

Community helps out at Noosa North Shore - Phil Moran

Thursday 19th May saw a hardy band of volunteers gathering at the ferry ready to take on some of the weeds causing havoc on Noosa North Shore. Noosa Integrated Catchment Association [NICA] has been successful in securing funding under the Federal Government's Caring for our Country program to treat weeds on a large area down towards the Noosa River mouth. The funding was specifically targeted at Lantana [*Lantana camara* var. *camara*], a Weed of National Significance. There are plenty of other weeds in this area, with Umbrella trees [*Schefflera actinophylla*], Groundsel bush [*Baccharis halimifolia*], Basket asparagus [*Asparagus aethiopicus* cv. *Sprengeri*], Corky passionfruit [*Passiflora suberosa*] and Fishbone fern [*Nephrolepis cordifolia*] featuring prominently! Noosa & District Landcare Group [NDLG] has been doing the contract weeding on the site, commencing from the northern end of the work site.

Our crew found a very heavy infestation of fishbone fern that we thought would benefit from the attention of the volunteer labour force. These people are no strangers to killing weeds, and came prepared. About 18 people turned up, including Dave Burrows from Sunshine Coast Council. After an explanation of the project by Tony Haslam [NICA] and an update of progress to date by Dylan and Joel from NDLG, we all marched off to attack the fishbone fern. It is amazing how much work these good people can get through! And how thorough they are ... Not only do they know how to weed, they really appreciate the importance of this vegetation to the North Shore. Soon mountains of hand-pulled fishbone fern started to appear ... quicker than our guys could collect it. A brief halt was called for a cup of tea/coffee, and back to work. By lunchtime, a once weed-infested area was free of this weed, uncovering many native plants that were struggling to survive under the fern. A sumptuous lunch followed [courtesy of Tony and NICA] where discussion ranged from other weeds to kill (!), to the importance of this area to the Noosa Biosphere. This end of the beach is home to many migratory bird species, as well as some magnificent littoral rainforest on sand. Dave took the group for a brief walk after lunch and pointed out some of the interesting plants surviving in these harsh conditions. It is hoped that with ongoing support from the Sunshine Coast Council and Qld Parks & Wildlife rangers, more work can be done to return this area to its former glory. For the NDLG contract crew, it was an opportunity to kill some weeds in one of the most beautiful and fragile areas of our Biosphere.

Thanks to Tony and the mob at NICA, and to all the volunteers that contributed to such a successful day.