



8,000 trees and counting

There was a fantastic turn out for the community planting days at East Evelyn Road in February, as part of the WTMA's Caring for Our Country project 'Making Connections'. About 40 people showed up to plant trees on Saturday 18 February and a further 80 on Saturday 28 February. This project helps to increase resilience of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area landscape to the predicted impact of climate change.

Tablelands Regional Council staff and Conservation Volunteers Australia Better Earth volunteers helped to prepare the sites in advance, making it easy for volunteers from TREAT, TKMG, CVA, the School for Field Studies, and others, to get the trees in the ground. People of all ages and backgrounds got involved, from as close as down-the-road, to as far afield as America and South Korea.

While the grown-ups planted and mulched, the kids had heaps of fun trying to create the World's longest 'pot snake'! Landholders were amazed at how many people turned out and how quickly the areas were planted. Both plantings were followed by a BBQ organised by TREAT who did a great job at filling all our hungry mouths.

A big thank you to everyone involved, especially the landholders for offering up their land and allowing swarms of volunteers to temporarily invade their properties! Even the skies cooperated, providing some good rains after planting to help water the trees in.

In total, approximately 8,000 trees were planted in February to help improve connectivity in this critical upland area. Last year, 6,000 trees were planted at Rock Road, and a further 4,000 trees are expected to be planted there over the next couple of months.

WTMA Senior Planning Officer, Deb Pople said increasing habitat and improving connectivity in these critical upland locations will help buffer many Wet Tropics species that prefer cooler conditions, like tree kangaroos, ringtail possums, and golden bowerbirds, from the effects of climate change.

"In addition to the plantings, all four sites have been fenced to protect the trees from grazing, and piles of logs and fence posts have been added to previously planted sites to create microhabitats to encourage faster colonisation by small animals like insects, frogs, and skinks," Ms Pople said.

In tandem with this project, the Department for Transport and Main Roads has recently invested in refurbishing the wildlife tunnels under East Evelyn Road, and weed control has been undertaken near the entrances to improve wildlife access to the tunnels.



'Pot snakes' at the tree planting

