

## Information Sheet

# Byron Wildlife Corridors System

## Wildlife Corridors and You

If your house or farm is in a wildlife corridor, this doesn't mean you have to change your land use. But knowing that you're in a corridor may help you make better decisions about helping wildlife on your property. Consider the following examples.

- If you live in a **suburban wildlife corridor**, you may want to plant some native shrubs or install a bird nesting box or water source to help improve habitat in your part of the corridor.
- If you're a **farmer, or a larger landholder**, being in a corridor may help you get funding from Council or another community group to fence off a creek, plant native shade trees, or manage environmental weeds.

The corridor map will not affect permitted land use activities in existing land use zones. For example, if a corridor goes across rural land, rural land use activities permitted in Council's planning scheme known as the Local Environment Plan (LEP) are still permitted. If a corridor goes over a vacant block in a residential area, you are still allowed to build a house on that block, in accordance with relevant planning requirements.

This system will help guide Council, and groups like Brunswick Valley Landcare, on where to restore habitat to maximise benefits to native wildlife. Referring to the corridor mapping in grant applications will help us get funding for projects like habitat restoration, weed management and regenerative agriculture, because it demonstrates that we are looking strategically at ways to maximise environmental benefits in our landscape.

We hope the corridor system will also help people to see where they fit in the natural landscape and help take steps towards improving this environment for the unique array of plants and animals that we share it with.

## Development Assessment and Wildlife Corridors

The Wildlife Corridor map is not a LEP overlay map, and the Wildlife Corridor System will not restrict existing land uses defined in the LEP. However, wildlife corridors are an ecologically significant feature, under [Byron Shire Development Control \(DCP\) Plan 2014 - Chapter B1 Biodiversity](#).

'Ecologically significant features' also known as red flags, are areas of high environmental value with features that improve ecological connectivity and resilience to climate change. These include threatened ecological communities, over-cleared vegetation types, old growth forests, wetlands, areas containing threatened species, koala habitat, all waterways, flying fox camps, raptor nests, very large or

hollow-bearing trees and wildlife corridors. Council's DCP requires development setbacks to these features to adequately protect and or managed their long-term ecological viability.

As part of the development of a wildlife corridor system, Council is considering some amendments to the Biodiversity DCP to ensure that the DCP reflects the new corridor map, rather than the current wildlife corridor definition in the DCP. Because wildlife corridors cross different land use zones, it is necessary to amend the DCP to clearly show the different management intent for corridors in areas of native vegetation compared with those in agricultural and high-density land use zones. It is proposed to amend the DCP to provide different setbacks for cleared and vegetated parts of wildlife corridors, as follows.

- 20 metre ecological setback to native vegetation within a wildlife corridor.
- No setback to cleared areas within a wildlife corridor (e.g. cleared farm paddocks).
- No setback to native vegetation within a wildlife corridor that is in Land Zones:
  - R1 General Residential
  - R2 Low Density Residential
  - R3 Medium Density Residential
  - B1 Neighbourhood Centre
  - B2 Local Centre
  - IN1 General Industry
  - IN2 Light Industry

For development applications in these land zones, proponents should demonstrate how they are avoiding and minimising impacts on corridor function through

- avoiding development in these areas where other suitable options occur and
- demonstrating steps taken to protect and enhance connectivity (e.g. through using fauna-friendly fencing, installing nest boxes, planting native species, restoring riparian areas).

The proposed DCP amendments will be formally open for comments after Council considers the feedback received on the Wildlife Corridors System. This is to allow for any amendments to what is being proposed and to provide further opportunity for community comment

## Farms and Wildlife Corridors

The corridor map will not affect farmers' ability to carry out permitted land use activities in rural land use zones. For example, if a corridor goes across rural land (land zones RU1 Primary Production and RU2 Rural Landscape), land managers can continue to carry out rural land use activities that are permitted in these zones under Council's Local Environment Plan.

