



LAND FOR WILDLIFE

Clarence Valley Branch

October 2011

This is our third newsletter. Not, I admit, a very good record seeing as we've been in business for over 12 months, but then I never did promise a regular publication, so no guilt trips for me.

Initially the newsletter was put on hold until after the May Sydney forum, with the intention of passing on all the interesting stories. Unfortunately the plan to attend had to be scrapped at the eleventh hour, but while I was sorry to miss the event, I was not so sorry, on seeing the professional presentations by other groups, that I didn't have a shot at a presentation myself this year. With some great examples and ideas for guidance, I hope to do quite an acceptable job next time around.

Meanwhile I'd really appreciate some photos, either to use in presentations and newsletters, or to attach to your file for reference. Gate signs are always good, particularly if they include family members; wildlife of course, and significant habitat areas on your property, all welcome. Also any records of threatened species would be good. I keep an updated spreadsheet of threatened species for the NSW Wildlife Atlas, so it's a good chance to get your valuable information out there for councils and developers to have to consider in development application processes.



Front on wall: Par; Aileen and John A; Rear: Dave B; Magda; Stan; Dave G; Tom; Jeanie; Jim; Del; Pat; Peter; John E; Lance (Missing is Heather B, and Nancy who was official photographer)

One main event of interest to us locally was our member's get-together, which finally happened on 20th August. A good group of 17 gathered at our Shannondale property to greet our State coordinator, John Asquith and his wife Nancy, who travelled down from Brisbane in a hire car that morning. And what a lovely day it turned out to be. Someone up there ignored the gloomy forecast and gave us a mild, dry day with flashes of sunlight and just a gentle warm breeze. A few of us already had some nodding acquaintance at the start of the day, but plenty of friendly

interaction ensured we knew each other pretty well by the end. The exchange of ideas and knowledge never ended, the food flowed as freely as the talk and the day didn't wind up until late into the afternoon.

It was a pity John and Nancy had to leave us by 2pm, but they did get to join us on our visit to koala territory along the creek below our house. Koalas have been only sporadic there



since North Coast Water built an access road to the Shannon Creek dam through core habitat, 400m higher up that same creek. There was no sign of them on our property this day either, but a single scat and some chewed leaves were found under a big old home base tree on the adjoining road reserve, so at least one koala was in the area. Since then one at least has been back on our property, so hopefully they are on the move again.

Koalas are always of particular interest to most of our members, and this year the Clarence Environment Centre bought 100 koala food trees from the Grafton Tree Farm, which were available on the day at 50cts a tube. Our sincere thanks and appreciation goes to nurseryman John Myer, who sold the seedlings to the Environment Centre at a significantly reduced price for the cause. Also thank you to Tom Davidson, who has been filling our recycled plant pots with locally collected seeds and added to our distribution with crates of tuckeroo and pink bloodwood seedlings. These were handed out free to everyone who bought a subsidised tree. There are a number of seedlings left, including a few koala tubes still at 50cts each, so please contact me if you want a few. Meanwhile they will be for sale at the Centre to the general public for a slightly raised cost.



Paired diagonal scratches indicate the syndactylus claws of a koala's hind foot

While on the subject, please, if you have planted your trees - or planted anything else for that matter - could you drop your empty pots in at the Environment Centre (rear of the Skinner Street Emporium, South Grafton), for return and reuse. This ensures the plants stay a little cheaper so we might do this another time, so don't forget to load them into your car on your next trip to town.



Unfortunately the change in the Asquith's plans meant John couldn't bring the promised nest boxes up from Sydney. However Peter Turland has been busy building small sugar glider boxes, and brought some along to hand out to members. In my view Pete has perfected the blueprint for these, which are his own design and superior to the plan used by the Gould's League. It is with pleasure and a sense of achievement that the Clarence Environment Centre has helped to fund the cost of materials for these boxes through the Land for Wildlife program. It means a further 10 boxes out in the environment for the

wildlife, so our thanks to Pete for his great craftsmanship and his dedication that has driven this effort.

In the meantime, thank you so much to everyone who came along, and for your contributions of both food and knowledge that helped to make the day so much fun and such a great success. Heather and David Bogie have volunteered to host our next field day. Their venue in Ashby might be easier for our northern members who couldn't make it this time, so we'll make some plans and look forward to the next event.

We continue to move ahead with property registrations and have completed our set batch of ten additional properties, which means 20 more Land for Wildlife properties in the Clarence Valley since we started at the end of the 2010 financial year. As mentioned in the last newsletter, the extra property assessments were made possible by Clarence Valley Council's generous bridging support to keep us going until the next round of CEN funding. By this we are now excited to be able to include CV Council among our Land for Wildlife members, with acceptance of their Diggers Headland Reserve into the program.



Diggers camp is an amazing little hamlet lost amidst endless tracts of wild protected bushland. A flora survey of the small reserve picked up 142 species, with many more bound to appear in different seasons. It's a great place for wildlife too, with emus, kangaroos, numerous birds and insects and plenty of small mammal diggings noted during our surveys.

Apart from our local Council, we are happy also to welcome Julie and Graeme Hodges, Rob Lacey and Dave Graham into the land for wildlife ranks. All of their wild and virtually pristine properties lie among the rugged sandstone country around the Pinnacles, north of Grafton. Also on the way to join them are close neighbours Dianne Dodswell and Charmain Lane, all helping to create wildlife movement links to the wonderful Fortis Creek National Park, and Corymbia Nature Reserve to the South East.

Others we thank and welcome are Dave and Janelle Young, whose wild property at Nymboida already supports an impressive list of identified wildlife. Also Par and Aileen Ronquist of Chambigne, who joined us at the gathering, who own a large property that links

significant regional mapped corridor habitat across the sandstone ridges above Chambigne Creek; the Lehman's of Copmanhurst, who are well-known for all their great work towards aiding the environment in general around the valley; Carmelle Chester, who protects a brilliant property with significant tracts of wetland and coastal floodplain Endangered Ecological Community in the corridor vegetation at Halfway Creek, and Tom Shulz, who has expanded the impressive growing wildlife corridor across the significant Pillar Valley ridge above Chaffin Creek.

A quick round up shows 57 properties now registered as Land for Wildlife in the Clarence Valley, which equates to around 1,300 hectares managed for wildlife protection. However a few landowners are still waiting for their assessments. These are Kirsti Stephenson of the Pinnacles, Alistair Maple of Black Mountain Road, and at least two others who are yet to be contacted. A good number of our original members also remain to be contacted and brought up-to-date with what we are doing, so the actual managed area will eventually be considerably more than this.



Gracie Shulz proudly exhibits her new gate sign (Pic by Peter Turland)

I really apologise to those people who were left out of the loop and missed the opportunity to attend our field day. Unless there's an email attached as a contact it becomes time consuming and eventually quite costly to keep in touch by letters and snail mail. So if any of you have a neighbour or a friend, or just know of someone who joined the program in the early years, I'd be really grateful to have some details - a phone number, or just the email would be welcome so I can get to them.

Meanwhile, keep fit and well, enjoy your own personal pieces of natural heaven and the peace and pleasure that brings, and hopefully it won't be so long before I can give you some further news and updates.

All best wishes

Pat