

Introduction & Quick Update

Greetings Gills Bridge Creek community and friends and welcome to Issue 5 of the Newsletter. Council is pleased to report that the first round of site works in Management Zone 1A + 1B (see Newsletter 4 for location of MZ1A+1B) have been successfully completed. Extending on these works, a second Bush Regeneration contract has been commenced in an upstream area (bordering MZ1A), titled Management Zone 2. 'Follow-up-works' are continuing in Management Zone 1A+1B to hold the success of the works to date. At several key sites along the Gills Bridge Creek Rehabilitation site Conservation Volunteers Australia are again busy developing Bush Care Skills through their new Green Corps Trainees, while undertaking supportive restoration works. Five of the Kempsey Men's Shed purpose-built Nesting Boxes have been placed into selected mature trees along the access into MZ1A, to enhance the habitat shelter afforded there. Two other sites are being surveyed for placement of habitat / nesting boxes in the near-future.

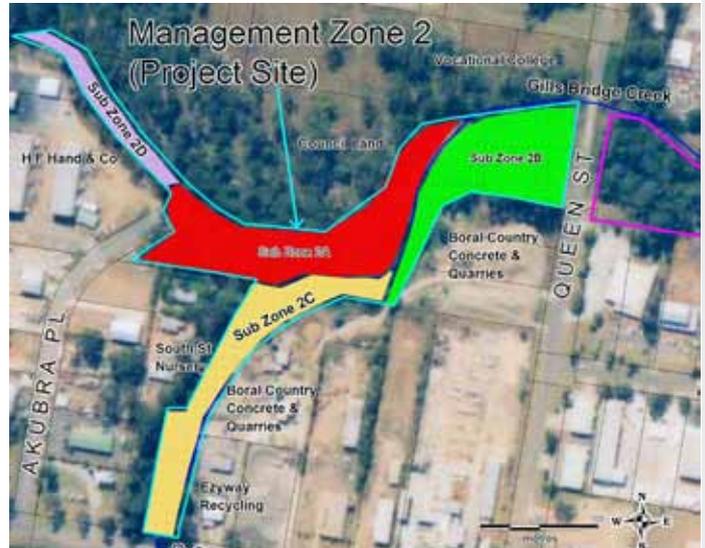


Habitat / Nesting Boxes sited at GBrCk Riparian Corridor (see centre of photo, host tree is a mature Blackbutt - *Eucalyptus pilularis*).

If you would like to find out any additional information about the project status or would like to become involved please contact Sustainable Development Services at Kempsey Shire Council on 6566 3200.

Second Round of Bush Regeneration Works Kick-off

Mid Coast Land Management (MCLM) Bush Regeneration team has won the next stage of contract for site works. The new project site is located upstream of the Queens Street low level crossing on Gills Bridge Creek (GBrCk) and extends from the remediation work already undertaken in Management Zone 1A + 1B (MZ1A+1B).



Management Zone 2 – Area to receive 2nd Round of Bush Regeneration Works.

This is the second area to receive rehabilitation activities funded under the Environmental Trust Grants Program. Again the program is being delivered as a mixture of hands-on physical weed removal, 'Cut and Paint' targeting of woody weeds as well as 'Splatter-gun' spraying of a Bio-herbicide (a creek-friendly chemical) targeting predominately Lantana thickets (*Lantana Camara*) and Morning Glory Vine (*Ipomoea spp.*). A series of Numbered Photo-points (reference points) will be set up on-site to give 'Before and After Shots' to allow the work to be monitored.



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Local Businesses Assist with Rehabilitation Works

Hy-Tec Industries have been working with Council to clean up approximately 2,500m² of land to the rear of their site on Nance Road, South Kempsey.



Location of rehabilitation area to the rear of Hy-Tec Industries.

The site forms part of the broader Management Zone 1A that received the first round of bush regeneration works during 2009. The area had previously been subject to a lease agreement with a former business owner. However, upon taking ownership of the site Hy-Tec has been proactively working with Council to clean up the area, ready for revegetation works. Hy-Tec have removed rubble and rubbish left over from previous use of the site and are in the process of relocating their rear boundary fence so that it is correctly positioned at the surveyed boundary line. A Revegetation Plan for the area is currently being developed, with

planting scheduled for early spring. The area also contains a pre-existing stormwater retention pond and associated dish drain, which will be augmented and replanted in line with the recommendations of the Stormwater Management Strategy, which was recently completed for the catchment.

