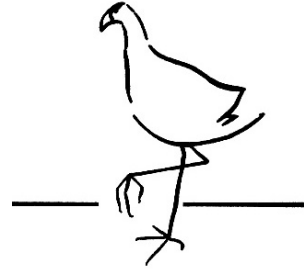


PANBOOLA

Pambula Wetlands and Heritage Project Inc



NEWSLETTER NO 16 – AUGUST 2009

Plantings

Unfortunately the Panboola site, as for the Bega Valley has received very little rain since our newsletter in May and this is reflected in the low water levels in the billabongs and stress to some of the recent plantings.

Nevertheless, we celebrated National Tree Day which was on August 2nd with a tree planting working bee at Panboola on July 30th. Around 80 indigenous wetland species were planted in The Corridor with the help of 10 volunteers. It was a perfect sunny morning for planting the trees and shrubs which were provided to local community groups through the Bega Valley Shire Councils tree preservation program. Hopefully these plantings can survive with minimal hand watering until the rain arrives.

We also completed the Riparian planting project with the help of the work team from the Eden Local Aboriginal Land Council through the months of May and June. They rolled out about 500sq m of weed matting and planted trees, shrubs and understory plants adjacent to the Pambula River. In time this area will provide habitat for birds, reptiles and small mammals and a healthy buffer of native vegetation, assisting with river bank stabilization and the filtration of water flow to the river from the floodplain.

Developments



John Bax, Max Smedley, Rob Bruce and Graham Waldon working on the entrance bollards. (Photo by Derek Jones, June 2009)

We have also finalised the shed by the installation of a water tank which one day will be full.

The Bullara St entrance has been transformed by the erection of a dry stone wall, and preparation for the linking track to Smith's Lookout is well underway. PWHP extend their thanks to Terry Radford whose valuable assistance in tidying up around the worksite has been greatly appreciated. The photo below shows some of the work team who put the bollards in place.

Grants and Awards

PWHP won the 2009 Regional Landcare Award for the Landcare Community Group category. Vice President, Mandi Stevenson, travelled to Braidwood and accepted the award on behalf of the group. The group was awarded a beautiful timber trophy and a book voucher for CSIRO Publishing to the value of \$100, funded by the Southern Rivers Catchment Management Authority.

A celebratory morning tea was held at the Panboola shed for all of the volunteers, work crew and staff who have been involved in establishing the wonderful community asset that is Panboola. We have now been nominated for the State award to be judged in Pt Macquarie in September.

Our application under the Community Development Support Expenditure program for funding to purchase a heavy duty brush cutter has been successful and this should assist in the maintenance of the site.

We are developing a range of fauna surveys under the Community Biodiversity Survey Program. Subject to funding, we hope to be able to engage the services of a local ecologist and some Lumen Christi High School science students in a range of fauna surveys at Panboola. The surveys will provide data about frogs, reptiles and mammals at the wetlands and will be valuable information for the benefit of educating the community and management, about fauna diversity

Visitors

Casual observation suggests that the site continues to attract increasing numbers of pedestrians, cyclists and picnickers. We hope to undertake a usage survey to gain a better understanding of numbers of visitors. One possibility is to participate in the project being sponsored by the Pambula Chamber of Commerce and Associates for Diploma of Community welfare students at the Bega Valley TAFE to undertake of survey of social capital in the Pambula Community.

We are also participating in an exciting local initiative to develop a walking track from Tathra to Snug Cove which would pass through Panboola.

We have commenced our fox control program and the first episode has resulted in the destruction of 14 foxes. Many thanks to Tony Jolley who has volunteered his services, and will revisit the site in November.

The elimination of so many foxes is just in time for the ground nesting birds in the new corridor plantings and the tussocky paddocks, where Pipits, skylarks and quail nest in or beside tussocks or small clumps of grass. The skylarks can be seen and heard performing their song flight, as they rise higher and higher, almost out of sight,

singing continuously, and then parachuting down to the ground. This indicates their breeding season has begun.

A large flock of over 30 Black Swans in Tips Billabong recently gave pleasure to many walkers and birdwatchers but as the water level has fallen they have moved on. Their honking, haunting tunes were far-reaching. However, receding water exposes muddy edges full of food and this will bring other birds to feed in the billabongs. Sitting quietly near the Old Bar or peering down from Smiths Lookout are good spots to look for tiny wading birds pecking in the mud. Their movement will draw attention to their presence as some run in and out of the reeds to escape attention while others feed without concern, such as the Black-fronted Dotterel, with a black 'v' on the breast.

The bigger birds are breeding too with Magpies and Ravens already sitting in nests. Cuckoos are singing, finding partners and ready to deposit eggs in the nests of the unsuspecting wrens and thornbills. Of course the Panboola emblem, the Purple Swamphen should be strutting around soon in fresh plumage and stamping down reeds to form slightly raised nests in the reed beds in order to maintain their dominance of Panboola with more tiny offspring.

Visitors are encouraged to carry binoculars to enjoy the birds to the fullest with the chance to watch parents caring for newly fledged birds or others carrying food to a hidden spot where they hope to keep the young safe until ready fledge.

Volunteers and Work Crews

The changes to the Commonwealth Government's employment programs came into place in July which has resulted in PWHP establishing working relationships under the new programs. A Green Corp team working through Workways is expected to be commencing regular working days at Panboola in the spring.

Our Volunteers continue regular working bees every Thursday morning and have recently undertaken a mud map survey of the Waterbird Sanctuary which identified an infestation of bridal creeper which they are now working at containing and will plan to eradicate.

Calendar for 2010

An early alert that our popular calendar will again be produced for the **2010 Calendar** year. We will be utilising the same size and format as for our previous calendar with some new amazing photographs and we hope to have it available for late October – in plenty of time for Christmas presents. Please keep your eye out for this major fund raiser for our project which is expected to be available at various locations in Pambula, otherwise contact a Committee member with orders around November.

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