

Rous Water Rainforest Reserve

explore the rainforest reserve ...

info sheet 13



There are four beautiful walks that you can do from the Picnic Area at Rocky Creek Dam. They are designed so that you can experience different aspects of the Rainforest Reserve which is managed by Rous Water.

For each of these walks, just follow the symbols and arrows on the post. Follow *Magill* along the Water Dragon Walk. *Djanbung* will lead you

through the Platypus Walk and *Gadjul* will take you on the Scrub Turkey Track. [These names for the creatures are in Wi-abul, the language of the Widjabul custodians of this land.]

Please note: you can walk across the spillway of the dam (a large area of gently sloping concrete on the other side of the dam wall) unless the dam is full and water is flowing over it.



There are four beautiful walks that you can do from the Picnic Area at Rocky Creek Dam...



Water Dragon Walk *Magill Gurahr* (1.2km return, approx. 20 minutes, easy).

Walk near the water's edge, across the **dam wall**, up the hill to the lookout to view the spillway (a big area of concrete where the water flows over when the dam is full) and back.



Count how many water dragons and whip-snakes you see on the dam wall. They like to bask in the sun to warm up. Don't touch them!



Platypus Walk *Djanbung Gurahr* (1.5km, approx. 30 minutes, easy).

Walk through patches of forest, across the pontoon bridge over **Rocky Creek**, along the elevated boardwalk beside the creek, through grassy glades, and back across the dam wall.



You may see platypus in the creek on this walk, if you are very quiet and still. How would you feel if you saw one?



Cedar Walk *Junbang Gurahr* (2.3km, approx. 50 minutes, easy, but could involve getting your feet wet!)

This longer walk takes you towards the edges of the Rous Water Rainforest Reserve, through patches of forest, and into areas of **rainforest regeneration** being conducted by Rous Water. You will see forest at different stages of regeneration, cross Rocky Creek, the spillway and the dam wall, as well as visit a small plantation of cabinet timbers.

When the dam was constructed in 1952, the land that is now the Rainforest Reserve was a dairy farm. Even in 1983, when the rainforest regeneration program began, the land on this side of the spillway was clear pasture with a few scattered trees. Rainforest trees were initially planted in circular beds around the existing trees. As the regeneration program continued, it was discovered that, if cleared of competing species (eg, kikuyu grass, lantana), seeds already in the soil or dispersed by birds and bats would naturally regenerate, reducing the need for planting.

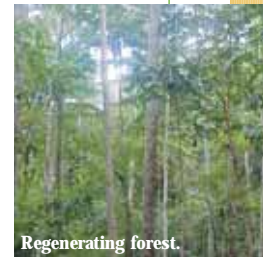
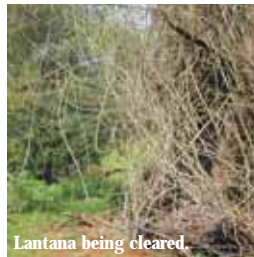
When the regeneration program began, the land on the other side of the spillway was covered in lantana and a mixture of exotic trees (eg Camphor Laurel) and natural rainforest regrowth. In this area, no new trees have been planted. It is all 'seedbank restoration' where exotic species have been progressively cleared and rainforest species have grown by themselves.



As you walk around this track, try to imagine what it was like twenty years ago!



Ralph Woodford of Rous Water, who has done most of the regeneration work here at Rocky Creek Dam, said "Restoration is a healing of the land as well as a healing of the people involved in the process." Feel into this statement as you walk around the track.



Scrub Turkey Walk *Gadjul Gurahr* (6km return, 1.5 to 2 hours return from the carpark to Catchment Loop Drive, medium difficulty). [This track is sometimes called the Northern Boundary Trail or the Big Scrub Rainforest Track.]

Walk through the Rainforest Reserve along any of the walks to the Cedar Walk on the other side of Rocky Creek, and find the start of the *Scrub Turkey Walk*. It will take you into the mature **Big Scrub rainforest** of the Nightcap National Park, to the Catchment Loop Drive, and back across the spillway and dam wall.

Along the Scrub Turkey Walk, you will experience tall regrowth Flooded Gum (*Eucalyptus grandis*) and Tallowwood (*Eucalyptus microcorys*) forest, magnificent 'old growth' eucalypt forest, and the lowland subtropical rainforest of the Big Scrub.



As you walk from the picnic area deeper into the forested areas, see if you can notice how the atmosphere changes. Feel this with all your senses. How does the temperature change? And the light? See if you can sense how the humidity changes as well. [Hint: You will probably notice the biggest shifts at the 'edges' between the open picnic area, the forested regeneration area, the mature rainforest, and then the eucalypt area.]



As you walk around this track, remember that this rainforest is what most of the green pastured hills of Northern Rivers region used to be covered in. Try to imagine what that would have been like. If you live in this region, imagine what the land on which your house is built looked like and felt like 250 years ago. Who and what lived there? Compare that to what and who lives there now.

(Sources: Ralph Woodford (2000) Converting a diary farm back to a rainforest water catchment; Rob Kooyman (2003b) Discover the Rocky Creek Dam Catchment.)

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These information sheets were prepared for Rous Water by Sustainable Futures Australia in liaison with Wadjabul elders. © Rous Water & Sustainable Futures Australia, 2004. This is an educational project for the protection of water and land, and for reconciliation.

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