

Community Participation

Paddock Trees project

Hovells Creek Landcare Group Inc

Planting paddock trees to improve species connectivity between the Great Eastern Ranges and inland areas.

The issue

The western sector of the Kanagra Boyd to Wyangala corridor where the project is located is an important corridor for migratory bird species between the Great Eastern Ranges and their inland flyways as well as habitat for a range of rare and endangered species of fauna. Only about 21% of the area still comprises woody native vegetation, noting that species diversity declines more rapidly below about 30%. About three quarters of the land is privately owned, so planting trees on farms in this area is critical for maintaining and enhancing connectivity.

The solution

As part of an earlier project funded by the NSW Environment Trust Bush Connect program for the Great Eastern Ranges Initiative, HCLG developed a strategic plan to enhance existing habitat connectivity across 66,000ha of privately-owned farmland within their area by planting paddock trees, stepping-stone clusters and tree lines. The current project focussed on linking paddock trees and was funded for \$90k by the NSW Environment Trust. We employed a consultant from DPIE to produce habitat connectivity plans for many properties to guide planting of 2048 trees on about 30 properties over three years. We provided advice on endemic species and appropriate locations to connect patches of remnant vegetation and existing older paddock trees. Five YouTube videos were produced on aspects of planting as guidance for members. Trees were planted within stock-proof guards, desirably within waterlines and gullies. They were placed from 30 to 50m apart and within a corridor of about 50-100m width. The funding covered trees and guard materials and the landholders did the planting and made the guards.

The impact

We enhanced connectivity within 42km of corridor in a 66,000ha area where it was much needed. The success rate for planting was over 95%. There was also a great sense of pride and satisfaction among landholders. Providing greater connectivity in this area is likely to reduce the stress on migratory birds flying between areas of viable habitat, particularly in times of drought. The same is true for other rare and endangered bird and animal species travelling between isolated habitat areas. The increased connectivity thus contributes to species' resilience under global warming. Other benefits for the environment and the landholders from planting trees include providing habitat for native animals and shade and shelter for stock, stabilising soil structure, lowering the water table and protecting against salinity and erosion.

Learnings

We learned that good savings can be made through bulk purchase and delivery of guard materials direct from the factory and that the success rate is enhanced by providing helpful guidelines for landholders on how and where to plant trees.



Key facts

- Funded by NSW Environment Trust
- 2048 trees planted by landholders on about 30 properties over three years with an over 90% success rate
- Improved connectivity for migratory birds and a range of other species within a 42km corridor in a 66,000ha area
- Many other flow on improvements for the environment and landholders

Project Partners



This initiative made possible by the NSW Landcare Program. A collaboration of Local Land Services and Landcare NSW Inc. supported by the NSW Government.

