



Pioneer Catchment & Landcare News

July 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>, early bird registrations close 31 July 2012

Coastal Community Winter Activities

The first of the Coastal Community Activities have been and gone, with volunteers at Shoal Point and Bucasia removing weeds and planting nearly one hundred native seedlings in the Bucasia dunes.

"It was great to meet local residents and provide them with an opportunity to help care for our local beaches" stated Ms Noni Zahmel, Reef Catchments Project Officer.

The revegetation area at Bucasia coincides with the installation of a new section of coastal fencing aimed at directing pedestrians to the beach access track, defining the dune rehabilitation area. Having a continuous zone of coastal vegetation on our sand dunes also reduces light pollution which impacts on nesting and hatching marine turtles.

Coastal Community Activities aim to improve the condition of our coastal environments while allowing for appropriate recreational use. Staying on pedestrian access tracks, removing weeds and planting local native species are simple ways we can protect and restore the condition of the dunes.

Ms Zahmel said, "There is always room for more volunteers at the community activity days. We are looking to spread the word and get more locals to join their neighbours in looking after the beach."

Mackay Coastal Community Activities are an initiative under the Coasts and Communities Project, which is supported by Mackay Regional Council and Reef Catchments through the Natural Environment Levy and Australian Government's Caring for our Country program.



Image: Mackay & District Turtle Watch Association



Image: H Glover



Sandfly Creek Environmental Reserve marks the start of the Blue Water Trail
Image: H Glover

All Aboard the Blue Water Bus

Our coastal environment is very important. Providing habitat for shorebirds, endangered sea turtles, and a host of other species. The vegetation type itself is increasingly under threat. A number of groups are working hard to conserve this valuable resource so that it may continue to survive into the future.

PCL will be running a **free** bus trip to a number of coastal sites within the Mackay region where these coastal community activities are taking place.

When? Wednesday 15 August, 9am

Meet at the Pioneer River Boat ramp. We start at the Blue Water Trail at Sandfly Creek Environmental Reserve, where we learn about the reserve and works undertaken from Conservation Volunteers Australia.

From there we board the bus and head to Blacks Beach to hear from Mackay & Districts Turtle Watch Association and Mackay Regional Council the importance of this site for sea turtle species.

The day winds up at Shoal Point where we will stop for lunch and see the fantastic works undertaken by Reef Catchments Coastal Community Activities. Expected return time 1pm.

Want to come? Contact PCL by Monday 13 August to register; 4944 1979 or admin@pioneercatchment.org.au

Please bring suitable clothing, waking shoes, hat, sunscreen and water; lunch provided

This PCL hosted field trip is supported by the Mackay Regional Council through the Natural Environment Levy

Pioneer Valley Show Great Plant Giveaway

With the sun shining, PCL was once again a hit at the Pioneer Valley Show. When Project Officer Dallas arrived on site people were already lined up to collect their share of the 400 free, local native plants. The plants offered were from a wide variety of species. The giveaway aimed to encourage people to grow native plants instead of introduced and potentially weedy species, as well as revegetate cleared areas on their properties. Those at the show were also keen to receive advice on weedy species, particularly Giant Rats Tail Grass which is increasing in prevalence in the region.



Image: C Barron

Sunday July 29 is National Tree Day!

Help Australia plant 1 million native trees and shrubs in 2012, go to the Planet Ark tree day website to register or find a tree planting site in your area: <http://treeday.planetark.org/find-a-site>

Weed of the Month

Dolichandra unguis-cati - Cat's Claw Creeper

Description: Long lived woody vine of tropical and temperate forests

Leaves: Leaves are comprised of two leaflets and a three clawed tendril (Cat's Claw) in the middle

Flowers and fruit: Bright yellow bell shaped flowers; spring. Long narrow flat pods develop bearing many winged seeds

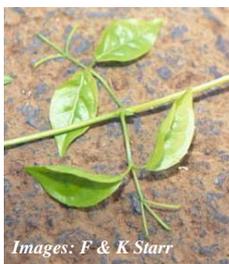
Habitat: Riparian corridors and rainforests, capable of establishing in urban environments

Origin: Central, southern Americas

The problem: Very aggressive, fast growing vine, sustained by a network of underground stolons and tubers. Is capable of pulling down large trees through sheer weight of the vine, and will smother understorey areas inhibiting native recruitment. Seeds distributed via wind and water, making riparian systems particularly vulnerable

What you can do: Trees will benefit from cutting vines leading up into the canopy. Remove a small section of each vine, ensure the bottom cut is as low as possible to the ground, treat stump with herbicide. Understorey growth can be treated with foliar applications of herbicide: contact PCL for more specific directions.

