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REGIONAL LANDCARE

FACILITATOR:

CATCHMENT COORDINATOR

Christine Peterson

**PROJECT OFFICER (Weed
Partnerships and Bush Regen.)**

Aaron Regan

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE:

Tony Hinschen, Chair
Scott Hardy, Deputy
Sue McLeod, Secretary
Jennifer Whitney, Treasurer
Mark Blair
Cath Campbell

Vision and Goals

To promote the planned and sustainable management of the O'Connell/Andromache, Proserpine and Gregory river catchments in a constructive and balanced way by actions such as promoting ecologically sustainable development, developing catchment management strategies, involving the community in NRM decision making, and promoting of the value of a coordinated catchment-wide approach for managing natural resources.

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Chairperson's Report

Tony Hinschen

Despite the shortage of funds which all groups such as ours are experiencing, Whitsunday Catchment Landcare (WCL) remains viable and continues to provide an important service to the Whitsunday community. This is, in large part, due to the fact that in October last year the employment of our Coordinator was taken on by Reef Catchments Mackay Whitsunday. Since that time Christine has maintained the role of Regional Landcare Facilitator and Catchment Coordinator, allocating her time between WCL duties (6 days per month), Reef Catchments projects, and the delivery of the Australian Government's National Landcare Facilitator program. This arrangement is funded for the next two years.

We developed a number of funding proposals with our colleague organisations, Sarina Landcare Catchment Management Association and Pioneer Catchment & Landcare Group, together with whom we form the Central Qld Coast Landcare Network. These projects include the Central Qld Coast Landcare Network webpage with associated plant database, projects database and wildlife gallery; and webpages for each of our groups to give us another way of reaching our communities. Another project has helped fund a number of land manager workshops across the region. The network continues to work together.

In what has been a difficult year for many of us, with industry and weather upheavals, I would like to make special mention of the WCL Management Committee members who have continued to volunteer their time for the organisation. I'd like to also thank our staff Christine Peterson for her work for WCL and her continued dedication in her new roles with RC; and Aaron Regan, our project officer who has recently resigned to take up a position with Whitsunday Regional Council. I've no doubt WCL will have plenty of opportunity to work with Aaron in future.

On behalf of WCL I again acknowledge the support of Whitsunday Regional Council, who continue to provide technical assistance and administrative support as well as support and funding for key on-ground projects. I would also like to acknowledge the support of Reef Catchments, who not only provide our part-time catchment coordinator, but also provide some funds towards our operating expenditure, which enable us to continue to produce our newsletter.

WCL also received a small contribution toward administrative costs from the Australian Government Grants to Voluntary Environment and Heritage Organisations (GVEHO) program.

Tony

Coordinator's Report

Christine Peterson

I'm certainly not the only one who comments that the years keep getting busier and busier; and this year was no exception. We received many requests for information and assistance: from individual land managers, community groups, and schools.

WCL submitted a number of funding applications this year: to the Qld Government's Gambling Community Benefit Fund (\$12407 for shadehouse, nursery benches and storage refurbishments); Qld Government Landcare Grants (\$5000 for continued rehabilitation of Galbraith Creek); the Australian Government's Caring for our Country (\$20000 towards financial incentives for land management) and the Australian Government Grants to Voluntary Environment and Heritage Organisations (GVEHO) program (\$2300 for administrative support). We also submitted an application to the Australian Governments Volunteer Grants Program for volunteer equipment, the outcome of which we have not heard yet.

I would like to thank our dedicated Bushcare Volunteer regulars who donate their time and energy almost every Thursday (and some Saturdays) to collect seed and propagate the plants needed for revegetation and who attend our tree planting and weed control days. I would also like to thank the council staff who never hesitate to help us with project advice and who we work with so easily to deliver on projects and awareness raising activities.

Christine

Whitsunday Weed Partnerships

The focus for Weed Partnerships again this year included the Andromache River for sicklepod and parthenium weed; Rubbervine adjacent to the Rubbervine containment line near Eden Lassie Creek; some parcels of public land; leucaena; and declared weeds on rural residential blocks. 39 land managers received specific training, advice and assistance with implementing their weed management plans and a number of community sites were treated for Leucaena and other declared weeds. Just over 56 ha of weeds were controlled. Land managers participating in the program have continued access to advice and information.



This partnership between WCL, Whitsunday Regional Council and land managers gives land managers information and assistance. A Council or WCL Officer conducts site inspections with land managers and develops weed management plans. A WCL Officer then trains the land manager on-site with techniques in weed control, including herbicide use, the use of personal protective equipment and the use of application equipment. Land managers become familiar with the use of a Quikspray, Splatterguns and knapsacks, all of which are available for hire from WCL after land managers are fully inducted with their use.



