

Topic of Capricorn

November 2007

The *Topic of Capricorn* is the official newsletter of the Capricorn Conservation Council Inc.

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Views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the Capricorn Conservation Council Inc., or of the editors of the Topic of Capricorn.

Co-ordinator: Pamela Malyszek

Co-ordinator's Corner

Hi everyone, welcome to another edition of Topic of Capricorn, CCC's official newsletter. CCC has been busy lately working on various issues, including the publication of "Plants of Capricornia", which has been greatly received. I hope you enjoy this issue, and I wish you all happy holidays.

Shoalwater Bay Training Area – Field Day

CCC has been invited by the Australian Defence Force to attend a field day in the Shoalwater Bay Training Area. This invitation extends to all CCC members. It will be held on Thursday, 13th December 2007, leaving Western Street barracks at 7.30am, and returning around 5pm. ADF has

provided the transport but you will need to bring any food and water, plus wear a long-sleeve shirt, long pants, closed-in shoes, sunscreen and a hat. ADF has left it up to us to decide the areas to be visited on the field trip, so if you have a preference, please let us know. Unfortunately we are limited to the capabilities of a bus, so keep this in mind when nominating your locations. RSVP to CCC by the 29th November 2007.

WALK AGAINST WARMING

Rockhampton held its very first 'Walk Against Warming' on Saturday 17 November 2007. This nationwide event on climate change has had over 120,000 walkers around Australia this year. In Rockhampton, 100 walkers were tallied, all showing up with great enthusiasm on the

day. The green theme made for a great sight as we marched across the old bridge; and our voices were heard as we chanted "LET'S STOP CLIMATE CHANGE!"



Photo: Walk Against Warming (supplied by J.Kerby, Great Barrier Marine Park Authority).

The day was a great success and now our political leaders need to do their part and get active on climate change. The following laws are recommended in order to

reduce greenhouse gas pollution.

- A reduction in energy use,
- Increased energy efficiency,
- A shift to renewable energy,
- Better public transport systems,
- An end to land clearing and logging of old growth forests, and
- A price being placed on carbon pollution.

The day included a great speech by Al Gore presenter Natalie Hatch, performances by Rockhampton City Brass Band, and donated prize giveaways. CCC wishes to give a big thanks to Greening Australia for providing an \$800 energy audit that was won by Farborough State School. Home Timber and Hardware and Hot FM also contributed some great prizes for Best Banners.

I would also like to thank all of those involved, in particular Joe Halloran, Therese McCabe, Susan Binnie, and Sara Hanggi, who helped out and made the day the success that it was.

I look forward to next years Walk Against Warming which is sure to be even bigger and better.

Three Rivers CRG

CCC has been very active recently, working with the Three Rivers Community Reference Group and Queensland Parks and

Wildlife, in order to find the best solution to 4WD use on Five Rocks beach and Long Beach. Four meetings have been held with various stakeholders, all with different views regarding the inclusion of these beaches as 4WD permitted. As the Capricorn Coast already has Farnborough and Nine Mile Beach for 4WD use, CCC is against the inclusion for multiple environmental reasons. CCC's submission to Livingstone Shire Council on this issue can be viewed on the CCC website. CCC encourages others with a similar view to write to:

CEO – Peter Franks
Livingstone Shire Council
PO Box 600
Yeppoon, Qld, 4703

QPWS are currently developing a draft management plan for the Byfield National Park and will be available for comment in the new year.

Callide and Isaac-Connors Sub-catchments Water Resource Plan

CCC is now on the panel among others to help assist the Department of Natural Resources and Water address and amend the over allocation of groundwater in both the Callide and Isaac Connors sub-catchments. The current Fitzroy Water Resource Plan only includes surface water and overland flow. This plan will be amended to include groundwater in both catchments.

Causeway Lake ERG

The Causeway Lake, located on the Capricorn Coast between Yeppoon and Emu Park has been in the spotlight recently for becoming too shallow for recreational use. The Causeway Lake was created around 75 years ago at the mouth of two joining creeks. Since then, sedimentation has caused the lake to become increasingly shallow. Along with other stakeholders, CCC has attended several meetings to discuss the best solution to this problem. Options include:

1. Non-interference so that in approx 96 years it will completely fill in.
2. Complete removal of the causeway barrier to let it return to it's natural state
3. Dredge and provide ongoing maintenance to maintain the artificial lake effect.

