

Topic of Capricorn

May 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's Corner

Hi everyone, welcome to another edition of Topic of Capricorn, CCC's official newsletter. I extend a warm welcome to our new members. Enjoy!

Central Queensland Climate Project

Climate change has emerged as one of the most serious issues facing Australia. The CQ Climate Project (CQCP) was formed in late February 2007 by a diverse group of locals including members of leading conservation organizations, Capricorn Conservation Council (CCC) and the Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF), and members of several local faith communities, including Anglican, Roman Catholic, Uniting, Baptist, Muslim and Bahai faiths.

A speaker trained by Al Gore in the presentation of a slide show based on his Oscar winning movie "An Inconvenient Truth", has been organized to come to Rockhampton. Emphasis will be given during the presentation, debate and in planned displays, to practical measures individuals and businesses can take to minimise their own carbon "footprint".

There will be 3 public meetings scheduled for this event:

Tuesday 29th May 7pm at North Street Annex, Corner of North and West Street, South Rockhampton;

Wednesday 30th May 7pm at Yeppoon Town Hall, Yeppoon;

Thursday 31st May 7pm at central Queensland University room 29.G.05

For more information contact Crystal here at CCC.

Rockhampton Urban Waterways Initiative

The launch of the Rockhampton Urban Waterways Initiative (RUWI) will be held at Joyce Harding Park (Corner of Beasley Street & Moyle Street) on Saturday the 2nd of June from 9am til 1pm. The day will hold the official ceremony launch, activities for everyone from water quality testing to identifying plant species. Food/refreshments will be available.

Callide Subcatchment 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 the Callide subcatchment.

The current Fitzroy water Resouce Plan only addresses surface water and overland flow. This will be amended to include groundwater as it is currently over-allocated in the Callide Catchment. More on this in the next newsletter.

Yeppoon to Rockhampton water pipeline route

CCC has also been busy communicating with the Livingstone Shire Council and Cardno on the proposed route for the water pipeline. After seeing the initial plans CCC is satisfied that they are trying to minimise the amount of remnant vegetation that has to be cleared to make way for the pipeline. In some sections they are even crossing the road and applying for easements onto cleared private land to minimise vegetation loss. Of course we must keep in mind that The Main Roads is planning to 4 lane this highway anyway so the vegetation may be saved now, but for how long?

Byfield National Park

Some time ago CCC nominated 4 parcels of State land at Byfield to the Australian Rainforest Conservation Society (ARCS) to be considered becoming a National Park, Well at last, the Queensland Government has put 3 of these 4 parcels of land into National Park, great to see more on-park conservation in Byfield area!

Environmental Defenders Office & Qld Conservation Council Seminar

I recently attended an EDO seminar in Brisbane on the legal responsibility for greenhouse gas emissions from coal mined in Queensland. This seminar gave us a brief overview of the Xstrata Newlands Coal mine Case and examined various ways of interpreting environmental and mineral pieces of legislation.

Fitzroy Industry and Infrastructure Study (FIIS)

CCC recently attended our first public briefing on the FIIS from the Department of Infrastructure. This study examines two main areas; the Stanwell Industrial Corridor and the Fitzroy Agricultural Corridor (FAC). The FAC will be focussed on intensive livestock industry and horticulture. CCC still believes that in the midst of climate change and uncertain future rainfall patterns that this 'excess' water should be kept for future population growth and environmental flows. The Fitzroy River's water should not be seen as excess water that needs to be allocated. We have until the 8th of June to make a submission.

For more information visit:
www.coordinatorgeneral.qld.gov.au/library/pdf/Fitzroy_project_info.pdf

Write submissions to:
FIIS Project Co-ordinator
Department of Infrastructure ,
PO Box 15009, City East, Qld 4002

Birds Australia Congress & Campout

Birds Australia Capricornia is hosting the 2007 Congress at Rydges Capricorn Resort on the Capricorn coast near Yeppoon. The event will be held on the 6th and 7th of October.

Birds Australia Capricornia is hosting the 2007 Campout at Coolwaters Holiday Village on the Capricorn coast near Yeppoon. This will be from the 8th until the 11th of October.

