Jasper Valley

Northern Rivers, NSW

James Jackson and Suzie Smith are regenerative farmers near Federal in the Northern Rivers region of New South Wales. On their 58-hectare property Jasper Valley, they use rotational grazing and natural inputs to fatten beef cattle for a grassfed home delivery business based in Casino. They also have a 26-hectare biodiverse carbon project under the Environmental Planting method.

PROPERTY SIZE:	58 hectares
PLANTING SIZE:	26 hectares
KEY NATURAL ASSETS:	Remnants of critically endangered Big Scrub subtropical rainforest (Lower Richmond Hills Dry-Subtropical Rainforest PCT3002). Existing riparian zone along the Wilson River on property's eastern boundary.
PROJECT FEATURES:	• Highly diverse planting using a mix of 84 locally native species to align with critically endangered Big Scrub subtropical rainforest. • Revegetation linking to existing riparian zone, enhancing ecological connectivity. • Integrated with rotational grazing system for producing beef cattle, solution for pasture dieback and weed control. • Registered carbon project with 25-year permanence, part of Greening Australia and Canopy's 2024 national reforestation program (ERF186544). • Delivered in partnership with Nestlé and One Tree Planted as part of the Nestlé Global Reforestation Program. Supported by the NSW Government.

Greening Australia

James and Suzie have lived at Jasper Valley since 2002, and raised three children there. They love the beautiful location, the good weather, and the friendly local community.

Prior to colonisation, this area was part of the 'Big Scrub', once Australia's largest lowland subtropical rainforest. In the late 1800s, settlers began intensively clearing to create pasture and cropland and meet the conditions of government loans. Today just 1% of the Big Scrub's original extent remains.

Map of the project area. Photo credit Clare Douglas.

The project area at the time of planting. Photo credit Clare Douglas.

A solution to funding Big Scrub restoration

James and Suzie said: "Most properties in this region have areas that should never have been cleared. Due to aspect, slopes or proximity to creeks, these are very difficult areas to maintain. Returning these areas to the natural state can both enhance the environment and help reduce maintenance."

They approached Greening Australia about planting part of their property to bring back Big Scrub rainforest and help counter weed intrusion from pasture dieback. Greening Australia undertook a desktop feasibility study and found that the project was eligible for funding as a carbon project under the Environmental Planting method.

James and Suzie said: "We really wanted to find a solution to funding the environmental restoration of the land. After researching a number of operators, the not-for-profit structure of Greening Australia and their subsidiary company Canopy attracted us, as well as their history, reputation and professional approach."

"One of the benefits is that they undertake the majority of the registration and compliance of the project. It really is a specialised skill. The project would not have happened without them."

Nature finance provides important funding to make projects like these possible. In this case, Greening Australia and its environmental markets business Canopy partnered with Nestlé and One Tree Planted to fund and register the project as part of the Nestlé Global Reforestation Program.

This Jasper Valley project was also supported by a NSW Government High Impact Partnership grant.

Implementation and biodiversity benefits

With the paperwork in place, in 2024, Greening Australia worked with Big Scrub Rainforest Conservancy and other local partners to plant a mix of 84 native species at James and Suzie's place that would best represent the critically endangered Big Scrub vegetation community. More than 60,000 seedlings were planted.

The revegetation is also designed to create a wildlife corridor, linking the restored areas with an existing riparian zone along the Wilson River on the eastern boundary of the property. While this regeneration effort will likely improve the habitat available for a variety of plants and animals, threatened species set to benefit include the Rose-crowned Fruit Dove and Grey-headed Flying Fox.

Thanks to additional support from Nestlé, Greening Australia has registered this project as an environmental account with Accounting for Nature (see **accountingfornature.org/p00006**), establishing baseline data so the condition of the native vegetation can be rigorously monitored and managed over time.

Reflections on the project

Asked to reflect on the project so far, James and Suzie commented on the value of Greening Australia's clear vision for the project, and the way the project has brought together the local community and promoted local connections.

"There is a lot of positive energy for the project, and we have a real sense of trust in the knowledge and expertise of the different parties involved in the project. We also have a real feeling of the project having relevance within the local community, and we've been really reassured to learn from local experts who understand the vulnerabilities of the environment here."

In terms of lessons learned, James and Suzie said they found the time frame for preparing the land for planting to be quite tight, which made it stressful. If project compliance permitted, they suggested a two-year planting period would help take the pressure off for site preparation and planting. Since James and Suzie's project commenced, there have been changes to the Environmental Planting method which allow for better lead time management. Having said this, external funding sources may require certain establishment timeframes (because delays can impact carbon credit returns). Landholders should weigh up the pros and cons of immediate versus delayed commencement.

James and Suzie also said they would like to hear more updates on how the site is performing, and have a clearer sense of the project milestones and timelines so they can understand what to expect.

From Greening Australia's perspective, the project has been an important learning in the complexities of rainforest restoration. Although the operational team brought considerable restoration management experience, finding and leaning on the knowledge of highly capable local experts like the Big Scrub Rainforest Conservancy has been vital to ensuring the project has been implemented efficiently and effectively. The landholders James and Suzie have also been very valuable to the project, with their excellent communication, willingness to work through difficult issues with managing the site, and pragmatic approach to getting the best outcomes.

From an operational perspective, the project reinforced that high-quality rainforest restoration is complex and costly, but undoubtedly worthwhile.

Greening Australia valued the advice of local rainforest restoration practitioners like Big Scrub Rainforest Conservancy. Photo credit Clare Douglas.

"We feel blessed we have the opportunity to be involved in this project which is sequestering carbon in a very natural and simple manner in growing trees, alongside the positive impact on biodiversity and the long-term ecological repair of the land."

— JAMES JACKSON

During a 2025 field day at Jasper Valley. Part of the 2024 carbon planting is visible on the left, behind the group. Photo credit Greening Australia.

For more information, contact Greening Australia | 1300 886 589 | greeningaustralia.org.au/contact

For a no-obligation chat about biodiverse carbon plantings on your land, register your interest at: greeningaustralia.org.au/landholders

This case study has been produced by Greening Australia in association with the NSW Government as part of a High Impact Partnership grant. The planting at Jasper Valley was supported by the NSW Government and majority funded through the Nestlé Global Reforestation Program. Through its partnership with One Tree Planted, Greening Australia and Canopy, Nestlé has supported the planting of more than 3.6 million trees across Australia.

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PUBLISHED OCTOBER 2026