

Fitzroy River and Coastal Catchments Inc.

NEWSLETTER • February 2011

President's Message

Michelle Hanrahan

On behalf of Fitzroy River and Coastal Catchments Inc. (FRCC) we want to thank you for your interest and involvement during 2010 and look forward to receiving your support again in 2011.

The Annual General Meeting (AGM) on 3 December 2010 provided the opportunity to recognise the excellent achievements of many of our members as well as being able to acknowledge the three best projects for 2010. Congratulations again to everyone involved.

Also at the AGM, four elected committee members and three special members stood down and the newly elected members announced. The 2011 FRCC Management Committee are:

Michelle Hanrahan, President (elected member)

Paul Birch, Vice President (elected member)

Peter Baggett, Secretary (elected member)

Leisa Childs, Treasurer (continuing elected member)

Ian Dare, (elected member)

Ian Groves, (continuing elected member)

Robert McArthur, (continuing elected member)

Jeff Mills, (continuing elected member)

Donald Black, (special member)

Cultural Heritage Representative to be advised

John Wall, (special member)

The committee members look forward to guiding the work of FRCC in 2011.

Executive Officer's Update

Jeff Krause

I am very proud to be appointed to this position with FRCC and look forward to developing productive partnerships with many individual members and organisations to contribute to sustainable natural resource management.

This is an interesting time to join FRCC with the extreme natural flooding event in the Fitzroy basin and its impact on much of our local and regional community. Many projects have been delayed due to the weather and the flood, creating an inability to access sites. There are significant challenges in completing some projects within planned timelines, given the continuing wet weather and as materials and labour are likely to be in short supply based on the extent of recovery required following the natural disasters here and elsewhere in the state. Our FRCC staff are available to support project completion as well as to discuss ideas for the development of new initiatives.

We plan to initiate and support more capacity building events in the coming months to develop greater awareness, understanding and skills aimed at improving natural resource management and productivity in our area. Details of events will be included in more frequent email broadcasts to members as well as being advertised to the wider community.

I look forward to building on the excellent achievements of FRCC through our highly committed staff and ongoing support from our valued members.

FRCC's New Executive Officer

Kristy Byers

FRCC is delighted to introduce to members our new Executive Officer. Jeff Krause is a long-time Rockhampton local and commenced his new role with us the week before Christmas. Jeff has an extensive background in education, starting as a teacher before moving into regional and state-wide executive corporate leadership roles within the State Education Department. Most recently this included leading the establishment and delivery of the billion dollar Tomorrow's Schools initiative aimed at providing modern school facilities to meet 21st century learning needs in some of the older communities in the state.

Jeff's involvement with education included the delivery of high level, client focused strategic advice and support services to schools, communities, central agencies and Government. This experience will be very helpful in his new role of leading FRCC into the next stage of growth.

The move to FRCC has been timely after working away from his family for much of the past four years. Jeff is very pleased to be working in this area once again which allows him to stay in the Rockhampton region and have time with his family and a range of community commitments. He has strong beliefs in the value of community networks and engaging with and empowering communities to deliver more sustainable and longer term development. FRCC is therefore extremely happy to have Jeff on board.

Jeff is very keen to meet as many of our members as possible over the coming months and he would love to hear from you should you have any ideas or just wish to have a chat about FRCC and how we may be able to develop our services.

AGM Coverage & launch of new FRCC website

Stefanie Carusi

Fitzroy River and Coastal Catchments Inc (FRCC) held our Annual General Meeting on the 3rd of December with a number of individual members and group representatives attending Kershaw House in Rockhampton.

The attendees braved the deluge of rain that fell on the day; some members who would have liked to attend had no choice but to miss out with many roads to Rockhampton closed.

The AGM featured guest speaker Mike Griffin, a weather consultant who writes weather forecasts for local newspapers and private companies and has worked for the Bureau of Meteorology.

Mike explained weather pattern trends, how and why Australia has moved in to a La Niña phase and what we can expect over the current wet season.

Mike's talk was fitting on such a day of torrential rain and I'm sure everyone at the AGM took away some information that will help them understand a little better the extreme wet conditions that Queensland and Australia may face in the near future.

The new website for FRCC was launched at the AGM. The new look and content of the site aims at making it easier to access information on things such as coming events, latest news, landholder experiences, available funding and our newsletters. The new website also contains a Landcare support page aimed at being a place that Landcare groups in the FRCC area can access publications and post their own news to share with other visitors to the site. There is also a list of Landcare groups within the FRCC area and some information on their past and present projects.

