

Cape York

Healthy Country Newsletter

A new year in NRM

Issue 17 - March 2014

Welcome to the new year and our first edition of Healthy Country Newsletter for 2014. The year is shaping up to be a big one, as funding flows for long-term projects, some good rain falls, and with many programs and events getting underway.

The year has started with some significant announcements. Cook Shire Council will cease to host the Cape York Weeds and Feral Animal Program from June. After missing a year in 2013 (due to funding constraints), the 2014 Indigenous Fire Workshop will be hosted on Taepithiggi Country at Steve Irwin Wildlife Reserve in July.

Submissions close this month for public comment on the draft Cape York Regional Plan and draft Water Resource Management Strategy. It is important that everyone reads and understands the plans and have their say by making a submission by 25 March.

Cape York NRM and Cape York Sustainable Futures will jointly deliver the Australian Government Reef Program and are entering into a formal Memorandum of Understanding for working together. Cape York NRM's sustainable agriculture program is underway, and our NRM planning project is well down the track.

We look forward to seeing you, in your part of the Cape, sometime soon.

David Claudie takes the Chair



Above: The Cape York NRM Board met in Cairns in February.
From left (at back) - Christo Lifu, Alban Zingle, John Charlton, John Giese,
David Claudie (in front) - Penny Johnson, Sandra Woosup, Gavin Bassani.
Absent: Shelley Lyon, Emma Jackson.

Cape York NRM welcomes David Claudie to the role of Chairperson, following the election of the Board of Directors late last year. Penny Johnson, deputy Mayor of Cook Shire Council, has been elected Vice-Chairperson. The votes were cast at the recent board meeting in Cairns in February.

Cape York NRM also welcomes Christo Lifu as Indigenous Zone One Director, and Alban Zingle as Director for Indigenous Zone Four. The Board and Staff wish to thank John Giese for his work as Chairperson over the past year. John remains with the Board as Director for Community.

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Within this newsletter Cape York Natural Resource Management is shortened to Cape York NRM



Cape York NRM's funding focus for 2014

After a long wait by land managers, funding has finally started to flow for state and federal funded land and sea management programs on Cape York.

Following the change of governments, programs have undergone many changes, which meant the release of funding for on-ground work slowed.

A focus on sustainable agriculture and reducing threats on vulnerable species, as well as building local capacity to deliver programs, has also meant a change in the way on-ground work has been funded on Cape York.

The Sustainable Agriculture funding program will see Cape York NRM work with graziers in central Cape York to demonstrate, document and share good farming practices and care for systems like waterways and soils. It will also support the establishment of an industry roundtable to improve grazing viability on Cape York. Work has commenced on Yarraden and Holroyd River stations with the mapping of sicklepod for trials on controls of the weed. Cape York NRM will also work with farmers in and around Lakeland Downs to

Background image taken while working on Wik homelands with APN Cape York

discuss water management for existing and future infrastructure development and use.

The Sustainable Environment stream will work with land managers across the Cape to reduce environmental threats like weeds and feral animals. Cape York NRM will work with some new partners to implement this, like Western Cape Turtle Threat Abatement Alliance, and continue to work closely with existing partners like the Wenlock River Catchment Group and South Cape York Catchments. The program will look at improved fire management practices, with a focus on traditional fire management.

Cape York NRM and Cape York Sustainable Futures will work together to deliver the Australian Government Reef Water Quality Grants with delivery agreements currently being finalised.

Tenders will be announced this month to deliver funds for weed and feral animal controls, which had previously been allocated to Cook Shire. All in all, a big few years are in stall. We look forward to seeing the results on the ground.

Tenders to be called for managing Cape York's feral animals and weeds

New priorities for State and Federal regional natural resource management (NRM) programs have resulted in changes to the delivery of funds for pest animals and weeds management on Cape York.

The new programs also focus on supporting grazing and farming families to operate more sustainably, as well as caring for the environment and conserving threatened species such as marine turtles.

Over recent years Cape York ranger groups, Land Trusts and graziers have also shown increased interest for self-managing pests and in many cases they are now funded directly to implement the work on their lands.

