



The Escarpment Park Friend

May 2023

Committed to bushland park care since 1994

www.fep.org.au

NEW CONTACT Details for JOHN and ALISON SWARBRICK

Dr. John Swarbrick is a founding member of the bush regeneration group Friends of the Escarpment Parks. One sunny weekend in the mid 1980's Dr John Swarbrick took his daughter to visit her friend at Spring Bluff Railway station. While there, John walked around the area with the Stationmaster and saw the big problem that the Lantana was creating. He invited a few friends to work in the area and so the seeds of Friends of The Escarpment Parks were sown.¹ The Friends of the Escarpment Parks began to push back the weeds in other areas including Redwood Park - a National Treasure. The tens of thousands of hours donated by the volunteers have seen the diversity of species there increase, e.g. the return of the Black-breasted Button Quail.

John Swarbrick has said that FEP owes a lot to Veronica Newbury, then the Toowoomba City Council's Bushcare Management Officer who strongly supported FEP in our early days with encouragement, tools, grants and funding and worked with us in the bushland parks

John Swarbrick has also worked with the Toowoomba Historical Society and has collaborated with TRC to publish a book, 'Toowoomba's best trees' (2014).

In this email to FEP Secretary, John says:

Thank you, Libby. What a mighty organisation FEP has grown into, and all through the work of volunteers such as yourself.

Congratulations on all of your work and successes.

We are moving to Buderim next week - I attach our new contacts but the email stays the same - and shall maintain our interest in FEP throughout.

Our postal address will be PO Box 576, Buderim, Qld. 4556.

Our email addresses will remain at alisonswarbrick@hotmail.com and johnswarbrick1@gmail.com

John Swarbrick.

As befitting his role and work in FEP, Dr Swarbrick has a lifetime FEP membership.

The members of FEP wish Dr Swarbrick and Alison the very best in their new residence in Buderim and will be pleased to maintain contact, especially with updates of the work of FEP.

A Brief History of Highfields Falls Reserve WHY IS THERE A RESERVE?

Bob Harvey

I understand that this Nature Reserve was set aside by an early Crow's Nest Shire Council in the late 1800's as a place of recreation for the local farmers and Brady's Sawmill workers processing the trees near here. The main reason for the creation of this park was the perennial spring-fed creek and the waterfall. The spring which feeds this creek is one of the many along the escarpment, however, this is one of the largest (by volume), and so visitors could guarantee that they could sit beside a running stream to enjoy a picnic. Watercress was probably introduced at this time to add to sandwiches, and persists to this day. Many footpaths were created by stock or humans (no exclusion fence existed until recently.) Short sections of the current tracks still follow some of the early routes.

AND NEXT?

It was left to the locals to maintain, and so little was done for at least 50 years as wars and The Great Depression took their toll on the menfolk, while trees were seen as a resource to be exploited not preserved. Only trees seen as unsuitable for milling remained, which is why so few mature gum trees with multiple nesting hollows remain and only the smaller dry rainforest shrub/trees were overlooked. During this period, invasion by feral plants occurred, to such an extent that lantana and privet became the predominant species. During the 1950's and 1960's cars became much more widespread and interest in using the Reserve for recreation diminished. Nearby children had bush cook-ups or played at being explorers here, travelling folk used it as a convenient sleeping spot on trips, and teenage boys would sometimes drink alcoholic beverages and throw their empties in the scrub. The local four-wheel drive club obtained permission to use the reserve for training purposes and a very rough, direct track was created from the current position of the FEP container to Dau Road where it turns the corner. Consequently, much scouring/erosion resulted and was increased by the local lads using their trail bikes.

MORE RECENTLY

From the 1970's onwards, the rapid urbanisation of Highfields began, and hence many more locals became aware of the Reserve. In an enlightened decision by the Crow's Nest Shire Council, an Environmental Officer (Rick?) was employed around 1990, and started to create interest in our reserved areas. He held working bees on weekend afternoons with equipment and chemicals provided by the Council. The work started around the Dau Road entrance and progressed down the slope to the vicinity of the waterfall. Council also received money from the Australian Government to train and use unemployed people during the early 90's recession. This was the first time the zig-zag track was created to the top of the falls. Tree planting days were held in the newly exposed sections. Unfortunately, very little water was available to help with this process, so the majority of the specimens expired in the drought which followed. When the drought finished, the very few young trees left were swamped by the lantana which burgeoned. About six somehow survived to this day and are now thriving following the recent removal of asparagus fern and lantana canes which were stifling their growth, mainly by shading their leaves.

Every Tuesday morning, a small but dedicated FEP group meets at the storage container situated below Recreation Reserve Road to continue restoration works, which involves the removal of environmental weeds and the planting of native species. Locally sourced seed stock is used when planting in the best attempt to recreate something like the original vegetation mosaic. The interest shown by walkers and their congratulatory messages are much appreciated by the volunteers. The Toowoomba Regional Council has recognised the significance of the work done by the volunteers by providing material support in the form of equipment and chemicals for the F.E.P.

WHAT OF THE FUTURE?

