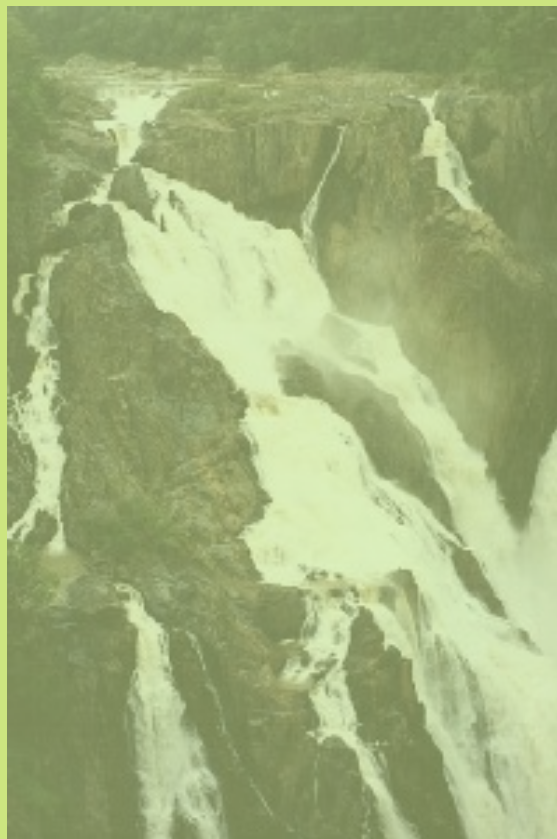


**Department of Environment and Resource Management
Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service**

Wet Tropics Region

Activity Report

November 2009 – February 2010



Wet Tropics parks and forests are top spots to visit!

Four of the top ten most popular Queensland parks — determined by number of visitors — are within the Wet Tropics Region! Barron Gorge National Park has taken out the number one spot with Daintree at number four, Lake Eacham at number six and Danbulla State Forest at number seven.

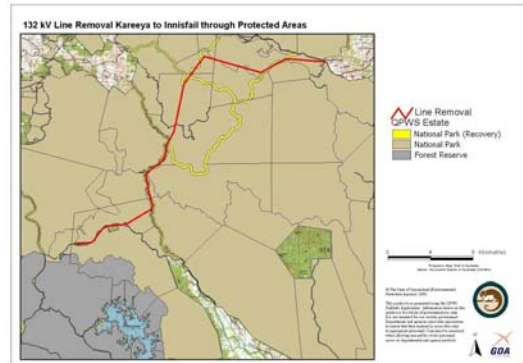
This Activity Report is produced in good faith and is intended as a fair representation of the outputs, actions, activities and outcomes of the Department of Environment and Resource Management Queensland Parks and Wild Service, Wet Tropics Region for the information of Wet Tropics Management Authority networks and the WTMA Board. The report is produced without prejudice and does not necessarily convey the policy of the Queensland Government.

Protected Area Estate and Tenure Actions

Removal of powerlines through the QPWS Wet Tropics estate

In December 2009, approximately 36 km of redundant transmission line (including 88 towers) was successfully removed from the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS) Estate between Kareeya Power station and the Palmerston Highway. The line was removed from the following parks:

- Tully Gorge National Park – approximately 8 km.
- Tully Gorge National Park (Recovery) – approximately 3.5 km.
- Tully Falls National Park (Recovery) – 1 km
- Wooroonooran National Park (Recovery) – approximately 8.5 km.
- Wooroonooran National Park – approximately 15 km.



The entire 36km length of line removed was inside the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area. The transmission line corridor was inspected by QPWS and WTMA following removal of the line. Powerlink has now commenced the rehabilitation phase of appropriate sections of the corridor in accordance with our Minister's requirements.

Amendments to the QPWS Wet Tropics Area Estate

On 11 December 2009, the following amendments to the QPWS estate were gazetted inside the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area:

- Dedication of Mount Lewis Forest Reserve as Mount Lewis National Park and National Park Recovery (27,540ha).
- Dedication of Tam O'Shanter National Park as Djiru National Park(4,123ha).
- Addition of OL 226 parish of Stone and Lot 46SP104507 parish of Ashton (2,810ha) to Giringun National Park.
- Addition of Lot 2 WG326 (near Bluewater) to Paluma Range National Park (6,510 ha).

Conservation

- Revegetation of Eubenagee Swamp has commenced and so far 1500 trees have been planted.
- On going care of revegetation plantings at Manu site.
- Rainforest Rescue joint revegetation — updated MoU with Rainforest Rescue regarding revegetation of buy-back blocks signed. Weed spraying of revegetation blocks commenced in preparation for further plantings. Poisoning of exotic fruit trees at Fig Tree Road completed.

Fire management

QPWS has completed 36 of its 50 planned burns to date and attended 26 wildfires across the Wet Tropics Region. The fire season extended right through to the Christmas-New Year period.

Planned burns conducted between Nov 2009 & Feb 2010

- Eubenagee Swamp
- Maria Creek north and south sections

Wildfires

- Herberton Range wildfire — post fire assessment completed.



