



NEWSLETTER

JULY 2018

LAGGAN RESERVES

On the second of June as twelve brave souls ventured up to Laggan, we were left in no doubt that winter had arrived on the Tablelands. The sun shone brightly as we met in the village—which takes its name from the Cairngorm region in Scotland. The wind was already present and could have come straight off the North Sea, judging by the chill factor.

A short drive brought us to the Laggan Travelling Stock Route (TSR). Readers will be aware of the important role they have played in our country's agriculture during severe droughts, as farmers took to the "long paddock" in order to maintain a core herd for better times ahead. What may not be so well understood is the significant role TSRs have played in maintaining remnants of bush. The regulations covering the use of stock routes means that they were able to recover from the effects of grazing as stock were kept moving. The other important benefit of TSRs is that by their very nature they are long narrow strips of land, which provide valuable corridors of habitat for wildlife.

After the usual warming cuppa at morning tea, we headed into the stock route. Not surprisingly, there was a range of native grasses present—an estimated six different kinds of *Poa* as well as *Themeda australis* (Kangaroo grass). Amongst these clumps there were a number of low growing shrubs including *Hovea linearis*. The trees were a mix of Eucalyptus including *E. aggregata* (Black Gum) and *E. pauciflora* (Snow Gum) and another specimen thought to be either *E. dalrympleana* (Mountain gum) or *E. rubida* (Candlebark Gum).

Mid-size shrubs such as *Leptospermum myrtifolium* (Myrtle Tea-tree) and *Hakea microcarpa* (Dogwood Hakea) grew in small clumps on the northern slopes, but for the most part, there was very little of this middle layer present. Near the top of the hill there was a magnificent Snow Gum which obviously thrived in the frigid conditions. Snow gum numbers increased in the higher areas, a clear example of the affects of altitude on microclimate and hence plant selection.

By the time we got back to the cars it was already noon. While there were hopeful suggestions of venturing back to the village to try our luck at the pub or The Pantry, it was decided to take a look at the second location, the newly made reserve of Thalaba. Parking our cars at the fork in the road, the surrounding countryside lay revealed like a contour map. From this commanding position it was possible to see about ten kilometres in each direction. While clouds swirled above, the horizon disappeared behind a foggy blanket.

We were able to find a sheltered spot for lunch, comfortably seated on grassy mounds, rather like woodland elves. There was

much speculation regarding the distant hills.

In this reserve there was a much denser coverage of middle layer shrubs including *Exocarpos*—here for the first time all day there was the chatter of bird calls and small woodland birds flittered between the trees. Here the dominant Eucalypt was Broad-leaved Peppermint, *E. dives*.

A short walk after lunch took in the smaller diversity of the plants in the reserve. As we watched the weather closing in we returned to the cars, reaching them just as the rain began.

CALENDAR

Sat July 7	Forum/presentation: Soil Improvement/ Plant Selection
Sat Aug 4	Bullio Tunnel Trail
Sat Sept 1	Walk - Nattai National Park
Thu Sept 13	Propagation
Sun Sept 16	Propagation
Sat Oct 6	Walk - Nadgigomar West Nature Reserve
Wed Oct 24	Wetlands Garden Maintenance
Sun - Tue Nov 11 - 13	Walks - Nature Reserves near Mudgee

Thanks to Pauline for the above account and photo(s); to Greg and Ashlea for recording plant species names and collating the species lists.

Congratulations to member Anne Wiggan for her award of an OAM last month for her many years of endeavour in the Bungonia community.



Tall grass in both reserves made it difficult to find smaller herbaceous specimens; here the party makes its way through a more open part of the Thalaba reserve

LAGGAN TSR LIST

Acaena ovina - Bidgee Widgee
Acrotriche serrulata - Honeyopts
Asperula conferta - Prickly woodruff
Aristida ramosa var. ramosa - Wire grass
Brachyloma daphnoides - Daphne heath
Burchardia umbellata - Milkmaids
Carex appressa - Tall sedge
Cassinia arcuata - Sifton bush
Cheilanthes sieberi subsp. sieberi - Rock fern
Daviesia latifolia - Broad-leaf bitter pea
Dichondra repens - Kidney weed
Eleocharis acuta - Common spike rush
Epacris microphylla - Coral heath
Eucalyptus aggregata - Black gum
Eucalyptus bridgesiana - Apple box
Eucalyptus pauciflora subsp. pauciflora - Snowgum
Eucalyptus rubida subsp. rubida - Candlebark
Exocarpos strictus - Pale ballart
Gompholobium sp. - Pale wedge pea
Gonocarpus micranthus - Creeping raspwort
Hakea microcarpa - Small-fruited Hakea
Hibbertia obtusifolia - Grey guinea flower
Hovea linearis - Narrow-leaved pea
Hydrocotyle laxiflora - Stinking pennywort
Leptospermum myrtifolium - Grey tea-tree
Lomandra filiformis - Wattle matrush
Luzula densiflora - Woodrush
Lythrum salicaria - Purple loosestrife
Melichrus urceolatus - Urn heath
Opercularia hispida - Stinkweed
Plantago varia - Plantain
Poa labillardieri - River tussock
Potamogeton perfoliatus - Pondweed
Pultenaea subspicata - Bush pea
Rytidosperma pallidum - Red-anthered wallaby grass
Juncus subsecundus - Rush
Scleranthus diander - Many-flowered knawel
Senecio quadridentatus - Fireweed
Solenogyne dominii -
Stylidium graminifolium - Trigger plant
Themeda australis - Kangaroo grass
Utricularia dichotoma - Fairy aprons
Viola betonicifolia - Showy violet

THALABA RESERVE LIST

Acacia dealbata - Silver wattle
Acaena novae-zelandiae - Bidgee Widgee
Amyema miquelii - Mistletoe
Astrotricha ledifolia - Star Hairs
Billardiera scandens - Appleberry
Cassinia arcuata - Sifton bush
Cassinia longifolia - Shining Cassinia
Cheilanthes sp. - Dry rock fern
Cymbonotus lawsonianus - Bears' ears
Daviesia latifolia - Broad-leaf bitter pea
Dianella revoluta - Flax lily
Dichondra repens - Kidney weed
Eucalyptus dalrympleana - Mountain gum
Eucalyptus dives - Broad- leaf peppermint
Eucalyptus mannifera - Brittle gum
Exocarpos cupressiformis - Cherry ballart
Glycine tabacina - Love creeper
Gompholobium huegelii - Pale wedge pea
Hakea dactyloides - Finger-leaf Hakea
Hardenbergia violacea - False sarsaparilla
Hibbertia obtusifolia - Grey guinea flower
Hydrocotyle laxiflora - Stinking pennywort
Lomandra longifolia - Spiny-headed matrush
Platylobium formosum - Handsome flat pea
Poa sieberiana - Grey tussock grass
Pteridium esculentum - Bracken fern
Rytidosperma pallidum - Red-anthered wallaby grass
Themeda triandra - Kangaroo grass
Veronica calycina - Speedwell
Viola betonicifolia - Showy violet