



Capricornia Catchments Inc.



NEWSLETTER March 2016

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Michelle Hanrahan

I want to pay tribute to our wonderful volunteers for continuing to contribute your time and talents to support a range of community activities to improve the management of our land, water and natural environment. Our hard working committee members continue to provide guidance as well as practical assistance, as do the people who support our events such as those involved with GenYadaba and other community groups.

We also continue to provide work placement opportunities, when appropriate, for students and individuals interested in exposure to real work situations in the natural resource management sector. These people assist us by providing their skills to support projects and the development of materials.

The range of training and events so far this year have covered a wide range of areas including, agriculture based training in best management practices in soils, grazing land management and animal health and production, as well as an area not highlighted until recently, the value in achieving a greater understanding of ground water and how to increase awareness and better manage this valuable resource. The google

mapping workshops continue to be well subscribed and we hope to be able to offer more in the future.

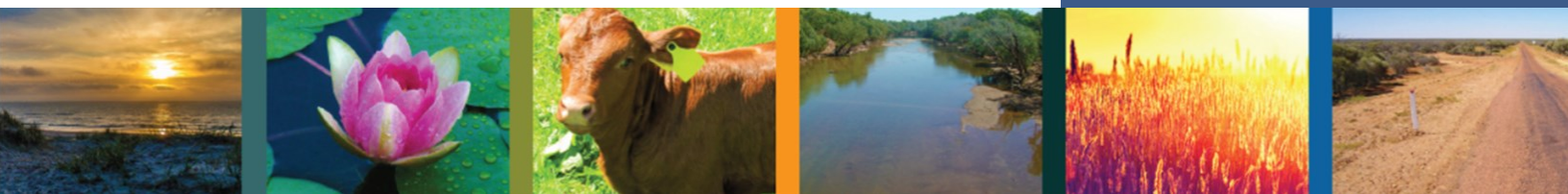
Staff and committee members are always interested to hear your suggestions on training and awareness activities that you think would be of interest to members, so please contact any of us with your ideas.

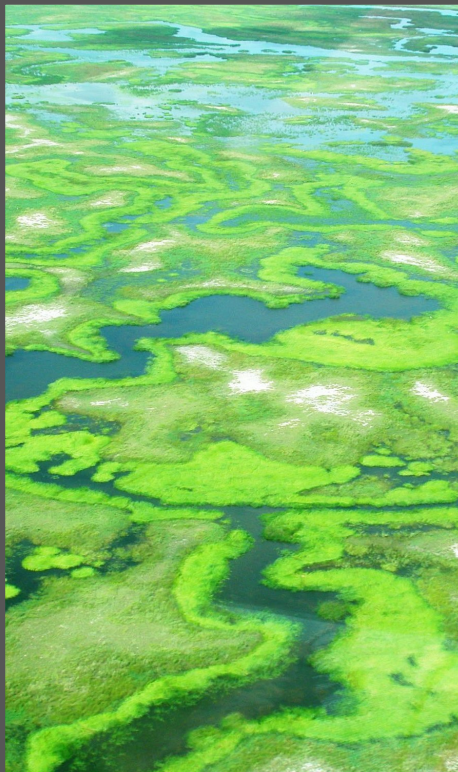
We look forward to offering the opportunity of attend our next members forum in Rockhampton in April and then one in Middlemount in May to hear about topical issues and well as celebrate and hear stories about our best project awards.



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CAPRICORNIA CATCHMENTS NEW WEBSITE

Our new website is now **LIVE** with a fresh look. The website covers our three areas in the Capricornia Catchments, Three Rivers, Fitzroy and coastal catchments and Boyne Calliope with information about the organisation, how you can get involved through events, funding opportunities, to becoming a member of Capricornia Catchments. A couple of new features on the website are the online booking for upcoming workshops and events, scrolling photos and videos. We now have an SMS messaging service reminding participants they are booked in to an event. Positive feedback on this service has been appreciated by the participants.

