

FIDO Volunteers

Report on Maintenance on George Haddock Track

Easter Weekend 2017



The team celebrating at Lake Allom at the end of a successful day's work

It had been twelve months since our last maintenance work on the George Haddock Track and we were anxious to fulfil our undertaking to the QPWS in 2013 that FIDO would maintain the work we had begun for five years after the track was opened. Since Easter 2016 FIDO had carried out repair work on the Kubota tractor and improved our Delver implement design and obtained a new battery. However all of these had to be tried together to see if our main aid would work.

In response to our muted "Call for Volunteers" we ended up with sixteen volunteers with 12 adults and four minors. Nine had participated in previous working bees on the George Haddock Track: Participants were John Sinclair, Su Dawson, John Cruikshank and Chris, Paula and Finn Breitenbach Daniel and Elice Garcia from Brisbane , Roger Williams from Sunshine Coast, Mary Sullivan, Andrew Hoberg , Frankie Sullivan Woods , Max Sullivan Hoberg from Peachester and Bob Irene, and Eva Brockhill from Ballina,

In 2014 FIDO and NPAQ teams opened up several kilometres of the George Haddock Track. Prior to the QPWS providing a \$25,000 Friends of Parks grant to carry out this work and repair the Barracks and sheds at Lake Allom, FIDO gave an undertaking to the QPWS that it would maintain these tracks and improvements for five years from the completion of the work.

The sections that were cleared during 2014 with assistance from the Friends of Parks grant that were maintained in this program were:

The PMG Section between Lake Garawongera & Moon Point Road	.27
The Old Lake Coomboo Section to the top of the Hill.	2.2
From Woralie Road(M18) south	.9
Dump Road	.5
The Bowarrady track to the Awinya Road although 2 kms of this At the Awinya Road end needs further work	4.7
<u>Length of Track maintained</u>	<u>10.6</u>

They were cleared of fallen timber, forest litter and regrowth. FIDO has a small Kubota Tractor and a new delver implement at Lake Allom to assist in this task. A puncture in a tractor tyre and the limited time meant that not all of the tracks could be run over with the delver but where the delver has been used the results are very impressive.

Other parts of the George Haddock Track are used for management	
Great Walk south from Lake Garawongera ,	.3
Forest walk Passing Hidden Lake and Lake Coomboo	9.0
Firebreak between Awinya Road and mouth of Bowarrady Creek	4.2
	<u>13.5</u>

About half of the proposed track remains unresolved or inaccessible and can't be worked on without Native Title approval

During the weekend other vital maintenance work was done clearing the ground surrounding the barracks and clearing the gutters as well as checking on the condition of the buildings generally.

Thursday 13th April Brisbane to Lake Allom

Half the group left Brisbane at 7.30. There was no queue at the ferry and the beach right for driving so we stopped at Eurong for Lunch and to pick up some equipment before arriving at Harold Charles Barracks 3.00 pm
A new battery was fitted to the Kubota tractor and the carryall was detached before fitting sand and adjust the Delver that had never been previously tried on 3-point linkage. It was a smooth efficient transition and we were able to drive down to the M18 on Woralie track and field-tested it. It worked well so we left the tractor *in situ* to continue in the morning. Back at the Barracks our numbers had grown to 13 with the arrival of the Peachester Crew.

Good Friday 14th The Bowarrady Section

Andrew and John C set off early to work on the tractor to see how far they could go along with the tractor before they ran out of cleared track. Su and Paula were charged with staying at the Barracks for security and also to purge the regrowth from the area cleared last year. The remainder of the team except for Su and set out to clear the Dump road coming from both ends. They then proceeded north along the Bowarrady Track.