For more information please contact Allan Briggs on abriggs@irock.com.au

Mt Archer State School's Environmental Expo

CCC will be part of Mt Archer's Environmental Expo on the 17th of May. CCC will be covering many aspects of energy to all of the primary school children.

Curtis Island Carve Up

Curtis Island lies alongside the Central Queensland Coast from southern Keppel Bay to Gladstone. Curtis is separated from the mainland by the winding mangrove lined tidal channels of The Narrows. Although the forth largest Island in Queensland it is relatively undeveloped and little known to the broader public.

The main activities have been recreation use based around the small settlement of South End and a few

grazing and forestry enterprises. On the northern end is Curtis Island National Park conserves coastal feature extending along the east coast including the spectacular dune feature named Yellow Patch. Black Head is an inlier within the National Park which was approved for resort development by the Queensland government several years ago. Local residents and regular users saw no activity at the resort site in the years since approval to proceed was granted until, early this year, machinery was brought ashore. Extensive clearing for establishment of resort infrastructure, including buildings, dams, roads, airport has been undertaken. As a consequence of the dry summer many of the traditional bush tracks used as access roads by the resort developers have now become streams of deep untrafficable "bull dust". Local who fear that the resort developers are breaching the scanty conditions of development imposed by the Queensland Government have asked the Member for Gladstone, Liz Cunningham to investigate. It is believed that pre-sales of resort dwellings has been poor and Black Head is shaping up as yet another failed Queensland coastal resort development sanctioned by the Queensland Government.

Meanwhile a second development is being

actively proposed on the Spadley property on the north west corner of Curtis Island by a Dutch consortium. Originally proposed as a small scale "Eco-resort" extending on from the few small cottages available for holiday rental, North Curtis has morphed into a possible mega resort with all the usual golf courses, marinas etc etc.. While locals scoff at the capacity of tourists to withstand the plagues of biting midges and mosquitoes which swarm from the tidal wetlands at the junction of the Narrows and the Fitzroy River the developers are no doubt confident that there are always enough suckers to put their money in and that a quick visit to the Queensland Premiers office is usually enough to secure approval on just about any type of coastal development.

The wide marine plain landscape behind the sheltered northern bays is a Conservation Park where a Critically Endangered bird, the Yellow Chat (Capricorn subspecies) was rediscovered about 12 years ago. As a result of a decision by the Goss Labor Government the lessees of Monte Christo pastoral property were granted a 75 year grazing lease over the part of their lease which became Conservation Park. While the land had been relatively well managed up to recent times the lack of wet season inflows has lead to

year round grazing without apparent control from the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service. This is apparently resulting in a decline in the quality of the reed and grass habitat on the marine plain. This will no doubt be a threat to the Yellow Chat population which has been lost from several mainland areas where heavy grazing occurred.

Nuclear power should be last resort- Flannery

Climate change scientist and Australian of the Year Tim Flannery says nuclear power should only be a last resort for tackling global warming.

The Federal Government is planning to lift bans on nuclear power and remove impediments to uranium mining and exports.

Dr Flannery has been a long-time critic of the Federal Government's climate change policies.

He says there are many undesirable attributes to nuclear power.

"I just think you take a three-fold approach, first let's get as [energy] efficient as we can, secondly use our local power sources, the renewables - whether they be geothermal or wind - which we've got excellent sources of here in this country, of solar, and then if we still have a deficit, yes we can look at nuclear power," he said.

Water-saving efforts 'ridiculous' amid soaring population growth

The Queensland Government has been accused of acting irresponsibly by failing to curb population growth in the face of dwindling water supplies.

The number of people living in Queensland jumped by more than 75,000 in the year to September, with most settling in the Brisbane and Moreton divisions.

At the same time, the Queensland Water Commission warns the region is not meeting usage targets under level five restrictions.

Sustainable Population Australia spokesman Simon Baltais says it is ridiculous to demand water conservation when those efforts are being eroded by population growth.

"You could describe it as irresponsible in a period when there is very limited water supply, they are allowing growth," he said.

"That's such that it means we're going to have communities are going to run out of water.

"It's growing to cripple business and people's quality of life as I see it in south-east Queensland is certainly going down the gurgler."

