

RAINFOREST ABORIGINAL news

ISSUE ONE : October 2016



Keeping connected and informed

Welcome to the first edition of the new look Rainforest Aboriginal News (RAN). I remember we used to yarn about RAN back in the day. It provided good information about what was happening in the region so that we could keep in touch and learn from each other. While other attempts to keep us connected have been tried, there are many good news stories out there that we just don't hear about anymore. It's been a goal of mine since being re-appointed to the Wet Tropics Management Authority Board in November 2015 to get RAN up and running again—to keep us connected and informed. We welcome



your feedback, ideas and contributions to future editions. The Authority aims to publish a new edition every three months. A big thank you to all the story writers and to all those who helped in other ways!

Leah Talbot ~ Director, Wet Tropics Management Authority Board

Unity and a pathway forward

Rainforest Aboriginal people have always remained connected to each other, and to national networks and international networks. In 2005, the Regional Agreement symbolised unity and a pathway forward. However the environment we live in and work in has changed over the past eleven years, particularly with native title and formation of Prescribed Bodies Corporates (PBCs). We now have the capacity

to use different opportunities and modernise the Regional Agreement's principles and protocols. Since my appointment to the Wet Tropics Management Authority Board in June 2016, I have been pleased to see that my fellow Directors (Indigenous and non-Indigenous) have prioritised a refreshed, supported and collaborative approach to Rainforest Aboriginal engagement.



The Authority is now well placed to play a stronger champion role in the future—advocating our interests at State, National and International levels; and supporting our aspirations at the local, sub-regional and regional levels.

Phil Rist ~ Director, Wet Tropics Management Authority Board

The Wet Tropics Regional Agreement was signed by Rainforest Aboriginal people and the Australian and Queensland governments in 2005 to provide for the cooperative management of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area. The Regional Agreement is available at www.wettropics.gov.au

Partnerships for country and culture

We have a custodial obligation to look after country and pass on our knowledge to future generations.

The Bama Plan is our vision for involvement in mainstream natural and cultural resource management. Traditional Owners have been doing some deadly work to record cultural knowledge and manage country.

Our initiatives have involved genuine partnerships with councils, research institutions, industry, community and government. Over the past six months, Terrain and the Wet Tropics Management Authority have been working together to look at how they can use the skills and resources of both organisations to provide better support for Traditional Owners.



As a Terrain Board member I am pleased to let you know that both boards have committed to support Rainforest Aboriginal groups with on-country partnerships, learning and knowledge sharing, planning for economic advancement and maximising opportunities in World Heritage. This edition and future editions of RAN feature some examples of how these commitments are being delivered.

Allison Halliday ~ Director, Terrain Board

The Bama Plan was developed in 2005 by Rainforest Aboriginal people. Bama aspirations are also included in the new on-line Wet Tropics Plan for People and Country which is available at www.wettropicsplan.org.au

Looking for northern bettongs

The northern bettong (*Bettongia tropica*) is a small marsupial found only in the Wet Tropics region. Northern bettong habitat is grassy eucalypt country on the fringe of the rainforest. Once found as far south as Rockhampton, northern bettongs are now listed as endangered. The northern bettong population on Tablelands Yidinji country (Lamb Range) is very small, but stable. However, in their southern habitat on Gugu Badhun country (Mount Fox) there has been a decline in their population to the point that they cannot be found. In the north, on Western Yalanji country (Mt Windsor National Park) there have been no sightings of northern bettongs for over 13 years.

A series of workshops facilitated by the World Wildlife Fund, brought together James Cook University researchers, Traditional Owners, the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Environment and Heritage Protection and the Wet Tropics Management Authority to discuss the ways Rainforest Aboriginal people could get involved in looking for northern bettongs

on their country. Researchers and Traditional Owners talked about the cage and camera trapping methods that could be used and how these would help find bettongs in different areas.

Girringun's Aboriginal Rangers and Gugu Badhun Traditional Owners helped set camera traps at Mount Fox. Two Traditional Owners from Western Yalanji helped to set over 99 camera traps in northern bettong habitat around Mt Windsor to see if any northern bettongs remain in the area. Researchers are reviewing the images over the next few months to get a better understanding of where the northern bettong lives and how many there are.

“We are in the middle of setting up our own ranger group so this was a really valuable experience for our young people. This is the kind of work we want to be doing with our rangers in the future, so it was an opportunity to learn new skills and build relationships and partnerships with researchers’ - Brad Grogan (Manager, Western Yalanji Aboriginal Corporation)”

PHOTO: STEPHANIE TODDD [JCU]



Future leaders Stepping Up

“What I learnt from this project was the planning side of things, being in a different position where I am actually in control, not the labourer who listens to all the orders. We can negotiate, strategise and go through with our plans.”