To see our website go to www.capcatchments.org.au

EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

Jeff Krause

Our partnership with FBA continues as we coordinate the range of programs, workshops and events across our area. To assist with this, our on-line booking system and recently introduced text messaging services are aimed at providing a more efficient system and improved service for our members similar to systems in the wider community.

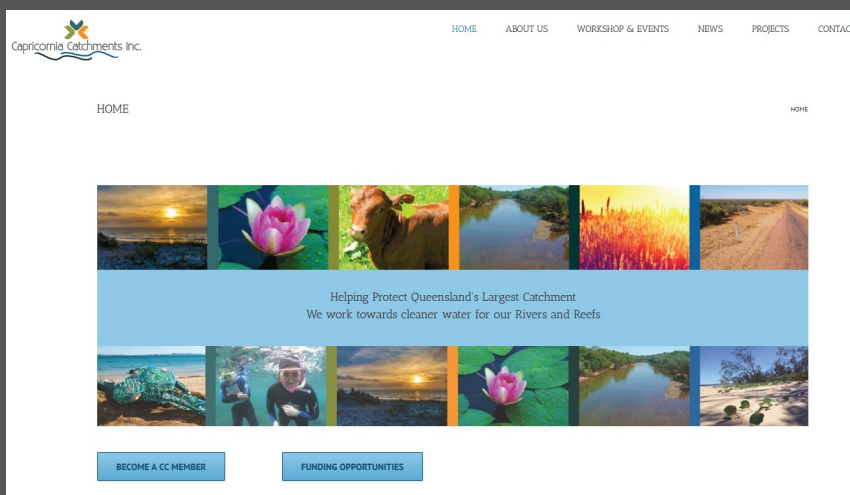
It has been an action packed start to the year, with the final three months of the Reef Rescue 2 program that offers incentives to implement practice change by improving ground cover and reducing sediment and runoff to the reef. Marina, Anne and John have been supporting landholders with the development of the last of the projects for this 3 year program, as well as checking completions for more than 40 projects over the next month.

This round of the State Government funded Pest and Weeds, Wetlands Protection and Innovations Programs also wrap up by June, so many of these projects need to be completed over coming months.

The Regional Water Quality Improvement Plan is now out for community input and FBA is seeking feedback from people who access the plan. Feedback forms are provided on each page on line so please take the

opportunity to question or comment on the information as your feedback will assist as the plan is further refined. The quality and quantity of information provided is extensive, so please take a look. While funding arrangements remain unclear, it is heartening to note that the WQIP identifies many catchments in the Three Rivers and Fitzroy areas as being high priority areas for future investment to improve water quality.

Information about the recent announcement of the gully erosion management projects in the Isaac River and Theresa Creek areas will be of interest to landholders in those areas and may offer opportunities to implement significant sediment reduction strategies on eroded country. As new incentive and funding possibilities become available we look forward to being able to advise our members of opportunities.





Landholders discuss the formation of a Catchment Working Group

OUR VOLUNTEERS

Capricornia Catchments have a large volunteer base which continues to grow each year. Last year over 800 hours were contributed to support events, marketing and project activities.

Specific thanks go to Lauren Clein and Sonia Thomas for assistance in the office with administration, media and project support. The late Jim Price and his brother Kim Price for assisting in the Boyne Calliope region with the Cats Claw Creeper Project. Mikala Maloney and Morgan Ells for their ongoing enthusiasm and drive with Gen-Yadaba.

We would like to extend our sincere thanks and acknowledge all of our wonderful volunteers for their valuable time and efforts.

BOYNE VALLEY CATCHMENT GROUP

Lisa Del Riccio

Landholders from the Boyne Valley recently met in Ubobo to discuss the formation of a Catchment Working Group focussing on sustainable and productive management of the valleys natural assets.

The forums objective was to facilitate the establishment of a grass-roots group which can share concerns and ideas, have access to latest knowledge and the strength to advocate for assistance or action when needed.

The group of 16, representing a cross-section of local landholders with different interests, worked to set the groups vision and aims, and to identify local concerns and issues. Kate Wilson, the Regional Landcare Facilitator from FBA, assisted this process by chairing the meeting, and guiding the agenda.

