



**RAINFOREST
RANGERS**
Restoring Rainforests

IMPACT REPORT

2020-21





**TROPICAL RAINFORESTS
COVER 6.5% OF THE
EARTH'S SURFACE
YET HOLD MORE THAN
HALF OF THE PLANET'S
BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY.**

RAINFOREST RANGERS IS ON A MISSION TO RESTORE THE WORLD'S RAINFORESTS.

We're reforesting parts of Australia and Sumatra, working with local communities in some of the world's most degraded rainforest ecosystems.

As well as providing critical habitat for some of the planet's most important plants and animals, we know that rainforests are also essential in stabilising the world's climate. Rainforests are often called the lungs of the planet for the role they play in absorbing carbon dioxide. They help maintain the water cycle, protect against extreme weather events, and support the livelihoods and connection to Country for First Nations people.

We already know that half the world's forests have been destroyed, but in March, 2021 new research honed in specifically on the world's rainforests. That research found that of the 14.5 million square kilometres of tropical rainforest that once covered the planet, 34% is gone. 30% is in various forms of degradation. Just 36% of the world's rainforests remain intact.

Let's face it, the world needs more trees.

GOAL ONE MILLION TREES BY 2023





THANK YOU

Every tree we've established is a result of everyday people making a commitment to restore the Earth's rainforests – whether cash donations or hands-on planting. We cannot thank our Rainforest Rangers enough for their commitment to rainforest conservation and restoration.

IMPACT



23.8
total hectares regenerated



64,877
total trees established



NINE
project sites



PROJECTS

Rainforest Rangers are active in Australia and Indonesia. The rainforests in these locations are biodiversity hotspots containing ecosystems with the richest and most threatened of the world's biodiversity.

In each location we partner with dedicated and passionate communities and expert organisations to restore what has been lost.

Each project responds to ecological needs and opportunities unique to each ecosystem and community.

BIG SCRUB, NSW, AUSTRALIA

ABOUT THE BIG SCRUB

Clearing of the Big Scrub began in the 1840s by European settlers who had their eyes on its valuable timber species – in particular Red Cedar – and ultimately to open up the land for agriculture and urban development.

Before clearing the Big Scrub was the largest expanse of lowland subtropical rainforest in Australia; covering approximately 75,000 hectares and crammed with an incredible array of species that thrived in the rich volcanic soils of Wollumbin, between Byron Bay, Ballina and Lismore. Today, only 1% of the former rainforest remains in the form of 35 small fragments totalling less than 1000 hectares.

These fragmented remnants are immensely vulnerable to the threat of climate change as the increased size of forest edges lose moisture, which rainforest needs to thrive. Invasive plant and animal species and ongoing degradation are also a threat.

Yet these remnants contain high levels of biodiversity and that means it's crucial for us to protect and restore what's left.

