



March /April Issue 2008

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

Coordinators Commentary

My short time as CCC coordinator, has seen a massive increase in my awareness of local and regional conservation issues.

CCC has been busy over the last few months and the following is a brief summary of key activities:

CCC stall at the CQU Market Day

Students got to learn more about conservation issues and what CCC does

Rockhampton Urban Waterways Initiative

RUWI Logo Design Competition opened to youth aged to 25. Promoted to Schools, Tafe and Public. CCC has also attended two meetings with RUWI partners to talk about the up and coming RUWI projects, and the creek signage project.

Great Keppel Island

CCC sent a letter to relevant Ministers supporting the submissions made by GKI Lot 21 Environment Group which calls for Lot 21 to be protected.

State Coastal Management Plan Review

CCC provided comment to EPA on the Coastal Management Plan which was open for public review.

Community visit to proposed dump site

CCC has engaged with council and community to gather information about this issue. CCC facilitated a community visit to the Hedlow Site CCC has commented on concerns about this issue via media coverage.

Ministerial Forum on Climate Change

CCC was involved in several workshops which provided feedback to forum members who ultimately presented recommendations at the Ministerial Forum. CCC also engaged in a short private briefing with Minister Andrew McNamara to discuss regional environmental issues.

Liaising with Conservation Groups

A Brisbane trip enabled me to network with key state wide conservation groups including Queensland Conservation Council (QCC), World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), The Wilderness Society (TWS) and Environmental Defenders Office (EDO) and The Nature Conservancy.

Dams and Weirs Development

CCC joined QCC and WPSQ representatives to talk to DIP Project Manager for development

CCC Management Committee:

President:	Ian Herbert
Vice-President:	Michael McCabe
Treasurer:	Graham Lightbody
Coordinator:	Sara Hanggi 4927 8644
Members:	Pamela Malyszek Crystal Gregson Daniel Maluga Michael Danaher Jason Countryman

Committee member nominations can be made via email, phone or in person before and during the CCC AGM, June 16, 2008.

The draft State Coastal Management Plan

The Public had opportunity to provide comment on Environmental Protection Agencies draft State Coastal Management Plan in March.

Along with stating support for submissions made by Queensland Conservation Council, Mackay Conservation Group and Birds Australia (Capricornia), CCC also sent along recommendations for the following to be considered:

- Priority be given to the establishment of a regional coastal management plan
- Mapping of the coastal areas which have conservation values and need protection from development
- Need for survey work to be performed to establish baseline data on fauna abundance and distribution
- Need for Island aquifers to come under protection of legislation

CCC funded by:



Department of Environment & Heritage
GHEVO
Environmental Protection Agency's
Conservation Grant

CCC Contact Details

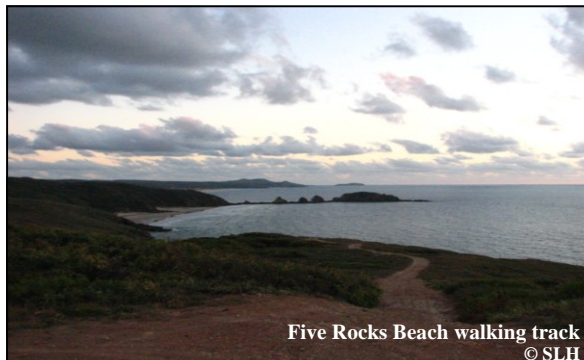
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Three Rivers Beach- Access by Walking tracks or 4WD

By Sara Hanggi

The recent Community Reference Panel meetings included representation by Capricorn Conservation Council, Stockyard Point Progress Association, CQ Offroad Club, Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service, Capricorn Sunfish, Local Council and more recently Regional Council.

The stance of interest groups can be divided clearly into those who want 4WD access prohibited and those who want to see 4WD access legalised.



Five Rocks Beach walking track
© SLH

Historically locals and visitors have accessed Three Rivers beach via 4WD but the local law permitting system has never allowed for this and thus access to this area by 4WDs is actually illegal.

The only beaches to which public has legal access rights using 4WD include Farnborough and Nine Mile (at least that's what my Beach Driving Permit says and certainly this is what Local Law purports). So remind me again why there is such a furore about access. Its never been legal to drive to Three Rivers!

