



Dear Rebecca,

Thank you for your enquiry about Mullions Range State Forest (MRSF) areas for flora conservation, and the opportunity for this Society to comment.

You are right in indicating that members of the Society had considerable early involvement in these areas and their conservation.

Unfortunately most of the people involved then have moved on or passed on and therefore, in all likelihood, the sightings you mentioned of three endangered/vulnerable animals can not be verified; furthermore there are no records currently held in our archives that could support the veracity of those observations.

Better known, however, are records for the flora in the areas mentioned and the adjoining/surrounding land, so the Society is able to make some informed comments.

- As stated, *Acacia meiantha* is listed as a ROTAP species. It has a coding 2RCi This infers it has restricted geographic range of < 100 km [2], is Rare [R] , at least one population of the taxon occurs in a proclaimed conservation area [C] and with < 1000 plants known [i] .
We consider at least the 'C' status is inaccurate as only two populations of this species are known; one near Clarence and this is not in a conservation reserve, nor is the Mullions Range population. The species has never been recorded for Bosches Creek Flora Reserve (BCFR) and has very limited distribution in the Mullions Range Flora Preserve (MRFP).
Its main occurrence in MRSF is in areas under plantation pine west of BCFR along the ridges and trails surrounding Black Mountain Road and in the area of woodland immediately north of what is known as the 'Bosches Creek picnic grounds'.
- There is another ROTAP species in MRSF, *Eucalyptus robertsonii* subsp. *hemisphaerica* which is not mentioned in your correspondence. It has a coding 2V. Like *A. meiantha* it is endemic to the Central Tablelands, with 3 disjunct populations know. The population in MRSF is scattered with some plants along the periphery of the south-western boundary of the MRFP, and it occurs sporadically through the native forest through to BCFR but, to our knowledge, does not occur within that reserve.
- Attention is also drawn to several plant species that occur in the native forests within MRSF that represent important range limits.

Within the northern most areas (to the north/north-west of BCFR) there are occurrences of *Eucalyptus sparsifolia* (Narrow-leaved Stringybark) and *Macrozamia*

secunda. Likewise, around the swampy headwaters of Bosches Creek (within the native forest) are the only known local occurrences of *Persoonia chamaepeuce* (Dwarf Geebung) and *Thelymitra circumspecta* (Naked Sun Orchid). Other such species include *Boronia microphylla*, *Bossiaea foliosa*, *Philotheca salsolifolia* subsp. *salisifolia*, *Omphacomeria acerba*, *Hibbertia vestita* and *Leptomeria drupacea*. There are also a number of fern species known for the forest that don't occur elsewhere locally, even in the adjoining State Conservation Area to its east.

These are all outlying/disjunct plant populations representing unique gene pools that are highly worthy of conservation.

This Society therefore submits that, because the two ROTAP species occurring in the MRSF are either not or poorly represented with the BCFR or MRFP, the WHOLE of the remaining 'native forests' (on the eastern side of plantation pines from Lookout Road in the south through to the northern forest boundary beyond BCFR) should be dedicated to flora conservation. This is a contiguous area of remnant native vegetation that has locally unique plant compositional diversity and which this Society strongly advocates has highly significant value for preservation of biological diversity in the high altitude western bounds of the Central Tablelands.

Should you require any further information or clarification of the matters raised do not hesitate to contact the Society. It is hoped you find the information constructive - your response regarding conservation of the greater area would be appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

ANG Smith
Secretary
12th August 2011