Tarquin Singleton
(Dawul Wuru Ranger, Cairns)

”

In August 2016 Aboriginal rangers from across Queensland, including four rangers from the Wet Tropics region, met up at Melsonby north, east of Cooktown. Each ranger had a project to manage during a week

of intensive training which focused on building skills in project planning, budgeting, people management and logistics. The training was the first stage of an eight month mentoring and knowledge sharing program called ‘Stepping up’.

The program, run by the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection's Land and Sea Ranger program connects rangers with experienced coaches. The coaches work with the rangers to help them develop the skills they need to ‘step up’ into project management roles and become leaders in their own ranger groups.

Rangers are now using and refining these project management skills to manage their own projects before meeting in March 2017 to report back on how they went.

Dawul Wuru ranger, Tarquin Singleton is coached by Jesse Low from

“We did signage, I learnt in the program that being a manager is quite different to being a ranger. You carry out the work plan. I learnt that communication provides a great key in management.”

April Thomas (Gunggandji Ranger, Yarrabah)

”

Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service. April's coach is Rebecca Lagerroth from the Wet Tropics Management Authority. Djunbunji ranger Victor Bulmer is coached by Peter Barker from EHP. Girringun ranger, Evelyn Ivey's coach is Peta Ross from the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority.



PHOTO: WET TROPICS IMAGES

Living on and working on Country

Jalunji-Warra means 'sea country people'—the Jalunji-Warra Country takes in land and sea south of Cooktown and north of Port Douglas.

Living on and working on Country is a priority for Jalunji-Warra people. The Jalunji-Warra vision for our Country is Bama Ngulkurru Wawu Wawurru Bundangka Bubungu Jalunbu -Healthy Mob, Healthy Land and Sea.

Jabalbina Yalanji Aboriginal Corporation now plays an important role in supporting the implementation of the Jalunji-Warra Land and Sea Country plan, including the management of the Eastern Kuku Yalanji Indigenous Protected Area and the employment of Indigenous rangers.

Jabalbina successfully secured funding to build a ranger base on their freehold land at Ayton. Although the land was in the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area zone B, which means that development was restricted because of the conservation values of the area. Jabalbina provided evidence to show that the benefits of the ranger base to control feral animals, weeds, wild fire and maintain cultural practices would be much greater than the local impact of construction.

The Wet Tropics Management Authority (the Authority) and Jabalbina negotiated a Cooperative Management Agreement so that Jabalbina could build the ranger base on their land.

The ranger base was officially opened in August 2016 by Traditional Owners and community leaders. Staff from the Authority, Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service, Cook Shire Council and the local Ayton community attended to celebrate this significant achievement. The new ranger base

gives Jabalbina rangers the space and ability to undertake cultural heritage and land management work in this part of the Indigenous Protected Area. It also gives the rangers opportunities to take on fee-for-service work and enterprise development opportunities. Jabalbina rangers now have three ranger bases on bubu—Ayton, Shiptons Flat and Mossman.

**Source: Jalunji-Warra People, Shee, R. 2012. Bama Ngulkurru Wawu Wawurru Bundangka Bubungu Jalunbu: Healthy Mob, Healthy Land and Sea. Eastern Kuku Yalanji Indigenous Protected Area Management Plan Stage 2. Mossman: Jabalbina Yalanji Aboriginal Corporation.*

“Going back on Country means healthy Bama.”- Marie Creek, Jajikal. Many of Bama are sick today. Getting back on Country, living off it and looking after it again are ways to get our people healthy again.*

“See our bubu as it is today – it’s beautiful. That’s because the old people looked after it. We want to look after it and keep it that way too.”
~ Lizzie Olbar, Jajikal*

Gabun – little fish

Gabun is the Gulnay name for Barretts Lagoon, south-east of Tully. It means 'little fish' and is the story place of a small Gudgeon that only travels in the wet season. Gabun is part of a wetland system that crosses a number of freehold lots which are primarily used for cane farming by local landholders. Hymenachne has become a serious problem in the wetlands since 2005.

Terrain NRM organised a meeting at the lagoon with neighbouring landholders, Gulnay Traditional Owners, Giringun and others to find a solution for the problem. The Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service and the Cassowary Coast Regional Council provided advice on the best way to treat Hymenachne in waterways.

