



## International Environmental Weed Foundation Annual Report – June 2013

*International Environmental Weed Foundation is pleased to present a report on our activities during the year from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2012 to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2013.*

### **The Habitat - progress**

The Habitat, which had its grand opening November 3<sup>rd</sup> 2012, is a **community native plant nursery and community food garden**. After 5 years of lobbying and hard work this facility and community has become a reality. It is being run as a partnership between our Habitat Network and City of Ryde. On a day-to-day basis it is run by our volunteers.

The construction started 9th July 2012 utilising funds from a Community Building Partnership grant. Additionally we had volunteers helping with the construction, donations of items from our community and also Bunnings helped with financing the shed. A grant from City of Ryde bought the first 5,000 litre water tank and a grant from FaHCSIA (see grants below) bought a 10,000 litre water tank, tools and equipment.

In August 2012 we had a major community garden planting day with Ryde Permaculture group, local residents and members. Six raised beds were planted with donated food plants.

The Habitat was opened by the City of Ryde Mayor Ivan Petch and NSW State MP Victor Dominello, and Federal MP John Alexander was also present. The opening event included music provided by local students and a paid musician, stalls put on by 9 community organisations and included a free BBQ sponsored by The Meat Boutique, the local butcher. The event was promoted via fliers, press releases and emails to Habitat Network members. A high school student painted the front of the shed, as a major project in a leadership program she was undertaking. Macquarie University and other members grew mobile food boxes and brought them along to help get us up and running and to promote our opening.



*Left: Shed being painted by student.  
Right: 1st community planting day*

Funds have been raised for an additional plant bench via a lucky draw with a Black and White limited edition photo donated by Raymond Horsey, a local photographer, as the prize.

Since The Habitat opened, the regular volunteers have undertaken seed and cutting collection, sowing and planting activities as well as composting, mulching and maintenance. Additionally we organise activities for casual visitors and volunteers, including children's art activities and habitat planting. Morning teas are great too with volunteers bringing along home-made treats. Volunteers also bring chutneys and jams to sell as a contribution towards funding The Habitat.

The Habitat is now also a base for an aboriginal group looking to run aboriginal workshops, establish food and medicinal plant gardens and youth connections between cultures and city / country. Our volunteers created a yarnning area as an informal meeting space for anyone using the garden.



In October 2012 and May 2013 City of Ryde ran composting and worm farming workshops at The Habitat with about 40 people attending each event. Also in May The Habitat hosted 40 prospective volunteers from Meadowbank TAFE and presented an overview of our activities. On a daily basis we promote: habitat; habitat plantings, connections and corridors; also sustainable gardens and living. Importantly we also promote community and volunteering.

For the period 19 August 2012 to 30 June 2013 we achieved 2,415 hours of volunteer time. For period 19 August 2012 to 31 December 2013 we had 13 regular volunteers, 70 casuals and 355 recorded visitors. For period 1 Jan 2013 to 30 June 2013 we had 18 regular volunteers, 33 casuals and 255 recorded visitors.

Local native plants and also food plants are in production with plants being sold regularly to visitors. Plants were donated to West Ryde and East Ryde Public Schools for National Tree Day (July 2013). The Habitat also provided plants for Canon's corporate event.

Volunteer recognition awards were received for The Habitat from both City of Ryde and local Federal MP John Alexander in May 2013. The Habitat was also nominated for a Landcare Innovation Award but was not successful.

A Way2Go Volunteer Toolkit Training Session, where attendees were given a toolkit and guidance on the paperwork involved in the management of volunteers, was attended by 3 volunteers from The Habitat in June 2013.



*Right - Pam Ward and Bev Debrincat receiving a recognition award on behalf of The Habitat from Federal MP John Alexander—May 2013*

## **Greenwood Park Bush Regeneration**

Johnson Controls donated funds, as they have done for the previous 2 years, which were used to employ professional bush regeneration contractor National Trust to undertake invasive vine control at Greenwood Park.

## **Grants**

### **Community Building Partnership Grant**

With the building of The Habitat we were able to finalise the Community Building Partnership Grant from the NSW Government which was for \$18,323. This grant paid for major items such as fences, preparing the grounds, raised plant beds for the community garden and a soil bay and some smaller items.

### **FaHCSIA Grant**

A grant of \$4050 under the Volunteer Grants 2012 program was received from Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs. This grant has bought a 10,000 litre tank, tools and equipment for The Habitat.

### **Foundation for National Parks and Wildlife Private Land Conservation Grant**

Foundation for National Parks private grant continued into its 2<sup>nd</sup> year at Delicate Nobby, Crescent Head, NSW. The works have been completed and reports submitted. This grant will continue for 1 more year.

### **Unsuccessful applications**

Two other grants were applied for however they were not successful. Another grant for which we have applied has been put on hold until after the Federal election – so fingers crossed!

## **Promotions, events and workshops**

The Habitat and the Habitat Network were promoted at stalls that we set up and manned at West Ryde Fair, Moocooboola in Hunter's Hill, Riding for the Disabled Fair Day and Granny Smith Fair in Ryde. Additionally we did a small display at Ryde Library Volunteer Expo.

