

Fitzroy River and Coastal Catchments Inc.

NEWSLETTER • June 2011

President's Message

Michelle Hanrahan

Welcome to the June edition of our newsletter, which provides an update and highlights a range of FRCC's activities.

The Management Committee and staff recently held its annual retreat to review the FRCC strategic plan and set priorities for the coming year. The chance to review our achievements and set priorities again proved beneficial ensuring that FRCC remains a vibrant and viable business supporting sustainable NRM outcomes in our ever changing world.

While the last year has had its challenges, the future holds many opportunities as development continues across the region. We need to do things differently and we need to build smarter business models.

I look forward to discussing opportunities on how to expand our services with members and encourage you to contribute to the further development of FRCC.

Executive Officer's Update

Jeff Krause

Since the February newsletter numerous changes have taken place at FRCC. Firstly, the office has moved to our new location at 14 Wandal Road. This has required a big effort by all staff to relocate and continue to deliver services to members. Please drop in and see our new office in the Wandal business area opposite Foodworks.

We have also seen staff changes, with Sandra Grinter moving on to further her career aspirations, two permanent positions were advertised during March attracting a quality field of applicants. The outcome for FRCC is that we are fortunate to have the positions filled by experienced and enthusiastic people, Rhys Kellow and Shelly McArdle. Both will be wonderful assets to the FRCC team.

I thank Amanda Johnston and Chantelle James for their work in maintaining our services whilst the recruitment process was being conducted. Their dedication and commitment has assisted with the planning and delivery of workshops as well as the development of a range of networking and information opportunities.

Planning is complete for an information day that focussed on improving landholders understanding of cultural heritage issues as requested by members of Landcare groups. Further information is available on our website.

We are also developing an information day for smaller landholders on effective land management and animal care following the Management Committee identifying this as a need and the success of a similar activity held in Calliope last month.

Staff have been engaged in advising landholders and assessing flood recovery funding applications. Advice has often included weed identification given the spread of weeds during the floods and the exceptional wet season. Specific focus is being given to concerns about the spread of Giant Rats Tail Grass with FRCC partnering with Rockhampton Regional Council (RRC) to raise awareness and control measures.

FRCC staff are also contributing to the RRC's Be Heard campaign to support the development of the Council's Community Plan, being asked to attend workshop activities and discussion groups that focus on identifying environmental and economic values for our community. Engagement in these forums provides an opportunity to profile the work of FRCC to other community groups and organizations and to have our priorities included in Council planning.

I look forward to providing an update in future newsletters.

Farewell Sandra

Sandra Grinter

After two years with FRCC, I have accepted a position with Water Services within the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DERM) in Rockhampton. In the two years at FRCC, I have worked on several projects (and even more project proposals), helped to provide support to local community groups, supported the field officers in mapping and assisted with performance reporting and completion mapping for Neighbourhood Catchment projects funded through Reef Rescue. I have developed proposals in partnership with RRC, CQU, FBA, and provided support for Landcare Groups and many coastal community groups. With the two years away from my "usual" work with water quality, I've certainly learnt a bit about weeds, feral pigs, and a range of other issues relevant to the FRCC sub-region.

I wish Jeff, the staff and Management Committee all the best for the future and I look forward to seeing FRCC continue to support members (both individual landholders and group members) in natural resource management over the coming years.

Welcome to new FRCC staff

Introducing Rhys Kellow

After recently returning from overseas Rhys Kellow began temporary work at FRCC in early March, replacing Sandra Grinter as 'Project Officer - Catchment Services'. Rhys spent over 3 years with the Fitzroy Basin Association in Emerald as a Biodiversity Field Officer. He has experience in a range of FBA programs and has worked throughout the region on many natural resource management projects. Rhys is excited to be back in Central Queensland and looks forward to working with our community again to bring further funding to the region and has already started developing submissions in conjunction with local environmental groups.

Introducing Shelly McArdle

Shelly started work with FRCC on 18 May in the position of Project Officer Community Engagement. Shelly brings a range of skills to the position, including a background in horticulture and her most recent role as community relations officer for Bunnings in Rockhampton.

Her involvement with a range of community, business groups and schools in the area will be a great asset in the role with FRCC. Shelly is very keen to meet members and discuss how we can improve our support and communication network.

World Wetlands Day

Sandra Grinter

On Sunday 13 February, FRCC along with other like minded NRM and environmental groups attended the World Wetlands Day event at Bicentennial Lagoon in Emu Park to educate the general community about the importance of our wetlands. It was a great day with many displays, native plant giveaways, free sausage sizzle, wetland bug ID and tours to the nearby Kinka Wetland to see a fish passage and bird watching. It is great to see such an array of people taking an interest in our wetlands.