Farm construction activities that require development approval, such as building a secondary dwelling, will trigger Council's Biodiversity DCP if the site is within a corridor.

Planting trees to restore native wildlife habitat on farmland can help improve agricultural productivity by

- slowing water flow (reducing flooding and soil erosion),

- creating localised cooling and shade for livestock,
- attracting pollinators, and
- attracting native animals that help with pest control.

If you are considering restoring some habitat on your property, you can use the interactive wildlife corridor map to help decide the best place to do this. Even planting a few native trees for wildlife to use as stepping-stones to cross a cleared paddock can help. To find out more on what to plant where, or grants that may be available, visit our [Restoring wildlife habitat webpage](#) or contact Councils Biodiversity Team.

Introducing regenerative agriculture practices to your farm can create huge benefits for native wildlife, as well as making your farm more productive and resilient. To learn more about transitioning to regenerative agriculture, visit our [Agriculture webpage](#), where you can book a free onsite farm consultation and sign up to the Byron Farmers Network.

## Help protect our Wildlife Corridors

Where possible the corridors go across the best areas of native wildlife habitat. Because this habitat is fragmented, corridors will also cross some cleared farmland and even built-up areas. Many species can still move across cleared areas, as long as they have 'stepping-stones' of habitat to move between. This could be as simple as a few trees spread across a paddock, or clumps of low shrubs in an open lawn.



You can restore and create wildlife habitat in your garden, big or small. Even one tree or shrub can make a difference. See our [Restoring wildlife habitat](#) web page to learn more.

[Brunswick Valley Landcare's native planting guides](#) also provide excellent detailed advice on garden design, what to plant where, and how to create wildlife habitat. These free resources are available for download on their website, or by collection from Council's Administration Building in Mullumbimby.

If you're a farmer, using regenerative agriculture practices can help our wildlife and improve your farms productivity. To find out more visit [Agriculture - Byron Shire Council \(nsw.gov.au\)](https://www.byron.nsw.gov.au/agriculture)

Even if you don't live in a wildlife corridor, you can help by taking extra care when driving through them. Slowing down on the roads, particularly at night, helps protect koalas, quolls, wallabies, and other native animals from ending up as roadkill.

Or get involved with a community conservation group and help restore wildlife habitat. A great starting point is [Brunswick Valley Landcare's conserving and restoring from forest to foreshore web page.](#)

## Bushfire and Wildlife Corridors

While many native Australian trees are flammable, it is important to remember that even small native forests cool the landscape and increase soil moisture, which ultimately reduces the risk of extreme fire weather. However, if you're thinking of planting native vegetation on your property, it is important to plan carefully, to avoid increasing your bushfire risk, such as:

- Keeping a good setback between infrastructure and new plantings. Plan your planting with space for a fire break and, if there are existing fire trails on your property, maintain them clear for access.
- Managing fuel loads - remove loose bark, dead branches, and dry leaf litter around your home in dry periods and avoid flammable mulch.
- Spacing your vegetation to minimise risk of fire spreading. Plant with gaps between trees or clumps of trees, and plant low shrubs or ground covers under trees to separate foliage from the ground layer.
- Planting a shelter belt of fire-retardant species between your house and native bushland can reduce radiant heat and catch embers to slow the travel of a fire.

[The Brunswick Valley Landcare Climate Resilient Landscapes guide](#) provides some great garden design tips, and a list of plants that are suitable for fire prone areas.

## More information

- See our Wildlife Corridors Project Your Say page on our website: [www.byron.nsw.gov.au/Your-Say-Byron-Shire/Byron-Wildlife-Corridor-System](https://www.byron.nsw.gov.au/Your-Say-Byron-Shire/Byron-Wildlife-Corridor-System)
- Call Council on 02 6626 7000 to talk to our Biodiversity Team.
- Email our Biodiversity Team at [biodiveristy@byron.nsw.gov.au](mailto:biodiveristy@byron.nsw.gov.au)