In an age where the internet has become the main avenue for sharing information, FRCC encourages landholders to regularly check our site for upcoming events and information that may be of interest to them.

We would like to thank all members and non members who attended, and we look forward to continuing our work with land managers and continuing our partnerships with group members in the FRCC sub-region throughout this year.

Best Project Winners 2009/10

Sandra Grinter

The winners of the Best Project Awards for 2009/10 (see the December 2010 Newsletter for an overview of the three projects that received the Awards for this round) were to be awarded at the FRCC AGM early in December 2010. Despite the wet weather, Rob and Ainslie McArthur from Mystery Park near St Lawrence were able to attend on the day to receive their award. Mystery Park won the award for the best Grazing project in the coastal catchments.

A small award ceremony and BBQ was held on the afternoon of Friday 10th of December at the FRCC office in Rockhampton. The awards were presented to the winners of the horticultural and grazing in the Fitzroy categories. John Cranny and Ben Clifton of Valley Syndicate were awarded the Best Project Award for their horticultural project. Ben's wife Michelle and son Robert accepted the award with Ben on behalf of the family farm.

Gerard and Craig Ellrott of Big House, Morinish were awarded the Best Project Award for their Grazing Project in the Fitzroy area. Gerard Ellrott accepted the award and John Ellrott was able to attend in place of his son Craig.

This is the second year that FRCC has presented Best Project Awards that are awarded to the best project in each of three categories from the list of Neighbourhood Catchment Projects that were approved during the previous financial year. There were six criteria that were looked at including property planning, outcomes and community contribution and involvement.

It's always so hard to narrow down to just three winners, with so many land managers putting strategic infrastructure on their properties that will have long-term benefits for the Fitzroy River and, ultimately, the Great Barrier Reef by reducing sediment flow out to the ocean. By running our Best Project Awards again this year, we were able to show appreciation and recognition of the well-developed on-ground projects and works land managers in our region have implemented with the FRCC support.

Farewell to Stefanie

Stefanie Carusi

The time has come for me to say goodbye.....

My time with FRCC over the last two years has been nothing short of fun, interesting, enjoyable, and a pleasure.

I have had the great fortune of meeting and working with some of the nicest people in Natural Resource Management and Primary Production. From my fellow staff in the FRCC and FBA offices to each and every landholder that has shared with me both a cup of tea and an insight into their lives.

For a western Sydney girl who grew up next to a chook farm, I didn't know much about steers, weaners and heifers, Brahmans, Herefords, or Droughtmasters and never even thought about how much they ate or how they grazed in a paddock. Now I know so much more about the grazing industry and so much more to still learn. I remain passionate about the production and environmental relationships in the grazing and horticultural industries, and look forward to watching FRCC further take its place in our region as a point of call for landholders seeking assistance and guidance for land management and planning infrastructure.

I hope I have made a valuable contribution to the organisation and hope to remain in contact with FRCC over not only the next few months but over the coming years.

I am looking forward to spending time with family in Sydney and to pursue my dream of travelling around Australia. My role at FRCC has inspired me further to go and see more of this amazing and unique (sometimes unforgiving as we have recently seen) country.

It has been a pleasure!

Landcare Queensland

Elli Webb

Edited by Kristy Byers

Since its formation in 1989 Landcare in Queensland has been a vibrant, highly motivated movement that has achieved significant change in both social attitudes and physical improvements towards land management practices and the environment. However, over recent years, Landcare in Queensland has experienced a decline in the overall number of groups, average group membership, and a reduced number of Landcare groups implementing local on-ground projects.

2010 was the 21st anniversary of Landcare in Queensland. In seeking to use this milestone to reinvigorate the Landcare movement in Queensland, the Landcare21 Plan was developed. Landcare21 provides an overview of recommendations to ensure that the movement becomes stronger again over the coming years.

The role and objective of Landcare is to work together at a local, catchment, and regional level to identify and solve natural resource management (NRM) issues. Landcare occupies a unique space that seeks to balance the needs of both conservation and production. Landcare seeks to raise community awareness and educate the public of the need to improve the management of our natural resources, foster cooperation amongst land users and government, and encourage action at all levels to tackle NRM issues. Like many locally based, community groups who operate largely on the commitment of volunteers, Landcare also generates community connections which are particularly important for people living in isolated conditions in rural and urban environments.

