

Mary River Catchment Coordination Association Inc



Annual Report 2000 - 2001



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Chairman's Report

Jim Buchanan

Introduction

It is with pleasure that I deliver this report, my first as Chairman of the Mary River Catchment Coordinating Committee (MRCCC). We have come a long way since the Hon. Ed Casey launched ICM in the Mary 1993, and I hasten to add that I feel our job is not over.

In the last 12 months I have seen a wave of change taking place in catchment and Resource Management issues like never before. A wave that I feel has the potential to leave the community behind. For example, the National Salinity Action Plan, Landcare Support Strategy and Water Resource Planning to name a few. Each of these issues alone would have created a heavy workload for most Catchment Committees.

The National Action Plan for Salinity is summarised separately in your papers. This joint Commonwealth and Queensland Government programme is to be administered through a regional body. A great deal of time and effort has been expended in getting the Burnett/Mary Regional Body almost up and running. This project should see approx.\$2.5million per year spent in the Burnett/Mary Region. We are led to believe that the formation of our Regional Body is more advanced than any other Region in Queensland.

The Landcare Support Strategy is also being developed as part of the NAP process. Your Executive again has been active attending meetings in Brisbane, Bundaberg, Maryborough Gympie as well as telephone conferences.

While the Minister for Natural Resources & Mines has not formally announced the Mary River Water Resource Plan, work has been going on in the Department and Technical Advisory Panel has been appointed and working. Your Committee has been involved in a process to have better Community input into our Water Resource Plan than has been the case in past WAMP processes. Maybe the initiative of your committee (perhaps more particularly Jenifer Simpson) will lead to an Australian first - to have a Citizens Jury Panel on an Environmental issue.

What I have seen achieved over the years in ICM is nothing short of remarkable but issues such as security in funding still need to be addressed. That is why my committee and I have at all times attempted to draw in the major player like Councils, industry, community and various government agencies active in the Mary together.

It is fitting that 2001 this is the year of the volunteer; unfortunately I feel that most of the tireless hours of service by many thousands of volunteers largely goes unnoticed by the greater community and politicians. Some members of the Executive would attend more meetings than I do (they are involved with other groups). A recent check of my diary reveals that from January to today I have attended a total of seventy-one meetings dealing with Natural Resources. Over 50% of those required more than half a day from work, often travelling to Nambour, Bundaberg, Childers, Maryborough, Kilkivan etc. You don't have to worry about tax or G.S.T. There's no pay!

It is easy for politicians and Departmental Chiefs to cut funding and leave the community to take up the extra work. This organisation has suffered very severe cutbacks and we have now reached breaking point. One of the hardest decisions made by the Executive was to stop paying travel allowances. This has severely affected quite a few representatives. However, this may be reintroduced by the new Committee following a small build up in reserves. Personally, I find it very distressing that after doing a lot of voluntary work, one still has to go cap in hand begging for a NHT Grant, or Poker Machine grants etc. to keep the organisation afloat. The Community has not only to work but finance it's own administrative costs!

I will not go into the detail of the large range of achievements discussed elsewhere in the Annual Report, but needless to say the committee has been very busy undertaking a range of projects to implement its strategy that led to us receiving the Landcare Catchment Award at Goondiwindi this year.

The Annual Mayors Forum in April was very successful and extremely encouraging from the perspective of the level of commitment and cooperation shown by the various Councils. The mayors recommending that the MRCCC undertake a review of the strategies to align it with current and merging issues. I will discuss this more at a later point.

Last year's Chairman, Peter referred to shortcomings in the consultation framework we operate in. My observation is that at a regional and local level we are fortunate to be served by a number of committed government officers. However the hiatus still appears to exist between community and George Street.

I see many challenges for the year ahead. Review the strategy and constitution to reflect evolution changes in catchment management. We feel that need to develop a business plan to ensure that the MRCCC can become more financially independent and source out funding opportunities, which may present themselves in the future.

