

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

**Wet Tropics Region
Activity Report July - October 2009**

Estate and Tenure Actions

Removal of powerlines

- Kareeya Power Station to Palmerston Highway. Powerlink has commenced removal of 36km of redundant 132kV transmission line between the Kareeya power station and the Innisfail substation through Tully Gorge and Wooroonooran National Parks.
- Copperlode Dam to Bridle Creek Road. Powerlink has completed removal of 11.2km of redundant 132kV transmission line between Woree Substation and Turkinjie through Bare Hill Conservation Park, Dinden National Park and Dinden State Forest

Estate transfers and additions

- Approximately 4,900 ha of State land adjoining Daintree National Park has been dedicated as Forest Reserve in preparation for addition to the National Park estate. Round Mountain Forest Reserve (Lot 143 AP13764 - 4,508ha) and Heights of Victory Forest Reserve (393ha) were dedicated on the 25 September 2009. These land parcels fall inside the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area.
- Bluewater Lot 2 WG326: this State land parcel has been transferred to QPWS in preparation for addition to Paluma Range NP, as part of a long standing acquisition proposal. The 6,510ha property is bisected by the gazetted section of Bluewater Road with the northern 1/3 inside the WTWHA.
- Paluma Lot 93 WG271: this 2,590ha State land parcel has been transferred to QPWS in preparation for addition to the QPWS estate. Approximately two thirds is inside the WTWHA.
- Transfer of Macalister Range USL (Buchan Point to Yule Point ex TR 315) - this 5,600ha state land parcel has been transferred to QPWS in preparation for addition to the QPWS estate. The transfer is a long standing acquisition as part of the NP transfer proposals of the early 1990s.

Conservation

Fire management

Planned burns

- Rollingstone burn (9kms): new area with rural interface not previously burnt by QPWS.
- Kandeer burn: not burnt since 2001 (mahogany glider recovery objective).

- Broadwater burn: not burnt since prior 2000; primarily lantana orientated.
- Deep - Dallachy Creek: new acquisition to protected area estate; long unburnt; mahogany glider recovery objective.
- Princess Hill east (Flaggy Creek - Herkes Creek).
- Taravale: tall moist forest planned burn (wet sclerophyll recovery).
- Blackfriars: tall dry/ moist forest planned burn (woody thickening associated recovery).
- Mullers Creek (mahogany glider recovery objective): decade long unburnt.
- Mailmans track.
- Hunts Brook Christmas Pocket

Wildfires

- Mount Fox SF (Lagoon Creek, Disaster Creek - Grants Rd).
- Mount Cudmore (Cardwell Gap - threat to rural properties).
- Clemant section of Paluma Range NP.
- Mount Kinduro - Ollera Creek Gorge.
- Wallaman west - Garrawalt scrub.
- Herbert River Gorge: isolated remote wildfires.
- Gillies Range
- Second Beach.
- Grey Peaks.
- Arnolds Bridge.
- Hunts Brook (Gillies Highway).
- Goldsbrough Road.
- Black Mountain NP and surrounds.
- TR165 near Rossville.
- "Zmeskals Castle" wildfire (adjacent to Smithfield CP)

Pest management

- Feral cattle mustering within the Henrietta section of Girringun NP has removed nearly 100 head of cattle; with further mustering to proceed into the lower Herbert River Gorge.
- Replacement of 11km of fencing to contain feral horses within Clemant SF (immediately adjacent to the Bruce Hwy) almost complete.
- Extended dry season has wilted emergent sicklepod seedlings within the Henrietta section of Girringun NP further enhancing control.
- Siam control within Yingalinda has successfully dealt with emergent and adult plants, with joint control between Biosecurity Qld, Cassowary Coast Regional Council and QPWS
- Co-ordinated mapping and survey taskforce of *Miconia spp* undertaken at Whyanbeel, Daintree. Cairns Regional Council, Bio-security and QPWS involved in control across a number of tenures.

- QPWS involved in co-ordinated wild dog baiting on park boundaries at key locations on the tablelands. Pre-assessment of sites with remote cameras provided evidence for dog presence.
- QPWS takes lead in forming a *Salvinia molesta* (floating water weed) working group aimed at producing a strategy for the release of the salvinia weevil, a highly successful biocontrol.
- Daintree Feral Pig Control program continues to yield significant positive outcomes — new financial support partners are being sought following ARF withdrawal.
- Lantana bio control efforts continue on Tablelands National Parks and State Forests.
- Pond apple control work undertaken at Bailey's Creek catchments (Daintree) utilising Posi Track machine. Work funded by CRC.
- Turbina and madeira vine control efforts at Curtain Fig National Park progressing.
- QPWS gave presentation at AGFORCE Predator Control field day at Ravenshoe — "Managing Wild Dogs on National Parks and State Forests"
- Attendance at the Queensland Weed Symposium at Yeppoon by two QPWS Wet Tropics staff