CCC is supportive of the move to protect the unique environmental values of Three Rivers beach and joined the Community Reference Panel group to represent conservation objectives.

We want to work with the other interest groups, Regional and State Regulatory Authorities to ensure that any management outcomes will mitigate and control 4WD impacts on the environment.

Connors River - Damning a free river

By Sara Hanggi

The Honourable Minister for the Department of Infrastructure and Planning and Deputy Premier Paul Lucas has announced the Dam project on the Connors River to be of State Significance.

The Connors is one of the last natural free-flowing Rivers in Central Queensland which is free from impoundments of dams and weirs.

The headwater of the Connors has its origin in the beautiful Connors Ranges, with the proposed placement of the dam high in the catchment at Mt Bridget. Little is known about the ecology and biodiversity of the Connors ranges let alone the values of the stream itself.

Capricorn Conservation Council has some concern that the development of the Dam will come at a cost to the environment, dependant flora and fauna species and downstream water users.



Rheodytes leukops (juveniles)
© Greening Australia



Rheodytes leukops (juvenile close-up)
© Greening Australia

The Fitzroy River Turtle (*Rheodytes leukops*) requires pristine, fast-flowing water (riffle zones) and is already geographically restricted to the Fitzroy Catchment areas. Limited research has been conducted on populations which occur in the Connors Rivers system.

Fitzroy River Turtles will suffer major impacts by change in flow regime which can potentially cause a decline in water quality, loss of environmental flows and further restriction of already limited habitat by inundation of suitable nesting areas (sandy substrates preferred).

Only three Rivers in CQ remain free from impoundments of dams and weirs including the Connors, the lower Isaac and Calliope River.

Keppel Island, Great 'au Naturel'

By Pamela Malyszek

When I think about getting that sun-kissed glow, on a picturesque beach with white sand and clear blue waters, my mind doesn't wander to Bora Bora or Fiji. No, It goes to that magical place just a 20 minute boat ride away, Great Keppel Island.

Over the years I have frequented this island for school camps, research, birthday celebrations, or to escape the city hustle and bustle and forget about life for a while. Each time I marvel that such a postcard location is situated so close to our doorstep.

Upon arrival from Rosslyn Bay Harbour, each visitor is greeted with the option of living it up 'resort style' or getting back to basics and exploring the natural wonders that enhance this continental island. Valuing the therapeutic benefits of uncramped wilderness, which let's face it, is becoming harder to find, I usually opt for the latter.

Then comes the decision of what best to explore....

Do I opt for snorkelling the surrounding reefs which are being researched for their ability to quickly recover after being inundated with flood waters; or do I check out the mangrove wetlands where I may find the rare 'Rusty monitor'?

If it's turtle season, I may be lucky to spot our flippered friends offshore before they come up to nest in the safety of darkness; or I could head inland for a bushwalk that rewards hard work with panoramic views of scrub meeting turquoise waters.

Of course, twitchers would relish the diverse bird life, but I'm more likely keep an eye out for that elusive dugong inhabiting our coastline.

Let's not forget exploring the history of the place. One can always talk to locals, Carl Svenson who has lived on the island all his life, or partner Lyndie Malan. They'll be happy to tell you about the



Leekes Creek Estuary
© SLH

heritage-listed homestead and the comings and goings of people over the years. They value the tranquillity provided by the island and hope that being cane toad free, it may be used as a haven for Aussie natives that are struggling on the mainland.

With so much natural beauty bestowed by the island I am always grateful that access has been available for the public.

However, in recent times, developers 'Tower Holdings', who currently possess two existing leases, have alternative ideas of what is best for the island.

Whilst I'm happy for the resort to be revamped on its' existing grounds, the recreation lease on Lot 21, that has prevented development, is up for review.

Tower Holdings have put forth plans to include a 500 berth marina, a total of 3 resorts, housing subdivision, 1300 residential houses and apartments, an 18 hole golf course, and a 2km jet airstrip that cuts into those precious mangroves.

Should these plans go ahead, not only will it take away business from existing tourism facilities, it will mean the end to any more nature retreats. To add to this, one has to question the sustainability of further developments with ground water use already pushing stocks to the brink, and it's no secret that the trend of seasonal rainfalls continue to decline.

