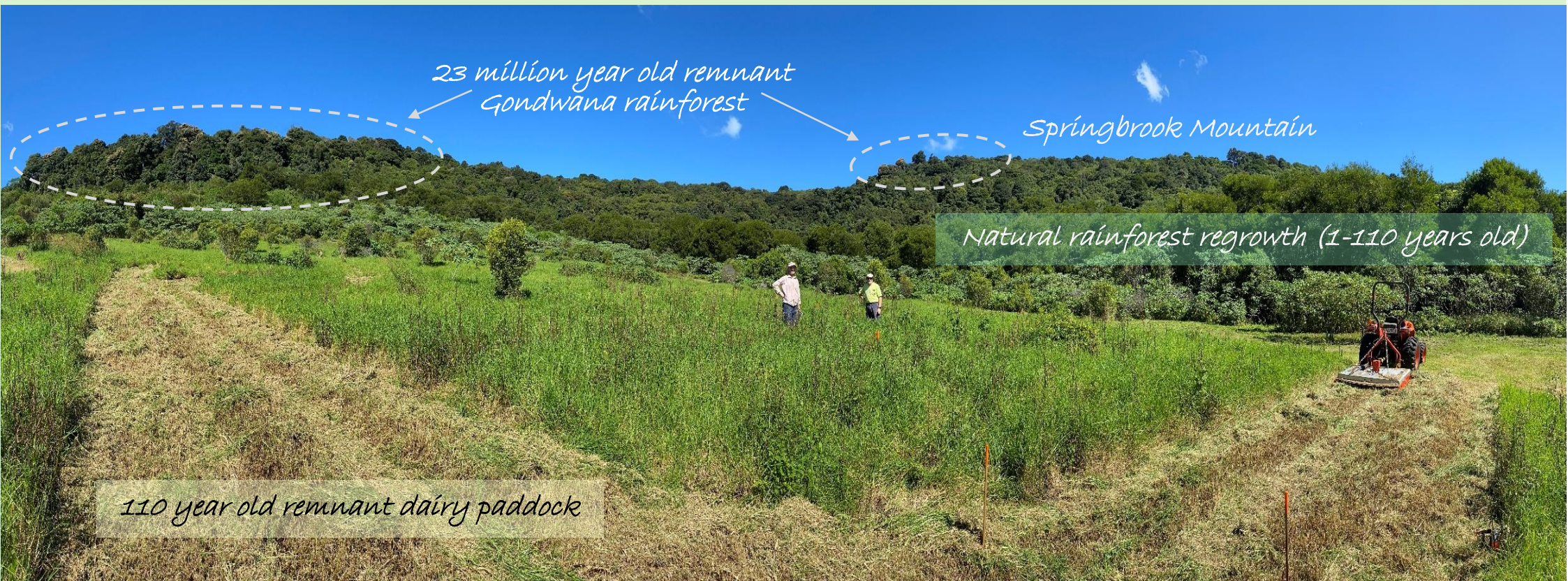




# *from* **GRASS TO GONDWANA**

## THE GREAT SPRINGBROOK RAINFOREST RESTORATION COMPETITION



**Commencing  
5-6 September 2026**

**Preliminary Expressions of Interest  
close 14 August 2026 – Apply early!**

**INFORMATION FOR ENTRANTS**

## What is 'from Grass to Gondwana'?

- Possibly the world's first rainforest restoration competition (certainly Australia or Queensland).
- Accelerating the regeneration of crucial temperate and subtropical rainforest at Springbrook National Park (Burrigun) in the Gold Coast hinterland.
- Surrounded by the [Gondwana Rainforests of Australia](#) World Heritage Area, on the high northern flank of the 23 million-year-old Wollumbin/Mt Warning shield volcano caldera.
- A unique opportunity to help set 100+ year old dairy paddocks on their journey back to unique, special and complex Gondwana rainforest and cloudforest.
- A 2-year competition for a number of selected community/industry-based volunteer teams with capability in bush regeneration, plus opportunity for ongoing follow-up and involvement on additional sites.

## Who can enter?

- Any community, industry, corporate or self-organised group, with 2 adult coordinators and minimum of 5 and maximum 10 members working on site at any one time.
- [Preliminary expressions of interest close Friday 14 August 2026 here](#) – apply early!
- Participating teams (approx 6) will be selected to join the competition, based on confirmed capability and commitment, in response to final expressions of interest closing **30 September 2026**.
- All interested groups should attend the **Information Weekend** on 5-6 August 2026, to find out more (you can do this without committing, but if you think you may want to enter, your group definitely needs to be represented at this weekend).
- No entry fee, free accommodation, but travel and food costs to be covered by teams or their sponsors.

