

Overview: The Recreation Road Bushland Reserve is a 7000 m² former railway reserve in Mt Clear. The reserve contains significant remnant forest including grasstrees whilst remnant old pine trees exist along the railway embankment. The site was being crowded out by an infestation of maturing pine trees and pine saplings. The adjacent private land to the east of the site had a similar pine infestation. There is a small creek running through both properties.

The Group: The Friends of Canadian Corridor (FoCC) is a local community group known for the establishment of Woowookarung Regional Park. The FoCC became involved with the site with a proposal for a “Bunny Rail Trail” using the reserve’s former railway embankment.

The Land: The land was bought by the City of Ballarat in 2021 at the request of the FoCC to enable the establishment of a rail trail on the former railway embankment.

Funding: In 2023 the FoCC was awarded a Victorian Landcare Grant of \$6,127 for restoration activities including an ecological report, weed and pine tree removal on the reserve and the adjoining private property and purchase of trees, stakes and guards. Volunteers planted the trees and are conducting follow up monitoring.

Research and Planning: The FoCC identified the site as worthy of habitat restoration. Using the CCMA NRM online portal, three Floristic Mapping Units zones were identified. The map top right shows the 3 zones.

1. Green – 23753 Colluvium transitional Plains Damp Forest
2. Purple - 23757 – Colluvium Foothill Damp Plains Heathy Forest
3. Light blue – 25499 Lancefieldian Damp Forest

An ecological study was undertaken to identify and determine what native vegetation still existed on site. The report including a plant list and a planting guide for the site using the “[Floristic Map Units](#)” (FMU) native plants description for use with the ecological study.

Restoration activities: During 2023 and 2024 as follows:

- Students from a nearby school removed thousands of pine saplings.
- Medium sized pine trees were removed by FoCC volunteers.
- The City of Ballarat and a private contractor removed the very large pine trees.
- The original pine trees beside the railway embankment have been left where they form part of the rail trail ambience.
- Plants were ordered early from the City of Ballarat Community nursery in accordance with the ecological report and FMU lists.
- In September 2023 students planted 300 grasses and shrubs in the reserve
- Blackberry and the pine trees on private property were removed by contractors during early 2024.
- On July 21st 2024 FoCC volunteers planted 800 trees shrubs and grasses on the reserve and the private land.

Outcome: The remnant Bushland Reserve is now mostly clear of pine trees. The existing remnant native plants are recovering with additional growth being evident in addition to the 800 planted thriving trees, shrubs and grasses.

Habitat Restoration Guide: This project was undertaken primarily by the Friends of Canadian Corridor using the **Natural Resources Conservation Trust** and the **Bunanyung Landscape Alliance** Habitat Restoration Guide to guide the project. <https://bunanyunglandscapealliance.org/habitat-restoration-guide/>



Recreation Rd Bushland Reserve Mt Clear



Pine tree infestation 2023



Volunteers removing pine tree saplings