Historically, much of this work has been carried out on behalf of these landholders by the very capable staff of the Cook Shire Council hosted Cape York Weed and Feral Animal Program. Cape York NRM has been a major external provider of funds to Cook Shire Council for the program.

Whilst Council has made the decision to cease operating the program in its current capacity from the end of this financial year due to reductions in their levels of external funding, Cape York NRM will continue to fund a range of weed control and feral animal abatement programs on Cape York.

Bob Frazer, CEO of Cape York NRM, said that funding which had been allocated for Cook Shire Council for the next two years will now be put out to tender in March instead. "While the delivery mechanisms for funding the abatement of feral animals and weeds have changed, it remains a priority for land managers and governments. We encourage all groups on Cape York with pest management capabilities to consider putting in tenders when they are made available" he said.

For more information, contact Cape York NRM on 1300 132 262.

Addressing critical threats to biodiversity through community

by South Cape York Catchments

Thanks to funding secured by Cape York NRM, South Cape York Catchments is working with our community to reduce critical threats to biodiversity.

A major threat to biodiversity we face is repeated late season wildfires. Wildfires reduce the abundance and health of both plants and animals. Land managers have indicated that wildfires have led to a reduction in biodiversity and have allowed weeds to take hold in many sensitive areas.

South Cape York Catchments and our partners aim to reduce the extent of late season wildfire across the upper Laura, Normanby, Kings Plain and Melsonby stations, through to the northern Wet Tropics areas. We will achieve this by supporting our community to plan and coordinate an early aerial incendiary programme and conduct on-ground fire management activities.

We have seen how wildfires impact on important wildlife corridors in our area. Wildfires reduce a corridors width and reduce its ability to function effectively. Healthy corridors are necessary to maintain biodiversity; they allow populations to interbreed improving long-term genetic viability; provide access to larger habitats ensuring a wider range of food sources and shelter; and they provide an avenue for animals to move or shelter in times of stress, for example, during wildfires and climate change impacts.

With the community's support we will build upon previous Cape York NRM funding and remove two weeds of national significance; Lantana and Gamba Grass from wildlife corridor areas. These are transformer weeds that can alter the environment to promote their growth at the expense of biodiversity.

We will continue to propagate and plant out degraded riparian areas from locally sourced seed and manage wildfire encroachment into these important ecosystems. South Cape York Catchments will also be holding a number of exciting field trips, workshops, and knowledge sharing events, where all are welcome to attend.

If you would like to receive project updates and invites to events please email your.scyc@gmail.com



Images supplied by SCYC

Cape York Landcare update

Cape York Landcare Inc. in partnership with Cape York Sustainable Futures was recently successful in gaining a grant through the Gambling Community Benefit Fund for landholders to target and control specific weeds in Cape York Peninsula.

Twenty Silvan 100 litre flat pack spray units, herbicide and drip torches have been distributed to grazing properties so that landholders can work together to target specific weeds, identify high priority infestations, control outlying infestations and reduce the risk of weed spread to clean areas.

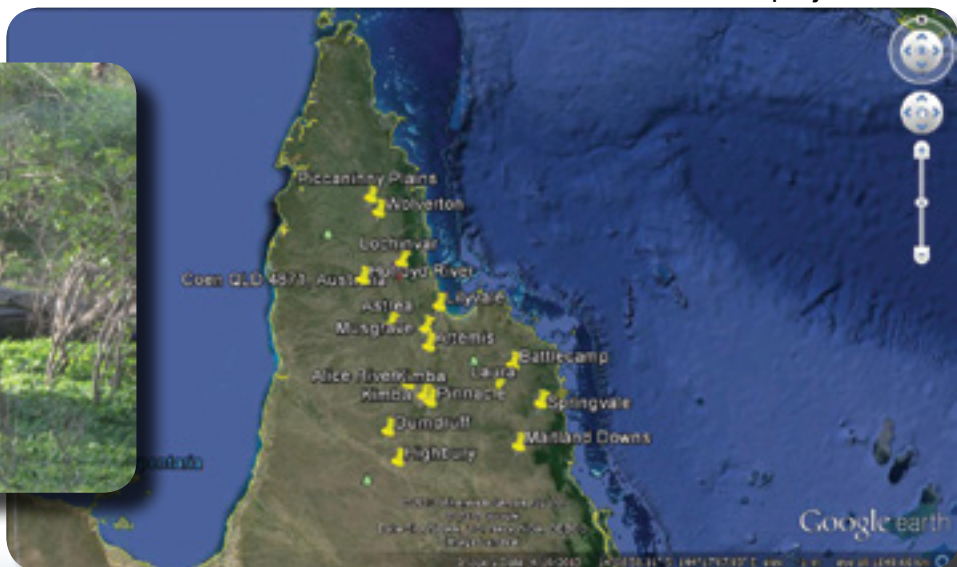
Expressions of interest were sent out to offer landholders a 12 month loan of the equipment, with landholders committing to a voluntary labour contribution and capacity to undertake the work.