Local impact: Cat's Claw Creeper has increasing regional populations. Reliance Creek National Park and surrounding properties have long been affected. Sandy Creek in the Homebush area has known incursions and isolated populations around town are increasing.



Images: F & K Starr



Plant of the Month

Archontophoenix alexandrae - Alexander Palm

Description: Tall, to 25m, elegant single-stemmed palm. Feather palm, so named for the shape of its leaves. Light, mid or lime green shaft

Leaves: Pinnately divided with 60-80 pinnae up to 750mm in length, leaves to 4.5m, dark green upper surface

Flowers and fruit: Many long, mostly pendulous branchlets in a large (500-1000mm) panicle. Small white to cream flowers present in any month which develop into ovoid-globose fruit, 8-14mm long, ripening from green into a deep red

Propagation: Relatively easily grown in most soil types and is able to grow in both shaded and full sun positions. Is a great alternative to exotic palm species

Distribution: Found throughout tropical QLD

Habitat: Rainforest gullies, stream lines and hill slopes

Typically found: Are common throughout our rainforest areas; particularly along creek lines. Is the dominant palm species in the Reliance Creek National Parks Palm Vine Forest. The fruit are an important food source for a number of bird species as well as the Grey-headed Flying-Fox. The endemic Eungella Honeyeater feeds on the flowers' nectar and it's also a food plant for the larvae of a number of native butterfly species.



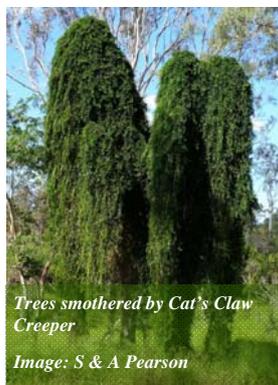
Image: G Everett



Image: M. Gray

Sources: MRPMG, Plants of Capricornia, Weeds Australia website, PCL website

Helping Save an Endangered Ecosystem



Trees smothered by Cat's Claw Creeper

Image: S & A Pearson

PCL has received funding for a three year project to assist in the management of Cat's Claw Creeper and *Hymenachne* in Reliance Creek National Park and surrounding bushland. This special area contains the region's only known protected Palm Vine Forest, which is under threat from infestation by these two aggressive species. This Regional Ecosystem has been classified as 'Endangered' by the Queensland Government, with less than 10% of the ecosystem remaining.

We will be working with Conservation Volunteers Australia, Queensland Parks & Wildlife, Mackay Regional Council and local contractors to alleviate the threat imposed by both weeds. Cat's Claw Creeper, long known to be substantial in the area, continues to spread. *Hymenachne* is a relatively new introduction. It is hoped that management of the vine will assist bio-control agents to create sustainable or declining levels, ensuring the Palm Vine Forest's future.

The rehabilitation of Reliance Creek palm vine forest is supported through funding from the Australian Government's Clean Energy Future Biodiversity Fund

Bugs lend helping hand

A sap sucking *tingid* is in use as a bio-control agent for Cat's Claw Creeper in Queensland, although success varies due to regional variation in conditions. A new agent (a leaf-mining Jewel Beetle) has been trialled and is showing good promise with expected introduction to Qld sometime in 2012.

Land for Wildlife - Broadcasting Biodiversity

ABC Tropical Queensland's Kim Kleidon has long been a supporter of the environment in her professional life, providing PCL and our sister Landcare groups in Sarina and Proserpine with regular radio spots. This care does not cease off air, with her and husband John supporting our regions biodiversity at home.

Kim and John's 2ha property at Habana officially became a registered Land for Wildlife site in early 2012.

Their land is covered with thick patches of dry rainforest vegetation that is well developed and situated under stands of remnant eucalypt forest. A diverse range of plant species grow on site, in good health, and is habitat for a range of wildlife.



Image: B Thompson

Did you know...

Nearly all male Northern Quolls live for only a year? The male reaches reproductive maturity within it's first year of life, dying shortly after his first (and only) breeding season having run himself ragged in the attempt to mate with as many females as possible to increase to the likelihood of passing his genes onto the next generation. In comparison the female may live to the ripe old age of two.