Key issues identified include plant and animal pests and river health. It was agreed that an integrated, catchment based approach to managing these concerns was needed to be effective. Access to up-to-date information, including latest research and biological measures are desired, as is the building of partnerships with local and state natural resource authorities.

With the initial groundwork underway, the group will meet again in the next few weeks to continue working together to further pinpoint issues and starting points. The enthusiasm shown by all involved indicates a solid future for the group, which will help ensure environmental, economic and social benefits to all in the Boyne River catchment.



Lauren Clein



Morgan Ells



Mikala Maloney



LANGLEY—PARKINSONIA PROJECT CASE STUDY

Marina Wall



"If you can get enough people on board you will see better results"

Donald Black has lived at 'Langley' for over 22 years and has been involved in the pastoral industry all his life. Langley is a 4881ha property situated half way between Middelmount and Clarke Creek on the May Downs Road. It consists of brigalow scrub country with predominantly black soils, some brigalow melon hole country, flooded brigalow coolibah flats and box forest easy slopes on sandy soils. There is currently 1000ha of country under cultivation.

Donald mainly operates a beef cattle fattening operation but also runs breeders. He turns off Brahman and Brangus bullocks, usually directly to meatworks in Rockhampton or Mackay depending on which is offering the best price. He has recently completed the process of having Langley EU accredited to widen marketing options and is confident that a grain assist regime helps his cattle meet the grade.

Donald is actively involved in many aspects of his local community. He is currently President of the local AgForce committee, President of Capricornia Catchments (Three Rivers) committee and has only recently retired from his position as President of the Clarke Creek Campdraft Committee.

Parkinsonia (*Parkinsonia aculeata*) is a Weed of National Significance. It is regarded as one of the worst weeds in Australia because of its invasiveness, potential for spread, and economic and environmental impacts. If left untreated, it displaces native vegetation and reduces access to land and waterways.

Donald stated that it has a significant economic cost to landholders due to the increased difficulty in mustering stock, the reduction in stock access to watering points and the decrease in primary production of grasses that are replaced by parkinsonia. Additionally, parkinsonia infestations provide refuges for feral animals, especially pigs.

In 2015 Donald completed an FBA funded project to 'Reduce the impact

and spread of Parkinsonia and Prickly Acacia in the middle to upper regions of the Mackenzie, Isaacs and Connors Catchments' through the Three Rivers branch of Capricornia Catchments. This project was developed in partnership with Isaac Regional Council and local landholder groups. Isaac Regional Council has also provided funding assistance through the Isaac Community Grants program for this project.

Donald mainly used the 'basal-bark' technique which generally provides more effective control than foliar spraying. Although it is more time consuming it is the main method (along with cut-stumping) recommended for use near waterways, as foliar applied herbicides can drift onto non-target plants or into water. This involved treating over 1100ha of parkinsonia on his floodplains and associated riparian areas .

Through his involvement with this project Donald has identified a significant area of parkinsonia with the naturally occurring dieback fungi.





He also released a bio-control agent *Eueupithecia cisplatensis* a Parkinsonia leaf-feeding looper - "UU" and is monitoring the impact of this on a trial area of parkinsonia.

Recent flooding in the Fitzroy Basin and the resulting sediment and nutrient run-off into our waterways has again highlighted the importance of sustainable land management practices that improve ground cover and reduce erosion. As Langley has

large flood plain areas from the Connors and Isaac Rivers it receives massive deposits of Parkinsonia seed when floodwaters recede. Controlling Parkinsonia on Langley has helped lessen the spread of this WONS downstream. It has also assisted with provision of ground cover and lessening of soil erosion in these areas.

As part of his property weed program Donald intends to monitor known

locations for regrowth seasonally, continue basal bark spraying of regrowth pre – flower/ seeding and manage grazing to maintain dense ground cover in seasonal times to reduce favourable conditions for weed germination. Early detection and control of small manageable outbreaks is a priority in his management strategy. Donald stated, "If you can get enough people on board you will see better results".