Habitat workshops were run at Little Einstein's Preschool, Loreto Normanhurst, Lane Cove River Catchment Day at St Ignatius College and for the River-to-River project (a project run in partnership between Ryde and Hunters Hill Councils).

In November 2012 we took part in Riverside Girls High School activities day and lead a group of 30 year 10 students on a habitat walk.

We assisted in promoting Habitat and bushcare at the Easter Show for 2 days by participating in the Bushcare stall run by the Sydney Metro Catchment Management Authority. And also attended the 2013 Hawkesbury-Nepean CMA Community Forum and informally promoted our activities. Brochures were also provided for Meadowbank TAFE Environment Day.

We attended a community leaders meeting organised by the Hawkesbury-Nepean CMA. This meeting was attended by Landcare NSW and other prominent bushcare related groups from around Sydney.



## Habitat Projects

### Hunter's Hill Small Bird Corridor

We continued working on the Hunter's Hill small bird corridor project. Sadly at the final moment the Hunter's Hill Councillors dropped all reference to the small bird corridor from the Riverglade Reserve Plan of Management. The corridor will still continue, as it extends from the top of Tarban Creek and around the waterfront passing through Riverglade Reserve to



*Top Right - River to River Project sign at Tarban Creek Bridge bushcare and planting site.*

*Above left - Bev Debrincat leading workshop on how to create small bird habitat for the River-to-River Project*

Gladesville Hospital. However the change to the Plan of Management means it will be without the ability to add new connective habitat islands within Riverglade Reserve.

Within the small bird corridor are a number of bushcare groups of which 2 are led by us (in partnership with Council and National Parks) - Bedlam Bushcare and Tarban Bridge Bushcare respectively. All bushcare groups will continue to manage their areas taking into account biodiversity needs.

### River-to River Project

We have been active in the River-to-River Project (run by City of Ryde and Hunter's Hill Council) for the past 3 years as part of the advisory group, providing a workshop and assisting with planting and promotional activities. The River-to-River project linked with and included parts of the Hunter's Hill small bird corridor. A River-to-River Project sign is now proudly displayed at the Tarban Creek Bridge site. This grant funded project has now come to an end however the surveys, community networking and plantings within these corridors will be a lasting legacy.

### Online updates and promotions

Our three websites [www.iewf.org](http://www.iewf.org), [www.habitatnetwork.org](http://www.habitatnetwork.org) and [www.rncalliance.org](http://www.rncalliance.org) have been maintained and developed especially in relation to including The Habitat community native plant nursery and community food garden. We have also continued to expand our YouTube channel which now has 140+ habitat related videos.

On the [www.habitatnetwork.org](http://www.habitatnetwork.org) site we have developed plant photo and information pages which we need to develop further to make into a comprehensive resource. The photos of activities on this site are popular with our members to view the progress and the pictorial history of our projects.

We continued to promote our websites as opportunities presented themselves, including continuing with Google Adwords (now only able to be used for IEFW due to change of Google policy).

We also have a Facebook page, used to promote habitat connections, which as at 30 June 2013 has 102 friends.

The Habitat is now on the volunteering websites SeekVolunteer and DoSomethingNearYou, which are starting to bring a slow trickle of new and much younger volunteers.

We met with a representative of Pollinator Link group from Queensland late April 2013 and are doing cross website promotions.

## Education materials and events



This year saw us produce and distribute a brochure on “Brush-turkeys in your garden” which is very colourful and attracts peoples attention. This has been in response to an increase of these birds in the Sydney area. You can see the brochure at [www.habitatnetwork.org/resources.htm](http://www.habitatnetwork.org/resources.htm) and front cover to the left.

A poster was produced and displayed at National Landcare Conference in September 2012 entitled "Creating habitat corridors and networks in an urban area". This poster is proving to be a useful addition to our displays at Fairs, events and workshops.

We finalised an article with help of bush fire specialist Cuong Tran entitled “Habitat in your garden in a bush fire prone area”. This resource was developed at the request of local Councils and is available on our website and was distributed to northern Sydney Councils see [www.habitatnetwork.org/resources.htm](http://www.habitatnetwork.org/resources.htm)

An article about small bird habitat was submitted and printed in the Namoi Valley Independent newspaper.

We assisted with many weed and plant ids and research references. Photos were provided for Sydney Metropolitan CMA’s Volunteer Coordinator Network Manual and the three Bushcare Boosters Participants Workbooks. Our materials were used by Cubberla-Witton Catchments Network Inc in a small paper they were producing. And a couple of photos are included to the Encyclopaedia of Life database.

Submissions were made relating to: Brush Farm Master Plan, Parramatta River Coastal Zone Management Plan, Lane Cove River Coastal Zone Management Plan and Riverglade Reserve Master Plan.

We attended the launch of and provided support for Hunter’s Hill Services Community Garden and donated some food plants from The Habitat. Community events for Councils and other groups were promoted via the monthly Habitat Network news update email.