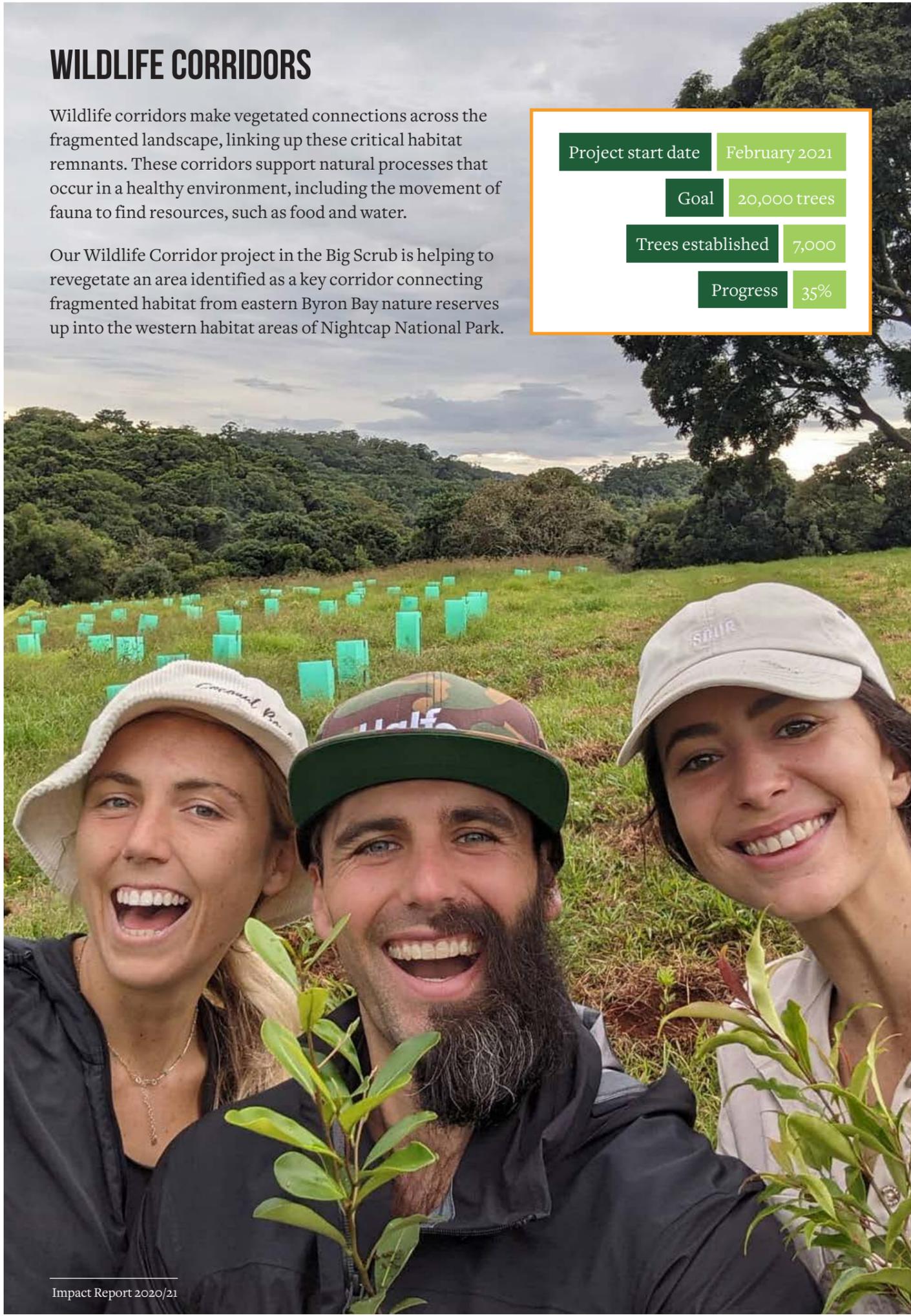
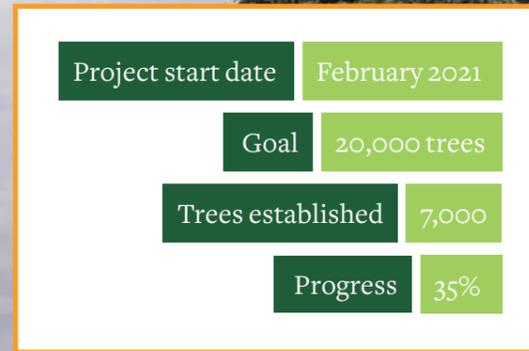
Sadly, the large gaps that exist between remnants also pose a danger for wildlife. They're forced to use paddocks and roads to move between parts of the fragmented landscape and that means any wildlife movement is life-threatening.



WILDLIFE CORRIDORS

Wildlife corridors make vegetated connections across the fragmented landscape, linking up these critical habitat remnants. These corridors support natural processes that occur in a healthy environment, including the movement of fauna to find resources, such as food and water.

Our Wildlife Corridor project in the Big Scrub is helping to revegetate an area identified as a key corridor connecting fragmented habitat from eastern Byron Bay nature reserves up into the western habitat areas of Nightcap National Park.