Wildlife

- Release of a rehabilitated mahogany glider ("Pitt") recovered from a barbed wire encounter within Murray Upper; relocated to Girramay National Park (Edmund Kennedy section).
- Koala sighted in Wallaman Falls campground;
- Cassowary & chicks reported in Broadwater Forest Park; an absence of sightings from the park for the previous eight years.
- Considerable trapping effort for northern bettongs at Mount Windsor has failed to relocate population. Last sighting in the area was in 2003. More surveys planned for near future.
- Project investigating the response of the food resources of the northern bettong to fire commenced in July. Experimental burn plots and follow up sampling of cockatoo grass and truffles has been undertaken at Davies Creek and will continue for several years.
- A long term remote camera trap study of wildlife in the Wet Tropics parks has finally revealed a spotted-tailed quoll adjacent to farmland in Wooroonooran NP near Bartle Frere. This was after 336 camera trap nights or 8064 hours of surveillance. Cassowaries, echidnas and northern quolls have also been captured by the cameras.
- Male dugong stranded on Coconut Beach (Cape Tribulation) was successfully returned to sea. Thanks to support of Cape Tribulation locals. QPWS staff coordinated efforts.
- Camera trap survey undertaken at Mission Beach in relation to northern quoll sighting. No further quolls found as yet.
- Crocodile sighting responses at a variety of locations.
- Crocodile warning stencils trialled at the Daintree River boat ramp.

Presentation

- The signage, web page and brochure program for 2009 is on track
- A Media Plan and an Events Calender have been prepared to strategically manage communications in the region. We welcome advice on forthcoming events.
- Planning underway for an educational program for the Mamu Rainforest Canopy Walkway.
- The Community Engagement team is developing a strategy to address requests for supporting school curriculum - partnership with WTMA opportunity.
- The Information and Customer Service Centre on the ground floor of McCormack Place will be merged with the ex-NRW desk on the third floor by December.

Capital Program

- Jourama Falls walking track bitumen surfaced (first 385m)
- Jacobsens track completed
- NDRRA works commenced at Big Crystal & Rockslides
- Tully Gorge (Kayeera & Butterfly walks completed)
- Murray Falls and Edmund Kennedy walking tracks repaired
- Funding approved from the Commonwealth Jobs Fund program for construction of Class 1 elevated boardwalk at Mossman Gorge. The project has commenced with completion due in August 2010
- Mount Baldy walking track upgrade (Herberton Range State Forest) nears completion.
- Flood damage repair works completed at Mount Lewis, Windsor Tablelands and Arnolds Bridge.

Compliance

- Weekend patrols for school holiday at Goldsbrough Valley, Kamerunga & Stoney Creek, no penalty infringement notices issued.
- Three infringement notices issued to developer for destruction of vegetation and illegal access to Mount Whitfield CP.
- Investigations commenced for alleged removal of Boyd's forest dragons in Mossman Gorge section of Daintree National Park.
- QPWS undertook an investigation for Powerlink to determine cause of wildfire 45 km west of Townsville.
- Ranger patrols undertaken across a wide range of areas. Penalty infringements issued for camping without permit, abandoned vehicles and riding unregistered motorbikes.

Stakeholders and Partnerships

- Echo Creek Adventures - best practice spotlight training provided to Traditional Owner guides for spotting mahogany gliders and associated nocturnal wildlife within Girramay NP (Edmund Kennedy section).
- CVA (Australearn) James Cook university exchange program - USA university volunteers (15 students) assisted with Northern Bettong surveys on Mount Zero/ Taravale Nature Refuge (also involving Australian Wildlife Conservancy) over 2 weekend surveys.
- WTMA and QPWS community engagement staff are working closely together on a number of projects including closer cooperation on planning.
- Indigenous partnerships continue to develop with Native Title negotiations occurring with MaMu, Jirrbal and Djiru Traditional Owners. QPWS staff from Cairns, Innisfail and Atherton supported respective Traditional Owner groups, Land Council and Indigenous Services staff in site visits to the Basilisk Range, Jordan Creek Goldfields and to the Koombaloomba area.
- Tablelands Yidinji and Manyurr Wajay Yidinji have approached QPWS to establish working arrangements as soon as possible.
- Recent meetings will contribute to assisting Eastern Yalanji to engage in the implementation of protected area Indigenous Land Use Agreements.
- Kuku Nyungkal Operational Working Group meeting held in late August.
- Indigenous Protected Areas (IPA) - Girringun, Mandingalbay Yidinji and Eastern Yalanji, assisted by QPWS and funded by the Commonwealth, are developing proposals for IPAs over their respective traditional lands, which include state protected areas.
- Bruce Rampton (Team Leader Engagement) recently attended a Northern Indigenous Protected Areas meeting near Broome. Representatives from Eastern Yalanji, Mandingalbay Yidinji and Girringun also attended.
- QPWS Indigenous rangers and the Community Engagement Team, attended the MaMu Exhibition of Arts and Culture recently and spent time talking with local students on working for QPWS.

Mamu Rainforest Canopy Walkway (MRCW)

- 1st year celebrations on site on 26 August with traditional owners and invited guests attending.
- Mamu art built in project now installed on site.
- Three remote hard wired radios now in place along the walkway to provide communications for clients.
- Retail DVD, postcards and annual pass now in place
- MRCW recipient of 2009 Disabilities Action Week award for government construction.
- MRCW nominated as finalist in TTNQ Awards, ceremony on 31 October.
- Carpark undergoing redesign as a "shared area" to cater for pedestrian movement throughout.
- Visitors to date - 47,879