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TREAT Newsletter No 23 AUGUST 1999

TREAT NEWS Editor: Dan Murphy

Items are included in "Treat News" for their interest to members and do not necessarily express treat's views.

COMING EVENTS

August 27th - TREAT AGM - Friday Morning, Lake Eacham Nursery
September 18th - Farm Tree Planting Re-visit (Maalan)

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A TRIBUTE TO LES BARNES

Les Barnes, who died at the beginning of June, was one of the first members of TREAT in 1982. He was a committee member and joined in the original planning sessions at which TREAT's aims and methods were discussed.

It was he who came up with the name TREAT (Trees for the Evelyn and Atherton Tablelands) for our infant organisation. Les was an avocado farmer at the time and lived in a 'flying saucer' near Lake Eacham. At TREAT's first tree-planting, Les brought his tractor and auger from his farm to Tinaburra to dig the holes for the lilly-pilly trees we planted near the toilet block.

Pelican Point was a place that Les visited and enjoyed latterly. It is proposed that TREAT will plant a tree there in memory of Les later in the year. Notice of this project will be given later.

AGM DATE CHANGE

The AGM which was to be held at the Lake Eacham Nursery on Friday morning 20th August will now be held on Friday morning of the 27th August. The venue is unchanged. As previously announced, elections will not be held at the meeting. Audited accounts for the six month period 1st January - 30th June 1999 will be presented. See you there.

FARM TREE PLANTING 1989

September 1989 Field Day



On Saturday 18th September, TREAT members and any other interested land-holders will re-visit the farms at Maalan (between Millaa Millaa and Ravenshoe) where trees were planted more than ten years ago. We shall see how they have grown and the benefits the plantings have provided for the Wallwork and Fairley families.

Mrs Janine Wallwork and her husband live on Maalan Rd at the junction with Suttie's Gap Road, and Mr and Mrs Fairley's farm is a short distance down Suttie's Gap Road.

We shall meet at the Wallwork's farm at 2 pm. Janine will show us her trees then we shall move onto the Fairley's farm. After discussing trees with Sue, we will join in a B.Y.O. afternoon tea picnic under a tree!

Any enquiries may be made to Joan Wright on 4091 3474.

The Australian National Tropical Botanic Gardens at Mareeba

By Geoff Tracey

A project of National significance is underway in Mareeba. It aims to establish a first class Tropical Botanic Garden in Mareeba with a major focus on Australia's Wet/Dry 'Monsoon' tropics which covers almost all of Tropical Australia.

This garden is to be known as 'The Australian National Tropical Botanic Garden at Mareeba.' It is to be a truly national symbol to enhance the development of our cultural identity within the natural environment of Tropical Australia.

Botanical Gardens are primarily scientific institutions established to collect, study, exchange and display plants for research, education and enjoyment. Botanical Gardens are an interface between plants, science and people.

The project has a long and eventful history. The original idea to establish the Gardens in Mareeba dates back to 1962 when Len Webb and Geoff Tracey (CSIRO Rainforest Ecology Section) spent a year in Mareeba studying the rainforest of North-East Australia.

Bicentennial Lakes attracted substantial funding, was professionally implemented and its lakes, walkways and plantings had a dramatic impact on Mareeba.

In 1988 North Queensland Wet Tropics was listed on the World Heritage List, the timber and plywood in Mareeba were closed down resulting in unemployment for the timber workers.

As part of a Structural Adjustment Package, the Federal Government provided funds for the employment of these workers. Geoff Tracey had been seconded to the Federal Environment Department (DASETT) and helped form the Shire based Tree Planting Scheme to employ the displaced timber workers. This scheme, now the Wet Tropics Tree Planting Scheme, started in Mareeba with Gary Barnes appointed as Technical Supervisor in October 1989.

Geoff and Gary planned and completed several WTTPS Projects on public land within Mareeba to establish 'Monsoon' rainforests modelled on Cape York Peninsula forests which were aimed to eventually form an integral part of the National Tropical Botanic Gardens.

