

Report on the McCarthy Catholic College “Creek Regeneration Grant” for the TRLA Committee Meeting

This report is an update on the McCarthy regeneration project which received 2023 grant money from the Tamworth Regional Landcare Association.

Location:

The main regeneration work is along the creek and the associated riparian zone running behind the McCarthy Catholic College, North Tamworth.

Current Project Status:

The grant money was used for the following tasks:

1. Obtaining and planting of two different *Casuarina* species.
2. Removal of larger exotic trees and shrubs.
3. Expanding the nursery at the school.

On the 13th October, two workers from Landcare led by Mr Pete Grono, spent the day in the creek helped by a number of volunteers from the school. The bottom part of the creek valley was opened up and a large number of *Casuarina* species were planted. The Grant money was used to purchase the *Casuarina* plants used. In addition, a number of *Hop*, *Wattle* and *Melaleuca* species were also planted. These were grown in the school nursery, which is run by the student volunteers.

Photos attached show some of the current work.



Photo 1: Shows the area where the work was carried out. Some of the South African Thornbushes were removed and a walking track was laid. Many of the *Casuarinas* and

Melaleuca species were placed here and into the actual creek. You can see some of the cut branches in this photo.



Photo 2: The gully next to the creek, which floods. Area where many of the Casuarinas were placed, with careful looking you can see some of the survivors. New stock of Casuarinas will be placed here.



Photo 3: This is the area where the first number of Casuarinas were planted. A number were claimed by the local kangaroo mob. There were a number of Casuarinas left over and these were used to replace the losses.



Photo 4a: This shows one of the Hop plant species which were planted. This species was germinated and grown in the school nursery. You can see that we use the old milk cartons as tree markers. This photo shows how some of the plants looked dead in October but many had shown some recovery. Around 70% of the plants survived the planting and kangaroo damage.



Photo 4 b: Another hop bush, which looked like it had died but you can see the new growth.



Photo 5: Though the landcare work focussed on the creek, some resources were diverted to an area heading towards Tribe St. On the left of the picture is one of the trees that is to be killed. The paper which we shred at the school is effective at reducing the weeds growing back and gives the new plants a chance to grow.



Photo 6: Though the grant money was not used here, this shows that the work is continuing. This is the next section where weed suppression has started. In Term 1, 2024, native plants will be placed here.

Future Project Status

The grant money was used as part of a larger long-term project. When school resumes in February, there will be an expansion of the regeneration work as we slowly reclaim the land taken over by the exotic weeds. The aims for 2024 are:

1. Keep expanding the regeneration site through weed suppression and removal.
2. Continue to add native plants either obtained through the school germination program or obtained from the Landcare nursery.
3. Adding animal habitat, such as frog hotels, hollows and nesting boxes.

The photos below shows some of the next stages of the project



Photo A: With the creek opened up with a pathway, more plants will be added. Plants will also be planted on the other side of the creek. This is one of the areas where artificial hollows will be placed.



Photo B: This is the other side of the gully, where there is a row of Thorn Bushes, as well as fennel bushes. This is where one of the site expansions will occur. Currently, new seeds have been laid for the summer germination. These plants will be going into this site.



Photo C: This photo is in the gully, parallel to the creek and school, heading towards Tribe street. One of the volunteer teams is already working here. Some of the established weeds will remain as bank stabilizers but new natives will be added along with artificial hollows.



Photo D: There is a Bamboo section where the next expansion will occur. The Bamboo stakes are being cut and used as markers for the new plants.