Chairperson, Mary Shephard, distributed the equipment with specific weed identification and control information advice from Cape York Weeds and Feral Animals Program. "The response to the expression of interest was taken up so quickly, that it is obvious there is a need to continue to seek funding for other land holders to participate" Mary said.

It is planned to collate information from landholders to be able to measure the success of the project.



Images supplied by Cape York Landcare



On the lookout for Giant rat's tail grass

Cape York graziers warn that the community needs to be vigilant about Giant rat's tail grass (*Sporobolus pyramidalis*, *S. natalensis*), as it could have severe impacts on Cape York's cattle industry, if the grass were to take hold on Cape York.

What to look for:

- grows to 1.7 metres tall
- tough, wiry stems, very hard to slash
- seeds heads change from 'rats tail' when young to elongated pyramid shape when mature
- seed heads are narrow up to 55 cm long and 3 cm wide and green-grey in colour. Seeds remain in soil for up to 10 years.

Where it grows:

- suit a wide range of soils and varying rainfall. Well suited to pastures and paddocks.

Spread and impact:

- spread by stock, stockfeed, vehicles, feral and native animals, machinery, fast flowing water
- dominates pastures quickly, can decrease production by 80%, loosens teeth of livestock while grazing.



www.dpi.nsw.gov.au

Be a part of your NRM plan!

Our natural resource management plan for Cape York is going to be different to other regions.

We are developing an Atlas - an online portal to bring together information from across Cape York. We are gathering things like case-studies, stories, management plans, photos and research so people can have one central place to go to find information for land and sea planning and management, and to for information about Cape York.

Agreements will be in place with individuals, communities and organisations about what they want to share and how best to present their information.

To find out more, or to share your story, call us on 1300 132 262.

Cape York Climate - The Good, the Bad and the Sensational

South Cape York Catchments, supported by Cape York NRM, are holding a photo competition to showcase Cape York's climate.

To enter:

- you must live in Cape York
- photos must be taken in Cape York
- provide your name, age, contact details
- write a sentence or two about what your climate photo means to you.

How to submit your entry:

Facebook - South Cape York Catchments
Email - your.scyc@gmail.com
Hand delivered - 31 Charlotte Steet
Cooktown.

Closes: 5pm 27 March
Winners and celebrations: 3.30pm 28 March
on the Cooktown Waterfront

For more information contact SCYC on
07 4069 6890.



Working together for healthy country

South Cape York Catchments

YOUR CLIMATE

The Your Climate project team wants to work with you for Cape York's long term natural resource management planning. No-one knows your place like you, so we'd like to ask what changes you've seen in your part of Cape York and how you think our communities can best adapt to change.

What's changing? What can you do?

To find out more contact us:
Cape York Natural Resource Management 1300 132 262
South Cape York Catchments 07 4069 6890

Cape York NRM and South Cape York Catchments are out and about asking you about the changes you have noticed at your place over the years, and what you've done to handle those changes.

To get involved call us on 1300 132 262.