Achievements

The reports that follow will detail our achievements, for which I think we can be proud. In the last year we have received a lot of positive feedback, and some negative, particularly regarding the River Rehabilitation Plan and associated consultation processes.

Our bread and butter projects such as:

- Dairy effluent
- Waterwatch
- VRRGS

Despite the difficulties faced by the Executive we should feel proud of our achievements. During the last year the Dairy Effluent Project was finalised. This was a very successful project and I trust you all have read the report.

The Waterwatch project is a continuing one and we hope it will continue on into the future. Water quality is directly related to the health of the river. Waterwatch provides a continuing measure of River health.

A comprehensive report on the Voluntary Riverbank Restoration Grants Scheme is enclosed in the Annual Report. Please read it carefully. This is another great project funded by a NHT Grant.

The Mary River and Tributaries Rehabilitation Plan Grant Scheme is now under way. Brad Wedlock is Project Officer with Phil Berrill assisting. The first applications for a Grant have now been approved and I am confident the project will be completed on time despite the late start. All grant money must be allocated by September 2002 so Brad and Phil will have no time to spare.

We are indebted to some of our hardworking project staff, Brad, Deb and the two Phils. Brad Wedlock who coordinated our most successful project, the Voluntary Riverbank Restoration Grant Scheme has been appointed as project officer for the Rehab Plan. The Catchment Resource Centre is becoming a vital centre of activity. A Natural Resource library is being established. The Waterwatch officer is kept busy testing samples brought in almost every day.

Conclusion

In closing I wish to thank my committee for a job well done and trust that my contribution has in part helped to put the course of Catchment Management in the Mary in the right direction. I'd like to thank the hard working members of the Executive Committee who have made substantial voluntary commitments to the ICM.

It is in no way a reflection on Margaret and her work as Secretary/Treasurer but I would like to suggest that the two positions be separated as they have been in the past. The workload of the combined position is far too great.

A special thanks must go to DNR&M staff who have given more than 100% in time and effort to assist MRCCC. We started this year under very difficult circumstances and it has taken a very special effort on the part of Bob Watson since he joined the team to get us back on track.

Personally, I would like to thank my business partners for allowing me the time away from work on the farm. It is not always understood that people in business who take time off for projects like MRCCC have to organise a replacement on the home front. This is an added cost. Sandowne Pineapple Co has allowed me the necessary time off. Also I must thank my wife Sue for putting up with my coming and going over the last twelve months.

For health, personal and business reasons I have decided not to continue on the Executive or Regional Groups. I wish the incoming Executive all the best in Natural Resource Management.

I mentioned the massive wave of change earlier in my report. It is only to be hoped that this wave of change in Natural Resource Management does not appear as a Tsunami that overruns us all.

Treasurer's Report

Margaret Thompson

It has been a difficult year for the MRCCC Executive as we have had to deal with many financial issues that were previously handled by Brian Stockwell, our former DNR Coordinator. However, our Accountant appears to have managed with the GST and our books have been returned from the Auditor with a clean bill.

This year the bulk of our funding has been received from the Natural Heritage Trust for the River Rehabilitation Project and for Waterwatch. It is pleasing to note that EPA also contributes to our Waterwatch project now. Financial support for River Rehabilitation has also been received from Caloundra, Cooloola, Hervey Bay, Maryborough, Maroochy, Noosa and Kilkivan Shire Councils and we are very appreciative of their ongoing support. Environment Australia has provided some funding towards conservation workshops, the Gaming Machine Fund has provided two grants for upgrading and improving facilities at the Resource Centre and DNR have again assisted our group with operating costs.

Funding for general administrative costs is still a concern for our group. An application for assistance has been submitted to Environment Australia through the "Grants for Voluntary Environment and Heritage Associations" program and we are eagerly awaiting the outcome of this application.

As mentioned by Jim in his report, the issue of travel allowances for Community Delegates has proven to be a difficult one for our Committee, however, I am hopeful that there will be some funds available to reimburse our Community Delegates in the coming year.