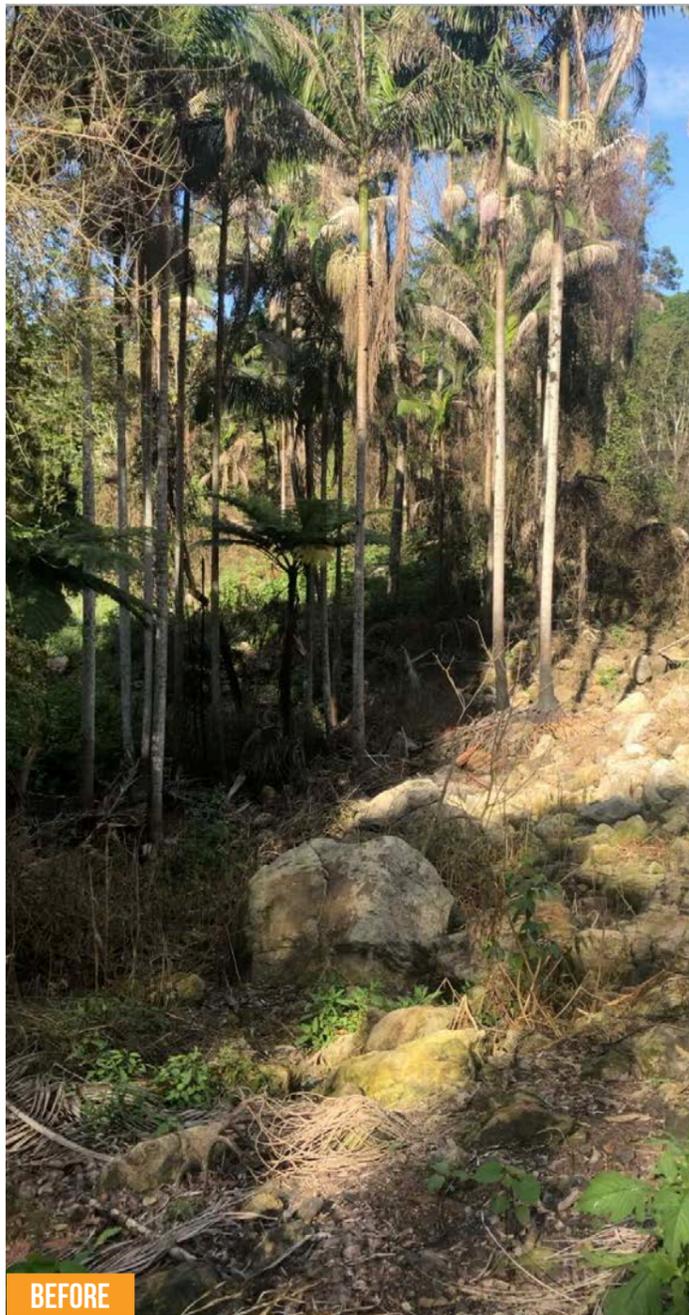


RIPARIAN RECOVERY AND INDIGENOUS BUSHFOODS GALLERY

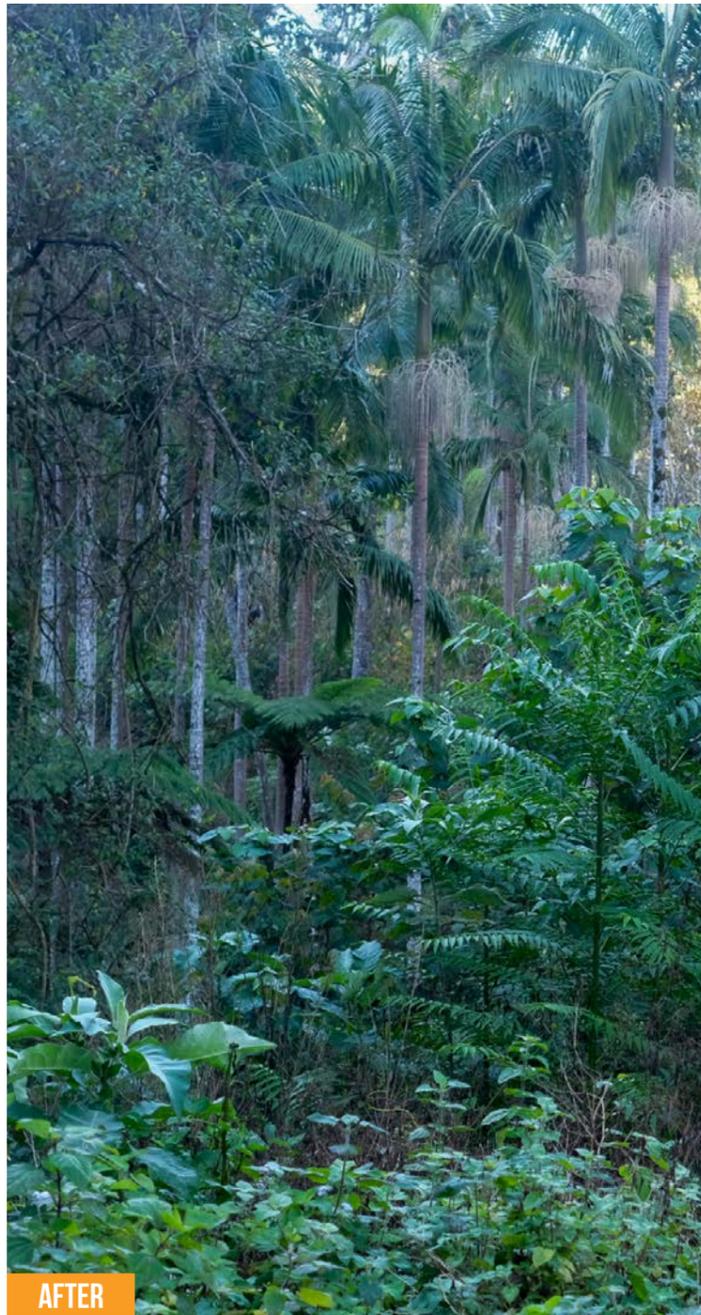
A multi-faceted project in Mullumbimby will restore a degraded waterway into a healthy, flowing creek and plant 3000 trees to create a rainforest tree gallery of significant species including Indigenous bushfoods, culturally significant plants and endangered native trees. The project was launched in February 2021 with a community planting of 300 trees.

