map, vegetation map, wildlife corridors map, weeds list, soils, site constraints, rules on herbicide use, threatened species, neighbouring properties)
6. MANAGEMENT ZONES AND ACTIONS (division into a number of zones based on topography, vegetation, prior use, access and zoning then actions planned for each zone)
7. APPENDIX (including flora and fauna lists from the Valley and our sightings)

Ours has become a 'fluid' document, with several alterations to plans, actions and timeframes as conditions change. A number of our actions have simply been e.g., 'Leave lantana in situ till 2023' and we have also divided zones up where appropriate so as to bite off appropriate sized jobs.



Sample property map showing zones

Whilst a comprehensive plan may run to hundreds of pages, we have heard of 'poster' management plans, where all the details are simplified and placed on an A3 size sheet and that's also a great idea!

Whilst possibly daunting, preparing a management plan is more a collation of available information into one document and a framework for all stakeholders to make some non-binding decisions.

‘Before and Afters’

This is a new segment that means just what it says! The aim of course is to show what can be achieved over time and that we don’t necessarily have to wait 20 years!

If you have some great before and after shots and a timeframe, please send them through to wilsonscreeklandcare@yahoo.com.au No names, no addresses!

SITE 1

March 2019

June 2019

August 2021

SITE 2

January 2020

June 2020

August 2021

SITE 3

2011

2021

SITE 4

2011

2021

If you have some great before and after shots and a timeframe, please send them through to wilsonscreeklandcare@yahoo.com.au No names, no addresses!

SITE 5

Initial condition February 2020: a lantana-dominated hillside

First step April 2020: all lantana removed,

Second step Sept. 2020: all vine towers removed

Final phase Sept. 2021: Rainforest recovery. The area is now covered with seedlings and saplings of Celerywoods, Red Cedars, Pencil Cedars, Brown Kurrajongs, Stinging Trees, Pepperberries and more

Tree of the Month YELLOW CARABEEN

Graham Watson

A mature, fully developed Yellow Carabeen tree is one of the most spectacular examples of the arboreal diversity of upland subtropical rainforests in our region.

Yellow Carabeen was named *Sloanea woollsii* by the great Victorian botanist Ferdinand von Mueller (1825-1896) back in 1867. The genus *Sloanea* was originally established by Carl Linnaeus (1707-1778), the Swedish taxonomist credited with formalising the binomial nomenclature used for the classification of all living organisms. He named the genus in honour of Sir Hans Sloane (1660-1753) an adventurer and polymath who essentially set up the original collections of the British Museum and is also known for inventing drinking chocolate, a recipe that was bought by Cadburys way back then. For the specific epithet, von Mueller honoured the Reverend William Woolls (1814-1893) who was an expert on the vegetation of the Sydney region and was one of the most distinguished in the milieu of clergyman-botanists in the developing colonial period.

Sloanea is placed in the family Elaeocarpaceæ, an ancient family that was present in the "Australian" part of Gondwana from where, probably during the Oligocene (about 40 million years ago). It subsequently spread to the "South American" and "New Zealand" arms of Gondwana. But the real origins of *Sloanea* are unclear as fossil leaves have been found in Western Europe dating from the Oligocene.

This specimen at Huonbrook is estimated to be about 60 years old. In the next few years, the bases of those plank buttresses will begin rising out of the ground in great curves. It is a fascinating transformation to witness.

Yellow Carabeen is a massive, long-lived tree in the rainforest with numerous specimens having been measured at over 55m high. The spectacular feature of the stems is the plank buttress roots, which, on a fully grown tree can extend 5-6m up the trunk and a similar distance outwards from the trunk to the ground. This tree cannot be mistaken for any other local species. The buttresses, while always obvious once the tree is even just a few years old, remain a modest feature of the tree until it is about 50-60 years old. At that time, in a relatively rapid space of only a few years, the buttresses just rise out of the ground forming great curving vertical "walls". On our property, we are already

looking at the likelihood of having to relocate a track to get around rising buttress roots of one of these trees (see more pictures following).

