

# Fitzroy River and Coastal Catchments Inc.

NEWSLETTER • March 2013

## President's Message

**Michelle Hanrahan**

This year offers great opportunity for FRCC to deliver our quality services as well as increase our influence in the community regarding natural resource management issues. Well managed and sustainable development is a key driver for our organization and as the rapid resources development continues FRCC aims to enhance its position as a premier natural resource management group in this area.

I am looking forward to the challenges this brings and with the other members of the FRCC Management Committee we plan to engage more widely with local industry and business sectors to develop high quality services and advice to our members.

The FRCC Management Committee for 2013 are:

Michelle Hanrahan . . . President  
Rob McArthur . . . . . Vice-President  
Peter Baggett . . . . . Secretary  
Leise Childs . . . . . Treasurer  
Ian Groves. . . . . Member  
Sarah Becker . . . . . Member  
Ian Dare . . . . . Member  
Donald Black . . . . . Member  
John Wall . . . . . Special Member  
Wade Mann. . . . . Special Member

Welcome to Wade Mann as our new Committee member in 2013. We send a special thank you to Evelyn Carte for her valued service on the Committee over the last 18 months and wish her well in her new role on the Capricorn Coast.

We look forward to continuing to work closely with our members in 2013.

## Executive Officer's Report

**Jeff Krause**

The regions reputation for unpredictable weather conditions has again surprised many of us with a relatively dry start to the wet season until the deluge in late January which delivered highest daily rainfall totals on record across much of our area. Thank you to the many landholders who shared their issues caused by the flash flooding to assist us in compiling a report which identifies flood recovery funding opportunities.

A major focus in the early part of the year is to ensure incentive projects are completed, so field staff are continuing to liaise with landholders regarding how projects are progressing. Most grazing, grains and horticulture projects have completion dates by the end of March with Flood Recovery Projects (parkinsonia and prickly acacia) due for completion by 31 May.

This year FRCC will continue offering and contributing to awareness raising and community information sessions on natural resource management issues. Already we have a range of activities and events being delivered and planned as outlined elsewhere in the newsletter. Our links with the three regional councils, Rockhampton, Isaacs and Gladstone continue to strengthen with more joint workshop and collaborative planning activities underway this year.

We plan to conduct members' forums again this year to share information and seek input into the identification of possible projects and priorities. The first forum for this year is scheduled for the evening of Friday 22 March, so please watch for the flyer with details of this event, which includes a very interesting guest speaker as well as an update on a new service identified during last year.

While there is uncertainty about funding in the new financial year, we are proceeding on the basis of 2013 being another year of growth and development for FRCC services and activities and we look forward to members raising issues and opportunities with us.

## **A Better future for the horses of Capricornia**

### **Lisa Sutton**

By popular demand *Equiculture* returned for another round of sustainable horse property management seminars. Last year FRCC hosted a seminar in Rockhampton that attracted 40 attendees, this time *Equiculture's* reputation preceded with the event held on Saturday 16 February, 2013 attracting over 70 participants. *Equiculture* also delivered a Seminar in Calliope hosted by the Fitzroy Basin Association's Boyne Calliope sub region on the following day with around 40 people coming along.

This turnout was great considering the flooding that had occurred so recently in our region which affected many horse owners. At the height of the crisis 300 horses were accommodated at the Rockhampton showgrounds. Peter Hunt from "Think Water" and "Wandal Seed & Feed" put in a lot of extra work carting hay to ensure that there was a good supply in between flood peaks.

In conjunction with the Rockhampton seminar, the newly formed *Capricornia Equine Landcare Association* launch was facilitated by Stuart Myers of *Equiculture* who has been instrumental in launching 4 others, all in Victoria. We believe this to be a first for Queensland which is really exciting for the local equine community and it is our hope that the project can eventually be a pilot for people in other areas that might feel inspired to do the same.

Attendee Kat Jones said "Landcare itself is very good and rewarding but being able to have access to a group that is specific to horses is even better. I think this is very exciting and to be here at the very beginning is a great feeling."