Many waterways in the Byron Shire have been degraded through logging and cattle grazing. This project aims to reverse the decline in waterway health, impacting plants and animals as well as landscape amenity, improving water quality and reducing the impacts of invasive species and pollution.





BEFORE



AFTER



BUSHFIRE RECOVERY



This project is focussed across four sites in three locations: two at Huonbrook and one each at Wanganui and Wilsons Creek in Byron Shire. All of these sites were damaged in the devastating 2019-2020 Australian bushfires.

Rainforests experience long-term damage from fire as they do not have the ecological mechanisms to recover like other Australian forests do. That means they need our help to recover. The fires created large gaps in the rainforest. Invasive and fast-growing weed species colonised the sites making it near impossible for native trees to establish themselves as they were outcompeted by weeds.

Rainforest Rangers' Bushfire Recovery Project utilises recognised methods of rainforest restoration including accelerated natural regeneration and matrix-model tree planting to remove these weeds and accelerate the recovery of the rainforest.

Across our four sites, 5000 trees have been planted by expert bush regenerators. In addition to the plantings, each site is monitored quarterly for progress including tree growth rates, signs of new weed species, and signs of animals using the area. Weed removal at each site has encouraged natural regeneration of native tree and shrub species which complements our planting efforts.

1000 trees planted. Many more naturally established. A year ago – planted. Expert ecologist in the area. Project planning. Ecological assessment on site, 18 species have regenerated onsite.

Dr Jo Green is an ecologist working with Rainforest Rangers to assess these four sites and monitor our impact. In June 2021 Dr Green undertook an assessment on the Wanganui site and found that trees planted in April 2020 had grown more than 2 metres in height. In addition, natural regeneration which was able to occur after our weed removal efforts has led to more than 18 species of native trees regenerating on the site.

ATHERTON TABLELANDS, QUEENSLAND

Project start date February 2022

Completion date June 2023

Goal 40,000 trees

WILDLIFE CORRIDORS

The Atherton Tablelands has experienced extensive levels of clearing which has transformed rainforest into savannah yet it is still home to ancient rainforest, cascading waterfalls, crystal clear crater lakes, and critical habitat for Tree Kangaroos and Cassowaries.

It is a highly fragmented landscape with cropping and grazing making up the predominant land use and fragmented pockets of rainforest dotted throughout. Just 41% of the Atherton Tablelands remains uncleared. This creates a significant challenge for wildlife moving between remnants.

Rainforest Rangers are expanding wildlife corridors to ensure connectivity between these critical remnants.

The initial goal of 40,000 trees to increase the size of an existing wildlife corridor will be achieved by June 2023 across 9 hectares. These revegetation works will enhance the connectivity of the wildlife corridor between the Lake Barrine section of Crater Lakes National Park and Donaghy's Corridor Nature Refuge.



GROWING LOCAL SOLUTIONS

As well as getting our hands dirty planting 40,000 trees on the Tablelands we're also partnering with Rainforest Reserves Australia to ensure enough seedlings for ongoing revegetation works. In January 2022, our first batch of 5000 seedlings will be ready for planting.

THE DAINTREE, FAR NORTH QUEENSLAND



The Daintree is one of only two places on the globe where two World Heritage sites exist side-by-side.

In the Daintree, the rainforest meets the sea, supporting an ancient landscape that contains the oldest plants on the planet.