WTTPS projects are still focussed within the Botanic Gardens framework. Since the land identified for these projects is on the Barron River or small tributaries, eg. Granite Creek and Cobra Creek, the WTTPS projects have much wider implications for land management with integrated Catchment Management eg. storm water run off control, tree planting for river management, fire management of river and creek verges and so on.

If funding is approved, the plan is to immediately set up a trust to establish the Botanical Garden policy, appoint appropriate staff and get the early stages of the Garden's development under way.

NatureSearch NEEDS NATURALISTS

The Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service is establishing a new program called NatureSearch which is calling on volunteer naturalists to collect information on the distribution of plants and animals throughout Queensland. Records of rare and threatened species, those that are significant indicators of environmental health and those that characterise important areas for conservation are particularly needed. By contributing records to NatureSearch, volunteers can assist in building up reliable data on species' distributions; essential information for conservation management.

NatureSearch volunteers can participate in a number of ways from simply sending in their own interesting records to taking part in organised surveys. As NatureSearch develops there will be training programs to improve volunteers' flora and fauna identification skills and ongoing newsletters to keep volunteers informed.

Interested people can contact Amanda Freeman, NatureSearch Volunteer Coordinator for Cairns-Tablelands at QPWS in Atherton. Phone 4091 4262 or email: Amanda.Freeman_at_env.qld.gov.au

TRAINEE SCORES WORK

Many members will recall our trainee from Brazil earlier this year, Mr Marcelo Moriera. Marcelo was a very dedicated student who has really taken the bit between his teeth since returning home. He has already formed a tree-planting group in his home town (Botucatu), using a nursery on his old university campus, and organised his classmates, families, etc into a group. As a result of his work with us, Marcelo also came to the attention of our former colleagues, Bill and Sue Laurance, nowadays working in Manaus, Brazil. Last month Marcelo commenced work as a research assistant working on Sue and Bill's forest fragmentation project and we hear he is already fitting in well. Not that we ever doubted that!

FORTY MILE SCRUB

By Maree Morgan

On 19th June a large group of TREAT members visited the Forty Mile Scrub National Park to see the projects being undertaken by QPWS to overcome the enormous threat posed by the spread of lantana.

On the walking track adjacent to the picnic area our 'tour guides' identified many magnificent species including bottle trees (*Brachyotum*), ebony (*Diospyros*) and strangler fig (*Ficus peltata*).

The picnic area provided a delightful setting for lunch and the opportunity to hear from Colin O'Keefe, the local ranger. Colin described the huge infestation of lantana and the arduous work of clearing even small sections. Not only does it choke the forest but also spreads fire which kills the trees.

In a roadside clearing we saw a buffer zone which has been planted by QPWS, assisted by the Yarramulla workers, at the beginning of this year. Three rows of *Acacia simsi*, backed by mixed species, have achieved very good growth so far. Plans are to establish a plant nursery at Yarramulla so that trees for future plantings can be provided locally.

Our QPWS hosts then took us to see the experimental regeneration plots. The trials with direct seeding and tree planting have had the benefit of good rain and are showing excellent results.

The main species include *Acacia simsi*, *Platygyium timorense*, *Ficus opposita* and *Codonocarpus attenuatus*. The very attractive *Codonocarpus* (bell fruit tree) shows great promise as a species for rehabilitation.

Eradication of lantana will be a mammoth operation and it is hoped that a biological control (a small insect recently introduced) will assist other methods.

Our QPWS team deserve congratulations on their wonderful efforts so far and our thanks for the privilege to be able to see the work in progress. We fervently hope that the resources will be provided for the Forty Mile Scrub to be restored to its full beauty.



HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1/7/1998 - 30/6/1999

Membership levels continued to fluctuate around 500 during the year; at the year end, membership was 521.

The cost of running TREAT for the year was \$5,300; income from various sources largely subscriptions and the sale of t-shirts, totalled \$6,500. Four project grants were received from Government amounting to \$45,175 - more than double that received the previous year.