**Local to Springbrook or don't have time to join a full team?** You can also get involved with **Springbrook Weed Busters** and support the competition by helping work on a *demonstration plot* in a more relaxed way! Just email <Springbrookweedbusters@outlook.com>

## What's the time commitment?

- Eight (8) weekends over a two-year period, starting with an **Information Weekend** on **5-6 September 2026**.
- Equal site access for all teams on the following **working weekends** (rain, hail, cloud or shine!):
  - 21-22 November 2026
  - 20-21 February 2027
  - 15-16 May 2027
  - 21-22 August 2027
  - 29-31 November 2027
  - 19-20 February 2028
  - 20-21 May 2028
- No other time commitment is required, nor is any extra work time permitted - it's a competition!
- Team coordinators will be responsible for organising their team members, arranging transport, and participating in additional online updates and briefings.

## What work is involved?

- Each team takes on responsibility for regenerating an equal number of allocated 100 square metre plots (20m by 5m) of pure, 100 year old pasture grass (kikuyu and setaria).
- Teams get an equal start but develop, submit and follow their own restoration plan.
- Planting and maintenance of locally germinated native tree species (all provided – no off-mountain seeds, seedlings, mulch etc allowed).
- On-site identification, protection and encouragement of self-sown native species.
- On-site identification and hand removal of weeds, introduced grasses and other invasives.
- Other interventions as per your restoration plan. Creativity and innovation encouraged!
- Non-residual herbicide use may be included and proposed, but where approved, will be administered by the ARCS ground team.
- Any fertiliser use will similarly be subject to prior approval as part of your restoration plan.
- Minimal work tools needed (mostly just gloves and weeding tools); no machinery allowed.

## Where is the competition site?

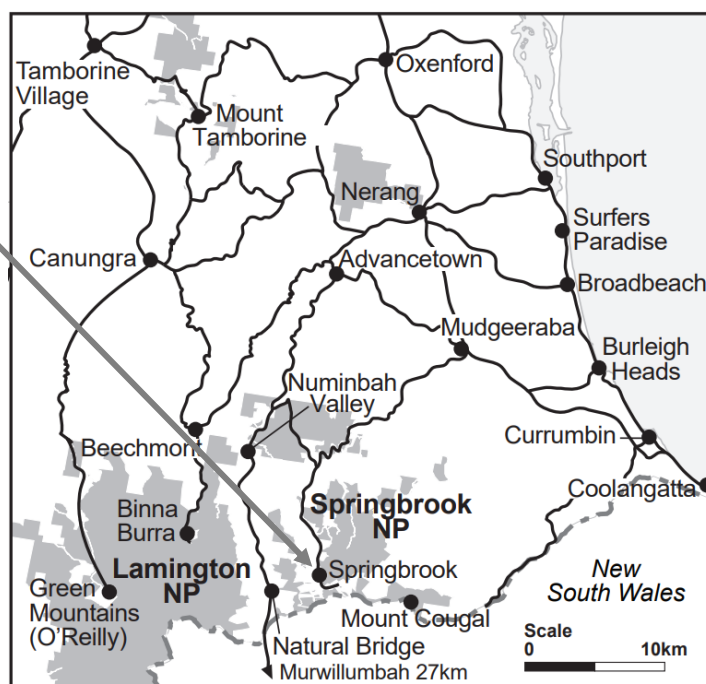


### **Competition Site: Springbrook National Park**

**Above: Aerial view of Upper Springbrook Mountain, looking south to Wollumbin / Mt Warning, 2021**

Almost all the area shown, voluntarily acquired since 2006 by the Queensland Government for addition to Springbrook National Park, has been regenerating from paddock back to rainforest under ARCS' Springbrook Rainforest Restoration Project.

**Cover photo:** ARCS Technical/Judging Panel members Dr Clyde Wild (chair) & Ben Kober (Numinbah Valley Environmental Education Centre) at the competition site, April 2026



## What is the Springbrook Rainforest Restoration Project?

The remnant and recovering rainforests and cloudforests of **Springbrook Mountain** (Burrigan) are a globally significant hotspot, and refugium, for ancient biodiversity, geological history and climate adaptation – as well as a place of deep significance for its traditional custodians, and for nature-based tourism, environmental education, and water sustainability for Australia's fastest growing and 6<sup>th</sup> largest city, as well as peoples beyond.