Planned burns submitted for 2010

- Eubenangee Swamp
- Ella Bay
- Carry over of ETTY Bay to be investigated to be burnt under IMT guidelines.
- A number of planned burns submitted for the Tablelands sub region.

Pest management

- Co-ordinated mapping and survey taskforce of *Miconia spp* undertaken across Innisfail sub region with Biosecurity Queensland. Control methods being trailed with contractors. Moresby, Clump and Hull National Park undertaken with Innisfail staff working with local contractors.
- Weed spraying for Woororoonan National Park Misty Mountain Tracks completed.
- Pest submissions for new funding submitted for 2010, Pond Apple, Haringana, Miconia and Pigs for example. Desk top study Haringana shape files developed.
- Feral cattle within the Henrietta section of Girringun National Park. Private mustering called off due to non-profitability. Planned aerial shoot called off due to inclement weather. Ground shooting removed additional 15 head to date. Total feral cattle removals for 2009/10 is approximately 115 head.
- Replacement of 11km of fencing to contain feral horses within Clemant State Forest (immediately adjacent to the Bruce Hwy) has been completed.
- Spraying of emergent sicklepod seedlings within the Henrietta section of Girringun NP continuing further enhancing control.
- Siam control at Jalum currently involves preparation for a planned burn to remove standing guinea grass, to scorch any live siam and to synchronise germination of siam seedlings. Inspections for new emergences is continuing.
- Siam control within Yingalinda has successfully dealt with emergent and adult plants, with joint control between Biosecurity Qld, Cassowary Coast Regional Council and QPWS. Inspections for new emergences is continuing.
- QPWS Ingham and Hinchinbrook Shire Council jointly co-ordinated pig baiting within the Henrietta section of Girringun National Park.
- QPWS Ingham finalising tender for private trappers to undertake trapping on estate at Edmund Kennedy section of Girramay National Park and Clemant State Forest areas.
- QPWS Ingham finalising partner contribution towards Hinchinbrook Shire Feral Pig Management Program.
- Daintree feral pigs program — 11 pigs removed in January; a meeting with Cairns Regional Council (CRC) was conducted regarding a new tender process.
- Hiptage revegetation works undertaken at South Mossman River site with CRC.
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Hiptage weed management - before and after

- Bump Track weed control completed.
- A letter regarding permit application for cattle removal from Mount Windsor NP has been sent.
- Eradication of camphor laurel and Indian cedar within the Tablelands sub region — site inspection to occur in March.
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- Lantana biocontrol in Tablelands sub region — Ophiomyia fly released at 2 sites in Jan.
- Lake Barrine tilapia — next spearfishing action due to occur in March.
- Wild dog baiting in Tablelands sub region — 1080 at 3 sites during Feb.
- One feral horse observed in Danbulla State Forest near Curri Curri.
- Three wild dogs reported in the Tablelands sub region

Wildlife

- Wet Tropics terrestrial staff have taken over management of the Garners Beach Cassowary rehabilitation facility.



- Numerous callouts for Cassowary incidents (new breeding season & dads and their chicks).
- Crocodile sighting responses at a variety of locations in the Innisfail sub region.
- Crocodile sightings reported at Rocky Point. Crocodile recent sighting sign still at Daintree Ferry crossing and the situation continues to be monitored.
- One reported crocodile sighting in Lake Tinaroo was assessed as not a crocodile of concern — spotlight surveys conducted in February.
- A 2m dead crocodile was retrieved from Cordelia, Herbert River — the death was likely the result of a territorial conflict given the nature of the injuries and the time of year.
- Marine turtle post storm surge survey run — no evidence of nesting at Ella Bay. Wave height and surge indicated with tropical cyclone Neville and Olga, as well as king tides in mid Jan demonstrates likelihood that any nesting would be exposed to inundation over several tides.
- Northern bettong conservation initiative — strategic fire management proposal for 18 fire reference plots at Davies Creek and associated planned burns prepared. Fire reference plots revisited, samples collected (cockatoo grass, truffles).
- Northern quoll camera survey at Bingil Bay — survey run over 2 nights pre cyclone Neville. No signs despite probable habitat (rockface at Wee Beach). More probable than not that 2009 sighting of single animal was a transported vagrant rather than a resident population.

Presentation of Wet Tropics Protected Areas

Media

- ABC radio interview “Living with snakes in the Wet Tropics” given on 19th Jan.