Activities were held monthly throughout the year; working sessions continued each Friday at the QPWS Centre for Tropical Restoration (formerly the Regional Nursery).

Members put in a total of 6,700 hours of voluntary work in a range of activities, from nursery work to planting, administration and monitoring.

More than 39,000 plants of 164 species were produced during the year - slightly more than last year; at an average plant population of 2,500 plants per ha, this resulted in 16 ha of rainforest being planted in project areas, State Parks and on members own properties.

Work continued on Peterson Creek revegetation Project and started on the Mazlin Rehabilitation Project; members also continued with the monthly survey of vegetation and quarterly monitoring of mammals at Pelican Point.

The 'Tree Awareness Programme' in schools - an environmental education programme, continued with support from members and school teachers and a \$3000 grant from the Environmental Protection Agency.

The Newsletter, with circulation remaining at 600 continued to be published quarterly; copies were mailed to members, schools and other agencies involved in similar work.

The Management Committee met monthly throughout the year, maintained liaison with other organisations, monitored finance, project progress and membership and produced media releases.

VISIT TO PUERTO RICO

By Nigel Tucker

In May/ June I attended a rainforest restoration conference in Puerto Rico, USA. The conference was jointly sponsored by the Society for Ecological Restoration, the International Union of Forest Research Organisations and the International Institute of Tropical Forestry. The main themes of the conference were Barriers to the Success of Restoration, Accelerating Forest Recovery and Human Dimensions of Forest Restoration. 300 delegates from throughout the World's tropics including Latin and South America, Asia, Africa, Hawaii and Madagascar attended the conference.

There were some excellent presentations given and I returned with some new ideas about the restoration of tropical dry forests (a la 40 Mile Scrub), a very common forest type in much of the world's tropics. Professor Dan Janzen gave an extremely interesting presentation about the restoration of Guanacaste National park in Costa Rica, which is a very similar environment to 40 Mile. Janzen was looking for ways to improve humus levels and weed control in his plantings. Whilst at the local dump one day he spotted a mountain of orange peels left by a local juice processor; so had the next load dumped in a degraded area of the park, just to see what happened. Twelve months later, the peels had broken down into rich humus with seedlings of native plants emerging from the soil below the humus! Parts of the park now looks like a range of low orange hills as all the juice companies in Costa Rica rush to dump their peels at Guanacaste.

I was asked by the conference organisers to give a presentation on the work being done by TREAT and QPWS in wildlife corridor restoration. I spoke about Donaghy's, Peterson Creek and the Walter Hill Ranges corridors, detailing how we have tackled each project as a joint effort between community and government, and spoke about the use of genetic techniques to evaluate small mammal movement and colonisation in the corridors. The presentation was extremely well received and many delegates commented that our government / community approach was a model for the rest of the world and represents the direction for the future.

TREAT on TAP

Semester one 1999 saw TREAT on TAP introduced to two new schools. Both Herberton State School and El Arish State School participated in the intensive 'TREE AWARENESS PROGRAM'. Students from Year 5 at Herberton and Year 3/4 at El Arish were involved in a range of environmental learning activities led by nursery staff, TREAT volunteers and expert guides. Activities included:

1. Introductory session on Tree Awareness where students utilise the TREAT on TAP library, puzzles and posters. Each student has an activity workbook provided.
2. School Tree Planting. After deciding on the best location and purpose of the tree planting, each class establishes a tree plot at the school. Herberton students planted local woodland species to provide shade plots around the newly constructed school oval and El Arish students established a Cassowary Food Forest.
3. Plant Propagation. Students visit the TREAT or C4 nursery for a morning of plant propagation and maintenance and a brief look at community volunteers in action.
4. Plant Identification. Field based activities build observation skills in students in the area of plant identification and wildlife watching.
5. Aboriginal Cultural Walk. Students learn about traditional aboriginal foods, tools and way of life in the forest from expert guides.