The following table summarises the Project Balances as at 30 June 2001. Most of the funds shown here are already allocated to specific projects and are not for General Committee use. A copy of our Audited Financial Report is included with this Annual Report.

Thank you to the staff and Committee members who have supported me in the role of Treasurer this year. I would also like to acknowledge the ongoing support from Queensland Dairy Farmers for their provision of the Resource Centre in Tozer St .

MRCCC Project Balances at 30 June 2001

Project	Balance at 01/07/00	Total Income 2000-2001	Total Expenditure 2000-2001	Balance 30 June 2001
Dairy Effluent	7057.53		7057.53	0.00
Dow Agro Project	0.00	5,000.00	0.00	5,000.00
EPA Conservation Grant	0.00	2,000.00	0.00	2,000.00
Hey Slow Down	165.00	0.00	152.73	15.27
Obi Obi Cod Habitat	17,850.00	10,695.00	10,659.68	17,885.32
Riparian Project	1587.74	0.00	1305.43	282.31
Rivers of the Range	4093.00	3830.47	7949.59	-26.12
River Rehabilitation (NHT)	0.00	71,050.00	5969.03	65,080.97
River Rehabilitation (Council funds)	0.00	53,144.54	0.00	53,144.54
VRRGS	100,407.88	68,356.29	130,767.93	37,996.24
Waterwatch NHT (97-00)	7245.69	273.08	7518.77	0.00
Waterwatch NHT (00-01)	0.00	15,000.00	2,862.93	12,137.07
Waterwatch EPA	0.00 .	10,000.00	0.00	10,000.00
Projects Total	152,609.84	244,349.38	184,660.41	212,298.81
General Funds	46,211.28	27,227.13	38,478.35	34,960.06

Minutes of previous AGM

31 July 2000 - Held at the DPI Forestry Training Centre, Gympie

Opening:

Peter Buchanan declared the meeting open and welcomed everyone. Proceedings began with each sector representative giving a short resume of their interests, aims for catchment management and support they may be able to offer. This gave a most important overview of the depth and expertise sitting on and supporting this committee. It was a most impressive array of skills.

Minutes of previous Annual General Meeting

Moved Dave Sands, Seconded John Horrex. Carried. The meeting then adjourned for morning tea so visitors and members could meet.

Meeting resumed at 10.50am with presentation of reports.

Chairman's report – Peter Buchanan

Highlights –

- MRCCC, the honest broker
- The annual Mayor's Forum
- Positive indications of acceptance of our position in community consultation

Peter moved the adoption of this report, seconded by Trevor Turner. Carried with acclamation.

Coordinator's report

Brian Stockwell delivered his report. Spoke of the great strengths in ICM, and his growth while in this position. Brian is about to take up a new position but still working in the catchment as well as other local catchments.

Treasurer's Report – tabled.

Moved David Burnett, seconded Dave Sands that the Treasurer's report and the Auditors report be received and adopted and that payments made be endorsed. Carried. Graeme Elphinstone offered his thanks and congratulations.

Voluntary Riverbank Restoration Grant Scheme report

Report presented by Brad Wedlock. Moved Brad Wedlock, seconded D Burnett that the report be adopted. Carried.

Dairy Effluent Project report

Presented by Brian Stockwell. Moved Margaret Thompson, seconded Dave Burnett. Carried.

Waterwatch and Rivers of the Range Report

Presented by Kim Stanton. An impressive report of activities and achievement in this area. Moved Margaret Thompson, seconded Jim Buchanan. Carried.

Working Group reports

- Legislative Procedure Working Group. Moved Paul MacDonald, seconded Dave Burnett. Carried.
- Knowledge Research and Education working group report – presented by Margaret Thompson. Moved Margaret Thompson, seconded Paul MacDonald. Carried.
- WNE working group – Moved Esma Armstrong, seconded Mark Cridland. Carried.
- Combined Water Group – Robert Zigterman and Bob Herd. Addressing the strategies and priorities identified in the MRCCC strategy. Water planning is being streamlined. Moved Rob Zigterman, seconded John Dillon. Carried.
- Regional Strategy Group – Sally Ferguson. Overall plan available for endorsement by RSG executive then RSG Committee and then public consultation. Moved John Dillon, seconded David Burnett. Carried.
- Land Management Practice. Moved Hugh Viner, seconded Graeme Elphinstone. Carried.
- Land use planning – transferred to general meeting following.

