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Dec 92 - Jan 93

Barung Landcare News

December '92/January '93

THE FITZROY CATCHMENT SYMPOSIUM

Jane Skrandies

A couple of weeks ago Barung Landcare sponsored me to attend the Fitzroy River Symposium at the University of Central Queensland in Rockhampton. This catchment is one of the largest ones on the east coast of Australia (about 140,000 km²). With the introduction of ICM or integrated catchment management, the QDPI introduced five pilot schemes in Queensland the Johnson and Pioneer Rivers in NQ, the Mitchell River facing the Gulf, the Fitzroy River in CQ and the Mary River in SEQ. Making the point that catchments are bioregions that need to be looked at in a holistic way.

The idea behind such a symposium was to initiate a meeting that brought together all parties interested in the use of land, water and related biological resources. So we saw an array of Government, University, Industry and Community Interests represented. During the symposium it became clear that the degradation of a river system does not solely occur 'in' the water but that all activities around the catchment are responsible for its state. The water quality is greatly dependent on how the resources (be it minerals, agricultural land, fish, the water itself etc) around and in the river are being used and what impact this usage is having on the river as a system. A catchment extends from its source (that includes all the run-off areas from surrounding ridges) to the estuary and beyond the rivermouth into the sea area into which it spills its waters.

The two days presented an overflow of information. It was an absolute marathon. Overwhelmed with info on geology, climate, soils, water, landforms, flora and fauna, history, industries like coal and other mining, landusers for horticulture, grazing, grain growing, cotton etc., fisheries, councils, electricity works, small bits of environmental issues, landcare etc. It was mind boggling. Holding my some 1000 pages long and heavy documentation of the presented papers I felt quite weighted down at times. The speakers changed at lightening speed first every 20 minutes than every 15 minutes the next day. Giving the presenters hardly time to take a breath having to speed through their papers mostly much too long for the time available. Most of them couldn't finish their prepared speeches. And talks they were. With an overwhelming agenda there was no time for questioning and interaction. Lots of us complained heavily about the lack of communication with the result that the speakers were cut even shorter to give us a bit of input. The only time of face to face communication was mumbled with bits of food stuck in the mouth.

Sorry Rocky - it was an enormous attempt and the organisers did their best to put everything on the "menu" that was related to the catchment care issues but it was too much of a good thing. (Like death by chocolate).

One of the highlights was the Cotton Industries' attempt to be ecologically sound by opening themselves up to an environmental auditor from Great Britain. This is the first time that an Australian industry has seriously looked at themselves with respect to their impact on the environment. Wouldn't we all welcome the other industries or councils looking into their landuse practises in the same way?

The mining industry, in this case coal mining, has made steps forward with a program called EMOS (Environmental Mining Operation Study). How far this contract of rehabilitation works out in real terms is still up for discussion. (Especially after the dinner talk I had with the BHP coalmine

environmental officer who was rather straight out about the reality of those approaches. Let us call them cosmetic rather than effective). I do admit to being sceptical about the involvement of industries in those setting up processes for Integrated Catchment Management. Although I still welcome the opportunity to talk to their representatives, I can't get past the feeling that they mostly want to have their hands in the pie not to miss what could turn into legislation aimed against their practises. This applies to councils as well as other stakeholders in the catchment.

How can we relate this symposium to our own catchment the Mary River? Only a few suggestions. The pilot catchments seem to differ dramatically in aspects of landuse, size, climate and stakeholders. Therefore the problems can be vastly different. We don't have coal mines, a coal fired power plant needing cooling water, industries which use enormous amounts of water for irrigation like the cotton industry, pollution outfall onto the Great Barrier Reef and our catchment is fair sized. What we do have in the upper Mary is the Baroon Pocket Dam with blue-green algae bloom, run-off pollution from agriculture, urban sprawl and the Maleny sewerage system. We do have problems with landslips, overcleared land and loss of valuable agricultural soil to housing. The Fitzroy has been a study object from various industries to university; the Mary is hardly mapped properly. We do need more geological, climatic, flora and fauna, landuse information on our catchment to get our river into a sustainable state. We do need strategies based on valid base line information to allow informed decision making for all stakeholders.

Will I get this all past the editor? - I do hope the democratic process is still working. Because if I learnt anything out of this symposium it is that communication is vital. Especially communication with those who we might have differences with, be it 'Greenies' or Miners.