The interim committee is made up of Peter Hunt (President), Joan Hart (Treasurer), Lisa Sutton (secretary) and executive members: Madeline Cherry; Andy Bent; Marina Mikecz and Karen Leeson. The first committee meeting is set for Thursday 28th February. If you are interested in becoming a member and have not yet contacted any of the committee please contact Lisa Sutton on 4921 0573 / 0428 123 017 or [lsutton@frcc.org.au](mailto:lsutton@frcc.org.au)

## **Our AGM**

### **Shelly McArdle**

The 2012 FRCC Annual General Meeting held on 7 December, 2012 saw around 70 people attend, keen to hear about what the organisation was involved in over the past year.

A wide variety of projects and initiatives were showcased including the photo competition, Schools Engagement, Dung Beetles, Grazing BMP and Stocktake workshops, Parkinsonia and Prickly Acacia Weed Abatement project, Small Landholder and Cultural Heritage Days, Coastal Community Engagement and of course Beef 2012.

The event also saw the announcement of the year's Best Projects Awards. Lachlan and Trudy Mace of "Toorilla" took out the top award in the Grazing Project- Coastal section with Jeff and Karen Mills of "Melrose" earning the top spot for the Fitzroy Basin Project category. The Best Horticultural Project was won by Ian and Sandy Groves of "Middle Ridge" for their biological control of insects project.

FRCC will continue with the help of our members to be a leader in innovation and engagement around sustainable land-management during the year to come.

## **Grazing BMP in 2013**

### **John Rodgers**

2013 marks the commencement of major expansions of the Grazing Best Management Practice program beyond the Fitzroy Basin area. AgForce has recently appointed Grazing BMP Project Officer, Michael Taylor, who will promote Grazing BMP across the Fitzroy and Burdekin catchments. He will emphasize the importance of recording how well landholders manage their country and livestock. This information can then be used to educate the general public who may be less knowledgeable about the grazing production system. The voluntarily provided anonymous data will then give credibility to this education campaign. Landholders who identify aspects of their practices which need improvement may be eligible for financial assistance.

NQ Dry Tropics is appointing a Grazing BMP Coordinator to manage delivery of the Burdekin Grazing BMP project. This is the first area outside the Fitzroy to take advantage of the program developed by AgForce, FBA and the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry. The expansion of Grazing BMP will greatly increase the number of cattle raised under recorded BMP conditions.

FBA is also employing a Grazing BMP Manager to oversee and co-ordinate the Grazing BMP process.

Very soon dates will be agreed for the next round of workshops. If you are interested in attending your first Grazing BMP workshop or progressing to the Grazing Land Management module please contact FRCC.

## Grains BMP Project - A First for the CQ CORS Network

### Anne Alison

Peter Foxwell, through his Grains BMP (Best Management Practice) Project, is the first to utilise the new CQ CORS (Continuously Operating Reference Station) network. Peter is a cotton/grain producer who is adopting more sustainable farming practices. Grains BMP funding has assisted Peter, based at Alton Downs, to fit Leica GPS equipment to his tractor. As a result he is the first to connect to the CQ CORS network.

The network consists of a number of reference stations used to receive positioning signals from GPS / GNSS satellites and broadcasts RTK (Real Time Kinematic) corrections down to +/- 2 centimetres. FBA has provided funding to establish the CQ CORS network throughout the region, which should be completed by 30 June.

Expressions of interest from landholders are being sort from the Marmor, Kunwarara and Ogmoo areas to establish further reference stations. These consist of two poles 5 metres apart - one with an aerial and one with a small dish. Data packages can be offered to those who would utilise the system.

Other components of the Grains BMP project have been fully funded by the Foxwell family and include the purchase of a new 24m boomspray and the rebuilding of a fertiliser applicator.

By participating in Grains BMP Peter has the opportunity to tap into free technical expertise. On Tuesday 19 February Peter attended a Grains BMP training workshop at Banana conducted by Tim Neale, Precision Agriculture. Topics included practical advice on farm layout, no-till machinery and controlled traffic farming.

Overall the project brings the Foxwell farming system closer to a controlled traffic situation and improves the efficiency of herbicide and fertiliser application on the 250ha farm. As a result less sediment, pesticide and fertiliser will run into the Fitzroy River and on into the Great Barrier Reef Lagoon.