Guest Speaker, Terry Hogan, DNR Director General, was then invited to speak and launch the Mary River Resource Atlas, the draft Mary River and tributaries Rehabilitation Plan and the MRCCC Watercourse Management Manual. Terry spoke on the opportunity we have to prevent some of the disasters faced by other states and noted that unless the community is with you agencies cannot accomplish anything. Clearly it is critical to work together. Terry Hogan then went on to announce the commencement of the Mary River WAMP. About to set up the community reference panel. The WAMP Reference Panel will be based around the MRCCC. DNR restructuring to reflect the needs of natural resource management integrated resource planning and integrated resource management.

Terry Hogan then formally launched the products, which were then followed by demonstrations. Resource Atlas by Bernie Powell, Brian Stockwell on the draft Mary River Rehabilitation Plan. Brian walked us through the theories behind the development of the draft Rehabilitation Plan. Brian also gave a dissertation on the Watercourse Management manual explaining the concept and genesis of this manual.

Carole Innes, Agforce District Representative was then asked to preside over the election of Office Bearers and acceptance of Sector Representatives.

Options to amend secotr representative. Moved D Sands, seconded J Dillon. Commerical Fishing Sector be amended to Fishing Interests. Carried.

Moved Esma Armstrong seconded Mark Cridland. Sector Representation to remain as is but allow a review of representation. Any change not to take place until AGM 2001. Carried.

Sector representation confirmed and endorsed. Moved Peter Buchanan, seconded John Dillon. Carried.

Election of Executive – written nominations requested.

President – Jim Buchanan, nominated by Esma Armstrong, seconded by Margaret Thompson.

Vice President – Esma Armstrong, Nominated by Margaret Thompson, seconded by Peter Buchanan.

Management Committee – John Dillon. Nominated Peter Buchanan, seconded Esma Armstrong. These people were elected unopposed.

Jim Buchanan as incoming Chairman then addressed the meeting with a wake up call to us all.

A presentation of a plaque was then made to Margaret Thompson to Peter Buchanan to express the committee's appreciation for all he has done for catchment management. Peter Buchanan then made a presentation to Brian Stockwell with our thanks and appreciation for his contribution to our catchment and committee.

12.40pm Meeting Closed. Guests invited to Lunch.

National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality

The Prime Minister, Premiers and Chief Ministers at the Council of Australian Governments endorsed a National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality (NAPSWQ) in November 2000. It involves a funding package of \$1.4 billion from the Commonwealth, States and Territories. The significant funding allocation is over a seven year period and complements the existing Commonwealth's \$1.5 billion Natural Heritage Trust.

Through the national action plan, communities and governments will work together to prevent, stabilise or reverse dryland salinity and to improve water quality in Queensland.

The four areas that Queenslanders will focus on are the catchments of the Fitzroy and Burdekin rivers, The Lockyer, Burnett and Mary Rivers, the Balonne, Condamine and Maranoa Rivers, and the Border Rivers.

The regional community role in the framework of the Action Plan is crucial and lies principally in the development of integrated managements plans and the delivery of desired outcomes, including the negotiation of trade offs needed to give effect to the plan.

The Chairs of the Burnett Catchment Care Association (BCCA) and the Mary River Catchment Coordinating Committee (MRCCC) convened a meeting of community representatives at Kilkivan on 18 May 2001 to gauge community ideas on forming a Regional Management Committee in the Burnett Mary under the NAPSWQ. Two meetings have since been held in Gympie and Childers.