I could give you an endless account of all the presented issues but here is neither time nor space. So please if you are more interested why don't you come in the Barung office to view the Fitzroy Catchment Symposium folder or have a chat to me (if you still wanna talk to me now !)



SCIENTIFIC TRIAL SITE.

Ron and Jack Mitchell are looking for an approximately 3/4 acre site to run some trials on Harvestable Timbers. They are looking to produce some scientific data on the Mitchell Low Maintenance Planting Method.

Costs for setting up the site will be covered by the Mitchells but Please only Contact us if your site has the following:

- All weather access.
- Not too steep.
- Deep red soils.
- Fenced from stock.

Lexy on 943922 or Jack Mitchell on (07)2891289.

COMPUTER REPORT

by Jane Skrandies

In the last year Barung LC received NSCP funding after successfully handing in a submission to buy a 386 Personal Computer, a mouse, a printer and a modem/fax facility.

We had already some funding available to buy a GIS system (Geographical Information System) called MapInfo and other software; a wordprocessor for secretarial and newsletter work, and a simple database called File Express.

Additionally one of our members, Andrew Martin, donated a membership program (that has been updated just recently) enabling us to keep records of our membership, print various lists and label our NLs.

IMPORTANT FACT

IF YOU USE CHEMICALS IN THE FORM OF FERTILIZERS AND PESTICIDES, YOU HAVE KILLED THE LIVING ORGANISMS AND EARTHWORMS IN YOUR SOIL. CSIRO TESTS CONFIRM THAT 50kg OF DEAD SOIL WILL ONLY HOLD 30 Litres OF WATER, BUT LIVING SOIL FILLED WITH HUMUS WILL HOLD UP TO 195 Litres OF WATER.

Here are a few more details on how we are using our computer:

Mapinfo: - a GIS system

Glen Thomas from QUT has recently completed his thesis called "LandCare by Design" using the Barung Landcare group and the Obi catchment area as a basis for his work. The catchment includes all tributaries of the Obi Obi from the headwaters to the link up with the Mary River. One of the outcomes of this project is a series of maps of the Obi catchment area relating to soil types, slope categories, remnant vegetation, current landuse, some weed distribution and other useful data.

We thank Glen for making the mapinfo data he collected and collated over the past two years available to the Barung Landcare group at no cost.

Recently we have updated our MapInfo program to windows which allows us to produce quite accurate mapping.

Building onto the data we already have available we hope to work together with the Caloundra City Council (CCC) to extend the mapping to the whole Maleny Plateau area, maybe all of the Barung area. Through the CCC we have the possibility to access satellite maps which will help us identify the different kinds of vegetation in this area. This is still in the discussion phase and strongly related to the Baroon Pocket Catchment Care group recently initiated by the Caloundra / Maroochy Waterboard.

Our student from Gatton Agricultural College, Craig Wood, did some conventional mapping of weed distribution in the Barung area. He specialised on woody weeds like camphor laurel, mistflower, small leaved privet and groundsel. We still hope to finish this weed project by entering the data to create a workable map.

The MapInfo program has also been used to produce 5 property plans for landowners in the region. The next plan attempted will involve the mapping of a 640 acre property in Conondale, the Crystal Waters Permaculture Village.

Due to some teething problems with the use of MapInfo and the Map printing facilities as well as the costs involved for the private landholders we decided to offer another service. Workshops with DPI officers will include a get together of landowners with related landuse and the production of a selfhelp property plan at a low cost.

File Express - an Inventory program.

With the initial help of Trevor Angel we are using a simple database working like a stocktaking sheet. This way we keep records of all the kinds of tree species available together with their quantities sitting in our school nursery and other private places. We know where the plants are, how many are available and how many more we need to produce. We can print out lists of plants for different uses like cabinet timbers, swampy, home garden, edible, rainforest understorey, hardy landslip, frost and wind resistant, pioneer, creek banks stabilising, and a new list on growth rates.

Use of the Modem

Landcare has recently entered the area of computer networking. I attended a workshop for the Landcare Co-ordinators of Qld given by Ian Peter, the instigator of an Australian computer network called "Pegasus". A few months back 50 LC groups in Australia were invited to be part of a Telecom sponsored network called Agrinet and LandcareNet. This way the LC groups with modems and computers have access over the phonline to computer linkup systems as Telecom's Discovery and Ian Peter's Pegasus Network. We are sponsored to use Telecoms Software Package Discovery, get paid the joining fees for Discovery and Pegasus as well as 1 hour per month free user time.