The trees are found in the higher altitude zone of lowland subtropical rainforest (above 300m) and are prominent all the way into warm temperate rainforests (up to 800m). It is likely that they were once the most physically dominant species of the Huonbrook and Wilsons Creek rainforests but were heavily logged because of the widespread utility of the timber. There are, however, a number of large trees still in the valleys and they are also naturally regenerating very nicely so we can expect future generations to witness these large trees once again.

Yellow Carabeens are relatively fast-growing and therefore highly recommended for any local rainforest planting. The dense foliage provides passing shelter for numerous bird species and the large fruit loads provide a welcome food source for animals in the tree or on the ground.

The leaves are alternate along the branchlet and up to 150mm long with a long pointy apex. Prominent joints occur at both ends of the leaf stalk and hairy domatia are present on the underside of the leaf

Another specimen at Huonbrook about 60-70 years old where you can see the plank buttresses already starting their extraordinary rise from ground level.

This specimen at Huonbrook is estimated to be about 100 years old and you can see by that age the plank buttresses have already substantially progressed their vertical rise forming the glorious curvy “walls”. The next 100 years will result in much more substantial buttress development.

Sometimes the great curvy planks seem to be just doing their own thing – barely curving up to the stem of the tree.

No two trees look exactly the same! On this one you can see the buttress curves coming out horizontally from the stem side.

Wanting words: Language and landscape

This article has been condensed and adapted for our newsletter with the permission of Landscape Australia and is written by Jess Stewart.

Words are powerful. If we don't have the language to describe our relationship with the natural world and our uniquely Australian landscape features, ecologies and systems, can we successfully care for them?

Language, writes British author Robert Macfarlane, is one of the great geological forces of the Anthropocene. The English language in particular constructs a human-centred world. Words elicit exclusion. Grammar enables expendability. Semantics engenders extinctions. Our vernacular limits our ability to comprehend, interpret and design for diverse ecologies. We have gradually ceased using some words to the point where they have become lost, other words have become so hackneyed as to be ineffectual, and we lack the words to describe particular natural phenomena.

As landscape carers, our work is always mediated. We often rely more on the image than the word to translate our ideas. Language can give form to ideas, processes and relationships. It allows us to engage with a broad discourse and critique our work. It influences the way we think of, analyze, describe and design landscape. And it allows us to understand the world in different ways.

Former Labor Party speechwriter, Don Watson, estimates that the English language gains more than 20,000 new words each year, yet our vocabularies relating to the so-called "natural" environment are getting smaller. "It is not, on the whole, that natural phenomena and entities themselves are disappearing," writes Macfarlane, "rather that there are fewer people able to name them, and that once they go unnamed they go to some degree unseen. Language deficit leads to attention deficit. As we further deplete our ability to name, describe and figure particular aspects of our places, our competence for understanding and imagining possible relationships with non-human nature is correspondingly depleted."

We need to be aware of the biases inherent in the English language so that we might intentionally confront them. The metaphors we often take for granted can reinforce society's negativity toward the things we should value. We can be notoriously ignorant of the hidden, less romantic or messy components of ecosystems that are so important to biodiversity. Macfarlane, referring to what lies beneath the surface of the earth, writes, "an aversion to the underland is buried in language." When we use soil as a verb, it usually has negative connotations. David George Haskell writes, "Our language does a poor job of recognising this afterlife of trees. Rot, decomposition, punk, duff, deadwood: these are slack words for so vital a process."