When the resort was developed in the 70's it was called progress, it brought dollars to the region and put us on the map as a tourist destination. Now we must question whether going down the same path is a continuation of this progress.

The environment, climate change, and eco-tourism have become the catch-words of the 21st century. We are seeing a cultural change where the outdoors are becoming more valued than ever before.

I believe Great Keppel Island holds a special place in local's hearts, and tourists will buy into that as well.



Big Peninsula Great Keppel Island
© SLH

RUWI—What's it all about?

Its all about our urban waterways and highlighting their important functions. Whilst we sometimes tend to overlook the natural features of our urban environment, we need to remember that waterways constitute a very important part of our ecosystem.

Even as a growing city Rockhampton still has the advantage of having natural setting and the recent rains certainly let us all know where the water likes to flow.

Rockhampton Urban Waterways Initiative was spearheaded back in 2005 with the installation of interpretive signage along the Fitzroy Riverbank.



The partners of that early effort have come back together for a brain storming session which was held at the Capricorn Conservation Council Hut.

The meetings are chaired by pro-active environmental group Greening Australia and attended by Rocky Creek Group, Fitzroy Basin Association, Society for Growing Australian Plants, Fitzroy River & Coastal Catchments, Natural Resources & Water.

Capricorn Conservation Council is doing its bit to contribute to the communal effort 'of promoting the importance of our urban waterways' by searching for a winning Logo Design for RUWI.

The winning logo will feature on creek naming signs and a detailed information sign produced under the RUWI banner.

The RUWI LOGO Design Competition closed on April 25th and RUWI Partners will be judging the entries over the week to come.

Waste not, want not. The dump debate!

By Sara Hanggi



CCC involvement has arisen out of the concern that the Hedlow site is not optimal as waste dump site. Bores have been installed by council for the purpose of monitoring groundwater levels and further investigations are underway on the site.

A major concern of CCC is that surface water flows might potentially play a more significant role in contaminant transport at this particular site.

Knowledge of the sites unique features are well known to property owner Dr. George Seifert and he believes that significant hydrological investigation of the site is warranted.

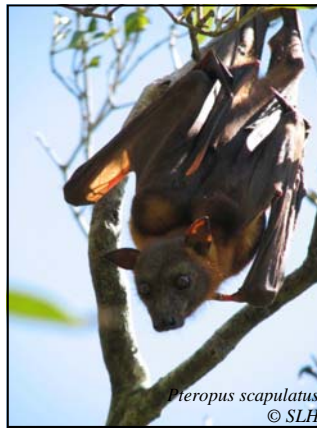
On Saturday 29th March the community visit was deferred due to wet weather but my visit to the site on this day could not have been better timed since the area had experienced rainfall which caused runoff lasting 48hrs.

CCC deferred the community visit to Sunday April 6th. Around 50 people joined in to hear about the locality and to discuss implications of having a regional dump site placed in the Hedlow Catchment.

Some good discussion eventuated among visitors and a key point put forth was the need to embrace a long-term sustainable approach to Waste Management in the Central Queensland region.



FACTS ABOUT BATS



Within Central Queensland there is an array of wildlife that are cute, cuddly and picturesque. One of the more common mammals around are the bats. Bats make up 20% of mammals, yet their history is very poorly known and they appeared in fossil records some 50 million years ago.

Flying foxes (*Pteropus* sp.) were here before humans and have been a part of the Australian human story for perhaps 100,000 years.

Flying - foxes are an invaluable pollinator and seed dispersal agent and many of the seed excreted by flying foxes are pioneer species that grow after rainforests are cleared. Due to land clearing, droughts and fires these animals are forced to fly many kilometers to feed. When food is available the feeding patterns are very unique and use more energy.

Greg Richards' "residents and raiders" description indicates that the dominant animals claim a food tree for themselves (residents) and the 'lesser' beasts have to fly in and grab whatever is available and try to escape retribution from the dominant individuals. This exercise is repeated until food or time runs out.

Female flying-foxes are pregnant for around 6 months and carry their young for a month after birth- imagine the strain being put on the foraging animals.

