



Pioneer Catchment & Landcare News

August 2012

Talking Wildlife: 50 years with Wildlife Queensland! Brisbane, Friday 7 and Saturday 8 September

To celebrate the significant milestone, Wildlife Queensland is bringing together some of Australia's acclaimed wildlife campaigners, researchers and workers. For more information go to, <http://www.wildlife.org.au/talkingwildlife>

ecoMackay Expo

Come and visit PCL and SLCMA's Landcare display at the ecoMackay Expo. The expo is a fun environmentally themed learning event, suitable for the whole family, where people can come along and find out about sustainable living.

With activities for all ages, this free community event includes live entertainment, face painting, kids crafts and games, seedbomb making, amazing animals and environmentally sustainable displays filled with ideas to assist everyone in becoming more environmentally conscience and sustainable.

As well as providing a learning experience, the Mackay Regional Council is giving the chance to win a share in over \$3000 in prizes!

Entry into the draw is as simple as completing the ecoMackay survey forms, found at the prize display stand at the front entrance of the Council Administration building on the day, with winners being drawn at 1.30pm the same day.

Go to the MRC website for more details;
http://www.mackay.qld.gov.au/community/council_events

**When: Sunday 12 August, 10am-2pm
Mackay Regional Council Lawn, Gordon St**

The ecoMackay Expo is proudly sponsored the following organisations:



Special thanks to our prize sponsors:

John Donnelly Good Guys, Bunnings Warehouse, Electric Vehicles Qld, Mackay Renewable Energy, Broken River Resort and Aurecon

Walk & Talk with Landcare

The next in PCL's 'Walk & Talk with Landcare' series is happening on August 21. This month we will be visiting the property of long-term Land for Wildlife member, Clare Davis. Set in the urban environment of Slade Point this walk will showcase what can be achieved in a suburban setting (*see page 3 for an article on Clare's property*).

Morning tea provided.

When: Tuesday 21 August, 8.30-10am Slade Point, contact PCL for details 4944 1979, admin@pioneercatchment.org.au

Please bring comfortable shoes and clothing, insect repellent and water

Notes on Nature

Have you been reading your Weekend Edition of the Mackay Telegraph? If you have you may have seen PCL and Reef Catchments fortnightly column 'Notes on Nature'. Keep an eye out for it to find out about current issues, events and items of interest within our region.

Future Leaders Take Up the Challenge

Friday 27 July saw Shoal Point invaded by year 5-7 students on a mission; to learn about the importance of the coastal environment to the health of the Great Barrier Reef. Thirty five students from five schools took part in the Reef Guardian School's Future Leaders Eco Challenge, held by the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority. Representatives from PCL, Reef Catchments and the Mackay & District Turtle Watch Association presented on a range of topics. Students learnt about the importance of mangroves for water quality, vegetation for dune stabilisation as well as the role of the habitat for endangered sea turtles and resident and migratory birds, along with how beach users can minimise their impact on these fragile systems.

Those who attended were charged with taking what they learnt back to their fellow classmates. Students impressed PCL staff with their enthusiasm and interest, asking questions and demonstrating an impressive background knowledge of their environment.

An education initiative of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority



Students record what they learnt about coastal birds

Image: C Bartram



Weeds of National Significance (WoNS)

Thirty two WoNS have been identified by Australian governments based on their invasiveness, potential for spread and environmental, social and economic impacts. A list of 20 WoNS was endorsed in 1999 and a further 12 were added in 2012.

Asparagus spp. - **Asparagus weeds**

Asparagus weeds were introduced into Australia as ornamental garden plants, as with many garden escapees Asparagus weeds have found their way into the natural environment through the incorrect disposal of garden waste and the spread of seeds by water and birds, which feed on the fruit. Once established Asparagus weeds can be very difficult to remove. Three of the species named as WoNS can be found in our region.

The ***Asparagus Weeds Best Practice Management Manual*** can be found at the Weeds of National Significance website; <http://www.weeds.org.au/WoNS/> or you can contact PCL for information.

Asparagus aethiopicus—**Ground Asparagus**

Description: Perennial shrub or scrambler, growing from thick tuberous roots formed on the rhizomes

Leaves: Thin (linear) flattened stems to 3 mm wide and to 250mm long that assume the form and function of a leaf (cladodes).

Flowers and fruit: White or pale pink, bell-shaped (4 mm) located in groups (racemes) arising at the base of membranous bracts. Flowers spring to autumn which develop into red berried 8mm wide.

Habitat: Grows well in shaded environments.

Origin: Southern and eastern Africa.