Work along the new Management Zone (named MZ2 – sited between Queen Street and South Street Bridge crossings over GBrCk) is also being assisted by a partnership agreement with Boral - Concrete and Quarries. Management and Operational Staff at Boral have kindly assisted with the rehabilitation works by introducing KSC and MCLM Bush Regeneration staff onto their work-site, re-surveying their boundary to the creek and re-positioning stored materials and related works activity away from the creek margin. Additionally, Operational Staff have used heavy work equipment to clear a boundary access (through thick pasture grasses) around the edge of the property along their creek-side fence line. This has given MCLM staff and vehicles better access to the Riparian (Creek-side) Corridor to combat weed 'hot-spots'. With no vehicle access available along the creek-side Crown Land corridor, Boral's support will greatly assist the success of works along this creek bank stretch. It is hoped that further Environmental Trust rehabilitation works will be supported by matching on-site weed control activity from the business houses inside this works area (bounded by Queen and South Streets). This will help to avoid reintroduction of aggressive urban weeds (such as the smothering Morning-Glory Vine) from refuges in neighbouring private property.

Planting Day with Conservation Volunteers Australia and the Green Corps Training Program – April 2010

Green Corps Trainees under the supervision of John Wilkinson (Conservation Volunteers Australia – Team Leader) have recently undertaken a successful Planting Day along the Riparian Corridor (downstream from the



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Old Pacific Highway crossing over Gills Bridge Creek) and bordering the public park. The first of 2 staged plantings at the site saw 100 selected GBrCk native trees added as a supplementary planting to the trees already lining the creek bank. A second planting in early spring is planned to enhance the Koala Corridor browse-tree species already on-site (which include several mature Blackbutt - *Eucalyptus pilularis* and Forest Red Gum - *E. tereticornis*). The select species to supplement this established group will include Tallowwood - *Eucalyptus microcorys*, Swamp Mahogany - *E. robusta*, Small-fruited Grey Gum - *E. propinqua* and additional Forest Red Gum).



Conservation Volunteers - Green Corps Trainees planting native riparian tree species - Old Pacific Highway - Gills Bridge Creek site

Kempsey Men's Shed - Native Animal Habitat / Nest Boxes

Five of the purpose built habitat / nest boxes constructed by Kempsey Men's Shed Staff have been placed into mature native trees along the Gill's Bridge Creek riparian corridor in MZ1A. The boxes were carefully positioned by expert arborists using climbing gear (Langham's Tree Services). Langham's were engaged separately by Council at the site to lop dangerous tree limbs limiting access to a sewer pump station nearby. The five habitat / nest boxes installed included 2 Squirrel Glider style nest boxes, a single Lorikeet/Parrott style nest box and 2 large-entry Possum/Glossy-Black Cockatoo style nest boxes. Each box also houses a Micro-

bat Roost in a below-floor shelter (to allow flight access up into the protective chamber where the bats will hang).



Arborist fixing a habitat / nest box into place in mature Flooded Gum - using abseil skills, with safety harness.



Lorikeet Habitat-Nesting Box prior to fixing (Note - seen from below are the Bat Roost access partitions).



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Kempsey High School Year 11 Excursion

Earlier this year, twenty one Year 11 students from Kempsey High School, accompanied by Teacher Gavin Saul, viewed the GBrCk Project Site to support their Year 11 studies – Local Environment Syllabus. A Field Briefing of the GbrCk Riparian Rehabilitation project was given by KSC staff as the group visited 3 sites along the Rehabilitation corridor. The group was first taken to the upstream entry into the Industrial Estate (West End Road Bridge crossing), then to the South Street Bridge crossing followed by the Queen Street low-level crossing (both within the Industrial Estate) and lastly to the old Pacific Highway Bridge crossing (downstream of the Industrial Estate).



Kempsey High School, Year 11 Students observing key environmental indicators at South Street Bridge crossing site.

The students were asked to take note of any observed changes in key environmental indicators, such as water colour, clarity and flow, surrounding vegetation types, including the presence or absence of weeds as well as any animal life they encountered. They were also informed about the various management and rehabilitation actions Council and the local community had taken to regenerate and protect this important waterway and riparian corridor over the last 2 years. The students were required to take the information they had gathered back to school to complete an assessment task.



Male Satin Bowerbird (Ptilonorhynchus violaceus) 'display arena' – Gills Bridge Creek Riparian Corridor, encountered during a Kempsey High School excursion earlier this year.

What's Next?

Bush regeneration activities in Management Zone 2 will continue for the remainder of the year, primarily targeting removal and suppression of Lantana and Morning Glory. Re-planting works will be carried out at the area to the rear of Hy-Tec, plus other areas identified for revegetation as weeding work progresses.

Following the completion of the Stormwater Management Strategy in late 2009, which provided recommendations on how to improve the quality of stormwater discharging into the Creek, Council is now preparing to commence detailed design work for a number of 'end of line' stormwater treatment options, including bioretention systems and grass swales. More to come on that in the next issue!



This program has been assisted by the New South Wales Government through its Environmental Trust



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