Of course the volunteers would love to see all the feral weeds disappear and be replaced by native species and the park returned to a close approximation of its original state. This would mean that the privet areas become microphyll rainforest/vine forest and the drier areas , i.e. the lantana zones, become Eucalypt woodland with the attendant understory. The lesser compromised areas of Redwood Park and Ravensbourne provide aspirational goals regarding eventual climax vegetation.

Another very encouraging phenomenon is the rapid reappearance of seedlings of local species by the second weeding. Thema fruit and fig fruit replace the privet and lantana berries favoured by the fruit eaters, e.g. cuckoo doves; while the greater diversity of insects now appearing on the plantings are seeing insectivorous birds thriving and the reappearance of butterflies whose caterpillars rely on the leaves of the native plants. Nectar and seed-eating birds are also being catered for, but these trees will take many years before becoming mature enough to support larger populations and attract endangered species, e.g. the Glossy Black Cockatoos.

Hancock Street Park Microforest News

Greg Lukes

Stage 1 of the Planting for Hancock Street Park Microforest was held on Saturday 1st April. We had over 60 people attend the activity and planted 600 native trees and plants on the block. This park is an endangered ecosystem. Our microforest will enlarge this natural area which we want to preserve and also provide carbon storage to reduce climate change. Hancock Street Park has a network of bush walking trails connecting its four entrances - Hancock Street, Pelican Drive, Fairview Close and Leith Crescent. The new Microforest is located at the southern end of Hancock Street Park. Once established, it will also act as a wildlife corridor linking the park with the bushland on the neighbouring Anglican diocesan land.

To see the development of the microforest step by step please see Hancock Street Park and Microforest Blogger <https://hancockstreetpark.blogspot.com/p/microforest-creation.html>

See the FEP Facebook site for other great photos and a video clip.

<https://www.facebook.com/people/Friends-of-the-Escarpment-Parks-Toowoomba/100064380653919/>

The next step is to get helpers to care for the new plantings. Weekday and weekend options are available for volunteers to do maintenance and watering. This will be fortnightly, and if we have a roster with more volunteers, you may be needed only once a month. If you would like to get involved please contact Elizabeth: secretaryfep@gmail.com

The microforest is being created on a 580sqm grassed parcel of land which is adjacent to Hancock Street Park and which is managed by the Toowoomba Regional Council. The project has received funding support from the Queensland Government's *Community Sustainability Action* grant program and an environment grant from Toowoomba Regional Council.



This project was developed following the Miyawaki method of microforest creation. This involves creating a dense planting of native plants which make up the local ecosystem, representing the same indigenous species and plant communities as found in Hancock Street Park. The Miyawaki method results in the rapid creation of forest ecosystems, reportedly 10 times faster growth than conventional planting approaches. More than 1000 microforests have been created around the world.

Those involved for our first planting included Friends of Escarpment Park (FEP) volunteers, neighbours of the park, volunteers from the community and other environmental groups. Crow's Nest Community Nursery prepared and supplied most of the tube stock. Some was also sourced from Paten Park Nursery. Hancock Street

Park is surrounded by urban development but offers locals and visitors an opportunity to connect with nature. And we have been receiving positive feedback about the microforest from local people who use the park.

Hancock St Park is just over 3.7 hectares (9 acres) and contains bushland vegetation of significant environmental value. In 2016 the Friends of the Escarpment Parks (FEP) started working with Council to eradicate weeds (especially lantana) and regenerate native vegetation. The lantana is almost completely gone and group meets there weekly on Thursday mornings and are always happy to welcome new members. If you would like to get involved please contact Bev on 0428 623 577. Please see the map below and also look at the Hancock St Park blog to find out about some of the birds, insects, plants and animals which make up this ecosystem.

<https://www.tr.qld.gov.au/component/edocman/facilityrecreation/sportrecreation/hancock-park-walking-trail-map?Itemid=>



Image; Ann Alcock



Image; Ann Alcock



Image; Max Henderson



Image; Ann Alcock



FEP Roger's Reserve Open Day 4th March 2023

Approximately 65 members of the public joined in the activities; 23 of those went on the guided spotlight walks, there were 20 people on the 7.30am Bird Walk. On the Butterfly walk there were 8 people, the rest went on the guided plant walks. It was encouraging to see local families with children eager to come along. Here's some feedback;

I was very impressed with the work done by the Rogers Reserve group; the understorey was looking so good with natives and very few weed species, well done, and the books very good too. Martin Bennet

It was a great networking opportunity and a chance for all of us to get up to date with each other's' activities. Trish Gardener (CNCN)

Crow's Nest Community Nursery received some good exposure, helped enormously by the generous gift from Jenny of the Koala food trees (DDEC); Deb (CNCN)

A great evening and smoothly organised, lots of gliders, Geoff Sharp

Thank you to the guided tour leaders and participating groups;

Toowoomba Bird Observers, BirdLife Southern Qld, Toowoomba Native Plants Qld, Crow's Nest Community Nursery, Peace Haven Botanic Park, Toowoomba Field Naturalists, Martin Bennet, Charles Dove, Dan Bishop, Greg Spearitt, Cam Mackenzie (Amaroo Environmental).