## *iHerd* an Ingenious Idea

### Stephen Donaldson

As we all know, modern technology has revolutionised the way we farm today. Technology has quickly evolved and in the space of a generation has made the move from traditional note taking to personal computers in our homes and now even into the palm of our hands. Smart phones and tablets allow us to utilise the computing power of desktop systems while in the field, rather than tethered to a desk. One of the many new emerging apps focused on primary producers, appearing in both Apple and Android app stores, is the free application *iHerd*, focussing on streamlining stock management and lifetime traceability. Created by Will Wilson, a third generation grazier of Calliope Cattle Company, the app is sponsored by industry backers to ensure that the many great features included are tailored for producers and is available for free.

Customisation within the app lets you define multiple properties, their paddocks and yards, allowing you to manage several properties through the one account and with the ability for multiple users to read and write information at varying levels of authorisation, this is a great management tool. Keeping track of stock and their movements is made easy by the ability to define mobs, including number of stock, breed, birth or purchase dates and treatments used in addition to more detailed notes that will follow these animals throughout their history on your property. As you move these animals throughout your paddocks in the real world, you can capture this information on the app while in the field which will then update to dedicated servers when you reach an internet connection for secure storage.

Treatment information and stock is able to be stored in the 'treatment cabinet' section of the app where you can add chemicals or other treatments, their batch numbers and quantity of product for future reference, saving you that trip to the shed to check product quantities. In a world where consumers are becoming ever more aware of the life of their food, this lifetime traceability 'from birth to barbeque' as Will himself puts it, is a valuable marketing tool for your product.

Having touched on only some of the great features of this great free app, make sure you have a look for yourself and check out the great tally counter and other new features as they become available.

## Project Completions Due by 31 March

### Anne Alison and John Rodgers

This is a gentle reminder to all those landholders who were successful in having projects approved and were allocated funding in 2012/13 financial year. The projects range from landtype, riparian or wetland fencing and associated off-stream water points; to horticulture or Grains BMP projects.

31 March is the deadline for completion of these projects. The projects approved this year have relatively short timelines as this is the final year of the Australian Government's current Reef Rescue Program which has required all funding to be finalised before the end of this financial year.

By mid February there were 11 projects fully completed with the remaining 33 projects at varying stages. We understand that

recent floods and the havoc they caused could have interrupted some landholders' projects. If because of the floods, time and funding is tight, landholders may be able to do a partial completion and receive the associated payment. Landholders are asked to contact FRCC Field Officers to discuss options.

## **Landholders Prepared for Weed Re-Match**

### **Kelly Smith**

If fighting natural disasters wasn't a heavy enough blow for landholders - losing fences, stock, crops and topsoil, weeds deliver a knockout punch at the end of each round.

Fitzroy River and Coastal Catchment (FRCC) with support from the Fitzroy Basin Association (FBA) has been visiting properties along the lower Mackenzie and Fitzroy rivers affected by the 2010/11 floods to assess infestations of declared class 2 weeds - Parkinsonia and Prickly Acacia.

The risk is very real of these weeds growing to impenetrable prickly stands blocking access to water points, out-competing native plants and grasses, exposing topsoil to erosion and losing it downstream. FRCC in consultation with Rockhampton Regional Council and Central Highlands Regional Council has recruited fifty landholders to commit to take out these weeds by 31 May 2013. Neighbouring landholders working together are delivering hard hits to their weed infestation from the 2010/11 flood waters, assisted by up to 50/50 funding from the State Government Flood Recovery Weed Abatement Project.

Groundcover is the boxing glove of the landholder - protecting soil structure, generating nutrient content and ensuring continued productivity. After extreme weather conditions, ground cover is often down for the count. To recover from blistering heat, scouring wind and drenching rainfall takes time, which is when weeds often have the upper hand.

Being pioneering plants, weed seeds of Parkinsonia and Prickly acacia, can lay dormant in the soil or travel in flood sediment until favourable growth conditions occur. Seeds are also produced in mass quantities by plants of only two years maturity, ensuring their succession.