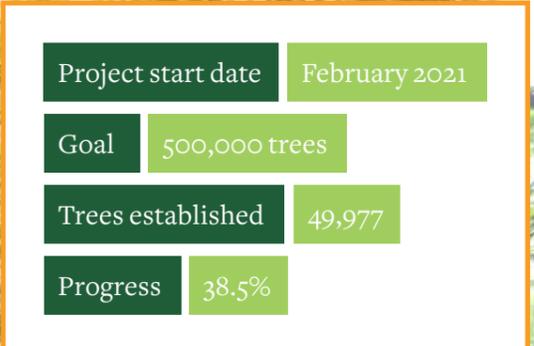
The rainforests of the Daintree represent the largest area of lowland rainforest in Australia, with an area sufficiently large to ensure ongoing evolutionary and ecological processes despite 120 million years of climate and geological change.

Deforestation for rural residential development and cattle farming has severely fragmented this ancient ecosystem leaving gaps in the rainforest canopy and damaging essential habitat for endangered species like the Bennett's Tree-Kangaroo and Southern Cassowary.

Rainforest Rangers are working in the Daintree to close up gaps in the canopy, expand the existing forest, and provide additional food and habitat for the endangered Southern Cassowary. In 2020-2021 our reforestation efforts focussed on Cow Bay.

PHOTOS RIGHT: Before (July 2019) and After (April 2021) of a tree planting site at Cow Bay in the Daintree. Photos: Daintree Life.





SUMATRA

As a part of the Leuser Ecosystem, the Gunung Leuser National Park contains such high biodiversity that in 1984, it was designated an ASEAN Heritage Park. The Tropical Rainforest Heritage of Sumatra was also inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage site in 2004.

It comprises Gunung Leuser as well as Kerinci Seblat National Park and the Bukit Barisan Selatan National Park. Sadly, just seven years after their inclusion as World Heritage sites, they were declared World Heritage in Danger. This listing reflected ongoing threats including encroachment, poaching and illegal logging.

Despite those challenges, the Leuser Ecosystem was named one of the world's most irreplaceable protected areas in 2013. It's the last place on Earth where orangutans, elephants, rhinos and tigers still roam together in the wild.

Our Sumatran restoration project is a three year endeavour that will facilitate half a million trees being established on degraded rainforest land within the lowland rainforest of the Leuser Ecosystem, extending this rainforest by 100 hectares. This will be achieved through the planting of 130,000 trees and the maintenance and care of trees which have self-sown around the planting site.

Throughout the restoration site, Oil Palm trees will be removed from the 100ha site and replaced with native rainforest species. These species bear fruits and provide food and habitat for endangered wildlife.



A key aim of this project is to empower local communities by supporting sustainable livelihoods through employment. To begin this process, a Community Restoration Group was established. The group has built a nursery centre and restoration station on site.

Members of the Community Restoration Group are currently being trained in the production of seedlings and the rehabilitation of degraded forest through tree planting and methods of maintaining planted trees. 130,000 trees will be grown in these nurseries and planted throughout the project duration. Between planting seasons, Oil Palm trees have been removed and will be replaced with native rainforest species in the coming planting season.

OTHER OUTCOMES

- Community Restoration Group formed
- Nursery centre constructed
- Restoration Station established

PARTNERSHIPS



HAILING OUR HALFCUT HEROES

HalfCut are our non-profit partner, seriously raising the bar for getting people engaged in rainforest restoration and conservation. While most of their fundraising efforts are aligned with the HalfCut Challenge (raising awareness about 50% of the Earth's forests disappearing), they also run an annual PSS Challenge.

The PSS Challenge sees people complete push-ups, sit-ups and squats for a month while raising funds to plant trees through our Rainforest Rangers program. In 2020 the organisation and its passionate volunteers raised funds to establish 100,000 trees across Rainforest Rangers projects.



OTHER IMPORTANT PARTNERS

Thank you to Jabalbina Yalanji Aboriginal Corporation, Rainforest Reserves Australia, Daintree Life and Madhima Gulgan Community Association.

We'd also like to acknowledge the contribution of our funding partners:

- WIRES' Landcare Wildlife Relief and Recovery Grant which saw 1000 trees planted and 1.75ha managed for weeds
- Stone and Wood InGrained Foundation's Northern Rivers Large Grant which saw 5 hectares revegetated with 3,600 trees established.



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FOR ALL ENQUIRIES

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