



Continuous Rainforest to
Southern Atherton Tablelands

Cassy (visitor)

"In theory, I could walk from the tallest mountain in Queensland to the beachfront at Mission Beach through continuous rainforest."

Valerie (Smiths Gap resident)

"There are quolls, wallabies, pademelons, echidnas, bandicoots, marsupial rats, snakes, lizards, all the butterflies. A friend even saw platypus in the creek. It's a heaven for wildlife. And don't forget the cassowaries!"

Tony (ecologist)

"We can't afford to lose Smiths Gap. If we did, we'd isolate Australia's second largest patch of lowland rainforest at Mission Beach from the core Wet Tropics World Heritage Area."

Lyn (Nature Refuge owner)

"Our wildlife includes cassowaries, goannas, saw-shelled tortoises, water dragons, all the different varieties of fruit-eating pigeons and doves, snakes, bandicoots, wallabies and frogs. We use nets to protect our fruit trees from bats and parrots."

Peter (farmer)

"The forest provides a good diversity of insect pollinators for crops, especially tropical fruits. An amazing amounts of birds use the range as a flight path, especially at night."

Adrian (birdwatcher)

"Noisy Pittas, Chowchillas, Topknot and White-headed Pigeons and Tooth-billed Catbirds are amongst the array of high country rainforest bird species that move to warmer Mission Beach during winter via the rainforest corridor."

Leonard (Traditional Owner)

"It's an important linkage to keep for wildlife because everything else has been cut off by clearing. It links up the mountain areas on the coast at Mission Beach to the Tablelands."

Legend

 Rainforest

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Walter Hill Range

- The Walter Hill Range supports Australia's longest and widest east-west rainforest corridor.
- It provides continuous rainforest from the coastal lowlands at Mission Beach up to the southern Atherton Tablelands at Ravenshoe.
- The corridor allows rainforest species to move on a daily, seasonal or longer basis, including helping offspring find their own habitat.
- Because it's a big corridor, it's more resilient to cyclones, weeds and other disturbances, especially if we keep the corridor intact and reconnect fragmented parts.
- The corridor will become more important if the climate becomes hotter or drier, allowing lowland species to move to cooler or wetter climates on the eastern Atherton Tablelands.
- Much of the corridor is protected as National Park. However some of the corridor is on private land, particularly in the Friday Pocket/East Feluga/Smiths Gap area. It's to the credit of these landholders that the corridor is still relatively intact.

Smiths Gap

Smiths Gap (or Maadi) is a valley in the Walter Hill Range corridor, so there are lots of creeks there, which is great for wildlife moving through. But the gentler topography also means more roads and other developments have fragmented the corridor. However, if all stakeholders work together, we can find solutions to maintain and enhance the rainforest connectivity at Smiths Gap and therefore the wider corridor.

With Australian and Queensland Government support, Terrain NRM is assisting C4 to work with Smiths Gap landholders to control weeds and revegetate priority areas. The Main Roads department are also aware of the importance of considering cassowaries and other wildlife in future highway work in the Smiths Gap area.



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Image: Five year old Cassy from Smiths Gap is looking forward to less weeds and more habitat. (Valerie Boll)