Added to the **Gondwana Rainforests of Australia World Heritage Area** in 1994, this unique forest 'island in the sky' is the second wettest location on mainland Australia, recording the highest rainfall south of the Wet Tropics rainforests – home to a higher concentration of endemic tree, plant and animal species than perhaps any other location in Australia, from the recently discovered *Syzigium nebulosm* (cloud lilly pillly) to the iconic Albert's Lyrebird.

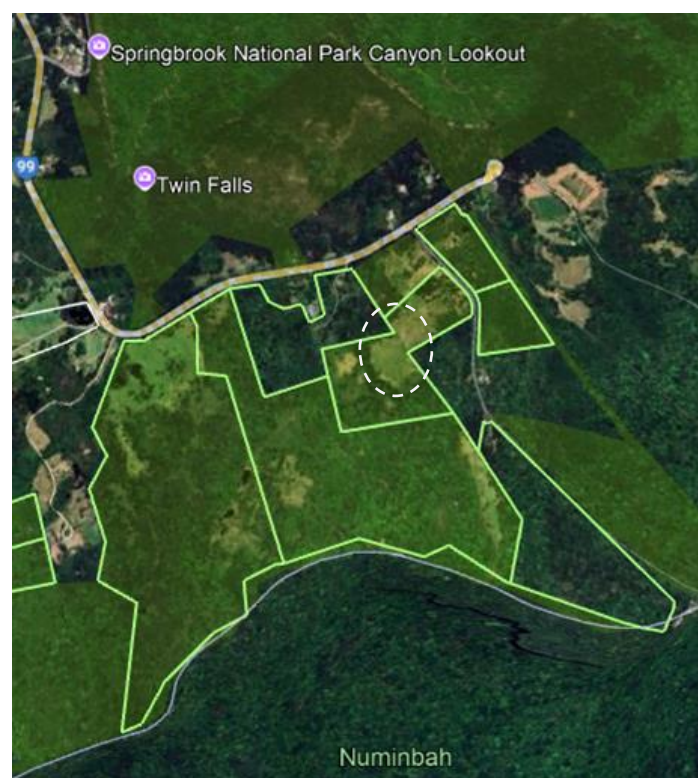
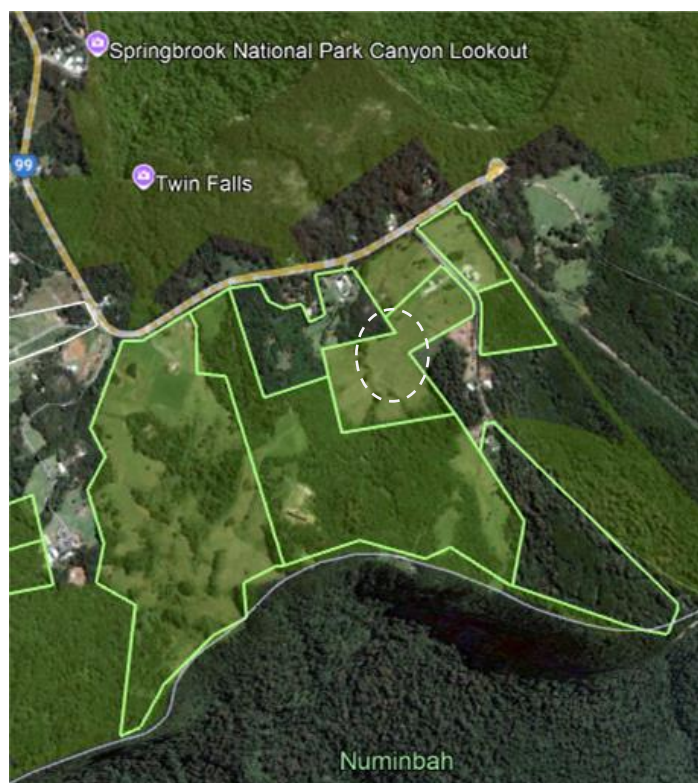
Since 2008, **Australian Rainforest Conservation Society** has partnered with the Queensland Department of Environment to deliver the historic **Springbrook Rainforest Restoration Project** – a program of assisted natural regeneration on over 200 hectares of former rainforest acquired by the Queensland Government since 2005 for addition to Springbrook National Park.