Whitsunday Weed Partnerships is funded with cash and in-kind from Whitsunday Regional Council, Whitsunday Catchment Landcare and in-kind from Reef Catchments Mackay Whitsunday Isaac.

Top: WCL Project Officer, Aaron Regan showing the seed head of Giant Rats Tail Grass, which is spreading through grazing country in our region. Photo: J. Dyke. Above: Leucaena trees ready for transport; these were not left on site due to safety reasons and aesthetics. Photo: A. Regan.

Land & Water Community Centre & Bushcare Volunteer Network

The WCL Bushcare Volunteer Network had good attendance at its regular activities. Like every year, some volunteers have left the region or been unable to attend and new volunteers have started. There are currently 60 volunteers on the register; with perhaps 10 regularly attending activities.

A number of activities were coordinated this year for weed control and revegetation from Conway Beach to Cannonvale. When not out and about in the catchment doing these on-ground works, volunteers ploughed through plenty of seed sowing and plant propagation at the Land & Water Community Centre (L&WCC). Productivity was somewhat impacted by the condition of the shadehouse which had been partially demolished by cyclones over the last couple of seasons. WCL was successful in applying for funding from the Qld Government's Gambling Community Benefit Fund to construct a replacement shadehouse. This shadehouse has only just been completed.

These volunteers have helped provide over 1400 native plants to landholders for revegetation and weed control and over 3200 plants for community planting days and schools etc. To date, 174 difference local native species have been propagated by this project.

70 local land managers were able to receive free local native plants as well as individual advice to assist them with property rehabilitation. Local schools across the region and groups such as Scouts also received plants and assistance with tree planting activities.

The L&WCC is supported by a grant from Whitsunday Regional Council and cash and in-kind support from WCL and many hours of volunteer contributions by volunteers.



Top: WCL volunteers and CVA participants planting coastal species at Conway Beach. Middle: Volunteers putting the shadecloth on the new shadehouse. Above: WCL volunteers enjoying a lunch break during a seed collecting trip. Photos: WCL.

Land Management Extension Program

WCL has continued to provide information and assistance to land managers. Interested land managers receive property visits, and have the opportunity to ask questions on land management from experienced staff. Short revegetation site plans are then supplied. Eligible land managers also receive local native plants to help with rehabilitation of their properties. Last year over 70 individuals received advice at their properties and more than 280 received advice during group events. Plants for this project are grown by WCL Bushcare Volunteers at the Land & Water Community Centre, a WCL and Whitsunday Regional Council project.

Land for Wildlife

WCL continues to assist existing LfWers on request through information extension and supply of trees for habitat as well as offering site visits.

Land for Wildlife is a voluntary conservation agreement between the landholder and the local Coordinating Organisation to manage the property or parts of the property for conservation purposes. LfWers receive property management plans with an emphasis on biodiversity, information, and acknowledgement of their conservation efforts in the form of a sign for their property.

Whitsunday Feral Pig Control Program

The coordinated aerial 1080 baiting program could not be carried out last season due to prolonged wet weather. As a result of conditions ideal for feral pig breeding, many land managers have commented on the large numbers of pigs throughout the catchment this year. Members of the Whitsunday Feral Pig Control Steering Group heard of similar problems from our neighbours in the Bowen horticulture industry.

Planning is underway for this year's aerial baiting, in conjunction with Whitsunday Regional Council (WRC), Queensland Parks and Wildlife (QPW) and land managers.

New pig traps have been purchased towards the program with funding from Reef Catchments Mackay Whitsunday and the Australian Government's Caring for our Country. These traps are available to land managers free of charge.

A Wild Dog and Feral Pig Control workshop was well attended and reiterated the need for land managers, private and public, to work together on pest issues.



Top: Successful feral pig trapping. Photo: WRC Above: Land managers hearing about best practice trapping techniques. Photo: WCL

Peri-Urban Land Management Program

This project continued last year to provide information to peri-urban land managers. A peri-urban land management plan was developed and provided to participating land managers highlighting a range of issues. The main aim of project was to develop and provide peri-urban extension support in partnership with other Catchment and Landcare groups in the region to promote the uptake of sustainable peri-urban land management practices.

Land management plans were developed for participating land managers. The level of detail varied significantly according to the property size, land use and the land manager's areas of interest and level of ability to commit to works. The framework developed for the project was designed to encompass all (most) issues of peri-urban land management including: native vegetation, riparian zones, nutrients, chemical use, pastures and stock, and biosecurity.