Parkinsonia trees typically produce up to 5000 seeds per year but can produce in excess of 13,000

JIM PRICE SADLY MISSED

Jim worked alongside the Calliope office staff for years, volunteering his time and knowledge, and assisting with many on-ground work and projects. His association with local natural resource management though, goes back much further than that.

He was actively involved with the Calliope Landcare Group, the Calliope Soil Conservation Association Inc. and Safe Haven at Mount Larcom, a captive breeding and research centre for the northern hairy nosed wombat and home to the bridled naitail wallaby and koalas. He was camp cook for research scientists at Kroombit Tops NP, and had plans to cook for them again this year.

Recently Jim was instrumental in the implementation of a biosecurity program, breeding Jewel Beetles as part of control measures against the Cats Claw Creeper infestation in the Boyne Valley. He worked alongside the Gidarjil Land and Sea Rangers at the Boat Creek revegetation site, and the staff from the Industry Partnership Group during working bees.

Jim had a wealth of local bush and historical knowledge which he was always willing to share. He was also a good listener and very interested to contribute to innovation and plans for managing the environment for the future.

A true bush gentleman, a kind and honest man, I feel privileged to have had the opportunity to get to know him. I know I am not alone in missing him. The Boyne Calliope region has **lost a good friend.**



FISH FRIENDLY FITZROY

Samantha Moger

The Fish Friendly Fitzroy program has been running across the Lower Fitzroy Floodplain from July 2013 and continues to work with and provide incentives to landholders through to June 2018.

The program aims to engage and work with landholders in the Lower Fitzroy Floodplain to restore the natural landscape and control weeds of National Significance. These weeds are threatening to our local

environment and ecosystem as well as downstream estuaries and marine environments.

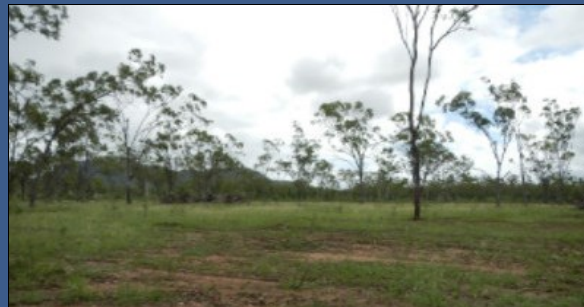
Weeds on the Floodplain are a constant battle due to continuous flooding and access difficulty during ideal treatment times. The Fitzroy Basin Association and Capricornia Catchments have been providing landholders with incentives to treat the bulk of the pest plants, then following up with treatment of juvenile plants. The idea is to follow

up with treatment before the pest plant has time to reproduce. Landholders are encouraged to continue treatment beyond the funding timeframe and reduce the emergence of weeds within their property.

Following the initial incentive funding it has been encouraging to see so many landholders expanding their treatment areas after seeing positive results and continuing follow up treatment.



Before



After

NORTH KEPPEL ISLAND ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION CENTRE PARTNERSHIP YIELDS GREAT OUTCOMES FOR OUR ENVIRONMENT

Shelly McArdle

A partnership between the North Keppel Island Environmental Education Centre, Marine Parks, local youth Group GenYadaba, Native Plants Capricornia, and Geofabrics has recently seen the roll out of the first of four working days that are planned over the next three months.

This project is supported by Capricornia Catchments and Fitzroy Basin Association Inc. through funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Programme and aims to address some of the Island's key threats to biodiversity by managing erosion, revegetating a section of the coastal foredune and controlling weed infestations.

GenYadaba is a group of young people that operate on the Capricorn Coast and have been involved with a number of projects including the LSC Mulambin Beach Restoration Project, the St Brendan's Social Action Day and the GBRMPA Marine Debris Blitz but they have a particular ongoing interest in working with the team at

North Keppel Island Environmental Education Centre to learn more about coastal restoration, with the second annual Island Eco Challenge taking place late last year.

GenYadaba spokesperson Morgan Ells said the project is a little different in that this time instead of planting small seedlings straight into the foredune, we are pre-establishing them in coir logs set into troughs with the appropriate level of water in them.