At the Childers forum, a steering committee was formed to finalise the Regional Body. Two subsequent meetings have been held by the Steering Committee, which has recommended the appointment of an independent Chair for the Regional Body. Nominations are to be sourced openly and from all interest groups. For further information or a copy of the Burnett Mary Regional Body Position Description, please contact Caroline Haskard on 07 4163 5090 or the MRCCC Resource Centre on 07 5482 4766.

Burnett Mary Regional Strategy

DEVELOPING THE REGIONAL STRATEGY - AN OVERVIEW OF THE PROCESS

1 Burnett Mary Regional Strategy Group

(i) Establishment and Membership

The Burnett Mary Regional Strategy Group was established to manage the development of the Strategy. It was a community, government and industry partnership that reflected the wide range of interests of the Burnett Mary Region and the natural resource management and biodiversity conservation activities of existing groups. All groups and agencies within the Region involved in natural resource management and biodiversity conservation were invited to participate in the Strategy development process. A broad, coherent and multidisciplinary approach to the issues involved was seen to be required and which would consider at the same time the social, environmental and economic aspects of the topics addressed.

Members of the Regional Strategy Group had broad experience and skills in resolving community issues, environmental protection, biodiversity conservation, sustainable agriculture, natural resource management and strategic planning processes. An Executive, drawn from existing members, was internally elected to oversee the project and its day-to-day operation on behalf of the Strategy Group.

Regional Strategy Group Members and Executive

Organisation	Nominee	Role
Burnett Inland Economic Development Organisation	Jan Darlington (Chair)	Executive
Mary River Catchment Coordinating Committee	John Dillon (Vice Chair)	Executive
Canegrowers	Barrie McLennan	Executive
Dairy Farmers	Lee Carlson	Executive
Wide Bay Burnett Conservation Council	Pam Soper	Executive
Wide Bay South Burnett Local Government Assoc	Roger Nunn	Executive
Department of Natural Resources and Mines	Tom Crothers	Executive
Baffle Creek Catchment Management Group	George Gibson	Member
Burnett Catchment Care Association	Tom Bancroft	Member
Byrne Brothers Pty Ltd (Extractive Industry)	Phil Walmsley	Member
Department of Primary Industries	Alan Stephens	Member
Environmental Protection Agency	Steve Barry	Member
Environmental Protection Agency	Tim Pulsford	Member
Greening Australia	Alan Dyball (Succeeding Jim Watson)	Member
Mary River Catchment Coordinating Committee	Peter Buchanan	Member
North Burnett Local Government Association	Micheal Edgar (Succeeding Viv Chase)	Member
Office of Rural Community	Hamilton Armstrong	Member
Queensland Fisheries Management Authority	Alan Dooley	Member
Wide Bay 2020 Regional Planning Advisory Committee	Bernard Cleary (Mark Saunders-Proxy)	Member
Queensland Timber Board	Rod McInnes	Member
Australian Marine Conservation Society	Liz Tanner and Sue Sargent (Shared)	Member

(ii) The Role of the Strategy Group

- 1) To develop an integrated assessment of the:
 - natural resources and biodiversity of the region;
 - present management and conservation arrangements; and
 - factors which may influence future management and conservation, including economic and social issues.
- 2) To evaluate the issues of regional significance, including those that may arise in the future.
- 3) To establish a framework for the resolution of issues of regional significance, including the priorities that should be given to particular aspects.
- 4) To propose a list of achievable actions that address the priority issues for the region.
- 5) To outline a resource management and biodiversity conservation program for the region.
- 6) To propose appropriate mechanisms for:
 - reviewing the strategy;
 - reviewing the effectiveness of the implementation of the strategy;
 - administering the implementation of the strategy; and
 - administering any funding, which may be allocated to the region to support the continuing development of the strategy and its implementation.

2 Development of the Draft Strategic Plan

The Strategy Group and its members individually have overseen and made significant direct contributions to the development of the draft plan. This, in summary, occurred in three main steps -

(i) Guiding Framework

The guiding framework around which the strategy is built was developed through a working group process. This group was drawn from the major planning and coordination groups in the Region, particularly those which have already produced key strategy documents. The details of the process are given in **Appendix Three**.

