



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

Wallaga Lake Heights community newsletter 19 - 15 March 2022

Update for the start of our third autumn

It's now just over two years, in the immediate aftermath of the black summer bushfires, that Heights Care was formed with the aim of 'caring for the Wallaga Lake Heights community and environment'. Community activities got started in January 2020 with a number of gatherings in people's houses.

The first few gatherings were largely concerned with bushfire protection - our individual and communal abilities to cope. The dramatic change to the weather patterns and welcome rains, while in no way reducing the long-term risks, did lessen the urgency. At the same time, our ability to get together in groups was severely restricted by the arrival of COVID 19. The steering group is looking at options for future activities – all suggestions welcome.

One of the great success stories to come from this has been the establishment and activities of the Wallaga Lake Heights Landcare group.

Wallaga Lake Heights Landcare activities

As noted in the last newsletter (now almost 5 months ago!) we received our second environmental grant from the council. The grant, running to 30 June this year, covers:

- Community consultation;
- Getting rid of weeds;
- Planting of flora indigenous to Wallaga Lake;
- Habitat restoration and fire hazard reduction

The Landcare group has been busy, working to guidelines set by Far South Coast Landcare and the council itself, in two main areas – weeding and planting.

What are weeds and what is the best way to deal with them?

There are many definitions of a weed. One of the Landcare's helpful web pages defines a weed as "*A plant that grows where it isn't wanted, causing harm to natural landscapes, agricultural landscapes, waterways and coastal areas.*" It goes on to observe that "*Weeds normally grow and spread faster than native plants and crops, and take over by out-competing them for light, water, space and nutrients. A weed can be an exotic or native species. that grows somewhere it didn't previously exist*".

We have LOTS of weeds on the Wallaga Lake foreshore, and the rains of the last year have encouraged them, even the ones we thought had been banished in 2020.

It's not always easy to identify a weed. Lots of pernicious weeds look like dinky die natives, and a lot of natives look pretty weedy. Fortunately a number of the Landcare group are highly experienced horticulturalists. When in doubt we don't pull out - Landcare is our go-to source of wisdom. Where infestation is too severe for just hand weeding we retain the services of one of Landcare's contractors to carry out targeted spraying.

Planting indigenous species on the foreshore

This is even more fun (!) than weeding. The rains have helped. Indigenous species such as Scaevola and Bleeding Heart have appeared from nowhere and are thriving. Seeds collected from plants such as Golden Shower on the foreshore have been germinated and planted. Grant money is being used to purchase indigenous plants from local nurseries. Our approach is to clear small areas and immediately replace weeds with natives.

One success story



Ipomea on foreshore – “a text book example of weed infestation” James Cook, Landcare advisor June 2020. Removed to reveal three young banksia and a Golden Shower...



... whose seeds were collected, germinated and planted in dozens on the foreshore

We have recently purchased 250 native plants to restore an area illegally cleared on the Northern edge of the Estuary foreshore below Lake View Drive.

Other planned and ongoing activities

Before 30 June we plan to undertake at least two other activities

- A survey of fauna to complement our monthly bird surveys
- An estuary health workshop; and
- A maildrop guide to Landcare activities

When the details have been finalised we will send out an invitation to the neighbourhood.

Web site and social media

The web site hasn't been working for some months now, an unwelcome outcome of our internet services provider (ISP) doubling its charges. We are in the last stages of setting up with a new ISP and hope to announce our re-launch shortly.

In the mean time a Facebook group - Wallaga Lake Heights Landcare – has been established with news and photos of goings on in the area. Do have a look, on the Facebook app or open www.facebook.com and Look for Wallaga Lake Heights Landcare.

Best wishes, Heights Care steering group,

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Peter Campbell

Ivana Gattegno

Alison Kuiter

Doug Mein

Bill Southwood