At present, the favoured suggestion includes a partial dredging at Mullumbin Ck entrance, combined with a barrage type set-up at the causeway to allow a continual release of sediments in the out-going tide, and to prevent further sedimentation on incoming tides. This is still in the draft stage and more updates will be available in the next newsletter.

"Plants of Capricornia"

"Plants of Capricornia" has been selling like hot cakes. All hard covers have been sold out, however plenty of soft covers are still available for the bargain price of \$65. Please contact CCC for details. Thankyou to CCC members for donations and pre-purchase book orders.

Stockland Retail Bridge

Stockland has had approval from RCC to include a 39m wide, 1 storey high, retail bridge across Moores Creek as part of proposed upgrades of the two Stockland Shopping Centres. A 6m wide road bridge will also run on the western side of the retail bridge. Combined, it is estimated that nearly 50m of shading will cover the creek. CCC's main concerns include the loss of vegetation which will potentially increase erosion. On the 24/11/07, CCC held a group meeting with Rupert Gilroy, Stockland Development Retail Manager, to discuss these concerns. Many suggestions were noted, however the most significant inclusion to Stocklands' plans will be the planting of native vegetation, endemic to Moores Creek around the site and car park. CCC members will be part of the "workers group" that will help with strategies for improving the creek's condition.

Urban Waterways Initiative

CCC has received funding from Rockhampton City

Councils – Community Organisation Assistance Program, for the Rockhampton Waterways Initiative Interpretive Signage Project. This project includes the placement of interpretative signs along various creeks around Rockhampton to improve the communities' understanding and interest of local urban waterways. These are expected to be installed in the new year. Look out for more information on this in the next newsletter.

Recent Submissions

CCC has sent two submissions recently.

The first was regarding the Keppel Sands Mining Quarry. CCC strongly opposes any sand mining in this area as a rare palm grove neighbours the quarry, and various complications with groundwater arise. It should also be noted that sandmining has been going on illegally over the past 6-7 years, and that this repeat offender should not be given a second chance.

The second submission was for Livingstone Shire Councils amendment to local laws 1 & 17, which aim to include 4WD use on Five Rocks and Long/Joskeleigh beaches. CCC want 4WD's excluded from these beaches.

Both submissions will be available for viewing on the CCC website soon.

Website of the Month

This month I have been constantly checking out the Walk Against Warming website to find out what I can do to get active on climate change. There are some great suggestions for average Australians, as well as some very informative reading material regarding the evidence of climate change and the consequences if no action is taken. I suggest following the links to other sites to find out more about this global issue.

Switch off on Wednesday

The Morning Bulletin is encouraging as many residents as possible to switch off their house lights for 30 minutes from 8pm on Wednesday 28 November 2007. It's being called "Rocky's Biggest Turn Off" and is aimed at being 'green' with savings to both your energy bill, and the environment. CCC urges all our members to become involved to show our support for the initiative taken on this hot topic.

Bring Brigalow Back

A seminar was held on Tuesday 13 November, by John Dwyer who is currently doing his PhD on Brigalow Regrowth. He has found that Brigalow forests and woodlands once occupied

over 8 million ha of fertile clay plains, alluvial floodplains and gently undulating country within the area now known as the Brigalow Belt Bioregion. Less than 10% of forests and woodlands remain and they are poorly represented in conservation reserves, particularly those on more fertile soils. Extensive clearing resulted in direct losses of biodiversity, reductions in ecosystem health and increased greenhouse gas emissions.

Brigalow regrowth (sucker regrowth) is widely viewed as a production scourge, however it represents a logical means of mitigating land degradation and restoring ecosystem functions (e.g. nutrient cycling, erosion control and salinity management) in the Brigalow landscape. The challenge lies in managing sucker regrowth to maximise sustainable production, carbon sequestration and conservation benefits.

This seminar reinforced the disadvantages that Brigalow faces, with increasing pressures from drought and humans threatening this local icon.

Tinker frogs feel the heat

Another presentation on 13 November was from John Clarke from QPWS, who looked at the predicted affects of climate change on amphibians. Amphibians

are the most endangered group of animals in the world, with many amphibians requiring habitats that exhibit highly specific moisture and temperature regimes.

