



Wallaga Lake Heights community newsletter 15, 8 May 2021

Into the autumn program

The coming of Autumn has seen no letup in Heights Care Landcare work. The early 2021 rains gave way to the driest April on record – a round zero millimetres for the month. May has started rather wetter! This will give our recent Autumn plantings the best possible start. This most recent work has been possible because of the grant funding we received from BVSC last year, which has paid for native tube stock and plant guards on the banks of the lake.

The heavy toil shown below on the right is the group clearing the lakeside path after cutting down and mulching invasive weed species; enormous Tecoma and Cotoneaster infestations were removed by machine (thanks Allan Dummett!). On the left is a picture of plantings on the bank which have replaced weed infestations on the steep slope.



With high summer behind us, the weeding and planting Landcare group has changed the meeting time to 2 pm every Wednesday afternoon. If you'd like to join in, call one of us or just turn up behind 31 Lake View Drive – you'll be very welcome.

Coastal Habitats Forum & Field Visit in March

This session started with a dusk tour of the coastal saltmarsh of the Bermagui south lagoon (next to the Country Club), and continued with presentations on various coastal environments. Around eight community organisations

told the gathering what they were doing. As the most recently established, Wallaga Lake Heights Care was pleased to be able to report on work restoring the lake side and engaging the local community.

For the record we are not living on a 'coastal saltmarsh' but next to one of the state's 'Intermittently closed and open lakes and lagoons' or ICOLLs. It was no surprise to learn that these too are sensitive habitats in need of protection – we're pleased to be helping.

Reducing the community's risk from fire

Heights Care's reasons for existing are to look after both the environment and the people of Wallaga Lake Heights. In earlier newsletters we reported on visits from the Bermagui Rural Fire Brigade and forums of communities, like ours, at the edge of last year's devastating fires.

Much of the work clearing invasive weeds, particularly an enormous stand of Elephant Grass – a bamboo up to four metres high – is helping reduce fire load alongside the lake.

The RFS advised that one of the most effective measures would be to get dead trees down onto the ground where they would be less of a fire risk and provide valuable habitat for local fauna. We now have one of our members trained and certified by Landcare to wield a chainsaw and have started work getting some of the dead timber beside the lake onto the ground.

What's coming up?

We have to report to BVSC on what we have achieved with the grant they awarded the group in mid 2020. Mountains of weeds hacked out and disposed of, hundreds of natives planted, and an impressive majority of the residents of Wallaga Lake Heights signed up is a start. A regular gathering of around eight, drawn from our two dozen Landcare members has recorded nearly 400 hours – 10 volunteer weeks - of work.

This track record should stand us in good stead as we apply for another grant when applications open later this month. Any suggestions for the coming year's activities will be most welcome.

Communicating with the neighbourhood

The Heights Care web site is up and running – please have a look at

<http://www.wallagalakeheightscare.com/>.

The site has all of the newsletters (including this one), information and photos about native vegetation and weeds, results of the monthly bird survey and links to other useful resources such as Landcare, The Crossing and U3A. We would also like more up to date material, so please submit any photos, news, comments or ideas to Ann-Maree at heightscare2020@gmail.com.

Best wishes, Heights Care steering group,

Roz Bannon

Libby Bolton

Peter Campbell

Ivana Gattegno (alternate for Libby)

Alison Kuitert

Doug Mein

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