Binary oppositions embedded in the English language neglect to recognize the complexity of ecological relationships: nature/culture, endangered/secure, invasive/endemic. The language dominantly used to discuss environmental weeds is aggressive, reliant on a vocabulary of combat and metaphors of war, which directly influences the way we approach weed management. Plants are spoken about as "aliens" and "enemies" that "threaten" the environment and need "fighting" against. Aboriginal elders in the Kimberley region of Western Australia, however, use a much more passive, neutral lexicon, focused on health and care, which dramatically alters the management approach. Invasive species are described as "introduced," "cheeky" and needing to be "watched." Over time, weeds can even be spoken about as "belonging" to a place.

These English language dualisms are not reflected in all languages. Many indigenous languages around the world use pronouns that refer to plants, animals and natural features as people rather

than objects. As North American-based Robin Wall Kimmerer notes, there is an inherent equality encapsulated in the pronouns used for natural features, systems, plants and animals in the endangered language of her people, the Potawatomi, a group whose headquarters are in present-day Oklahoma. “This is the grammar of animacy. Imagine seeing your grandmother standing at the stove in her apron and then saying of her, ‘Look, it is making soup. It has gray hair.’ We might snicker at such a mistake, but we also recoil from it. In English, we never refer to a member of our family, or indeed to any person, as *it*. That would be a profound act of disrespect. It robs a person of self-hood and kinship, reducing a person to a mere thing. So it is that in Potawatomi and most other indigenous languages, we use the same words to address the living world as we use for our family. Because they are our family.”

The English language also fails to make connections across systems, as many indigenous languages do. As Richard Walley told an audience of landscape architects at the 2019 International Festival of Landscape Architecture, “*Ngarngk*, in Nyoongar language, means mother. It’s also the name we use for the sun.” This speaks to the acknowledgement of interconnectivity inherent in language. Similarly, Tyson Yunkaporta writes of the silky oak tree that “…that tree cannot be examined as a specimen on its own for medicinal and other uses, because it is part of a complex system, like every other entity in the universe. That silky oak tree has the same name in Aboriginal languages as the word for eel. Its wood has the same grain as eel meat and it flowers in the peak fat season for eels, signaling to us that it is the right time to eat them. The fat is medicine in that season and can cure a fever.” This alludes to the interconnectedness of these living things, capturing just some of the complexity of the relationships between organisms through language.

Grasslands sway in the fading dusk light at Bungarribee Park in Western Sydney (Simon Wood)

We have not yet developed the words in English to describe distinctive Australian landscape qualities. The words we use about plants, ecologies and biodiversity often come under the “green” umbrella: green space, green roof, green wall, green spine, and green corridor. The imagery conjured by these terms doesn’t speak to any sense of an Australian landscape character. Where are the words to specifically describe the soft, kinetic, reflective, light-filtering, dancing, expanding beauty of our grasslands? Or the harmonious, muted, fine-textured, salty vegetation of our coastal vegetation. Or the majestic, misty, dusky, cool, undulating, encompassing atmosphere of our mountain ash forests?

The limits of the English language prevent us from sensitively caring for coexistence in a uniquely Australian context. We need to rethink the words that we use, to generate, communicate, advocate and legislate for a post-anthropocentric world.

This article has been condensed and adapted for our newsletter with the permission of Landscape Australia. The full article is available at:

https://landscapeaustralia.com/articles/wanting-words-language-and-landscape/?utm_source=Landscape+Australia&utm_campaign=cd97b1685c-LA_2021_13_september&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_99db55805d-cd97b1685c-43613558&mc_cid=cd97b1685c&mc_eid=bcfb6355a5

Introduced weeds or native?

Both weeds! Small-leaf privet (*Ligustrum sinense)* on the left hand picture shown earlier and below is flowering right now and rapidly takes over native bush, particularly on creeklines. Dutchman's Pipe (*Aristolochia elegans*) in the earlier right hand picture (and flower on the right below) is an environmental weed in NSW and Qld, can spread rapidly and is poisonous to the Birdwing caterpillar!

Contact us: Barbara 66840378, Julie 66840242 Email wilsonscreeklandcare@yahoo.com.au

WCHL is on Facebook

facebook

To become a member of our Facebook 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.