

FENCELINES: EUNGELLA AG-NRM UPDATE



APRIL 2021

Welcome

Welcome to the first edition of Fencelines: Eungella Ag-NRM Update. This newsletter will give Eungella landholders access to land management stories, and to information about field events and workshops. The 2018 Eungella-Clarke Range bushfire disaster prompted an NQ Dry Tropics and Pioneer Catchment Landcare project to help Eungella build climate resilience and capability, which has included field days and Walk & Talk events. This bi-monthly newsletter will continue work in this area, feedback and contributions are welcome, through communications@pioneercatchment.org.au : feel free to get in touch and tell us what you would like to see.

Eungella Cluster Group Walk and Talk

A recent Walk & Talk event of the Eungella Cluster Group explored a magic patch of Dalrymple Heights landholder-owned rainforest. The walk was led by Pioneer Catchment Landcare Vegetation Ecologist Peter Alden, who showed walkers the web of elements at work in a functioning rainforest, from soil and water to fungal, flora and fauna networks. Understanding how Eungella's unique rainforest ecology works is crucial in rehabilitating from fire, drought and cyclone events.



NQDT Landholders Driving Change Update

Compiled by Rodger Walker, Land Management Support Coordinator, Bowen Office

rodger.walker@nqdrytropics.com.au 0408 828 276

Greetings Eungella landholders,

A number of NQ Dry Tropics' Landholders Driving Change (LDC) projects are due to wrap up in the Eungella area by July this year. Field days to showcase the successes and challenges landholders have faced while undertaking these projects will be held in June and July. Everyone is encouraged to attend these informative events. For further information and stories about these projects visit the LDC website: <https://ldc.nqdrytropics.com.au/>

Giant Rat's Tail Grass (GRT) Management technical update and field walk Thursday, 3 June, 1-5pm. Assemble at Crediton Hall Reserve.

This will be our third annual GRT field walk and we expect a high attendance similar to the previous two events. Landholder feedback on their GRT grass control efforts will be a key focus, along with demonstrations of trial paddocks and gear used for GRT control. We will also hear from technical specialist John Reeve (Department of Agriculture and Fisheries) who has assisted landholders over the last three years. John will be in the area for a few days so one-on-one landholder visits will be possible for those interested pre or post event. Industry representatives will also be present on the day. Look out for the flyer which will be distributed later this month. Please send RSVP's to me.



Bus tour of completed landcare works across multiple farms (in conjunction with Reef Catchments). June 24, Depart from Eungella Hall. See What's On, page 3 for bookings

For those keen to learn more about some of the land and water improvements their neighbours have been making, this is the tour for you. We will visit a number of properties across the catchment to learn and see how others are managing a wide range of issues, including waterway management, fencing, invasive weed control, and revegetation efforts. This will be a full day tour, and a local bus will be hired for the day.



Multi-species pasture establishment Q and A (in conjunction with Reef Catchments and industry). Date to be confirmed, but likely to be in July.

This half-day event is aimed to equip landholders with the latest knowledge and findings in multi-species pasture establishment. Availability of a new seeder as part of a demonstration for the event is the current hold-up to this day going ahead at the moment. We will keep you posted.

*DAF technical specialist John Reeve on-farm
GRT pasture monitoring Crediton, October
2020*
Images: NQDT

LDC Property Soil Sampling Technical Support

A number of landholders were visited by independent agronomist John Hughes from December 2020 to February 2021 to better understand their soil tests and plan their paddock pasture and soil management accordingly. Feedback from landholders has been positive and they have received electronic correspondence on their individual results and management recommendations. John also spoke on the management recommendations at a Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF) Grazing Resilience and Sustainable Solutions (GRASS) event in January.

On-ground Grants

- ◆ Future grants for on-ground works for the Eungella and wider BBB catchment will primarily be via the LDC's "Sediment Loss Prevention Grants". The first round of successful grants will be announced in May. This funding is competitive.
- ◆ Another opportunity for landholders is to get involved with the Grazing Resilience and Sustainable Solutions (GRASS) program. The program supports graziers with areas of poor (C) or degraded (D) land condition to develop and implement a tailor-made action plan for land management. Delivered by DAF and NQ Dry Tropics, funding is competitive.
- ◆ Federal Enviro grants, Smart Farm grants and other industry funding opportunities may appear so keep an eye out for those opportunities. Another grant to keep an eye out for is the Land Restoration Fund (LRF) and their carbon farming opportunities (<https://www.qld.gov.au/environment/climate/climate-change/land-restoration-fund/funded-projects>). Government review feedback from 2020 has been that smaller projects and properties should be one of the priorities for funding in their future rounds.