A number of extension and community awareness activities were supported by the project: Information stalls during Weedbuster week, the weed stampede and Landcare week.

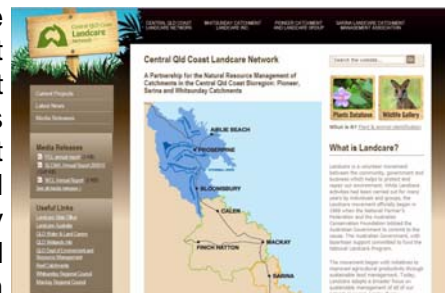
This project was funded by the Australian Government's Caring for our Country via Reef Catchments Mackay Whitsunday and supported by the National Landcare Facilitators Program.

Proserpine River Fishway Revegetation

The rock ramp fishway held up very well during the prolonged flooding of the river. To date several hundred native plants have been planted on site by WCL volunteers and participants with Conservation Volunteers Australia (CVA) National Green Jobs Corps. More trees will be put in over time and weed control and site maintenance carried out.

Website and Plant Database Project

The Central Qld Coast Landcare Network webpage has been completed. This project has pages for the network as well as each of the catchment/ Landcare groups (WCL, Sarina Landcare Catchment Management Association and Pioneer Catchment and Landcare Group). It includes a searchable database of locally occurring plants (native and weeds); a projects database of past and present projects from each of the groups and a wildlife gallery of local species. The project also involved students from Whitsunday Christian College who participated in revegetation and weed control activities as part of their curriculum and resulted in some movie clips of these activities.



This project is supported by WCL through funding from the Australian Government's Caring for our Country.

Galbraith Creek Restoration Project

The project aims to re-establish native vegetation along Galbraith Creek via extending previous rehabilitative works. It will create direct habitat for native fauna, create a corridor for native fauna, protect stream banks from erosion, suppress weed infestations and, as it is readily accessible via Galbraith Park, raise awareness in the community of the value of creek vegetation and healthy natural environments as well as the local environment.

Site preparation was carried out after last wet season by Whitsunday Catchment Landcare with assistance from Whitsunday Regional Council for major works. WCL held a number of advertised community tree planting days resulting in 1900 trees planted. Over time these can be used to provide awareness to the community on the value of healthy creek vegetation and bushland. Site maintenance has been carried out by Whitsunday Catchment Landcare and volunteers.



Students participating in the Future Leaders Ecochallenge learning about the value of riparian vegetation and helping plant out the Galbraith Creek site. Photo: GBRMPA

This project received funding from the Qld Governments Landcare Grants.

Regular Community NRM Extension

- Monthly newsletters with NRM information and advice to 360 readers
- WCL membership - 92
- WCL General Meetings with NRM presentations held bi-monthly for members and the wider community
- Bi-monthly committee meetings to guide WCL projects - with links back to stakeholders
- Fielding land management questions over the phone and in person at the office

Working Groups/ Committees Supported

- Whitsunday Local Marine Advisory Committee
- Whitsunday Pest Management Committee
- Whitsunday Feral Pig Control Steering Group
- Mackay Regional Pest Management Group
- Whitsunday Botanic Gardens Horticultural Reference Group

Training, Events and Projects Coordinated or Supported

- Wild Dog and Feral Pig Control Workshop
- Show Whitsunday - Display (weeds, native plants, healthy waterways, river restoration wetlands)
- National Tree Day – Galbraith Creek
- Schools Tree Day – Whitsunday Christian College
- Schools Tree Day - Cannonvale State School
- Local Schools environmental unit presentations
- Weed Stampede – information stalls at Centro Whitsunday and field day
- Weedbusters - information displays
- School field trips and presentations on water quality, native plants, weeds and our catchment (Proserpine, Eimeo and Cannonvale State Schools, Whitsunday Christian College)
- Reef Guardian Schools' Future Leaders EcoChallenge



*Lee Allen from Biosecurity Qld showing best practice dog trapping techniques at the Wild Dog and Feral Pig Control Workshop.
Photo: C. Peterson*



Students from Proserpine State School learning about coastal environments during their walk along the bicentennial walkway. Photo: C. Peterson



*Students from Proserpine State School learning about the different environments in their catchment.
Photo: K. Todd.*



*Volunteers collecting seed from Hydeaway Bay.
Photo: C. Peterson*



Weedbuster display at Centro Shopping Centre. Photo: C. Peterson

Further Acknowledgments to Supporters

- JJ Richards & Sons
- Under Pressure - irrigation and landscaping supplies
- Whitsunday Regional Council