

Rocks and Reptiles

Central Tablelands Landcare Inc



Linking and enhancing rocky outcrops- critical refugia for biodiversity in The Central Tablelands

The issue

CTLC has driven a number of successful biodiversity projects which has seen an increase in the number of hectares on private property which has been revegetated especially in the EEC of Box Gun Grassy Woodlands. An important landscape feature of the cleared grassy woodland landscape are rocky outcrops. They are important diversity refugia in our agricultural landscape and are critical in providing landscape-scale connectivity. With this project we want to diversify our successful biodiversity projects by enhancing these important 'stepping stones' of native vegetation and wildlife habitat.

The solution

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We were successful in receiving funding from the Environmental Trust to assist property owners to protect rocky outcrops. We ran an information session to let people know about the importance of protecting and enhancing rocky outcrops which was attended by 35 people including potential project partners plus interested members of the public and LLS staff. This was clearly an area of great interest and concern. Dan Florance from Sustainable Farms (Fenner School, ANU) addressed the attendees on the ecological value of these areas and what they can expect to find in rocky outcrops ranging from reptiles, pollinating insects and bugs to echindas and possums. Did you know that certain butterflies need a rocky outcrop to successfully breed? Dan also spoke about the importance of trees as well as grasses and forbs in revegetating outcrops whilst not over-shading too much.

The impact

Sue, our Biodiversity Officer and myself, conducted site inspections on 20 properties to assess their suitability. We were assessing for Box Gum Grassy Woodland, were there any rocky outcrops and what kind were they, existing vegetation and what would be required remembering that it is important to not have too many large trees because if the outcrop receives too much shade then there is nowhere for the reptiles to sun themselves.

At the end of Stage 1, twelve landholders have installed wildlife friendly fencing around 15 hectares of rocky outcrops which are in various stages of degradation. Some have taken advantage of the autumn rains and started planting their areas.

We had organised a on-site field day but we have had to postpone this due to the restrictions of Covid-19



Key facts

- 12 landholders have committed to enhancing 15 hectares of Rocky Outcrops.
- Rocky outcrops ranged from limestone ridges, silurian deposits and ordevician sedimentary and volcanic rocks.
- 3600 trees, shrubs and grasses will have been planted the end of the project.

Project Partners



This initiative made possible by the NSW Landcare Program. A collaboration of Local Land Services and Landcare NSW Inc. supported by the NSW Government.