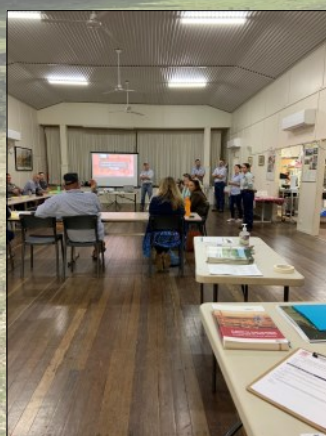
Have a safe and rainy April-May!

GRASS is greener

The Grazing Resilience and Sustainable Solutions (GRASS) program has been running in the Eungella district, working with graziers to deliver one-on-one support and tailored land management plans to address land in poor or degraded condition.

Designed to support beef producers in the reef catchments of the Burdekin, Fitzroy and Burnett-Mary regions, the program is being delivered in the Broken River catchment by Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF) and NQ Dry Tropics.

Through participation in GRASS, graziers are able to access a range of resources and identify actions that lead to improved land condition and productivity of degraded land, and identify preventative strategies. Participation in the program also assists producers in being compliant with grazing Reef Regulations, and offers an opportunity to opt for your property to be placed on a low-risk for compliance register. This is to recognise that producers participating in the GRASS program are proactively undertaking activities which reduce nutrient and sediment runoff and improve land condition.



There has been some positive uptake of the program in the Eungella district, with DAF hosting a workshop to take producers through the Land Management Plan process last September. Any producers who did not participate and are interested in assistance to create a Land Management Plan for their property can contact one of the following DAF officers: Roxanne Morgan 0436 826 211; Peta Stockwell 0436 943 013; or Jim Fletcher 0428 960 572

What's on in Ag and NRM

Wed, April 28	Regional development Australia MIW Ag Tech Workshop, providing an opportunity to be involved in the regional discussion on ag tech development and opportunities. To register and enquires, phone Ph: Nic Willis on 0487 895 796 or projectmanager@rdamiw.org.au
May 2-8	Beef Week, Rockhampton
Thursday May 6	Reef Catchments and Mackay Regional Council present Bruce Pascoe– free event at MECC. Bookings: www.eventbrite.com.au/e/reef-catchments-presents-bruce-pascoe-tickets-149993587859
Saturday, May 8	Eungella Cluster Group Field day at Holistic Pantry Garlic Farm, with guest presenter Luke Mathews, Pandurunga Permaculture. Contact Peter Alden 0407120104
Thursday, June 3	Giant Rat's Tail Grass Management technical update and field walk 1-5pm. Assemble at Crediton Hall Reserve. Enq: Rodger Walker, NQDry Tropics, 0408828276 or rodger.walker@nqdrytropics.com.au
Thursday, June 24	Eungella Show & Tell Bus tour, providing an insight into completed landcare works across multiple farms. Departs from Eungella Hall. Enq: Rodger Walker (NQDry Tropics) 0408828276 or Julia Kasiske (Reef Catchments) 0488730021
Every Tuesday	Volunteering with Pioneer Catchment Landcare, 8am to noon with shared morning tea. Activities include propagation in the Mackay Natural Environment Centre Nursery, developing PCL display garden, and re-veg projects such as Far Beach. Please contact Tom Crow at projectofficer@pioneercatchment.org.au to get involved.

Management of Wild Tobacco (*Solanum maritimum*) in recovering rainforests.

By Peter Alden, Vegetation Ecologist

The November 2018 fires burnt large areas of rainforest in the Crediton and Dalrymple Heights areas of Eungella.

Most of the forest that burnt was regrowth rainforest recovering from previous clearing, with narrow species diversity of mainly pioneer species including Brown Kurrajong (*Commersonia bartramia*), Red Ash, (*Alphitonia petriei*), and Blackwood Wattle, (*Acacia melanoxylon*). These species have seeds that have hard cases that persist in the soil awaiting the conditions for germination should they arise, such as disturbance or fire, and given the time these forests had been growing on site, there would have been considerable build-up of seeds of these species.

