

our ENVIRONMENT

LANDCARE + COASTCARE *profile*

Landcare volunteers take on vegetation restoration works and bring their skills, experience and dedication to target weeds and promote natives species in a number of locations throughout Ballina Shire.



ALSTONVILLE

In this issue of Community Connect we profile Alstonville Maguires Creek Landcare.

Alstonville Maguires Creek (AMC) Landcare is a committed group of volunteers who cover six-urban bushland sites from Lumley Park to the Alstonville Bypass along sections of Maguires Creek in Alstonville.

We visit the group on a clear October morning at the Maple Drive and Coral Street sites.

The team is industrious; digging holes for planting, mulching and removing weeds. We are welcomed into an oasis of shade and tranquillity, and enveloped by the unique scent of the Australian bush as they show us the difference they are making in this urban bush paradise.

START WITH A PLAN

The Alstonville Maguires Creek Landcare group formed a core group of seven volunteers with the specific aim to implement the Bulwinkel Park and Associated Reserves Vegetation Restoration Strategy.

Developed by consultants the strategy was adopted by Ballina Shire Council in 2018 and covers the public bushland reserve areas in the urban areas of Alstonville.

This strategy has been a real strength for AMC Landcare, as it plans out the vegetation works as well as the group's operations. The strategy has been a great guide providing a weeds list to target, a species list to plant, and specifications on low, medium and high growing natives.

SO MUCH GROUND TO COVER FOR A SMALL GROUP

AMC Landcare is a small group, but they pack a tidy punch.

Clearing weeds and replanting 6,000 rainforest tubestock, they have revegetated a one-kilometre corridor along Maguires Creek.

But they are modest about their achievements and don't like to take all the credit, calling on local schools and residents to help out when they have larger quantities to plant. In March this year, they put in 2,000 plants. Thankfully, within 24-hours, 100 mls of rainfall provided a perfect start for these new plantings.

TREASURES UNCOVERED

The Maple Drive and Coral Street sites previously hid a freshwater creek. Before AMC Landcare came in, the creek could not be accessed due to the thick cover of lantana. Corridors of natural regeneration are developing since the removal of weeds and regenerated natives are tagged with ribbon, so that they're not inadvertently damaged.

The group have also formed a walking track to improve access for site maintenance, education and community activities.

VERITABLE OASIS

New plantings tap into the underground moisture that naturally exists in this area, allowing the plants to thrive, providing a lush green environment. The ridges however get a bit dry, and in these extreme dry conditions require some watering.

SUPPORT AND EDUCATION

Ongoing community and corporate sponsorship have helped AMC Landcare continue their work and education.

They have been called on to demonstrate best practice grazing and riparian



management by assisting with the inclusion of the two-hectare Alstonville Police Paddock in their project area. AMC Landcare are also hoping to expand the Maguires Creek site by another two-hectares.

AMC Landcare provide regular assistance to Alstonville High School farm with weed control, livestock exclusion fencing and student training.

Council's Nursery is also grateful for their rainforest seed collection. These seedlings are propagated by the nursery staff and used by Landcare groups and for council's planting across the Ballina Shire.

A LASTING LEGACY

The AMC Landcare project has reached a point where they can proudly display the incredible natural beauty and biodiversity of Maguires Creek: attracting the next generation of Landcare volunteers to continue this project.

Big Scrub Publishes Rainforest Restoration Manual

Big Scrub Landcare has published its third edition of its highly regarded Subtropical Rainforest Restoration – a practical manual and data source for Landcare groups, land managers and rainforest regenerators.

The manual is a comprehensive guide to rainforest and subtropical rainforest restoration practices.

It provides information on how to rehabilitate and care for existing subtropical rainforest remnants and re-establish subtropical rainforest.

The third edition identifies and incorporates the latest science and current best practice techniques, and important data relevant to planting trees and shrubs that occur in lowland subtropical rainforest.

First published in 1998 with a second edition in 2005 the manual has sold over 4000 copies to date.

➔ The manual is \$25, to purchase visit bigscrubrainforest.org or email info@bigscrubrainforest.org.