"These logs are then later half buried and pegged at a certain angle to the wave and wind action. Not only will this method provide more protection for the plants but the logs will help to build up the sand leading to a coastal strip that will be more resilient in the future," he said.

The coir logs were sourced from Geofabrics and they also generously donated a number of them. They were then delivered to the island by Marine Parks ready for use. This donation delighted the group and helped to expand the scope of the project to achieve much more than what was

initially planned.

Fitzroy River Water also donated the half pipes that were used to make the troughs- another example of how many groups working together can help build what was a smaller project into one that has much more potential to deliver a great outcome for the community.

Neil Hoy from Native Plants Capricornia said "I saw that others have been successfully using the technique of pre-establish bio filtering plants such as common reeds for use in sediment management around storm water and drainage lines and it got me thinking about whether we could use the same



NKIEEC CONTINUED...

method when addressing coastal erosion and after some discussion with representatives from Capricornia Catchments it was decided that we should run a trial on North Keppel as part of a community project."

Volunteer and retired Marine Parks Ranger John Messersmith said "Revegetating on an island has some challenges as in line with the Island's biosecurity policy all plants for revegetation projects have to be sourced

from the island to rule out the threat of the introduction of new weeds or plant disease being accidentally introduced in potting mix etc."

NKIEEC principal Roger Searl said "If the techniques can be perfected at NKI, the knowledge will be easily transferred to other coastal areas which are suffering from beach erosion and even as effective management of gully erosion using other appropriate species."

For more information on this and other projects in our local area contact

Capricornia Catchments on phone 4 9 2 1 0 5 7 3 or email: admin@capcatchments.org.au



GREEN ARMY CYCLONE RECOVERY—ARCHONTOPHOENIX GROVE

Late last year Capricornia Catchments (CC) was successful in their bid to secure a Green Army Team to assist local landholders with the recovery work after Cyclone Marcia. The project that has seen CC partner with the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection (EHP) and Livingstone Shire Council (LSC) to deliver on a number of activities across three sites within Livingstone Shire.

Under the guidance of Supervisor Alex Peters, of Manpower, the team has taken on two projects on nature refuges and a third at Gawula Aboriginal Land to carry out debris removal, weed management, revegetation and fencing.

Archontophoenix Grove Nature Refuge is just one of these project areas and with the assistance of Green Army team member Meghan Jeffery, we have prepared the following story, which outlines their project thus far.

This beautiful nature refuge, protected under the Nature Conservation Act since 1997, is situated close to Yeppoon and owned by John and Estelle Lindsay since 2002. The site is a significant remnant corridor containing four different vegetation communities. Three of these are Eucalypt communities and the fourth is the *Archontophoenix alexandrae* closed palm forest – an endangered community found more commonly in the north and threatened by clearing for agricultural purposes. It is home to a variety of plants, birds and reptiles. This refuge had been easily maintained by the owners up until Yeppoon was hit by Tropical Cyclone Marcia, in February 2015. The area lost 30% of its trees, thus losing of a good portion of the canopy cover. The resulting load of fallen debris made access impossible. Weeds including lantana, madeira vine, asparagus fern and coral berry proliferated and posed a real threat to the biodiversity of the site.

So it was a daunting task that lay ahead of the Green Army team. We spent the first two weeks (two days a week) identifying native plants and weeds and mapping the area to come up with our rehabilitation plan. Our key activities would be debris removal to re-instate the access track and weed management, with a natural regeneration approach taken for filling the gaps in the canopy.

By far the biggest task, as with so many sites around the Capricorn Coast, was clearing the debris so that the team could access the weeds in order to treat them. This took ten people two days a week for 19 weeks. With the help of EHP staff, the landholders and a professional chainsaw contractor for the more challenging debris, the team were able to re-open the old track to allow access to the palm forest, vine thicket and seasonal creeks, by moving the debris into the surrounding vegetation or using it to define the track.

"Green Army is a great opportunity for people interested in environmental works and restoration to gain hands-on field experience and has significantly helped me in my pursuit to gain a career in environmental works. Through positive interactions a good volume of knowledge has been gained through my experience with other environmental groups and in fact everyone involved in this project." Mitchell Young (Green Army Participant.)