The program relies on the support of school principals, P & C's, teachers and the many motivated TREAT volunteers who assist with its planning and implementation. To all, many thanks! El Arish Students write...

Dear Tania

We have learnt so many things from you. We especially like learning about cassowary droppings and how the seeds can grow into quandong trees. We now know so much about planting trees. Most of us have planted the plants from C4 Nursery and can't wait for them to grow.

Thank you and all your helpers for spending so much time with us.

Love from 3 / 4, El Arish School

EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

Are you interested?? ... In BIRDS and TREE PLANTING?

The trees are planted, they're growing, but what's the benefit for local birds?

BIRD MONITORING is a vital aspect of research that tries to identify what happens to bird life as plantings grow and develop. All major revegetation projects deserve regular (quarterly) follow-up visits from a bird monitoring team.

Birds Australia and TREAT are planning a TRAINING PROGRAM for bird team members - the aim is to have a core group of about 8 - 10 people who would help with 2 or more bird counts each per year, while building up their bird skills. All you need to join is motivation, a field guide and a pair of binoculars.

Interested? Call Elinor Scambler 4095 3296 or Dan Murphy or Amanda Freeman 4091 4262 (BH) or Tania Murphy 4095 3406 (BH)

Or send an email to Elinor Scambler dacelo@internorth.com.au Amanda Freeman: Amanda.Freeman@env.qld.gov.au or Dan Murphy: Dan.Murphy@env.qld.gov.au

TREAT ENVIRONMENTAL EXCURSIONS

By Peta Standley

This year's environmental excursions have so far proven to be a great success. Two out of the three excursions planned have been completed. The excursions to Peterson Creek - Palumbos property/ Davies Creek, Thurling's property and Malanda Environmental Park were both conducted in July.

The last excursion to Tolga Scrub will take place in September. A special thank-you again to those experts and volunteer's involved. The excursions would not be possible without your assistance.

At the Peterson/ Davies Creek excursion the children learned about; water quality, the differing reasons for the importance of revegetation, what's involved in the scientific monitoring of revegetation sites and why it is important. This year there were two schools involved in the excursion, the upper grades from Walkamin and Upper Barron Primary Schools combined. This is the first time we have had more than one school involved in a single excursion. It was a good way to increase the numbers of children on the excursion when primary with small schools, and the students enjoyed the opportunity to interact.

The excursion to the Malanda environmental park involved two Year five classes and one Year three class from Tolga Primary School, 76 students in total. The students gained an appreciation of the cultural history and use of the rainforest by the Ngadign people of the Malanda area. They also learnt of the importance of trees in the environment, how to identify certain species of tree, the volcanic formation of the Tablelands, and the pioneering history of the area. They played some games after the three main activities were finished based on the knowledge that they acquired. The games focused on bush foods for a modern culinary menu, a habitat game, and a creative word story using three new words from one of the activities. Thank-you to Nev Simpson for organising these games, and the Malanda Environment Centre for the use of their facility.

Both days were enjoyed by all those involved.

We have had an enormous response this year to the provision of the environmental excursions, as indicated by the large number of students involved. The excursion to Tolga Scrub will also have around 70 students. In addition to the three excursions, Yungaburra Primary School organised another excursion with Nev Simpson and Ernie Raymond. This is so the present Year three class could also have the opportunity to do the bush foods walk. Yungaburra Primary School Year three's were involved with the initial excursions last year. This is most exciting, as it indicates that schools want to be involved more than once and that they see the learning experiences as an essential part of children's education. It is great to see more schools wanting to be involved in environmental education activities.