Membership Application Form

Please tick a box to indicate the type of application ☐ Individual ☐ Organisation

Business Name (if applicable) _____

Given Name _____ Surname _____

Postal Address _____ Postcode _____

Contact telephone _____ Mobile _____

Email _____

Signed _____ Date _____

Please Tick a box to indicate which Sector you represent

Sector		Indigenous Zone
Please tick ONE only		If Indigenous, please tick which Zone you represent
Indigenous	<input type="checkbox"/>	Zone 1 <input type="checkbox"/>
Local Government	<input type="checkbox"/>	Zone 2 <input type="checkbox"/>
Primary Industry	<input type="checkbox"/>	Zone 3 <input type="checkbox"/>
Community	<input type="checkbox"/>	Zone 4 <input type="checkbox"/>
Conservation	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Tourism	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Small Business	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Mining	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Other Industries	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Cape York NRM would like to offer free membership to new members in 2014

I would like to receive regular newsletters & other information from CYNRM ☐ Via email ☐ via post

PO Box 907 Atherton Q 4883 Phone: 1300 132 262
Email: admin@capeyorknrm.com.au
www.capeyorknrm.com.au

Proudly hosted on Taepithiggi Country, Cape York Peninsula

STEVE IRWIN WILDLIFE RESERVE

14 - 18 July

2014 INDIGENOUS FIRE WORKSHOP

Be quick to register now on the web address below

www.mulong.com.au/fire

Contact: Ben Lister Ph: 4041 6633 Email: ben@mulong.com.au

Cape York 2014 calendar of events

It's going to be a big year on the Cape for natural resource management activities and for other regional events. Here's a heads up for some of the things you might like to mark in your diary.

March Cape York NRM will announce tenders for weed and feral animal management.

25-26 March Northern Beef Producer Forum Mareeba - Cattle Council of Australia, Agforce and MLA invite all beef cattle producers to the forum on Wednesday 26 March, with a welcoming reception on 25 March.

27 March Central Cape Cattle Industry Roundtable, Mareeba - Cape York NRM extend an invitation to Cape York graziers for updates on key grazing issues on the Cape, and input into Cape York NRM's sustainable agriculture program.

28 March Announcement of the Your Climate Photography competition winners - Cooktown

10 April Lakeland Downs Growers Information Session, Lakeland pub (to be confirmed) - Cape York NRM and Landcare invite growers for dinner and yarns about water, soils and more.

29-30 April Resourcing Women of the North - Northern Gulf Resource Management Group invite rural women to be part of two days of food, friendship and great speakers.

May - September Beach clean-ups across the Cape.

14-18 July 2014 Indigenous Fire Workshop, Steve Irwin Wildlife Reserve.

Cape York NRM will post confirmed dates and external event links on our website calendar <http://www.capeyorknrm.com.au/calendar.html>



This lovely Palm Cockatoo (*Probosciger aterrimus*) was photographed by Australia Zoo's Luke Burnett at Steve Irwin Wildlife Reserve last year. Palm cockatoos are iconic of Cape York. New research is investigating the importance of gallery forests such as those along the Wenlock River as these forests may be important habitat corridors and essential for the species long term survival in Australia. A full article on the research undertaken by Australian National University's Miles Keighley will be in the next edition of Healthy Country newsletter.

Plan Lacks Recognition of Cultural Sites

The lower Wenlock River Catchment Group will submit a map reflecting their primary areas for conservation, cultural protection and commercial development as part of their submission to the Queensland government for the draft Cape York Regional Plan.

The group met at the Mapoon Aboriginal Shire Council chambers on 12 February to discuss making a submission for the draft plan.

The lower Wenlock catchment group comprises representatives from the Tjungundji, Yupangathi, Mpakwithi, Taepithiggi, Thanakwith, Kaanju, Warrangku clan groups, plus shared history people, Weipa Town Authority, Rio Tinto Alcan and Steve Irwin Wildlife Reserve.

Invited guests from The Wilderness Society and the staff from Department of State Development Infrastructure and Planning, briefed the group on the intent of the plan,

and clarified how the plan could work on the ground.

After intensive discussions, the clan groups resolved that they would undertake mapping of their areas of concern, particularly within the green zone, and present the government with areas they thought needed preserving, and areas which could proceed with development.

They felt the map did not cover cultural sites and recognised the lack of cultural zones as a weakness of current plan.

A broad map will be presented by March deadline, but a full detailed map will be presented late May.

Traditional Owners from the group are keen to balance conservation and economic development, but want to be in control of where this occurs.

The group invites the government to consider alternative economic opportunities for remote Indigenous communities, who are concerned for future employment opportunities of their children.