Working together, ARCS personnel, Springbrook locals, volunteers from across Australia and the Queensland Parks & Wildlife Service are returning large areas of **former agricultural land and residential sites** to World Heritage-quality forest.

By healing fragmented and damaged forest, we are protecting a vital hub of ecological resilience in the face of climate change, and securing one of Australia's most precious landscapes as a world-class destination for nature-based visitation, research, environmental education and biodiversity preservation.

At Springbrook, ARCS also owns and manages the largest private Nature Refuge areas on the Gold Coast.

Visit our websites for more on [Australian Rainforest Conservation Society](#) and the [Springbrook Project](#).



**Upper Springbrook properties acquired for addition to National Park and under ARCS restoration management since 2008 - in 2004 (top) and 2025 (below)**

*from Grass to Gondwana competition site circled*

## How will the competition be judged?

- Each team's restoration effort will be judged against published criteria developed by our esteemed Technical/Judging panel including:
  - Dr Clyde Wild, Conservation Biologist, ARCS Management Committee member, and former Dean (Academic), Science, Griffith University
  - Adele Carter, Springbrook Ranger Base, Queensland Parks & Wildlife Service (Department of Environment, Tourism, Science & Innovation)
  - Ben Kober, Senior Teacher, Numinbah Valley Environmental Education Centre (Education Queensland) & Springbrook Weed Busters
  - Saul Hondow, Senior Conservation Partnerships Officer, City of Gold Coast.
- Criteria will focus on creativity and effort in restoration science approach, successful establishment of canopy species, growth success relative to site conditions, retention and encouragement of self-sown native species, and success in weed removal and suppression.
- Attend the Information Weekend to ask questions, and help shape the final ground rules and criteria.

## What will be the prizes?

- Prizes will be announced during the course of the competition.
- Prizes for **Best Team** will include an award certificate and prizes for all coordinators and team members who participated in a minimum number of the working weekends.
- A major **Wild Card Prize** will go randomly (drawn by raffle) to any participant (from any team) who participated across the minimum number of working weekends, with maximum participation earning the maximum number of entries.
- Prizes will be awarded at a public award ceremony in mid-2028.
- Of course, the *biggest* prize will be pride in the knowledge of your incredible contribution to restoring the World Heritage rainforests of Springbrook Mountain, for the present generation and all generations to come.

## What will it cost to participate?

- There is no entry fee.
- Teams will be provided with free accommodation for the working weekends (Friday to Sunday nights inclusive) at Koonjewarre Campground & Retreat, Springbrook Mountain.
- Pre-booked breakfast, lunch and dinner will be available for the working weekends at a reasonable cost to teams or your sponsors.
- Teams make their own travel arrangements and cover their own costs for travel.
- Working weekends will include briefings, free expert talks, educational experiences and opportunities for walking tours of Springbrook National Park.

### Information Weekend – 5-6 September 2026

Join us for the Information Weekend to learn more about the site and competition – even if you have not yet decided if your group is ready to enter.

Walk in Springbrook National Park, observe the restoration efforts to date, and hear from local experts about the benefits of the competition.

Potentially team up with others to form a competitive team, if you and your friends think you might not quite have the numbers.

Share your own insights on how to make the competition run most successfully (without giving away your secrets!).

Arrive by 2 pm, and join us for **Intro Briefings from 3 pm Saturday 5th September**, followed by dinner, and then site visits and further briefings on Sunday (concluding by 4 pm).

All groups entering for final selection should have **at least two members** attending the Information Weekend, to familiarise yourselves with the site and prepare for the first working weekend.

**Final expressions of interest** close *after* the Information Weekend - on 30 September 2026. But teams represented at the Information Weekend get first preference to enter.



**Above:** Provisional layout of the restoration plots to be allocated to 'from Grass to Gondwana' restoration teams. Final number and location of plots per team will be determined by the Technical Panel based on final expressions of interest.

## How to enter

- Share this information and gather your team!
- Block out the planned working weekends for the duration of the competition.
- Complete the [preliminary expression of interest](#) by **Friday 14 August 2026** – including registration for the **Information Weekend** (5-6 September).
- Apply early to ensure your spot and help us with our planning!
- Attend the Information Weekend to find out more, even if you are still deciding if you want to field a team – but remember, you *need to attend* this weekend in order to enter.
- Contact us with any queries at [springbrook@rainforestaustralia.org.au](mailto:springbrook@rainforestaustralia.org.au)

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