For landholders the deciding move is treating weeds before they can produce the next generation of seed and add to the soil seed bank on their property and the neighbours downstream.

Weed treatments by landholders as part of this project and trials carried out by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry have demonstrated the winning combination - integrated pest management. Prickly weeds hit the canvas when up against natural biocontrol agents, a Skidsteer to rake and pull, chemical spray to kill quickly, fire to diminish dense thickets and short growth, followed by pellets with a residual chemical to limit regrowth and reduce seed bank germination.

The inevitable weed seed deposits from these 2013 flood waters will be identified early and treated effectively by many landholders as they now know more about their opponent.

Controlling and eradicating weeds is best achieved with successive bouts of treatments, including an annual weed management strategy as part of a property plan, is a clear hit to eventually win the fight against weeds.

## **Riparian Fencing Project on "Figtree" and How to get a Helping Hand**

### **Lisa Sutton**

"Figtree" is a 30 hectare property 15 minutes from Rockhampton. When purchased just over two years ago by Penny and her partner Graham, it was heavily infested with Lantana and Rubber vine. For the next two years every day not spent in full time employment by the pair was invested in controlling this dense infestation. The enormous effort has now paid off and cattle now graze on the property. Continual follow up treatment is being carried out, but much is less arduous and time consuming than the initial control.

In 2010 Penny attended FRCC's first Small Landholders day at the Rockhampton showgrounds. On being presented with a lot of great information for property management Penny completed an FRCC membership application and expressed interest in a riparian fencing project. "Twelve Mile" Creek flows through the property and the project fitted beautifully within FRCC riparian fencing project guidelines. Less than a year later the riparian fence was completed and water points were installed. The grazing is now controlled and the riparian area has recovered rapidly, despite the very late start to the wet season. FRCC's financial assistance was greatly appreciated by Penny and Graham as well as training opportunities offered in Soil Health and Managing Horses on Small Properties.

In more recent times WWOOFers (Willing Workers on Organic Farms) have been hosted at "Figtree" to help with light work around the property in return for food and accommodation. WWOOFers are not intended to replace paid workers but can be a really big help on your property. Registered WWOOFers are covered by insurance and most, but not all, are foreign travellers. To register as a host you need to have some aspect of your property that is organic eg. vegetable garden or fruit orchard, but do not need to be a certified organic property. A similar scheme with no requirement for organic production is [www.WorkAway.com](http://www.WorkAway.com). For further information on Willing Workers on Organic Farms please visit [www.woof.com.au](http://www.woof.com.au)

## Plant of the Month

### Wedding Bush Beach Scrub Beauty

**Shelly McArdle**

**Title:** Wedding Bush

**Scientific Name:** Ricinocarpus pinifolius

**Distribution:** East coast of Australia including Tasmania

**Habitat:** Coastal heath and woodland community in sandy areas.

**Description:** Small shrub growing up to four metres with needle like leaves (thus the pinifolius - pine like name) Flowers are borne in late Autumn to early Spring followed by a rough, round seed capsule. The seed capsule then splits and releases 5 seeds. This plant is reputedly very difficult to propagate; therefore it is hard to find in cultivation.

**What you can do:** Anyone who has been up to Five Rocks in late Winter would have noticed this little beauty growing throughout the heath land often visible growing beside the tracks with the small shrubs absolutely covered in scented white flowers. Many areas where this plant occurs have been under pressure from urban development therefore it is important to protect areas like the Byfield National Park that have large areas of this vegetation community. You can help by sticking to the designated tracks and obeying fire restrictions.

## Turtle Tale Now on Sale

**Julie Cook (FBA)**

The plight of the Fitzroy Basin's own bum-breathing turtle will be told in a delightful new children's picture book being published by Fitzroy Basin Association Incorporated (FBA).

The Fitzroy River Turtle is a vulnerable species that is only found in the creeks and rivers of the Fitzroy Basin. Developed by local authors and artists, this illustrated picture book can be yours now.

"Oh Dear, That's My Rear" is the tale of Rheo the Fitzroy River Turtle. Rheo needs to make a splash as her species is in trouble! Maybe if Rheo can win the 'Central Queensland's Iconic Species Quest', her turtle friends will finally get the attention they deserve.