DONAGHY'S TRAPPING PROGRAM UPDATE

By Nigel Tucker

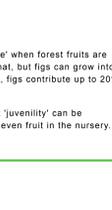
Some very interesting events are unfolding! This July, a number of animals were tagged in corridor areas where they had previously not occurred, including juvenile and adult animals of a number of species. In addition to animals actually moving in and establishing territories we also found a number of animals now beginning to use almost the whole length of the corridor. A Cape York rat (*Rattus leucopus*) was trapped in the Lake Barrine forest and trapped two nights later in the 1998 planting, around 350 metres downstream and a bush rat (*Rattus fuscipes*) was trapped on night one in Cadgana and on night three in the 1995 planting. Genetic analysis of our captures will commence later this year at the University of Qld, Centre for Conservation Biology. We'll keep you posted! Last week Donaghy's Corridor was visited by renowned botanist and broadcaster, Prof. David Bellamy who visited the nursery to look at our work. Prof. Bellamy enjoyed his visit enormously and was particularly interested in our genetics-based monitoring techniques at the corridor and our work in rare plant conservation.

Have you seen A TREE-KANGAROO (Tree Climber)?

If so, the Tree-Kangaroo and Mammal Group need your help. During the first week of August, you should receive a questionnaire in your letter-box, asking where you have seen a tree-kangaroo, and if you have any interesting anecdotal stories about these unique animals.

The Tree Kangaroo and Mammal Group are wanting to combine the sightings seen by the community with sightings collected from existing historical and current scientific sources, in order to produce a distribution map of all known sightings of the Lumholtz's Tree-Kangaroo in this region. This is most exciting, as it indicates that you are shared with the public via public talks and various information pamphlets for local landholders/ schools/ tourists. This is a most excellent project, and your contributions will be greatly appreciated.

If you don't receive a questionnaire and want to be involved, and didn't return a Malanda questionnaire last year, please ring 4096 5001 for details on how to receive your copy.



NURSERY NEWS

SOWING LIST 3rd Quarter 1999

May	Melicope viriflora	Glochidion philippicum
Acmena hemilampra	Musa banksii	Helicia lamingtoniana
Acronychia aciculata	Neolitsea dealbata	Hodgkinsonia frutescens
Aphananthe philippinensis	Pittosporum rubiginosum	Mischocarpus lachnocarpus
Archontophoenix alexandrei	Pittosporum venulosum	Neolitsea dealbata
Brachyotum alicandrei	Viticipremna queenslandica	Syzygium alligatum
Calidivulia australiensis	June	July
Davidsonia pruriens	Acmena hemilampra	Acmena smithii
Dysoxylum alliaceum	Acronychia aciculata	Acronychia aciculata
Elaeocarpus angustifolius	Acronychia laevis	Aphananthe philippinensis
Ficus congesta	Arytera pauciflora	Cassine melanocarpa
Ficus septica	Canarium acutifolium	Ficus hispida
Harpullia ramiflora	Castanosperrum australe	Ficus virgata
Hodgkinsonia frutescens	Elaeocarpus angustifolius	Plecygynium timorense
Melicope elleryana	Ficus septica	Prunus turneriana

In addition, figs are being propagated from cuttings on a weekly basis

All About Figs

Figs (*Ficus* spp.) are known as a 'keystone' species, that is, they are extremely important in forest systems. They fruit throughout the year, often during the 'lean time' when forest fruits are scarce, providing nutritious food for many birds and bats. In addition, their leaves are eaten by many arboreal folivores like possums and tree-kangaroos. Not only that, but figs can grow into immense individuals with a complex structure - providing many resting and nesting sites for wildlife. In recognition of their importance in re-planting degraded areas, figs contribute up to 20% of species in our plantings.

Although figs germinate readily from seed, we also grow them from cuttings. The main advantages are the ready availability of propagation material and the fact that 'juvency' can be overcome. In other words, using mature wood for cuttings means the new tree will fruit much sooner than the same species grown from seed - at times young plants even fruit in the nursery. That translates to early food provision inside our plantings, attracting fruit eating birds and bats and potentially other seeds they may disperse.

More Newsletters

- TREAT News No 23 August 1999 (this page)
- TREAT News No 22 - May 1999
- TREAT News No 21 - January 1999
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