For more information:

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/newsitem/s/200704/s1909669.htm>

Annual General Meeting

That's right, it's that time again already. Our AGM this year will be held on Wednesday the 20th of June at 7pm. All members are more than welcome to attend and even help pick the new CCC Committee. We are trying to get a keynote speaker for the night to give a presentation after the AGM. I will send out a reminder a week before to all members. Also don't forget to renew your membership in June. Thanks.

Recent Submissions

CCC has recently commented on the Draft Crocodile Plan for the Estuarine Crocodile for 2007-2017.

We also submitted comments on the Terms of Reference for the Boundary Hill Mine Expansion Project.

Website of the Month

I just love Natures Organics range of Earth products

These products are environmental friendly with recyclable packaging, low amounts of sodium and no phosphates, no animal testing. Their washing liquid is also suitable for grey water re-use.

Products they make include:
Dishwashing liquid
Laundry detergent
Fabric Softner
Floor and surface cleaner

Multi surface spray
Toilet cleaner

Check them out at:

http://www.naturesorganics.com.au/household_earthchoice.htm

Building a future - Zero Emissions Buildings Now

In August last year the City of Melbourne opened the new Council House 2 (CH2) building, setting a new international standard for ecologically sustainable commercial construction. CH2 is now in full operation, using 70% less water and 85% less energy than conventional office buildings. The building was awarded six green stars by the Green Building Council of Australia, representing world leadership in office building design.

Under sweeping changes to legislation and national building codes, Beyond Zero Emissions is calling for all newly approved commercial office and retail buildings within two years to be of six green star standard or better, leading to ten star, fully autonomous building targets by 2016.

"The City of Melbourne has set the standard with CH2," said Matthew Wright, spokesman for Beyond Zero Emissions. "They have taken the leadership with carbon neutral targets by 2020 and Australia's best environmental building design.

"Now that six star construction has been proven as practical and viable, it should become the bare minimum standard Australia wide. We must set a new benchmark in commercial construction if we are going to bring human induced greenhouse gas emissions under control. By 2016 all commercial buildings should be entirely self-sufficient in heating and cooling, with net on-site energy production."

For more information visit:
<http://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/info.cfm?top=171&pg=1933>

More rules needed on water use in mines: says expert

An expert in environmental engineering from Melbourne's Monash University says there are real problems in the regulation and monitoring of water use in the mining industry.

Gavin Mudd told an environment conference in Adelaide yesterday that more needed to be done to monitor the upstream and downstream impacts when miners used large quantities of water.

Mr Mudd said both governments and companies had a role to play in improving the industry's performance.

"The companies have to take prime responsibility for being efficient - for really paying the true cost of water both in terms of the volume of water they use, the potential impacts on the quantities of water available, and the quality of that water," he said. "Government [has to] make sure that there is robust, detailed monitoring in place so we can keep a good handle on all the things that are happening."

SE Qld inches towards water target

The Water Commission has welcomed new figures that show south-east Queensland residents are reducing their water use.

The latest statistics show the average daily consumption per person was 152 litres. That is better than the previous week but commission spokesman Gerald Tooth says it is still more than the 140-litre target.

"The Water Commission is focused on the fact that we're trending down," he said. "We think that's a good thing and we're inching towards that 140."

"It was down a little bit this week. We need it to keep going in that direction and everyone has made an effort so far."

New global warming threat from Southern Ocean

Climate change has weakened the Southern Ocean's ability to absorb the globe's excess carbon dioxide, a factor that could accelerate global warming, international scientists have found.

A study published in the journal Science revealed that since 1981, the Southern Ocean has been taking up less carbon dioxide - five to 30 per cent less per decade - than researchers had predicted previously. At the same time carbon dioxide emissions rose by 40 per cent, the study found.

The reason for the slowdown is more winds over the Southern Ocean since 1958, caused by human-produced greenhouse gases and ozone depletion.

The winds have led to a release of stored carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. This prevented further absorption of greenhouse gases in the ocean's carbon "sink" - a natural carbon reservoir, according to the study.

"This is serious," said Corinne Le Quere, a scientist who led the research by the University of East Anglia, the British Antarctic Survey and the Max Planck Institute for Biochemistry in Jena, Germany.

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