Community Action Grants

Rhys Kellow

Community Action Grants 2011/12 round is open for applications and close on 1 August. Any groups currently operating in the environmental and sustainable land management arena and established and emerging Indigenous groups are encouraged to apply for grants of between \$5000 and \$20 000 (GST exclusive) for a broad range of activities that will contribute to Caring for our Country national priorities. If anyone is considering applying, or has a project they would like to undertake, please don't hesitate to contact FRCC for assistance. Guidelines and eligibility criteria will be available on the Caring for our Country website at www.nrm.gov.au when the 2011–12 Community Action Grants round opens.

Coastal Project Update

Rhys Kellow

The "Communities Caring for Coast" project which was developed in conjunction with FBA is progressing well, with 5 groups along the Capricorn Coast to receive their funds very soon.

Funded through the Australian Government's, "Caring for our Country" program, the aim of the project is to provide local community organisations with the funds and resources required to address the threats posed to our coast's natural assets. These projects could include, but are not limited to, community education and awareness; direct on ground works, such as fencing, tree planting or weed control; and research initiatives that will increase knowledge and aid conservation and management.

If anyone would like to know more about the project, or become involved in any way, please contact the FRCC office.

Lower Fitzroy Landholders Support Workshops

Lisa Sutton

FRCC engaged Resource Consulting Services (RCS) to deliver "Healthy Soils Workshops" for The Caves, Marlborough and Wycarbah Landcare Groups, as well as the Raglan Catchment working group, and to interested people in St Lawrence and Rockhampton. The workshops are supported by FRCC, through from the Australian Government's Caring for Our Country funding.

The series of workshops that commenced in May last year have seen more than 100 people attended the initial workshops on soil health and the follow-up ones on property planning and monitoring. There has been real interest from landholders in understanding the benefits of having healthy soils and effective land management practices.

Ross Collins, nephew of Alf Collins Snr from "Tandarra" between Bowen and Ayr, attended the first Rockhampton workshop. Mr Collins said that David McLean did a great job of presenting the course material which was very useful in understanding the benefits of healthy soils, how to improve them, and for moving cattle at the right time to benefit production.

The first workshop, healthy soils, focused on how land managers can work with nature to improve the productive capacity and ultimately the value of their enterprise and property. David McLean and Terry McCosker from RCS demonstrate how holistic management systems could benefit your land, animals, financial situation and most importantly yourself and your family. Key take home messages were to focus on aspects of your enterprise that you can improve and not waste energy on those which you can't and to manage your natural resources more effectively to reduce input costs thereby improving sustainability and profitability.

Other key messages were that management determines the health of ecological indicators (soil health, biodiversity, the water cycle, and energy flow). These provide ecosystem services via natural assets (soil, plants, water and air) which benefit the plants, animals and people of rural enterprises. Soil organic matter and organic carbon was discussed in detail including its importance in promoting good soil structure and aeration, nitrogen storage through microbial activity, and water and mineral storage. A 2% increase in soil organic matter increases the soil's water holding capacity by 144 000L/Ha. The interdependence of soil, plant and animal health were examined in detail and how its flow on effect influences production and therefore profitability.

Later sessions emphasised the importance of maintaining a vigorous standing pasture rich in biodiversity as well as detached groundcover to intercept rainfall and retain soil moisture to make it work for you instead of losing good topsoil in runoff. Topics also included the importance of matching of stocking rate to carrying capacity and this is critical to a well managed grazing enterprise. Different grazing systems were discussed: from the traditional continuous grazing in place since the 1860s, to rotational grazing, rotational spelling, multicamp rotational grazing and time controlled grazing; each of which has a different intensity of infrastructure development and management, so with a better understanding of each type, producers can determine the grazing system which suits their situation to achieve improved outcomes.

The second workshop in the package, on property management and monitoring, reviewed the previous workshop briefly, focused on the financial benefits of planning, monitoring and managing your grazing system accordingly. The effective use of Grazing charts is explained in detail, together with planning to get fencing and water infrastructure right, improved livestock management, animal nutrition and low stress livestock handling concludes another great day of learning.

Participants left with a greater knowledge of how a holistic management approach can contribute to a healthy grazing system that is profitable and sustainable.

FRCC Secure a new vehicle

FRCC was recently successful in obtaining a grant for close to \$32,000 to purchase a new vehicle through the Gambling Community Benefit Fund. The Ford Ranger 4x4 will assist FRCC staff to continue to visit landholders face to face.

Many thanks to Sandra Grinter for her great work in compiling the proposal and to the Queensland Government and the Gambling Community Benefit Fund for providing this funding opportunity. Thank you also to the Fitzroy Basin Association, Rockhampton Regional Council and Miles Consulting Services for their letters of support and to Tropical Auto Group who supplied the vehicle.

Mt Larcom GPS Workshop

Lisa Sutton

Lisa Sutton attended a recent Global Positioning System (GPS) workshop. Agforce Reef Rescue Project Officers, Natalie Schick and Josh Shwartz delivered a very informative GPS workshop at the Mt Larcom CWA hall on Thursday 17 March. The CWA ladies excelled in providing delicious food for the day.