Capital works, minor works and maintenance

- The swimming/viewing deck at Alligators Nest, Tully Gorge National Park has been completed.
- Princess Hills National Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements (NDRRA) fence, road and track repairs completed.
- Clemant NDRRA fence repairs completed.
- Clemant NDRRA road and track repairs 60% completed.
- Henrieta Section of Great Walks NDRRA repairs 70% completed.
- Big Crystal Ck camping and day-use area NDRRA repairs completed.
- Birthday Creek walking track NDRRA repairs 90% completed.
- Murray Falls water system replacement completed.
- Tully Gorge water system replacement completed.
- The plans for the Mossman Gorge elevated boardwalk — a commonwealth funded Jobs Plan project — are currently with the engineers for design approval.
- Mossman Gorge Rex Creek suspension bridge — load testing of tie downs completed and passed; tender for demo, fabrication and installation completed and sign off on offer to builder; fabrication works commenced in February.
- Marrdja boardwalk replacement — concrete pillar samples being tested and report with the engineers.
- South Johnstone bridge replacement — Geotech to be used for stage 2 design of replacement bridge footings.
- No diving and shallow water pictograms installed at Lake Eacham day-use area water access in order to improve visitor safety.
- Tully Gorge day-use area pedestrian bridge repairs underway.
- Wall Creek Road repair commenced.
- Downfall to Kauri Creek walking track commenced.
- Kauri Creek campground toilet emergency repairs undertaken on balustrades, dorrs, handrails and decking.
- Tully Falls weir walk closed for bridge repairs.
- Barron Gorge National Park new toilet facilities — new facilities completed at the end of Jan. The cost of the project was \$250,000 and was split between QPWS and the Tablelands Regional Council.

Interpretation

- New Cedar Bay web page live.
- New Wet Tropics Great Walks web pages live.
- New Daintree National Park web page live — visitors to our website can now search for Daintree National Park instead of having to search for either Cape Tribulation and/or Mossman Gorge.
- Wet Tropics regional communication plan completed.

Department of Environment and Resource Management (DERM) Business Centres Transition.

Under the melding of former Environmental Protection Agency and Department of Natural Resources and Water customer service and information centres have been rationalised. In Cairns this has resulted in the majority of the business of the Cairns QPWS Customer and Information Centre transitioning to the 3rd floor of the building and being branded as the DERM Business Centre. The public and clients can now have their DERM business and information needs dealt with at one location. Accredited Visitor Information Centres also play a significant role in providing information to the public on national parks and therefore the region is exploring opportunities to support them to continue to deliver this valuable business.

Compliance

QPWS has been involved in over 20 compliance issues in the past 6 months and are particularly targeting vandalism in the southern Wet Tropics. Compliance patrols across the Wet Tropics Region will be increased as the weather improves and these patrols will particularly target motorbikes, dogs and vandalism/loutish behaviour in parks.

- Two major sites have been targeted by groups of people near Cardwell at Five Mile Creek and also as Bluewater, north-west of Ingham. Extensive damaged occurred to park infrastructure.
- Dogs were found on estate in the Innisfail sub region — owners warned and directed to remove dogs from the park.
- Ranger patrols undertaken across a wide range of estate across the Innisfail sub region. Penalty infringements issued for camping without permit and abandoned vehicles were removed from NP estate.
- 5 Mile Day Use area vandalised. Incident reported to Police. Repairs continuing.
- Broadwater camping and Day Use area vandalised twice. Incident reported to Police. Repairs completed.
- Complaint re drunken noisy behaviour at Big Crystal Creek.
- Compliance report submitted regarding the take of plants from the Daintree River.

Stakeholders and Partnerships

- A strong partnership between QPWS and the Mandingalbay Yidinji people is continuing with both groups cooperatively working on developing a joint work and training program, planning for the future use of country and agreeing on accommodation for the Djunbunji l Land and Sea program rangers. A baseline study (environmental and cultural) of the area is almost complete. Rangers will be employed shortly and a ranger base is being established at East Trinity.
- Giringun Aboriginal Corporation has also recruited to its land and sea management positions and is working closely with QPWS on common land and sea management issues.
- Kuku Nyungkal (northern Kuku Yalanji clan) likewise is well underway with rangers and an operational working group.
- Each of these groups continues to explore the development of cooperative management Indigenous Protected Areas with the Wet Tropics QPWS region and other land and sea management agencies.
- In December Malanbarra-Dulabed Yidinji and Girramay peoples signed Indigenous Land Use Agreements with the state and consequently native title consent determinations were granted by the federal court to each group.
- Native title negotiations continue with Jirrbal, MaMu and Djiru peoples while at least two other claims are being progressed.
- Djiru Elder John Andy has realised a long time dream of having the Tam O'Shanter National Park changed in name to Djiru National Park.
- Innisfail sub regional staff are working with QPWS Marine Parks division with regard to the Traditional Use of Marine Resources Agreement (TUMRA) covering Ella Bay. Protocols for

communication with the MaMu corporation received (letter delivered from corporation laying out contacts).

- 11 Giringun Caring for Country and Wild Rivers Indigenous Rangers commenced work.
- Ongoing liaisons with Jabalbina re scientific permits, bouncing stones and Kuku Nyungkal operational working group.
- Ongoing liaison with Kuku Nyungkal rangers regarding fire workshop and cross cultural workshop.

Mamu Rainforest Canopy Walkway (MRCW)

- 6 additional wayside signs installed.



- Advertisements in tourism publications ongoing.
- Water tank is being moved.
- Planning underway for new retail/coffee shop area.

QPWS Wet Tropics Region Contacts

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