There are interesting new horizons in using Computer Networks like Pegasus. There are special areas reserved for computer conferences where LC groups, like ourselves, can communicate fast and without paperwork with other interest groups like: Action groups like Green Peace, other GIS systems, Landcare Groups all over Australia, soon the Landcare coordinators, access to Universities by next month, in the future we will begin to communicate directly with Local Government Authorities and other Departments like DPI, Lands Dept.etc., and we also have access to overseas users of the system.

There is a flood of information out there worth being read, collated and put to good on the ground use.

We invite any of our members or interested people to join a Computer Subgroup. We had quite a lot of interest but due to other commitments the group will start next year.



THANKS TO JEAN

As many people may know Jean Jarvis has been one of our longest standing volunteers and with the constant demand on space in the couple of years Cec and Jean have provided us with a area to put up a Shadehouse and also harden off plants. Jean has now decided that she's had enough and it couldn't have come at a better time as we should be able to move some plants down to the Nursery Site this week. I would like to THANK JEAN AND CEC FOR ALL THEIR HELP AND SUPPORT OVER THE LAST FEW YEARS. I hope this isn't the last we see of you.

WATER QUALITY WORKSHOP

After a fair bit of confusion about the collection of bottles from the High School, (some people didn't bother) and a bit of general confusion about how where and why they were collected, (It seems as though people didn't read the very specific instructions supplied) we got into it. There were 12 of us in the High School Science Lab. who sat quietly and listened to what Peter Oliver had to say. But by the afternoon the interaction was great and there were people and water samples everywhere. It was a really enjoyable and interesting day and most of us found out some pretty interesting information about our water.

Generally I think the Phosphates, Nitrates and Dissolved Oxygen levels in the water around here were pretty low. The one thing which did show up a lot was the amount of E.Coli in the water which shows to me that it's the human element which is having a big effect on our waterways in this area. I would like to Thank Peter Oliver for all the time and energy he put into giving us this information and if enough people show interest in this process we may be able to run future workshops.

TREE DEMONSTRATION PLOTS

Since our last newsletter we have had the opportunity to view two different methods of tree planting.

The first Field Day was held at Mt.Mee on the property of Don Pickering showing us the results of some of the trials carried out by Greening Australia in conjunction with the Forestry.

The second one was held in Upper Cedar Creek Rd., on the property of Genesis Foundation and was more a How to do it? than looking at what has been achieved.

Jack and Ron Mitchell were talking about the Mitchell Low Maintenance Planting Method.

In my view of things they seemed to be two very different ways to go about planting trees and I do feel as though some sort of adaptation for our area would be totally appropriate.

Basically the Mitchell Method is to plant the trees at very close spacings and to spray the whole area with Round -up prior to planting. Then after a certain number of years the plot is thinned and some income is generated from this timber. The close plantings encourages the trees to go up and not form too many lower branches which interferes with the quality of millable timber. It also encourages a fast canopy closure therefore pushing the trees up and cutting down on the light getting in which in turn discourages weed competition on the ground.

The Mt. Mee Field Day was looking more Rainforest Cabinet Timber Species Selection.

Make a difference...



THE RIGHT TREE, IN THE RIGHT PLACE FOR THE RIGHT REASON!

We looked at

The Establishment and Management of Cabinet timbers.

The Marketing Considerations and

The Nelder Wheel which investigates the aspects of tree/ pasture interactions on ex-rainforest land using high value cabinet timbers.

For more information on any of the above Please Call In at The Enterprise Centre on Tuesdays or Thursdays and we can copy the relevant information.

RAINFOREST ECO-SYSTEM ESTABLISHMENT

A rainforest eco-establishment workshop will be held in Samford on Friday February 12th, 1993 and Saturday February 13th.

Where? Samford Showgrounds, Mt Glorious Road, Highvale

When? Friday evening, beginning at 7.30pm
Saturday, 7.30am to 3.00pm

FRIDAY NIGHT Speakers will be people experienced in rehabilitation of rainforest and harvestable timber species. Following the speakers, supper will be provided to allow everyone to take part in informed discussion over a cup of tea or coffee.

