

Pioneer Catchment & Landcare News

December 2023

Plant of the Month -
Musk-scented plant



Pest Spotting -
Creeping Cinderella weed



VegCat Training



2023 Chair Report



**PIONEER
Catchment
LANDCARE**

Our Mission

To implement an integrated, science-based approach to natural resource management through supportive partnerships across our catchment

2023 Annual general meeting

The Annual General Meeting (AGM) held on 7 November 2023 by PCL, was a great event where members gathered to reflect on the achievements of the year and discuss the aspirations for the upcoming year.

One of the highlights of the meeting was the presentation by Project Officer Daniel Hudson. He shared his noteworthy accomplishments in the Monitoring of the Northern Quoll in Homevale National Park and Crediton State Forest. The detailed insights provided will shed light on the progress of the conservation efforts undertaken by PCL for these endangered marsupials. His report not only highlighted the dedication and hard work of the team, but also emphasized the importance of ongoing monitoring and conservation initiatives.

Sharon Dwyer, the Chair of PCL, played a pivotal role in the meeting by presenting the Chair's Report for the year 2023. This report, available at the end of the newsletter, provides a comprehensive overview of the organisation's activities, challenges faced, and milestones achieved throughout the year. It serves as a valuable resource for members and stakeholders.

For those who prefer digital access, the annual report is conveniently accessible online at <https://pioneercatchment.org.au/about-us/annual-report/>.

The AGM provided a platform for members to actively participate in discussions about the organisation's direction, offering a collaborative environment where ideas and insights could be shared.

PCL would like to wish all members a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.



Image: Vintage Kiss, Melba House Marian



Image: Participants of 2023 PCL AGM at Vintage Kiss, Marian



<https://www.facebook.com/vintagekissbaravan>

Salt couch trial update

The salt couch trial for TMR has entered its second stage, involving the reinstatement of salt couch grass (*Sporobolus virginicus*) near the original salt marsh community it originated from. The project aims to address the following objectives:

1. Determine the viability of successfully cultivating salt couch in a nursery setting using vegetative material sourced from areas affected by the proposed alignment of the Mackay Port Access Project (MPAP).
2. Assess the successful reintroduction of salt couch to natural marine environments after being grown in nursery conditions.
3. Estimate the expected timeframe for salt couch coverage (in square metres) in both nursery setting and in relocation into natural marine environments.

The salt couch had been growing at the Swayne Street, Mackay Natural Environment Centre nursery run by Mackay Regional Council (Site A) for five months in controlled growing conditions. Plants were cultivated in different media, including plain potting mix, potting mix with added fertiliser, and a wetland organic mix with fertiliser. Additionally, two distinct watering schedules were implemented to test tolerance levels: heavy watering versus a lighter schedule. Due to biosecurity regulations at the Council nursery, all soil from the root system needed to be thoroughly cleaned from the plants.

Salt couch plants were also cultivated with their original soil intact and kept off-site (Site B). However, due to Site B's inland location, several plants were adversely affected by frost.

The plants have since been reintroduced to their original intertidal environment. PCL will continue to monitor the health and spread of the salt couch. A final report, outlining the viability of growing salt couch in controlled environments and successful reintroduction to its natural habitat, will be presented to TMR in January 2024. This report will include information on optimal growth media, suitable watering schedules, timeframes, and seasonal considerations associated with healthy growth, as well as the duration required for recolonisation after reintroduction to a salt marsh environment.



Image: One of the 4 trial sites that salt couch will be reinstated .



Image: Salt couch planted in groups, according to growing conditions in Sites A and B ,to measure spread in natural environment.



Image: A single tube stock showing root development.



Image: The root system of salt couch in a tile.

Native Plant of the Month

Musk-scented plant *Hypoestes floribunda*

Family: Acanthaceae

This variable upright herb to 600–800mm is widely distributed in drier monsoon forests and vine thickets in coastal and inland regions across the top of Australia from Western Australia to Queensland and into northern New South Wales, from sea level to 1,000m. Occurs locally but is not common.

Leaves: Opposite, softly hairy, mid-green, 4-25 x 10-90mm.

Flowers: Pink, mauve or purple lobed often with white inside corolla tube, borne in leaf axils or terminally.

Fruit: Narrow capsule 9-12mm long, containing 4 seeds, expelled at maturity. Seeds germinate readily.

Growing Notes: Attractive shrub for sunny or partly-shaded areas with adequate moisture. It self-seeds readily. Regular pruning will help maintain a more compact shape and prolong flowering.



Source: Native Hypoestes | Native Plants Queensland (npq.org.au)

Image: Peter Storer

Pest Spotting

Creeping Cinderella weed *Calyptocarpus vialis*

Family: Asteraceae

Annual or short-lived perennial herb, roughly hairy with weak often sprawling thin stems to 600mm.