Landcare21 Plan seeks to provide a range of recommendations and actions that all stakeholders at all levels (local, regional, state and national) can implement to conquer the following challenges:

- Providing adequate support for Landcare Groups who are working together to achieve the Landcare vision;
- Availability of technical advice to enhance the adoption of Landcare principles of natural resource management;

- Ensuring that communication networks and technologies are in place so that timely and tested information is available to all land managers;
- Ensuring the local level of information is taken into account in the formulation of regional plans and state level policies;
- Integration of biodiversity into productive agriculture and urban management;
- Establishing priorities for education, extension, training and research activities needed to advance the principles and practices of Landcare;
- Continuing to strive for better mechanisms for coordination of planning and implementation at local, regional and state levels;
- Local groups being supported and empowered by key organizations at a regional and state level;
- An effective state voice for Landcare that brings together conservation, farming, government and community volunteers.

The Landcare21 Plan is relevant to anyone involved with natural resource management, and it is up to *you* to take it on. Visit www.landcare.org.au for a copy of the plan.

Central Queensland Forest Association Funding Opportunities

Stefanie Carusi

The Central Queensland Forest Association (CQFA) has received funding for Reveg.net under the Federal Government *Caring for our Country* Landscape auspice.

Funding is currently available through CQFA for landholders interested in managing their forest land for multiple objectives such as, providing downstream environmental benefits, diversifying income opportunities and improving the long term resilience of the landscape.

CQFA is offering financial incentives to owners of freehold land with substantial forest reserves. Financial incentives of \$75.00 per hectare are available via the Reveg.net program for forest mark-up and thinning in both standing native forest and regrowth areas. On ground works including improving the health, productivity and ground cover of overstocked regrowth forests, revegetating waterways and linking fragmented essential habitat forests will be integral to the program.

CQFA is also offering comprehensive integrated forest and property management planning and mapping as part of the program along with supporting complementary field days. For further information on this funding or the field days please contact Jodi Newton in the CQFA office on (07) 49212420, Reginald Connolly on 0427105416 or Anne Stünzner on 0419857791 to discuss further.

Grazing BMP update

John Rodgers

The Cattle grazing Best Management Practice (BMP) program has reached the pilot group stage with the first modules being trialled by a selected group of cattle producers. This landholder reference group is made up of representatives from the Burdekin, Burnett Mary and Fitzroy river catchments and will examine the content and practicality of the self-assessment modules. These modules are based on the successful Grains BMP program and are designed so the cattle producer can access them through a secure website package to benchmark their business.

Lindy Symes from DEEDI in Biloela, who is leading the development, says:

“This program will enable producers to identify and access training to improve their knowledge and skills and then design and implement actions to assist them to focus on the most profitable and sustainable management practices for their own business.”

“These self assessments are automatically linked to action plans that record actions to improve BMP and instantly compares how their management relates to industry accepted BMP.”

“Producers will have a clear indication of where they sit in relation to other grazing businesses within their catchment or across the State based on best management principles at three different levels – above, minimum or below standard.”

Some of the potential actions identified by producers in this process will attract funding from FBA programs. Examples of this could be, improving ground cover by better distribution of watering points, fencing areas prone to patch grazing, or increasing 3P component of pastures by reducing areas of bare ground or short duration pasture.

Basically any action which improves water quality downstream can be considered. Most of these actions will result in improved income and sustainability for the producer as well.

Grazing BMP is scheduled to commence in March. If you have any questions please contact an FRCC project officer on (07)49210573.

Landcare Group Training Needs Survey: What do you need?

One of the more common remarks to come out of the Landcare21 Plan is that the Landcare community in Queensland want more training opportunities.

Landcare Queensland would like to know what type of training your group needs. This will guide us as we apply for funding to provide training to groups in Qld.

A survey is available at <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/ZH9LQX2>. There are only five questions to keep it short and sweet.

Gambling Community Benefit Fund (Purchase of new car)

Sandra Grinter

FRCC is grateful for recently receiving news that our proposal for funding for the purchase of a four wheel drive was successful. We have put in an order and expect to have the vehicle on the road in March.

Post Flood Weed Control

In this time of flooding events and wide-spread rainfall, there is a great concern about the spread of weeds in the flood waters, animal fodder and earth-moving machinery. This would be to the detriment of many native species and agricultural productivity, but with your help we can reduce the potential impacts.

If you have noticed new incursions or increased numbers of weeds in your area, please report this to DEED's Biosecurity Customer Service Centre on 13 25 23 or local Government.

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75 Canning Street
PO Box 288 Rockhampton Q 4700
T: 07 4921 0573
F: 07 4921 0528
E: info@frcc.org.au
www.frcc.org.au