Taking a look at Cape York's water resources

with Luke Preece

The Queensland Government has started a new planning process through the Cape York Statutory Regional Plan.

The *Draft Strategy for Delivering Water Resource Management* in Cape York (DNRM 2013) was released in November last year, with invitation for submissions by 25 March. The strategy proposes to maximise opportunities for tourism, agriculture and other industries through responsible water allocation.

Water values help to make Cape York the amazing place that it is. In 2012, the Australian Government Department of Environment (then known as DSEWPAC) contracted Cape York NRM for the first phase of the Bioregional Assessments initiative. This project enabled Cape York NRM and several partners to identify and collate information related to water assets of the Cape York region.

After sifting through hundreds of articles and thousands of spatial datasets (eg. map files), the team identified a rich diversity of water assets. Covering vast areas of Cape York, the assets include water and exploration bores, dams, springs, lakes, rivers, wetlands, aquifers and cultural sites. The majority of the assets have dynamic economic,



Above: Magnificent floating islands of the nypa palm-lined Wenlock River.

social, cultural and ecological values.

The project also revealed large gaps in knowledge, such as the location and value of springs and the connectivity and hydrology of aquifers. As a result, future projects and water strategies should further document the ecological, economic and cultural details for each asset and monitor and model the water resources for Cape York.

Cape York NRM's sustainable agriculture project will work with farmers around Lakelands Downs to plan for improved water resource management into the future. For more information call 1300 132 262.

SAVE THE DATE 26th MARCH

NORTHERN BEEF PRODUCER FORUM

MAREEBA, QLD

Cattle Council of Australia (CCA) together with AgForce Queensland, and supported by Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA), will jointly host the Northern Beef Producer Forum. The key theme for the forum will be 'Trade'.

25th March 2014 Evening Welcoming Reception

26th March 2014 Beef Producer Forum focusing on 'Trade'

For further information visit www.cattlecouncil.com.au or call 02 6269 5600



Grazing BMP - Grazing Land Management

Grazing BMP is a voluntary, industry led, self assessment tool, which helps identify practices to improve long term profitability.

Improve your
PRODUCTIVITY
PROFITABILITY
SUSTAINABILITY

The best approach to grazing land management is to focus on improvements that can be made to grazing land condition, level and evenness of use and diet quality.

Grazing land management is about managing the pastures and the number, type and location of grazing animals on your property to optimise pasture growth and composition, and animal production.

Topics covered include:

- Maps and property information
- Land capability and condition
- Managing the land resource
- Managing the grazing pressure
- Improved pastures and forage crops
- Weeds and pest animals



Get involved: Junior Ranger Guidebook

Work has begun on developing a National Junior Ranger Guidebook and Queensland Indigenous rangers are being called on to take part in an important part of the planning.

A workshop will be held in Cairns at Rydges Plaza Cairns, on Thursday, 20 March 2014 to start developing ideas and plans around the writing, planning, activities and distribution of the Junior Ranger Guide-book.

The workshop will bring together the existing partners for the project, The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA), The Australian Marine Environment Protection Association (AUSMEPA) and the Queensland Indigenous Land and Sea Ranger program as well as other interested people to develop the resource.

AUSMEPA is a highly regarded not for profit organisation that aims to educate and empower students, teachers and communities on how to protect their marine environment from human impacts, both on land and sea. The not for profit organisation saw the need to bring together like minded groups and individuals to develop a junior ranger guide-book.

GBRMPA and AUSMEPA have collaborated previously to develop education resources in the Torres Strait. The idea of the Junior Ranger Guidebook stems from ranger groups wanting to develop a consistent approach to junior rangers and their activities. The guide will be a simple, highly visual, user friendly and best practice example of how to organise and run an ongoing junior ranger program. The book could be used to guide others to establish junior rangers all over Australia.

The project is being developed as a positive contribution towards children's environmental education and for the future of ranger programs as many junior rangers develop aspirations to become senior rangers when they grow up.

Developing the Guidebook will be a collaborative process therefore organisers are calling on as many Indigenous rangers as possible to take part in the Cairns workshop on 20 March as it will set the



Pompuraaw Junior Rangers show their ranger guidebook

Image: Queensland Government

direction for the entire project.

