

# Enviro News

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## Swamp Forest Gets Helping Hand

Over the last couple of years, there has been considerable effort invested by Board staff into revegetating many of the low-lying swampy areas and creek lines draining into the lagoon. Historically, much of the vegetation lining these waterways in the settlement area was cleared or at least partly cleared for agricultural. With constant grazing pressure over many years, only a few old isolated trees and palms survive. What remains today is cleared open creek lines or low lying swampy areas mostly devoid of any tree cover and dominated by Kikuyu and Buffalo grasses.



*Top or north end of Old Settlement Creek ready for planting.*

Areas such as Old Settlement Creek, Solider Creek and the swampy areas behind Pinetrees and the Bowling Club are typical examples. Mosley Park is another example, but as many Island residents would recall, this swampy area was cleared back in the 1975, to improve safety at the southeast end of the airport.



*Old Settlement Creek linking Northern Hills with creek mouth to Lagoon*

So why bother restoring these swampy wet areas anyway? Well, firstly, these vegetation communities are not well represented and have been listed as an endangered ecological community under the NSW Threatened Species Conservation Act. (TSC Act).

Apart from being rare on the Island (and unknown anywhere else in the world), these areas also provide an important physical link. These links or corridors provide a source of food and shelter and safe protective pathway for birds, skinks, micobats and insects. Trees and plants along creeks also act as a type of filter sponge, slowing down the movement of water and trapping sediments and nutrients like cow manure, septic outputs and fertilisers which may otherwise end up in the lagoon or our ground water. Vegetated creeks which exclude stock and are less turbid from sediment will also attract water bugs, crustaceans, and insects and in turn attract small fish and other predators.

The Board has been successful in recent years in attracting external funding to assist with these works. For example over 12 months, the Commonwealth Governments Natural Heritage Trust (NHT) through the Northern Rivers Catchment Management Authority has awarded the Board \$74,000 to regenerate these areas. These monies greatly assist with Board salary and material costs associated with collecting seed, propagating and raising native plants at the Island nursery, preparing the sites for planting, establishing fencing to exclude stock, planting the shrubs and trees and undertaking maintenance works such as watering and weeding to ensure the plants survive.



*Old Settlement Creek.  
Stage 1.*

Most of the creek restoration works to date have been undertaken on special leases, and the board is grateful for the cooperation of the special leaseholders that have supported these important initiatives.

Lookout for more revegetation works in the coming months.

*Old Settlement Creek. Progressive revegetation  
working from south to north*