Asparagus africanus—**Ornamental Asparagus**

Description: Climber or low shrub with thick fibrous roots, but lacking tubers. Stems to about 12 metres long with spirally arranged branches; has reddish-brown spines with those on lower stems to 12 mm long.

Leaves: Leaves reduced to sharp spine-like scales at the base of leaf-like cladodes, cladodes needle-like in clusters of 6–12, of unequal length with the longest about 15 mm and about 0.5 mm wide.

Flowers and fruit: Small white flowers occur in clusters of six and form into fleshy green berries which ripen to orange with a single seed 3–4 mm

Habitat: Most successful in coastal areas.

Origin: South Africa



Ground Asparagus
Image: Blackwood Images



Climbing Asparagus
Image: hear.org

Asparagus plumosus—**Climbing Asparagus**

Description: Wiry perennial scrambler with fibrous rhizomes and roots, stems to many metres long. Distinguished by main roots swollen on young plants, tubers not formed

Leaves: Leaves reduced to spine-like scales <5 mm long found at the base of leaf-like cladodes 2–7 mm long, 0.1 mm wide, in clusters of 8–15; lateral branches arranged in the same plane.

Flowers and fruit: Greenish white, bell-shaped, 5–7 mm, form into black, single seeded berries 4-5mm. Flowers spring to autumn.

Habitat: Dry or wet rainforests, wetlands.

Origin: South Africa

The problem: Asparagus weeds can smother vegetation wherever they occur. Form resistant tubers or tough root crowns which may be hard to remove, particularly in rocky environments..

What you can do: All plants are declared **class 3 weeds** and should be removed. Plants can be dug out, being sure to remove the entire crown. Herbicide applications produce limited results. Please contact PCL for best practises management.

Local impact: Climbing Asparagus is the most common in our area, generally occurring in dry rainforest settings. This species is a significant threat to our regional wetlands.

Sources: MRPMG, Weeds Australia website, Weeds of National Significance website

New Weeds of National Significance

A review of weed species has resulted in 12 plants being added to the list of WoNS, with all known to occur in QLD. A number of the species named are known pest species within the greater Mackay Region; Asparagus weeds, Bellyache Bush, Cat's Claw Creeper, Madeira Vine, and Water Hyacinth. Both Bellyache Bush and Water Hyacinth are two species identified as priority weeds in the Mackay Whitsunday region by the Mackay Regional Pest Management Group.

Individual landowners and managers are ultimately responsible for managing WoNS with State and territory governments responsible for overall legislation and administration. WoNS have been selected as they require coordination among Government, organisations and individuals with weed management responsibilities. More information about WoNS is available on the following websites:

<http://www.weeds.org.au/WoNS/> | <http://www.weeds.gov.au/weeds/lists/wons.html> |



Water Hyacinth has been added to the list of WoNS
Image: C Bartron

Land for Wildlife - An Urban Oasis

Nestled amongst the urban sprawl of Slade Point a small area of healthy native coastal scrub and Melaleuca forest is being managed by a pair of dedicated land owners.

Lee and Clare Davis are the proud owners of the land that extends to just over 2 hectares in size. The land has been in the family for over 100 years and is also registered as a Nature Refuge, protecting it from further development in the years to come.

The block itself consists of primarily remnant vegetation with mature Melaleuca wetland verging into beach scrub in more exposed areas. A wide variation of flowering plants produces a hive of activity for local birdlife.

Did you know?..

Nature refuges comprise the second largest expanse of Queensland's protected areas estate, and actually outnumber national parks.

Learn more at www.ehp.qld.gov.au



Management of the area has always been an ongoing challenge. Madeira Vine has been on the property for many years but has now all but been eradicated. Arson and rubbish continue to be a periodical nuisance but this hasn't deterred their desire to continue.

Areas in conservation provide levels of protection and security for wildlife, particularly in vital stages of their lifecycle such as breeding. The value of these areas is increased when subject to human encroachment and urbanisation.

You can join PCL on a tour of this truly unique property on August 21, from 8.30am—10. Please contact our office for details of the walk.



Reef Waters 60,964 kilograms Cleaner, and Counting

Eco Barge Clean Seas Inc. was founded by Libby Edge in June 2009, with the simple mission to minimise the threat of marine debris on our aquatic environment saving our turtles and marine mammals from entanglement



and eventual death. Eco Barge's approach is a very simple one, removing marine debris from beaches of the Whitsunday Islands, the effectiveness of which can be seen in the numbers with 60,964 kilograms of marine debris having been removed since 2009. As well as collecting rubbish Libby and volunteers also meticulously sort and record all debris, to help better understand what debris is finding its way to the Great

Barrier Reef and where it is coming from, with some litter being traced back to Victoria. Funded by sponsors and staffed by volunteers, Eco Barge Clean Seas has attracted a large amount of community interest and has received a number of awards to assist with their operations, most recently the Healthy Waterways Alliance Community Award for the Mackay Whitsunday and Isaac region in June.