Grab a copy for only \$15.99 from FBA or FLOW (Old Post Office Building Corner of East and Denham Streets, Ph:49992800), FRCC, Another Story, Visitor Information Centres or email [flow@fba.org.au](mailto:flow@fba.org.au)

The Fitzroy River Turtle (*Rheodytes leukops*) is unique to our region. It was discovered in 1980 and is vulnerable due to factors including loss of habitat, poor water quality and destruction or predation of its nests.

This book was produced as part of Fitzroy Basin Association's community engagement efforts. We want to share our love and appreciation for the diversity and beauty of the Fitzroy Basin.

Learn more about the landscapes, industries and special plants and animals of the Fitzroy Basin at FLOW Visitors Centre: Ground Floor Old Post Office Building, corner of East and Denham Sts Rockhampton.

By purchasing this book you are supporting the Fitzroy Basin Association Incorporated, a non-profit group that coordinates natural resource management in Central Queensland, including protection of threatened species like Rheo! FBA is funded by Queensland and Australian Governments to support improved land management and sustainable development in the Fitzroy Basin, adjacent coastal catchments, and the Gladstone region.

## Landcare Update

**Katrina Conway**

Landcare has kicked off to a great start in the FRCC region for 2013 with many Landcare groups holding their first meetings for the year.

Last week a Mobile Apps workshop was held in Rockhampton to promote agricultural apps. The highlight of the day was hearing from the designers of the apps and getting an insight into practical ways to better use mobile apps. Presenters included:

- Jane Pryor, DAFFQ with a sneak peek at the new Stocktake app. This app will be released in March so keep a look out for it on their website [www.futurebeef.com.au](http://www.futurebeef.com.au). (The app is free unless you want to store information on iCloud).
- Paul Williams from Tropical Beef Technology Services presented information on the mobile app INSolutions, a virtual breeder catalogue. (\$1.99)

- Will Wilson, Property Manager near Calliope presented his mobile app iHerd. (The app is free unless you want to store information on iCloud).
- Susan Whitbread from Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) presented on an app which provides access to their Public Chemical Registration Information System (PCRIS) database and useful information on stopped, cancelled, suspended and archived products.

Coming up next month is the Carbon Farming for Graziers information day planned for Rockhampton, Biloela and Emerald from the 5-7 March 2013. Make sure you book ahead if you are interested in attending. Other events have been planned around the region, to find out more visit [www.fba.org.au/news/events](http://www.fba.org.au/news/events).

What's been happening in Landcare groups around FRCC?

- Caves Landcare group held a meeting on Tuesday 12 February and plan to take on a new project and reinvigorate their group.
- Following FRCC Equine Workshops a new Capricornia Equine Landcare Association was established on Saturday 16 February and will be the first group of its kind in Queensland.
- Capricorn Coast Landcare group were not deterred by wet weather and held their weeding and planting day on Sunday 17 February.
- The announcement of the 2013 Community Landcare Grant has several groups writing grant applications. If you need assistance with Landcare grants please don't hesitate to contact Katrina Conway, Regional Landcare Facilitator on 4999 2842 or the Caring for Our Country hotline on 1800 552 008.

## Witnessing King Tides

### Shelly McArdle

The Witnessing King Tide Event, hosted by the Fitzroy Basin Association and again supported by FRCC is held annually to encourage people to take a photo or two of the king tide to help emphasise the effects posed by rising sea levels on our coastal infrastructure and environment. This is aimed at increasing community awareness of high sea levels so that we can better prepare for the future.

This year's event that was held on 13 January, 2013 attracted around 50 attendees that submitted photos from Corio Bay to Emu Park. The photos were uploaded onsite to a local database before they were submitted to Green Cross to be included in a National Database.

To view the photos submitted from around the Nation visit:

<http://www.witnesskingtides.org/what-are-king-tides.aspx>

## 2012 FRCC Photo Competition

### Stephen Donaldson

The 2012 FRCC photo competition finished in December last year, with winners announced and presented with their prizes at our AGM. We plan to run the competition again in 2013, towards the end of the year, so please continue snapping photos between now and then!