(ii) Working Group Sessions

The Regional Strategy Group determined that the key sectors relevant to natural resource management and biodiversity conservation that should be addressed by the Strategy were:

- Biodiversity
- Extractive Industries
- Fisheries and Coastal Ecosystems
- Forestry
- Human Settlement
- Primary Production
- Tourism and Recreation

Working groups were established for each of these sectors. Each group consisted of Strategy Group members and persons known for their understanding and expertise in relation to the sector and the issues that should be taken into account, drawn from the community, industry and government. Between February and April 2000 either one or two

day workshops were held to determine the decade outlook, decade targets and key strategic actions required within the five priority themes of the guiding framework for each sector.

(iii) Drafting and Review

The outputs of the workshops for each working group were compiled into a first draft of the core Strategy. This was reviewed by the Executive of the Regional Strategy Group for coherence and for identifying gaps which needed to be overcome before a broader community consultation phase could be initiated. A sub group of the Executive was responsible for action on the results of the review and the preparation of this draft, drawing in other sections drafted by the Executive Officer for the project, particularly the Regional Overview and Appendices.

(iv) The Public Consultation Phase

This first draft of the Burnett Mary Regional Strategy was designed specifically for consultation with the broader community of the Region. Its purpose was to seek further inputs on:

- errors and omissions;
- any different perspectives on the strategic actions which should be undertaken; and
- whether the actions proposed are comprehensive and a sufficient outline for the development of local action plans by community groups, industry, local government and government agencies.

Following this process the need for further consideration of particular aspects and redrafting was considered, prior to the preparation of a final draft for assessment under the State and Commonwealth arrangements for endorsement of regional strategies for Queensland.

(v) The Final Draft

Public consultation was carried out during July and August 2001 following the development of a Communication Strategy, which identified the key stakeholders in the region who were to be consulted.

A total of thirty responses were received from Catchment Management and Landcare groups, local government, state government, and business representatives. The information received, was carefully considered by the Editorial Panel of the Regional Strategy Group and a number of relevant changes were made to produce the final draft document.

As at this time, it is proposed that the draft be presented to the Landcare and Catchment Management Council for recommendation for endorsement in early October 2001. Once endorsed, the Burnett Mary Regional Strategy will be officially launched to the public, including key stakeholders within the Region.

MRCCC Project Reports

2001 Rivercare Grants

Implementing the Mary River & tributaries Rehabilitation Plan

Project Manager, Brad Wedlock

Project Assistant, Phil Berrill

Introduction

The Rivercare Grants Program has taken over the Voluntary Riverbank Restoration Grants Scheme. The Rivercare Grants program follows the principles of the Mary River & tributaries Rehabilitation Plan. This plan was developed in 2000, and released last August by Terry Hogan, Director-General of Department of Natural Resources. It was endorsed by the MRCCC in April this year. After public consultation an *Implementation Edition* was released at the recent Launch of the program, held at River Heads, in July 2001.

Sources of Funding

During 2000 – 2001 financial year the Rivercare Grants Program attracted funding from the Commonwealth through the Natural Heritage Trust's Rivercare Program. Six local councils also provided funds for rehabilitation work.

The local councils that contributed to the Rivercare Grants Program are:

- Cooloola Shire Council
- Noosa Shire Council
- Caloundra City Council
- Maroochy Shire Council
- Maryborough City Council
- Hervey Bay City Council
- Kilkivan Shire Council

Rivercare Grants

The Rivercare Grants Program offers financial and technical assistance to riparian landholders. The style of rehabilitation works offered are soft-engineering options, such as streambank fencing, off-stream watering, revegetation, and environmental weed control. Rounds of funding will be called over the next 2 years. The first round closed on the 14th August, with the Working Group meeting on the 14th September to assess the applications. The second round of Rivercare Grants closes on the 23rd November, and the applications from the 2nd round will be assessed on the 10th December.