Interested in volunteering?
<http://www.ecobargecleanseas.org.au>
info@ecobargecleanseas.org.au

Spotlight on Veronique

Groups such as PCL are able to do the work they do thanks to the efforts of dedicated volunteers. Veronique has been undertaking water quality monitoring at the Mackay Botanic Gardens for seven years, working with garden staff and BirdLife Mackay members to undertake coordinated sampling. After seven years of hard work Veronique is taking a year off to travel and PCL will have a hard time filling her shoes in her absence. PCL would like to say a big thank-you to Veronique and we wish her a safe trip full of wonderful adventures.



Come rain or shine Veronique can be relied on.

Image: M McSwiney

Flock to the Gardens

The Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens 'Friends of the Gardens' are holding a free walk and talk with fellow botanic and bird enthusiasts at the Botanic Gardens to celebrate the installation of two new bird identification signs.

'Friends' and members from BirdLife Mackay will lead the walk through the gardens and along the lagoon where both birds and plants will no doubt be on display. This is a great opportunity for people to come along and learn about the Botanic Gardens, the plants, and the birds that use them. The walk will be followed by a BBQ lunch and people are asked to bring a salad or dessert to add to the meat, rolls and drinks provided.

When: Saturday 11 August, 10am-2pm,
meet at the admin building
RSVP: 4952 7300, botanic@mackay.qld.gov.au

Who's who in Pioneer Catchment & Landcare

Management Committee

Chair Margaret Lane (SGAP—Mackay Branch)
Deputy Chair Dave Hunter
Treasurer Currently Vacant
Secretary (Non voting) Wendy Eiteneuer

Committee Members

Irene Champion
Di Salau
Dianne Williams
Cr Theresa Morgan
John Atkinson

Pioneer Catchment office

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Pioneer Catchment Landcare Facilitator

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Office Manager Wendy Eiteneuer

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Newsletter: Claire Bartron,
Dallas Milburn

Supported by:



CARING
FOR
OUR
COUNTRY



Upcoming Events

Thursday 2 August, from 7.30pm—SGAP Monthly Meeting, *An Introduction to Using the Internet and Electronic Re-sources for Plant Identification* by Grant Paterson, Mackay Gem and Craft Society Hall, Leisure Court. Visitors Welcome

Saturday 4 August, 8-10am—Morag McNichol Reserve working bee. Contact Jim McNichol, 4942 8802

Sunday 5 August, meet at 6am—BirdLife Mackay Outing, Tedlands Wetland, 4952 2964 for details

Saturday 11 August, 8.30am– 2pm—Coastal Community Activity Sandfly Creek Environmental Reserve Conservation Volunteers Australia, 4951 0933

Saturday 11 August, 10am– 2pm—Mackay Botanic Gardens, Friends Guided Walk, RSVP, 4952 7300, botanic@mackay.qld.gov.au

Sunday 12 August, 10am –2pm—ecoMackay Expo, Mackay Regional Council lawn

Wednesday 15 August, 9am– 1pm—PCL's Coastal Communities Activities Field Trip, meet at the Pioneer River Boat Ramp near the entry of Sandfly Creek Environmental Reserve. *Free bus and lunch*, RSVP required, 4944 1979

Saturday 18 August— *Coastal Community Activities*

9-11am—Ball Bay Meet at Vehicle access nearest to Mason Street

2-4pm—Blacks Beach, meet at car park at end of Anglers Parade
noni.zahmel@reefcatchments.com.au, 4968 4215

Tuesday 21 August— 8.30-10apm—Walk and Talk with Landcare at Slade Point. Contact the office for details.

Check our website for more events and updates!
www.pioneercatchment.org.au

Coastal Field Trip!

Conservation action at the beach, don't forget to sign-up for the Coastal Communities Coastal Field Trip being hosted by PCL.

Starting at 9am at Sandfly Creek Environmental Reserve on Wednesday 15 August this free hosted bus trip will visit a number of coastal sites showcasing the conservation work being done by a number of groups, winding up at Shoal Point for lunch (provided) before heading back to Sandfly Creek for 1pm.

RSVP by Monday 13 August, 4944 1979 or
admin@pioneercatchment.org.au

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PO Box 1076
MACKAY Qld 4740