The most common weed before the fires was Lantana, that had been frosted in the previous winter and drought affected. This lantana provided a pathway for flames to reach the canopy. Lantana and its seeds are killed by hot fires.



Wild Tobacco is a common weed in the area, and the seeds, spread by birds, are hard and persist in the soil, and respond to disturbance such as fires. Common areas of growth are fence lines, around un-grazed areas and edges of forests. It does not grow well under a canopy, or in rainforest, due to shading.

The first noticeable response to the fires was that all standing rainforest species were killed, but there was prolific germination of the pioneer species, and the Wild Tobacco, in the ashes, this being the perfect conditions to break the seed dormancy. The Wild Tobacco has the faster growth rate so its leaves dominated the canopy, but the other pioneers, the native were just underneath and growing well.

Two years after the fire, there is now a canopy of Wild Tobacco and native pioneer saplings up to 5m tall under the burnt dead stems of the remnant forest. But there is hope. Wild tobacco is not a tall species growing to 5m max, while the rainforest pioneer species are tall trees to 25m. Eventually the wild tobacco will be overgrown and will disappear under the shade of the canopy. It will however persist on the edges and any areas of disturbance created in the canopy as it is in other areas that were not burnt.



It is important that as the canopy of this forest regrows, it is not disturbed, and gaps are not created that will support another generation of this weed.

On-going edge management will be necessary if this weed is to be reduced, but given the persistence of populations of this weed, eradication will not be possible. Those foliar spraying should ensure there is limited overspray thus creating more conditions for weeds to grow.

Disturbance or removal of the recovering rainforest will result in another generation of Wild Tobacco, and landowners should assess the usefulness of the pasture created before spending the resources to clear and maintain weed free on such steep country.

Find out more at https://www.daf.qld.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0007/60991/wild-tobacco.pdf



Eungella Rainforest Cluster Group Field Day

Saturday May 8, 2021

3pm to 5pm

At Holistic Pantry Eungella Permaculture Farm

Free event followed by barbecue dinner at 5pm

Bookings essential!

- Walk through of local short-chain food production farm
- Guest presenter: Permaculture educator Luke Matthews on building soil health on your land and beneficial composting techniques, including compost teas for pastures.



Venue

334 Schumanns Rd Eungella
Look for the signs! Access by 4WD, parking/transport available from gate for 2WD.

RSVP by May 1 to Peter Alden
0407 120104 or email
peter.alden15@bigpond.com



Landholders Driving Change is a Burdekin Major Integrated Project funded by the Queensland Government through the Queensland Reef Water Quality Program



Wild dogs on the move

Wild dog breeding season is underway. Mackay Regional Council Pest Management Team Leader-Mirani, Shelley Molloy, would like Eungella landholders to be conscious of some key facts about wild dogs at this time of year.

WILD DOGS AFFECT:

- ◆ Lifestyle block owners
- ◆ Peri-urban residents
- ◆ Rural landholders

INCREASED WILD DOG ACTIVITY (MARCH-MAY)

- ◆ Females ready to breed
- ◆ Juveniles looking for new home range
- ◆ Males seeking breeding partner

SIGNS

- ◆ Howling and sightings
- ◆ Domestic dogs barking (late at night and prior to dawn)



Wild dogs will gamely approach human use areas during breeding season, scouting for mates and dens.

Image: MRC

PRECAUTIONS

- ◆ All domestic animals to be kennelled or kept inside from dusk till morning. Would advise when letting dog out for toileting in the morning to have on lead
- ◆ Livestock eg: goats/sheep/chickens to be put into secure enclosures at night. Their paddocks to have dog meshed fencing, fence line to be well maintained.
- ◆ Any landholders with questions or concerns regarding wild dogs can contact 1300 622 529 (MACKAY) and ask to speak to Council's Pest Management Officers.

Fencelines is produced by



**LANDHOLDERS
DRIVING CHANGE**
BURDEKIN MAJOR INTEGRATED PROJECT

Landholders Driving
Change is a Burdekin
Major Integrated Project
funded by the Queensland
Government through the
Queensland Reef Water
Quality Program



Feedback and contributions are welcome, through communications@pioneercatchment.org.au