F.L, checked on the tractor crew. They had run out of defined track and were returning so they went to work on the Dump Road while the manual workers

cleared the way through to the Bowarrady Track. It had been anticipated that there would be few obstacles before reaching the Telstra Tower turn-off because of use by management. It was an incorrect assumption because the length of the road was littered with fallen timber. After finally reaching the lake and having lunch half the group and tractor returned to Harold Charles Barracks while four others continued towards the Awinya Road. There is still some clearing work to be done from the Awinya Road into the Scrub but it is generally clear.



Clearing one of the many tree-falls across the Bowarrady Track

On the return to camp it was noted that the firebreak from the Bowarrady Bridge (M19) to the beach had been freshly graded. That section of the George Haddock Track had been foreshadowed for clearing but that now won't be necessary.

Back at camp the Ballina trio had arrived and set up camp

Su with Finn and Paula stayed behind at the Harold Charles Barracks meticulously cleaning up the immediate environs of emergent suckers and regrowth,

Working around the Barracks was a less glamorous task that Su and Paula were committed to for the duration of the weekend but at the end of the weekend we were much closer to have eradicated all sucker growth in the Barracks precinct and now just need to focus on seedlings. Some of the wildings that might have otherwise been destroyed were potted up. At the end of the weekend about 30 pots of wildings including Midyim, *Lomandra longifolia*, *Myoporum*, foxtail and *Monotoca*. were delivered to the QPWS Eurong nursery for growing on and using in bush regeneration programs.



The before and after the Tractor and delver had passed

Easter Saturday 15th April The Old Coomboo Section

The Tractor set off early along the closed section of the Northern Road to link up with the other workers at Coomboo Barracks. It cleared the dodgy bridge over Woralie Creek that caused that section of the Northern Road to be closed, but alas just after, it had a puncture and that changed to strategy for the day and for the rest of the weekend.

Meanwhile the rest of the party were busy manually clearing the wallum – heath section around to the north of Coomboo Lake to the top of the hill which is as far as had been previously cleared. After clearing the steep hill the group returned to the Coomboo Barracks for lunch. Then half went home returned to camp bouncing on the long Bullock Road detour.

The other six had to assess what could be done about the tractor. The Tractor team though first checked state of the Forest Walk to see what if any work had been done in the last 12 months. It appears that nothing has been done but the track is walkable. We were later assured by QPWS at Dundubara that it was on the agenda.

The self- sacrificing six then proceeded to see what could be done with the tractor. The wheel was removed and taken to Happy Valley via Yidney Scrub in the hope that it could be repaired there. It couldn't, but fortuitously one generous person provided a tyre repair kit. However we had no means of opening up the tyre. A phone-call to Dundubara QPWS solved that and it was here that the repair kit proved invaluable. With the tyre fixed and fresh ice the six reached Harold Charles Barracks on the very last of the light.

Easter Sunday 16th April

The Telecom Section— Lake Garawongera

Because of time constraints it was impractical to drive the tractor to the furthest point of the George Haddock Track. The group then resolved that six would travel to Lake Garawongera via the Ocean beach and start work from the eastern end of the Telecom track heading west while the other six would first make the tractor mobile before working their way eastwards along the Telecom Track from the M15 (Big Scribbly Gum) towards the other group.

The tractor was fixed and both teams went to work but they never met on the track because one group worked on clearing the Great Walk before realizing their error and returning to the Telecom track. It was an honest mistake. However everyone met up at Lake Garawongera for lunch before returning to camp. The trip from the beach to Lake Allom was not without obstacles as we met at least 25 on-coming vehicles with 15 in one of the convoys.

Easter Monday 17th April

The Telecom Section— Lake Garawongera

The Ballina group had a very early start to catch the morning low tide. While the Peachester group was also heading home they were planning on the afternoon low tide. When the Peachester group had decamped we headed off to complete the work on the Telecom track. It now looks so impressive as a through walk and next year should be able to be maintained with just the tractor sweeping over it. With farewells said the Peachester party progressed to the ferry while the Brisbane mob returned to lonelier barracks to prepare for their departure.



Working on the diary at the Harold Charles Barracks