



Community tree planting at historic reserve

Hunter Region Landcare Network

Community working together to restore historic reserve on the Hunter River

The issue

The Hunter River Reserve contains one of the last remaining stands of intact native vegetation along the Lower Hunter River, a host of native wildlife, and direct river access via historic sandstone steps and pathways.

Hunter Region Landcare Network received a grant from the Communities Environment program to continue work regenerating the Lower Hunter Valley Dry Rainforest endangered ecological community after previous project funding finished. The reserve has been subject to illegal dumping and vandalism; more community awareness and involvement is needed to protect and look after this special place.

The solution

Fencing and erosion control structures were fitted out last year to prevent future vehicle damage to the historic steps and native vegetation in the reserve. This helped to eliminate some of the illegal dumping issues as well. Bush regeneration over the previous three years tackled the large infestation of madeira vine, balloon vine, green cestrum, lantana and other weeds on the lower section of the Dry rainforest, but follow up weeding and planting is crucial for the long term recovery of the vegetation community and to maintain quality habitat.

The impact

On Saturday, 7th March 2020, twenty members of the local community came together to help plant out 200 canopy trees on the lower slopes of the reserve. It was a tricky site to access but both young and old had no trouble planting, setting up the tree guards, and watering in. Conditions were perfect for planting with a good amount of moisture in the soil and the light drizzle didn't scare the group away. " Everyone worked well together and we enjoyed being part of such a worthwhile project" commented Margaret, one of the volunteers. It is very rewarding seeing the results of all those new trees in the ground and to think about the positive impact we are making for the future of our climate and our native wildlife. Landcare volunteers meet at the Reserve the first Friday of every month to continue weeding and maintain the plantings.



Key facts

- Local residents pitched in to plant 200 trees to protect the native flora of the reserve.
- The community event resulted in more Landcare volunteers caring for the reserve.
- Planted canopy trees will re-establish Lower Hunter Valley Dry Rainforest and shade out the weed infestation over time.



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