Weed Category: Other Invasive Plant, invasive plants that are not prohibited or restricted invasive plants, but are known to spread readily and cause negative impacts, within the region.

Leaves: Opposite, simple, hairy pale green, oval to triangular, 15-40 x 8-25mm, margins serrated, tip pointed, base tapering abruptly into winged stalk, 5-11mm long.

Flowers: Daisies, 5-10mm long, with bright yellow centres and 'petals', borne singly or in few-flowered terminal or axillary groups.

Fruit/Seeds: Seeds, 3-4mm long, warty textured, compressed, slightly 3-4 angled with 2 barbed or scaly awns 1.5-2mm long.

Spread by: Garden waste, probably water and contaminated soil and invades any disturbed areas.



Source: Mackay Regional Pest Management Group (2018) Weeds of the Mackay Whitsunday Region Second Edition.

Image: Central Queensland Coast Landcare Network

Healthy Horse, Healthy Land workshop

A series of two Healthy Horse Healthy Land workshops was held in Bloomsbury on Thursday 26th October. A joint venture between PCL and Whitsunday Landcare, it was held in Bloomsbury Soldiers Memorial Hall, a beautiful hall kept going by a volunteer committee of dedicated locals. The workshop was presented by Stuart Myers, acclaimed author, and joint creator of Equiculture, with his wife Jane. The system presented sees a world where the needs of domestic horses are met by providing them with a species-appropriate lifestyle that recognises horses as part of an ecosystem, not separate from it. The workshop was well attended with 10 participants and was engaging, fun and informative. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive with Stuart holding his audience captivated throughout the day.

A massive thankyou to Stuart, who had just flown in from the UK, for a thought provoking and practical workshop. Also, thanks to Farmacist who helped with sponsoring of our event, Kayla, Brooke and Leigh from WLC who helped make the event run smoothly and the committee at Bloomsbury Soldiers Memorial Hall for the excellent venue

The second workshop was held in Sarina on Saturday, run by Sarina Landcare Catchment Management Association.

If you'd like to find out more, check out www.equiculture.net which is full of information and contacts for Stuart and Jane Myers.



Image: Leigh Donkers WCL, Brodie Reynolds WCL, Kayla Simpson WCL, Stuart Myers Equiculture, Donna Jackson PCL



Image: Participants at the Healthy Horse, Healthy Land workshop at Bloomsbury Hall.

Native Plants : Native Wildlife Keep the Bird Baths Full

by Jennifer White

It seems everything is waiting for the rain. There's a quietness about and my thoughts turn to running and how much harder it is in the heat. I tell myself to keep the bird baths full and put on the sprinkler every now and then to provide a cool environment for the birds, insects and other animals that frequent my garden. The native plants I have, also appreciate the extra bit of water.

My *Larsenaikia ochreata* has been flowering constantly, the perfume is heavenly and on it I had a chance meeting with a male Great Carpenter Bee. Enjoying the bird bath and sprinkler, have been a variety of bird species all coming into the garden for a cool down and drink. It just goes to show that with some native plants and a little bit of water at this time of year, the wildlife will come.



Image: Giant Carpenter Bee, male and *Larsenaikia ochreata*, Velvety Gardenia



Image: Chestnut Breasted Mannikins at the bird bath under a *Pipturus argenteus*,



Image: The Varied Triller is a small songbird with a short fine bill who loves to take a bath under the sprinkler on a *Pandorea*

Photos: Jennifer White

VegCat training

PCL Project and Field Officers attended a two-day VegCat training session, run by Reef Catchments in Nebo, this month. Theory was completed in Nebo Hall and the practical session in Homevale National Park at two locations.

VegCat is a tool for doing a rapid asset assessment of vegetation and records vegetation rating before and after completed weed control or revegetation works. It is part of the State Wide Indicator Framework (SWIF) which is used by the QLD State Government to measure and monitor impact of revegetation works. The method used in VegCat is to run a 50m transect line with three 10m x 10m quadrants along the length. Each quadrant is assessed for native perennial grasses, shrubs, and canopy as well as weed species present, bare ground, leaf litter and disturbance by animals. A whole of transect assessment is also completed. The data is run through the program and delivers a health assessment number for the land. The beauty of the monitoring method is its simplicity and ease. The data provided by the tool will be instrumental in reporting and can be used in long- or short-term projects, giving an accurate assessment of success as well as areas which may require improvement.

A big thank you to Penny Scott from Penny Scott Consulting who ran the training. She was knowledgeable and passionate and kept us all engaged with the program, illustrating the potential uses of VegCat and other similar assessment tools.

Also, thanks to Reef Catchments who provided the training, accommodation and meals.



Image: PCL Staff recording data within VegCat transect.