Thank you to Cr Bill Cahill for launching the Plants of Rogers Reserve Book, the Plants of Rogers Reserve Book authors, TRC and the Highfields Library for support, to the FEP volunteers and of course the FEP volunteers at Roger's Reserve.



Echidna (*Tachyglossus aculeates*), Redwood Park. Image; Peter Harley



Hibiscus splendens Image; Kelly Kellert

Hibiscus splendens, the splendid hibiscus, is a species of flowering shrub or tree in the mallow family, Malvaceae. Other common names include hollyhock tree and pink cottonwood. *H. splendens* is a fairly common plant native to eastern Australia. The fruit is an egg shaped capsule, covered in hairs. Five cells within the capsule contain pyramid shaped dark seeds, 3 to 4 mm long. The hairs on the capsules can cause severe skin irritation and need to be handled with care. ([Hibiscus splendens - Wikipedia](#))

FEP Bush Care Parks and Groups

FEP Bush care groups are volunteers carrying out bush regeneration activities in our local bushland parks. *Bring your gloves, hat and water.*

Redwood Park (Each Mon & Thu 8am)

Warrego Highway below the saddle
Contact Hugh Krenske hkrenske@gmail.com - 0418 748 282

Hartmann Bushland Reserve

Wednesday from 9am each week
Cnr Alderley St & Rowbotham St
Contact Greg Lukes glukes@bigpond.com 0428 288 077

Hancock St Park (off McClymont Dr)

Thursday from 8:30am each week
Contact Bev Yates 0428 623 577

Hancock St Park Microforest Group

Contact Elizabeth secretaryfep@gmail.com

Blue Mtn Heights Parklands

8am - 9am

The worksite is from the end of Rangeview Road, Blue Mountain Heights. Contact Christel on 0448329008 for further information. The group usually meets once a month on the first weekend of each month on Sundays from 8am to 9am. The group is small and the date and time may change if there one of the group cannot make it.

Panorama Crescent Park

3rd Saturday each month from 9am
Contact David Heckscher 0419 642 940 or panorama.crescent.park@outlook.com

Nielsen Park (Colman Drv, off Mackenzie St)

1st & 4th Saturday each month 9am – 12
Contact Rob Brodribb 0407 124 863 or rwbrodribb@ozemail.com.au

Prince Henry Drive FEP Group

Second and third Fridays

- Sept to March - 7:30am to 10:00am.
- April to August - 8:00am to 10:30am.

We meet in parkland opposite 342 Prince Henry Drive.
Contact Tom Esplin 0438 441188 tom@180partners.com.au

Leopard Ash Bushland Park, Kleinton (Near Highfields)

1st Saturday each month from 9am – 12
Contact Michael McGoldrick 0417 802 817

Echo Valley South Park (Ramsay St)

2nd & 5th Saturday each month from 9am
Contact Greg Lukes 0428 288 077

Duggan Park (Leslie & Collier Streets, Rangeville) 1st Tuesday morning each month from 8:30am)

Third Saturday contact Roger Jaensch
roger.jaensch.bne@gmail.com 0488 201 008



Photo: Max Henderson

Rogers Reserve Highfields

1st Friday each month from 9am – 11am
3 Community Court, Highfields
Contact Judi Gray 0458 155 177

Highfields Falls Bushland

Tuesday mornings - James Byrne Rd, Highfields
Contact Jane Butler jane.butler@westnet.com.au

Other Bush care group (Not FEP), Dwyers Scrub Conservation Park (East Egypt Road, Mount Whitestone).

1st Thursday each month 7:30am – 10:30am Contact Paul 0429 880 144 or Jim 5462 6724

FEP Key Contacts

FEP President – Rob Brodribb

FEP Secretary – Elizabeth Addie :secretaryFEP@gmail.com

Escarpment Friend Editor - Penny McGowan

Thank you to our contributors; please send emails to: vectorspace101@live.com



FEP is on Facebook. You can *like* any articles you see on there and help lift the profile of FEP in our community.



Dr John Swarbrick (*'a younger and more vigorous and active me!'*)

Dr Swarbrick moved from lecturing at the West of Scotland Agricultural College to Queensland in 1970 where he was a Weed Science Lecturer at Queensland Agricultural College (now University of Queensland, Gatton) for many years to 1993.

He was one of the first weed science lecturers in Australia and contributed greatly to weed management through his enthusiastic training of many undergraduates and further supported training by writing the book 'Basic Weed Science' in 1979.

John was involved in the 10th Australian Weeds Conference/ 14th Asian Pacific Weeds Conference in 1993, has contributed through national roles and he was inaugural Secretary/Treasurer for the Council of Australian Weed Science Societies (CAWSS), first editor of the journal "Australian Weeds" (it later became "Plant Protection Quarterly") and author of a variety of informative articles.

In 2002, Dr Swarbrick was granted an honorary membership of the Weed Society of Qld for outstanding contribution to any aspect of weed and pest animal science in Queensland.

(Honorary Membership - Weed Society of Queensland (wsq.org.au))

ⁱ <http://www.fep.org.au/nl/0000000424.pdf>