John gave as an example the rare and endangered "Tinker Frog" in Queensland to highlight the need for immediate action.

The seminar highlighted the many undesirable implications of global warming, and the following are just a couple that were noted;

- Climate change will increase frequency and intensity of fires. Fires destroy habitat, and dry the soil, thus changing habitats to drier, Savannah-like conditions.
- Increasing El Nino years lead to lower rainfall in Queensland, therefore decreasing the moist conditions needed, thus inducing behavioural changes, and lowering chances of reproduction.

Turtley Wild

Lesley Hale from Greening Australia has been working hard to protect the Fitzroy River Turtle (*Rheodytes leukops*) from predators during the breeding season. These CQ locals were only discovered in 1980 and are listed as vulnerable, existing only in the Fitzroy Basin. Also known as a "bum-breather" because it can stay under water for days due to its cloacal respiration, the

Fitzroy River Turtle is under threat from nest predation, changes in water quality, and loss of habitat. CCC has concerns that any future rising of the barrage and weirs will inundate current breeding grounds. On a positive note, this year has been a successful nesting season after good rainfalls. Lesley and the turtles will be on the T.V show 'Totally Wild' early in the new year.

War of the Weeds

Silverleaf sunflower (*Helianthus argophyllus*)

I love heading to the beach, and for years as a child had admired those beautiful sunflowers that cover the dunes. I felt horrified when I discovered that it is an invasive weed, out-competing native vegetation. Native to the USA, Silverleaf Sunflower is common on disturbed dune systems around the Capricorn Coast. If you see this exotic, it is advised that you pull it out and leave the remains on the ground. However if a seed head is present, rip this off and place it in a bin.

Cocoanut Pt National Park

Emu Park volunteer Cliff Bunn has a reason to celebrate as the 60ha piece of land where he has been encouraging vegetation regeneration is now registered as a National Park. The appropriately named "Capricorn Coast National Park – Cocoanut

Point Section” has been 4 years of work in progress after the land was donated by Seaspray developers. Initially, there was clearing of weeds like Lantana and Guinea Grass, however in the last 15 months since Cliffs’ involvement, there’s been a focus to fine-tune the park. Seaspray developers are still responsible for assisting in any ongoing weed issues. CCC encourages our members to take a look at this success story and appreciate a job well done.

Coast Care Week

More than 80% of the Australian population live within 50km of the coastline.

Coastcare Week, held **3-9th December 2007**, offers a week to highlight not only all that is spectacular and unique about Australia’s coasts, but also the practical things that everyday Australians are doing to help protect their coastal environments.

Hut Hire

Just a reminder that CCC hut is still for hire for \$10 / session. It is a great place to hold meetings or group activities. For more information please contact CCC.

Yes!

I would like to join / renew my Capricorn Conservation Council Membership

I want to help The Capricorn Conservation Council attain its goals

- ◆ To make every effort to ensure the land, waters and atmosphere of the region are not misused by any person or organisation
- ◆ To promote the search for a socially and ecologically acceptable balance between population, resource use, economics, technology and lifestyle within the region and
- ◆ To promote and teach the principles and values of conservation in schools, other institutions of learning and the general community

ABN: 14 846 165 788

Incorporation No: IA4 922

Membership Form

Name: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____

Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____

E-mail: _____ Fax: _____

Please circle: Non-wage earner **\$5** Individual **\$10**
 Family/Group **\$15** Corporate members **\$50**

CCC Membership is due for renewal each year by the 30th of June

RECEIVED BY _____

DATE _____ SIGNATURE _____

I/ we would like to make a one off donation of \$ _____

Donations over \$2.00 are tax deductible

I REQUIRE A RECEIPT

I DO NOT REQUIRE A RECEIPT

Please Return to:

Capricorn Conservation Council Inc.
PO Box 4011
ROCKHAMPTON QLD 4700

Ph (07) 4927 8644
Fax (07) 4927 8279
Email ccc@cqnet.com.au

OR

Call in to "The Hut" Livermore Street "Haigh Park" Rockhampton
The Coordinator is at the Hut most Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from 9am - 5pm