Chair's 2023 Annual Report

2023 has been another outstanding year for PCL. Staff numbers have increased as we continue to deliver impressive results on several large projects. We are all extremely proud of the quality of work they all deliver.

The committee are a dedicated group who have worked tirelessly to support the staff in their achievements. Without their support PCL would not continue to advance at the rate it has in the past 12 months. Our other volunteers who help in the nursery and at different PCL community events have enabled us to achieve our goals for the year. These achievements would not have been as substantial without their continued effort.

This year, as well as our larger, flagship projects, PCL has been able to partner with Queensland Parks and Wildlife to monitor quoll numbers in our region. It is exciting to be part of such significant research into threatened and poorly understood animals in our region. This project will add to data collected a decade ago increasing the knowledge bank for the species.

Our vision to implement an integrated, science-based approach to natural resource management through supportive partnerships across our catchment and our mission to empower our community to build biodiverse ecosystems has been possible due to our strong financial position. However membership fees will be introduced in the upcoming year. Our reliance on grants has hindered our ability to nurture our planting sites for as long as required for absolute success. Membership fees will allow PCL to deliver more of the quality work that everyone has come to expect from us.



Sharon Dwyer

Chair

Upcoming Community Events

December 2023


Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
				1	2	3
4 Harbour Beach Clean-up, 10am	5 MRC Volunteer Christmas party, 10am at Botanic Gardens	6	7 Native Plants Queensland (Mackay Branch) meeting 7:30pm at MRBG meeting room.	8	9	10
11	12 PCL Volunteering in the nursery, 8am to 12pm last one for 2023.	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21 PCL Christmas Break, 21st December—2nd January	22	23	24
25 Christmas Day 	26 Boxing Day	27	28	29	30	31

January

- Tues 9** - PCL Volunteering in the nursery, 8am to 12pm.
- Tues 16** - PCL Volunteering in the nursery, 8am to 12pm.
- Tues 23**- PCL Volunteering in the nursery, 8am to 12pm.
- Tues 30**- PCL Volunteering in the nursery, 8am to 12pm.

Contact Us

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PIONEER Catchment LANDCARE

Pioneer Catchment & Landcare Group Inc. Management Committee

Executive

Chair | Sharon Dwyer

Deputy Chair | Judith Wake

Secretary | Fran Mann

Treasurer | Claire Stribbles

Committee Members

Earl Neilsen

Paul Tippet

Jennifer White

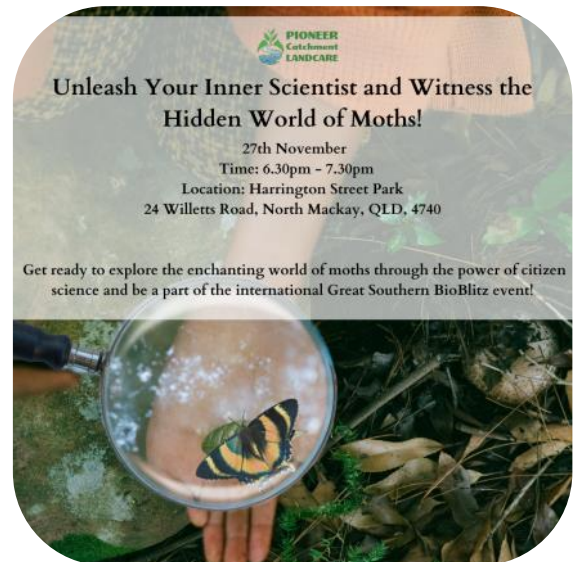


**Follow PCL on social media
to keep up to date with
recent projects and events**

Volunteering Opportunities

Keen to volunteer with PCL? We are looking for new volunteers keen to get involved in Landcare planting activities at beautiful locations! Come join us! Contact projectofficer@pioneercatchment.org.au for more information.

Big shout out to our volunteers who have shown their support of PCL by assisting with plant propagation at the MNEC nursery, and for registering their interest in our events and workshops – we couldn't do it without you!



Unleash Your Inner Scientist and Witness the Hidden World of Moths!

27th November
Time: 6.30pm – 7.30pm
Location: Harrington Street Park
24 Willets Road, North Mackay, QLD, 4740

Get ready to explore the enchanting world of moths through the power of citizen science and be a part of the international Great Southern BioBlitz event!

PCL Membership is Changing

Keep an eye out for upcoming changes to our membership policies and new opportunities coming for PCL members



**PCL'S ID:
C10041933**

OUR VISION:

To empower our community to build biodiverse ecosystems

OUR MISSION:

To implement an integrated, science-based approach to natural resource management through supportive partnerships across our catchment.

VALUES:

- We are innovative, and driven by action at a grassroots level ◦
- Ethical ◦ Engaged ◦ Passionate ◦

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