There was an important discussion about the values of the area for Traditional Owners and neighbouring landholders. It was agreed that Gabun needed to be looked after because it provided significant habitat for fish and other species as well as improving farm drainage and water quality to the reef.

With Queensland Government support, Terrain provided some funding to help landholders and Traditional Owners control the Hymenachne in the lagoon. A field day was held in April 2016 to celebrate the results. A sign was put up to acknowledge the Gulnay name, 'Gabun', to communicate shared values of the area and tell the story about the partnership to improve the area.

Maintaining traditional knowledge is a priority for Gulnay Traditional Owners. Elders regularly hold traditional knowledge camps with young people at Jingalingnu (the beach area downstream from Gabun) and workshops to monitor endangered species. Gulnay Traditional Owners also want to work closely with agencies to cooperatively manage national parks and beachfront reserves in the Jingalingnu area.

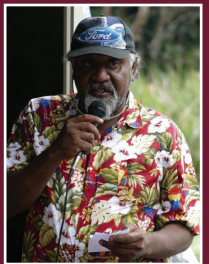


PHOTO: DARYL DICKSON



PHOTO: JABALBINA (YALANJI) ABORIGINAL CORPORATION

Updates

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wettropics@wtma.qld.gov.au

What's been happening in the Wet Tropics...

Wet Tropics Workshops: Participatory Techniques in Decision Making...15 June 2016 •
Project Planning Workshop...20 July 2016

Train the Trainer: Designing and Delivering Cultural Awareness Training...29 June 2016

Wet Tropics Management Authority : Cultural Capability Training...27-28 June 2016

Wet Tropics Tour Guide School on Atherton Tablelands...5-8 October 2016

Jarragun - Reinstating Rainforest - Field Day at Babinda...12 October 2016

Tablelands Aboriginal Tourism development opportunity showcase...13 October 2016

Aboriginal Partnerships team



M'lis Flynn (PROJECT OFFICER) is on leave until 5 May 2017. Eli Taylor is acting in this position. Eli previously worked with Girringun Aboriginal Corporation to evaluate Indigenous Protected Area partnerships.

P: 4241 0505 E: Eli.Taylor@wtma.qld.gov.au



Zoe Andolfatto (PROJECT OFFICER) is working with the EHP Land and Sea Ranger team until 24 February 2017. Alicia Haines, a young Yalanji and Djiru person, is acting in this position. Alicia has previously worked with EHP environmental services and regulation; and in employment and training.

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Rebecca Lagerroth is the Manager of the Aboriginal Partnerships, Community Engagement & World Heritage Presentation Program. Rebecca previously worked in Cape York negotiating land handbacks for Traditional Owners and joint management for National Parks; in the Torres Strait managing land and sea rangers and Indigenous Protected Areas; and in the Wet Tropics when the Bama Plan and Regional Agreement were negotiated.

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What's Coming up in the Wet Tropics

Fiji Department of Forestry and Fisheries on a study tour in the Wet Tropics.....4 November 2016

Girringun hosts an Indigenous Ranger workshop at Clump Mountain.....8-10 November 2016

Terrain NRM Board meeting and AGM.....25 November 2016

Wet Tropics Management Authority Board meeting 1-2 December 2016

Cassowary Awards.....3 December 2016

Review of the Wet Tropics Management Plan 1998
By May 2018



IUCN
World
Conservation
Congress
Hawaii 2016

International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)

The Australian Committee of the IUCN met in Canberra from 19 to 20 July 2016. This two-day event focused on the need to ensure long-term funding for conservation through partnerships and innovative funding arrangements.



The IUCN's World Conservation Congress took place in Hawaii from 1 to 10 September 2016. The theme, Planet at the Crossroads, reflected the serious choices and actions the world needs to make to meet major global challenges of species loss, ecosystem decline and climate change. It was acknowledged that the values and wisdom of Indigenous peoples will help inform changes needed.

The IUCN has created a new category of membership for Indigenous peoples' organisations. The Members Assembly also passed a resolution declaring that all protected areas and the sacred lands of Indigenous peoples should be 'No-Go Areas' for destructive industrial activities like mining, dam-building and logging. For more information www.iucn.org

Rights of Indigenous peoples

The Special Rapporteur on the rights of Indigenous peoples has presented a report to the Human Rights Council – a copy of the report is available at www.unsr.vtaulicorpuz.org

PHOTO: IUCN/ERIC MCNATT

www.unsr.vtaulicorpuz.org/site/index.php/en/annual-thematic-reports