Weed work then became a focus for the team, with LSC lending a hand to help the team get on top of weeds like guinea grass and lantana, that were quietly taking hold on the boundary. The team were also able to experience firsthand why madeira vine,

"We are so grateful to the Green Army Team who have done an amazing job. Without them we wouldn't have been able to complete the job so quickly - we may never have been able to get it done." John & Estelle Lindsay (Archontophoenix Grove NR landholders).

can so quickly take hold when left unchecked. The whole team spent an entire day digging out tubers underneath a treated mother plant, established well into the canopy. Buckets and buckets of tubers were hauled out of an area of 10 m² within the refuge. This won't eradicate the weed, but it does make it easier for owners John and Estelle to monitor and manage.

We are planning to have an open day in April, to celebrate our successes, to showcase the natural values of the site and the works achieved by the team and to educate local landholders on what impacts people can have on our natural environment.

In a project that has taken an enormous amount of effort and support to complete, the Green Army team can really be proud of themselves and what they have achieved. Once again this project has demonstrated that partnerships with multiple groups can work really well to support our local landholders in delivering great outcomes for our environment.





EVENTS

Watch for workshop and field day opportunities in your area over coming weeks and months.

APRIL

- 06** Grazing BMP Reassessment, Wycarbah
- 07** Grazing BMP Soils & GLM, Dingo
- 07** Wild dog Trapping Workshop, Calliope
- 12** Gully Erosion Demonstration Field Day, 'Brussels', Ogmoo
- 13** Gully Erosion Demonstration Field Day, 'Eton Vale', Clermont
- 15** Members Forum, Rockhampton
- 27** Stocktake, Middlemount
- 28** Stocktake, Rockhampton

MAY

- 8** Fire Management Workshop, Boyne Valley
- 11** Grains BMP, Dysart
- 14** Fitzroy Flood Plain Weeds Workshop, Rockhampton
- 18** Three Rivers Members Forum, Middlemount
- 19** Cats Claw Creeper Field Day, Nagoorin

Please contact the Capricornia Catchments office or visit our website for more information or to register.

Capricornia Catchments

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MEMBERS FORUM

Our Annual Members Forum is coming together nicely with an interesting mix of guest speakers for an informative evening and a chance to catch up with our members.

Guest speakers on the night are:



Ku Lacey is an Agriculture teacher at the Rockhampton Girls Grammar School and has been teaching since 2003. Ku worked as a dairy farm manager and DPI Extension Officer and found much love and enjoyment in this profession. She currently serves as

President of the Qld Agricultural Teachers Association. She sits on the executive councils of the Joint Council of Qld Teachers Association and National Association of Agricultural Educators.



Jim Lacey currently serves in the Queensland Police Force and works in the Stock and Rural Crime Investigation Squad. Prior to joining the force he worked in the Agriculture and Horticulture industries throughout Queensland.

BEST PROJECTS AWARDS PRESENTATION

During the Members Forum Capricornia Catchments will be presenting the **Best Projects Award for 2014/15** celebrating the achievements of the graziers who are onground natural resource managers of our region. Eight projects were shortlisted from the 25 projects approved during the 2014/15 financial year.

The three categories and nominees are listed below:

Fitzroy Catchment

Mick Alexander
 Glen and Nikki Kelly
 Ben Smith

"Bindaree"
 "Edithvale"
 "Separation"

Coastal Catchments

Ray and Leah Vella
 Scott and Victoria Finger
 Lachlan Mace
 Olive Family

"Bald Hills"
 "Oakvale"
 "Toorilla"
 "Wongrabry"

Boyne Calliope Catchments

Julie Jenkinson "Radleigh"

We wish them all well as they continue achieving industry best practice with a strong emphasis on improving the natural resources of our region.

Where: Athelstone Bowls Club, Ward Street, Rockhampton

Time: 5.30pm for a 6pm start (Dinner will be provided)

RSVP by Friday, 8 April 2016.

Contact Janeen Whiting on 4921 0573 for further information or visit www.capcatchments.org.au.



Australian Government



Queensland Government