Included on their property is habitat for the Northern Quoll, known to occur in the area, which is listed as 'Endangered' under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999.

With the property having connectivity to the Mt Gabrovo forest system as well other healthy bushland in the Habana area it forms part of a habitat corridor through which animals may pass unhindered; making it a valuable resource for conserving biodiversity in the region.

Kim and John are working hard to conserve the environmental value of their property, tackling weeds and acquiring new knowledge on land management practices.



Tirumala hamata Blue Tiger

Large butterfly (to 70mm) which occurs throughout tropical Australia into the Philippines and across Asia.

During the dry winter period they can form large colonies in cool, damp areas; dispersing as the wet, warm weather results in the growth of larval food plants.



Image: C Bartron

Female Blue Tiger's can live for more than five months during their dormant non-reproductive period

Wildlife Snapshots

When we see caterpillars in our gardens it can be easy to forget they become the butterflies we love



Image: S Paldas

The black and grey striped larvae of the Blue Tiger feed on native milkweed vines.

The larvae are able to isolate and store

the toxins from their food which is transitioned through the pupae and butterfly stages of life. The adults may also feed on milkweed and other poisonous plants, making them beautiful but toxic.

PlatySearch

Tranquil rainforest settings, clear, cool mountain streams and the unique Australian Platypus; what a day at the office!

Queensland Parks and Wildlife staff, PCL and volunteers undertook the first PlatySearch Platypus survey at Broken River in the iconic Eungella National Park on July 3-4. Beautiful sunny winter days were the backdrop to the surveys which took place at four sites within the Broken River area. Participants were fortunate to see Platypus at all locations over the two days, even in the frosty morning.

Water samples for water quality monitoring were also taken during the survey. To better understand the



One of the resident Broken River Platypus

Image: C Bartron

population of Platypus within our region and the ecosystem they live in, QLD Parks and Wildlife will be starting a routine water quality monitoring program at Broken River with PCL and Reef Catchments Healthy Waterways.

QLD Parks and Wildlife are interested in any Platypus sightings within the greater Mackay region, including Sarina and the Whitsundays and encourage people to record and report any sightings.

Want to get involved? To report a sighting, get your PlatySearch information kit or simply want to know more contact: Eddie Adams, 4944 7842 or Claire Bartron, Claire.bartron@reefcatchments.com.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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Newsletter: Claire Bartron

Dallas Milburn, Wendy Eiteneuer

Supported by:



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OUR
COUNTRY



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Upcoming Events

Thursday 5 July, from 7.30pm—SGAP Monthly Meeting, *The Murray-Darling Basin* by Bev Weston. Mackay Gem and Craft Society Hall, Leisure Court. Visitors Welcome

Saturday 7 July, 8-10am—Morag McNichol Reserve working bee. Contact Jim McNichol, 4942 8802

Saturday 7 July—Coastal Community Activities **9-11am**—Ball Bay, meet at vehicle access nearest Mason Street **2-4pm**—Haliday Bay, meet at boat ramp, end of Haliday Bay Rd
noni.zahmel@reefcatchments.com.au, 4968 4215

Saturday 7 July, 8.30am– 2pm—Coastal Community Activity Sandfly Creek Environmental Reserve Conservation
Volunteers Australia, 4951 0933

Tuesday 10 July, 9–12am—PCL Community Nursery Day, Contact Dallas, 4944 1979 or 0447 749 769, *morning tea provided*

Saturday 28 July—Coastal Community Activities **9-11am**—Bucasia, meet at track next to 172 Waverley St **2-4pm**—Eimeo, meet at end of Graham Crescent
noni.zahmel@reefcatchments.com.au, 4968 4215

Wednesday 15 August, 9am– 1pm—PCL's Blue Water 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

Check our website for more events and updates!

Bob Hawke Landcare Award

The award will recognise an outstanding individual effort in encouraging Australians to adopt sustainable and productive agricultural practices. The winner will receive a prize of up to \$50,000 to develop their knowledge and skills in sustainable land management.

For more information on the Bob Hawke Landcare Award or to nominate visit: www.bobhawkelandcareaward.com.au

Walk and Talk with Landcare at Slade Point

The next trip in our Walk and Talk series will take place at Clare Davis's Land for Wildlife property in Slade Point. This site is a shining example of how important, and beautiful, a well managed area of native vegetation can be in an urban setting.

Save the date! Tuesday 21 August, 8.30– 10am