SATURDAY There will be visits to and discussions on existing plantings and a visit to the planned research planting site for a discussion on methods for preparation of successful new plantings. A fee of \$25 per adult person will be charged to cover the cost of speakers expenses, rental, and hiring of necessary equipment. Some people will be travelling quite a distance to attend, so there will be camping facilities at the Showgrounds for anyone wishing to stop over. Cost is \$3 per van or vehicle. BYO your own eats etc.

This is a low cost introduction to the successful growing of rainforest and harvestable timbers. It will be necessary to have some idea of numbers wishing to attend. For further information ring Jack Mitchell 07-2891288 or write C/- Betts Road, Samford. 4520



NURSERY SITE UPDATE AND NEW WORKERS

Finally, with all the liaison and negotiating we have ourselves a Jobskills worker. His name is Lyndon McPherson and you will be able to catch him most days down at the Nursery Site or up at the High School. Lyndon will be with us for the next six months mostly working to help get the Shed and Nursery Site together.

If you have had a look at the Nursery Site it is pretty noticeable that Lyndon is getting into it. The Committee has finally come to the decision on what type of shed to build and when the Consent Application is through and the Plans have been passed we will be needing all the help we can get.

We have decided to build a timber shed and to use as much voluntary labour as we possible can. Lyndon has had abit of experience with building and seems to be pretty handy all round.

We have also become an agent for Community Service Workers and have two of them starting this week. This will supply us with plenty of labour to get the Nursery up and running.

The Building Plans are in Thanks to Peter Bray and the Consent Use application is in Thanks to Rob Cork and John Gibson. It was advertised on Friday the 27.11.92 but will probably be the main thing to hold us up. Nothing will happen till after Christmas at least.

We have been granted a fifteen year lease on the site from the Council and that is all Signed, Sealed and Delivered for the grand total of \$ 1.00 per year.

As part of the deal we are doing a concept plan of the adjoining Council Parkland trying to incorporate locally endangered species and just generally give people some idea of what a tree will actually look like when its grown in an open position.

BRIDGE CREEK LANDSLIP REHABILITATION PROJECT

With many Thanks to the Rodericks again there have been major changes made to the Site down on Bridge Creek Rd., at Collin Corks.

The application for trees from the Forestry is done, the seeds are in the process of being ordered and the fencing will be done by the time you all get this.

There has been alot of interest from Maleny High and we've also had a visit from Maroochydore High. A Field Day held in conjunction with the Qld. Dairyman's Assoc. also attracted alot of interest.

The Schools are encouraging the Students to do projects on Landcare related topics and it's been great to have them involved with this one from the start.

We have also been able to offer the Students alot of information for these assignments.

BARUNG WOULD LIKE TO WELCOME ALL NEW MEMBERS AND INFORM YOU ALL OF THE FACT THAT YOU CAN CONTACT ANYBODY ON THE COMMITTEE WITH ANY QUESTIONS OR SUGGESTIONS.

LEXY IS ALSO AVAILABLE ON 943922 ON TUESDAYS AND THURSDAYS AT THE ENTERPRISE CENTRE.



DATE CLAIMERS DECEMBER/JANUARY

- 2.12.92. A Walk with Mary by Steven Lang at the Maleny High School.
- 8.12.92. Regional Landcare Meeting at Kilkivan - 9.00am.
- 11.12.92. Property Planning Workshop -Dairy Farming at Maleny High School at 9.30am - 3.00pm.
- 15.12.92. Barung Committee Meeting at the Enterprise Centre at 7.00pm.
- 22.12.92. Enterprise Centre Xmas Party after 5.00pm for a couple of hours. B.Y.O. Food and Drinks. All Welcome.
- 12.1.93. Enterprise Arm Sub Committee Meeting at E.C.M. at 7.00pm.
- 26.1.93 Rural Sub Committee Meeting, ECM 7.30pm with guest speaker

Jo Ferrier

BARUNG LANDCARE COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Coordinator - Lexy Forbes

Secretary & Treasurer - Lexy Forbes

President - Jo Ferrier

Vice President - Mal Thompson

Committee Members - Jane Skrandies, Gillian Ainscough, Bill Hall, Denise Irons, Harold Hopper

Advisers - Ashley Sewell, Sam Brown

The Coordinator is available every Tuesday, some Thursdays, at Enterprise Centre, 23 Coral St., Maleny.

December '92/January '93



'Working for our future'

Contact: Barung Landcare Association
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on Tuesdays and Thursdays
Phone: 074-943922

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