On the Capricorn Coast, we encounter two species: the Black Flying Fox "*Pteropus alecto*" and the Little Red Flying Fox "*Pteropus scapulatus*" which is a nomadic species and follows the flowering gum and eucalypt trees.

The Grey headed flying fox "*Pteropus poliocephalus*" has not been seen in this area for around 50 years and is believed to come up as far as Miriam Vale. Conversely, the Black flying-fox and the little red seem to have moved further south and have recently been reported as far south as Victoria.

Flying Foxes are wonderful social, non-aggressive animals, with each camp or colony typically containing hundreds of individual flying-foxes.

In Yeppoon and Emu Park it is believed the colonies are of Alecto or Black flying-foxes but these colonies have been reducing over the years and there is no current regular count on the flying-fox in Queensland.

There is only anecdotal information as apposed to facts to support this hypothesis. Volunteers perform monthly "guestimations" of colonies at Emu Park and Yeppoon.

By Joy Davison- Lee



Update by Ian Herbert

We have now sold over 1100 books out of 1500 printed, but need to sell about another 100 to break even. If you know of friends who have not yet got their copy, send them along to CCC to buy one now. CCC had a stall at the recent Rockhampton Garden Expo, where quite a number of books were sold, and we were able to discuss environmental issues with those who were interested.

The orders just keep on coming in with Bookshops, Councils, State Agencies and Community from as far as Victoria and Darwin wanting to purchase copies.

I wish to order <i>Plants of Capricornia</i> by Melzer and Plumb.		Price (GST Incl)	Number	Amount
Name		\$65 per book		\$
Address		Post and pack- see table below		\$
	Pcode			
Email	Phone	TOTAL		\$

Payment Options:-

Either
 Cheque or Money Order payable to **Capricorn Conservation Council**

Postal Address:
 PO Box 4011, Rockhampton Qld 4700

Or:-
 Direct bank credit to ANZ Bank
BSB = 014-690 Acc Nr = 4912 68991
Acc Name = Capricorn Conservation Council
Please include your name in the bank transaction.
 Then write your bank transaction details below:

Post and packing charge			Date	Amount	Bank Transfer Number
	Qld	Other states		\$	
1 book	\$12	\$16			
2 to 4 books	\$16	\$25			
5 or more books	Price on application				

JOIN /RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP WITH CAPRICORN CONSERVATION COUNCIL

CCC Annual Membership Form

Name _____
 Address _____

 Phone _____
 Email _____
 Date _____

Please select

- Non-Wage Earner \$5
- Individual \$10
- Family / Group \$15
- Corporate Member \$50

I/We would like to make a one off donation

Donation \$ _____

All donations over \$2 are tax-deductible

Return to:

The Hut, Livermore Street, Rockhampton 4700
 PO Box 4011, Rockhampton 4700 Q

With the Annual General Meeting coming up on the 18th of June, now is a good time to remind you to renew your membership with CCC.

We need your membership to support our work lobbying Government and Industry in light of the headlong rush for more coal mines and increasing pressures on our coastal areas.

CCC membership fees are deliberately kept low so that all community members are able to join and support our work. However for those who can afford it, we welcome your donation which is fully tax-deductible.

Members receive the bi-monthly 'Topic of Capricorn' Conservation Council Newsletter and receive CCC information and networking news on local and regional environmental issues and action.

Members are welcome to attend the management committee meetings held at the CCC Hut on the 3rd Wednesday every month. Volunteers are also highly sought after to contribute time working to affect positive outcomes on regional environmental issues.

CQU O-Week Market Day



It has been an exciting time for students starting their first year of studies at Central Queensland University.

Capricorn Conservation Council attended the CQU O-Week Market Day in February and set up a stall packed with leaflets and handouts about conservation, regional green groups and local environmental issues.

Our stall was not far from the stage where a talented band was kicking out some good music. The atmosphere was fantastic, a diversity of students poured in through the doors of the CQU Sports centre and the CCC stall got some interest and attention as did many of the other stall holders on the day.

There was a hive of activity over at the Bundy Rum stall so CCC stall was up against some major competition for attention from students.

CCC was pleased by the response of students who signed the Save the Murray Darling Petition.

While this petition was for a river outside of CQ it is encouraging to know that we will receive support from student community to engage in future campaigns to protect the CQ regions river systems.