The one day workshop is free to attend, with lunch, morning tea and afternoon tea provided.

For more information or enquires please contact:
Jody Plecas from AUSMEPA: education@ausmepa.org.au

Corrections from last edition

While we try and quadruple check our facts for Healthy Country Newsletter sometimes an error slips through. Apologies to Ian MacConnell for changing your name in the last edition, and note that John Giese is the chairperson of Cape York Weeds and Feral Animal Program Inc.

Buried campfires are dangerous

New Years Day celebrations ended abruptly for Wolverton Station's Jackson family, when seven year old Lucy suffered severe burns to her feet and legs after playing on sand which concealed a campfire. The fire, at Chili Beach, had been covered with sand, but not put out, which intensified the heat generated by the fire. Lucy spent several weeks in the Townsville hospital burns unit undergoing treatment.

Unfortunately this is not a rare event on Cape York, with similar stories told every year. Lucy's mum Emma, who is Cape York NRM's Primary Industries Director, stressed the importance of extinguishing camp-fires properly. "Lucy suffered physical and emotional trauma from these burns, which could have been avoided if the fire was extinguished properly. She's scared to go to the beach now" Emma said.

Unextinguished campfires are also one of the causes of the many bushfires across Cape York each year.

Putting out your campfire is easy, and can save lives.

Here are some simple tips:

1. Start early - at least 30 minutes before you leave, preferably earlier, or allow the fire to burn to ash the night before.
2. Let all of the wood burn to ash. If time doesn't allow this, stir the fire with a shovel to break up the fuel size and quantity.
3. Pour water over the fire, slowly and gently, and continue to mix the fire, ashes and water with a shovel. Beware of steam and ashes as you pour the water on, and that the wind doesn't blow the fire towards you.
4. Hissing indicates that something is still hot - soak everything - ashes, coals and sticks completely. Allow to sit for 10 minutes, check for embers and heat then repeat the process if the fire is still going, or if heat is present.

NO WATER?

1. Allow the fire to burn to coals, then separate the coals so that no coals are touching. Allow to burn out and monitor until ashes are cool.

But I covered the fire in dirt or sand....

As with what happened with Lucy Jackson, covering a fire with dirt or sand does not mean it goes out. You can mix in dirt or sand, but only to deprive the fire of oxygen, you still need to make sure that the embers, coals and ash are cool before you leave the fire. If you BURY the fire, it DOES NOT mean the fire is out. The fire can smoulder, and reignite.

Remember: Lucy Jackson was playing on the sand, on a beach with no visible fire. The fire was hidden under the sand, cooking away like an oven.



Coming up on the Cape

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www.capeyorknrm.com.au/calendar.html

March

- 8 International Women's Day
- 17-19 National NRM Knowledge Conference Hobart
- 17-20 National Carbon Farming Conference Canberra
- 25-26 Northern Beef Producer Forum
- 27 Central Cape Industry Roundtable
- 28 Your Climate Photo Comp Announcement

April

- 3 Walkamin Soil Health Forum
- 10 Lakeland Downs Growers Information Session
- 18-21 Easter
- 25 Anzac Day
- 29-30 Resourcing Women Mount Surprise

2014 Indigenous Fire Workshop

Planning is well underway for the 2014 Indigenous Fire Workshop, an initiative of Mulong Productions and Cape York NRM to be held 14-18 July.

This years event will be hosted on Taepithiggi Country at Steve Irwin Wildlife Reserve, and organisers are working with Traditional Owners and Mapoon and Napranum Ranger groups.

Building on the past six highly successful workshops, this is set to be another great event. At the fire workshop you walk with the fire, practically learning first hand with Traditional Owners and fire practitioners on country.

People can register at <http://www.mulong.com.au/fire/index.html> by email at ben@mulong.com.au or by phone 07 4041 6633.



Above: The Western Cape Turtle Threat Abatement Alliance met with Minister for Indigenous Affairs, Senator Nigel Scullion in Cairns in January.

Below: Dale and Lewis Musgrave undertake fire management on their country.



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FOR
OUR
COUNTRY



Queensland
Government

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Next edition:

Celebrating Family Farming