Natalie and Josh demonstrated how to set up a GPS correctly; measure areas and distances; work with waypoints and tracks to better navigate on-property; download and upload information into a property computer mapping program to assist with

mapping and regulatory requirements. All of which are useful when rebuilding property infrastructure damaged by the flooding as experienced by many in the Fitzroy Basin recently.

The 15 participants on the day received assistance with their own GPS unit; GPS glove box guides illustrating how to use different GPS units; a certificate of participation which goes toward a nationally accredited Certificate IV in Conservation and Land Management.

This workshop was delivered by AgForce Projects in partnership with Fitzroy Basin Association Inc and Boyne Calliope Sub Region through funding from the Australian Government Caring for our Country Reef Rescue initiative.

GPS Essentials workshops are open to all producers. If you missed out this time, Agforce runs GPS and computer mapping workshops regularly, so if you would like to know more about either it's a really worthwhile investment of your time. Upcoming courses are usually posted on www.frcc.org.au

Cultural Heritage Information Day for Land managers

Chantelle James and Shelly McArdle

An interesting and informative day for land managers, Landcare members and the community.....

Questions answered on the day included:

- Have you ever wondered about cultural heritage and what you need to be aware of before commencing any projects such as fencing or earth works?
- How to identify culturally significant items or sites?
- What are my obligations under the current legislation as a land manager?
- What resources are available to learn more about cultural heritage and to connect with the right people, information and support?

Those who came along learnt about indigenous cultural heritage from local groups, elders and specialists to increase their awareness and understanding at a free Information day on Saturday 18 June at Cawarral. The group looked at the importance of culture to Land managers and Indigenous people and brought these people together informally with support groups to overcome myths and misunderstandings so that we can work together to protect our cultural heritage.

The info day commenced at Cawarral Hall and was followed by a field trip to nearby Gawula with local Elders Bob Muir and Bill Mann and the Gawula Aboriginal Land Trust committee, for a walk and talk on Indigenous Cultural Heritage. It was a great opportunity to learn how to identify sites, areas and examples of cultural significance in the landscape and on country. This was blended with simple explanations of the Cultural Heritage Act to help land managers understand their obligations and duty of care.

Guest Speakers included Patrice Brown of CQ Consulting Group, local elders Uncle Billy Mann and Bob Muir, Fitzroy Basin Association (FBA) represented by Kristian Smith, Fitzroy Basin Elders Committee (FBEC) represented by Murray Bullock, and Gawula Aboriginal Land Trust Committee. FRCC is greatly thankful to the Gawula Aboriginal Land Trust Committee for their permission to visit 'Gawula' and to all the partnering organisations and indigenous peoples supporting and involved in the day.

Gawula, also known as Mt Wheeler, is a 137 hectare freehold property on the coast near Rockhampton, within the traditional country of the Darumbal people. Sally Vea Vea, chair of the Gawula Aboriginal Land Trust, said "The area was transferred to the Gawula Aboriginal Land Trust by the Queensland Government in 2007, under the Aboriginal Land Act 1991 and we are very happy to support this initiative."

This workshop is supported by FRCC, through funding from the Australian Government's Caring for Country.

FRCC Members Forum

FRCC members were treated to an enjoyable evening on Friday 10 June at Kershaw House. Members were interested to hear guest speaker, Peter Milne, recount some of his experiences and perceptions as Director of Animal Health Australia, Director of National Livestock Identification System Ltd., Chairman of CQ Forest Association, and member of the Biosecurity Queensland Ministerial Advisory Council. Peter holds these high level positions whilst living in Rockhampton and was happy to respond to members questions.

Guests were also interested to hear about the range of services and support etc.

Stocktake Workshop

BALANCING SUPPLY AND DEMAND

Up and coming Stocktake Workshop: Rockhampton Tuesday 26 July 2011. Facilitated by DEEDI

Key features of Stocktake include paddock assessment, monitoring, data interpretation, quantifying potential improvement and forage budgeting. This one day practical training workshop steps participants through the technical concepts and demonstrates field assessment techniques and database use. See the flyer with more information on our FRCC website at www.frcc.org.au

Weather Updates

Amanda Johnston

Every Friday since 11 March, Mike Griffin (a local meteorologist) has been providing a weather update for the FRCC area. Based on a central point around Rockhampton, the weather update provides a general overview of the weather and information on weekly river height measurements, rainfall updates, an outlook and forecast for the coming week ahead.

The update, which is available on the FRCC website, has been found to be useful for many people in the area. We have received positive feedback and are open to any suggestions you may have on these weather updates.

Thanks to Mike for providing this very relevant and important information.

Take a look at our website to see the latest weather update under the Latest News tab.

<http://www.frcc.org.au/>

2011 List Committee Members

Michelle Hanrahan	President
Rob McArthur	Vice-President
Peter Baggett	Secretary
Leise Childs	Treasurer
Ian Groves	Member
Paul Birch	Member
Ian Dare	Member
Jeff Mills	Member
Donald Black	(Special Member)
John Wall	(Special Member)
<i>Vacant</i>	(Special Member)

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