Demonstration Sites

A component of this program is the development of leading edge demonstration sites, that incorporate large-woody debris. These demonstration sites will build upon knowledge gained from the Obi Obi Creek Cod Habitat project.

Water Quality Grants

Towards the end of 2001, Water Quality Grants will be offered to landholders wanting to improve the water quality of waterways on their property. This program will work along similar lines to the Dairy Effluent Management Assistance Program, however all industry types will be eligible to apply for Water Quality Grants.

Publicity and Promotion

During 2001 the Rivercare Grant Program has been in attendance at the following exhibitions and field days:

- Bridge the Gap tree-planting event – Maleny (February 2001)
- Centenary of Federation tree-planting event – Gympie (February 2001)
- Clean-up Australia Day tree-planting event – Gympie (March 2001)
- Salinity Roadshow – Gympie (April 2001)
- Mothar Mountain tree-planting event – Mothar Mt (May 2001)
- Maleny Show – Maleny (June 2001)
- Rivercare Grants Program Launch – River Heads (July 2001)

- King of the Mountain – Pomona (July 2001)
- Farming the Future – Cooroy (July 2001)
- National Tree Day – Cooroy (July 2001)
- Lake Baroon Catchment Care Water Quality field-day – Maleny (August 2001)
- Lake Cootharaba Community & Water Day – Boreen Point (September 2001)
- Noosa Show – Pomona (September 2001)
- Threatened Species Day – Gympie (September 2001)
- The Greatest Earth on Show, Nambour (September 2001)

Significant Achievements - 2001

• **2001 QLD Catchment – Landcare Award**

The Mary River & tributaries Rehabilitation Plan was named the joint winner of the 2001 Queensland Landcare Catchment Award. The winners were announced at the award dinner at the Queensland Landcare Conference at Goondiwindi held in July. MRCCC shared this prize with the Fitzroy Basin Association. All Queensland winners will become state's finalists in the categories in the National Landcare Awards.

Significant Achievements: MRCCC being awarded this accolade is an acknowledgement of the persistent effort and many hours of work put into the preparation of the Rehabilitation Plan by Brian Stockwell (previous ICM Coordinator). Credit also should go to the MRCCC General Committee who became the focus group for the preparation of the Plan, as well as the Riverbank Stability Working Group, Steve Dudgeon (Rivercare Officer) and Sally Boon (Riverine Policy Officer).

Brian produced a draft Rehabilitation Plan which was opened to public scrutiny in July 2000. After much community consultation an Implementation Edition was produced earlier this year.

• **Rivercare Grants Program Launch – River Heads**

The launch of 'Rivercare Grants Program' was held on Thursday 19th July at River Heads, near Hervey Bay. River Heads is located at the estuary of the Mary River, and is the site of the internationally-recognised RAMSAR-listed wetlands, and is temporary home for migratory birds, dugong, and rare butterflies.

The Federal Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries & Forestry, Warren Truss officially launched the 'Rivercare Grants Program' on the day. Cr Ted Sorrenson (Mayor of Hervey Bay) welcomed guests to the area. Olga Miller, Elder of Butchella people told a story on the mouth of the Mary and Susan Rivers, and students from Yarralea State School gave presentations on how they would like to see the estuary of the Mary River managed. Over 60 people attended including Traditional Owners, Federal, State and Local Politicians, key industry representatives, fishing and community groups, school students Landcare, Greening Australia, TV, radio and print media.

A special thanks goes to Jim Buchanan, John Dillon and Margaret Thompson who also spoke on the day. John was called in at short notice – thank you John for helping out.

Many people would not have even realised but running in conjunction all day with the Launch was a school-based activity. Yarralea State School took part in many activities, starting with a tree-planting event in the morning, practicing their performance of Dugong Rock, helping out with the official launch, demonstrating their sea-grass monitoring activities, and ending the day with waterwatching and rocky seashore activities. Thanks for these activities goes to:

- ❖ Ashton Berry, Greening Australia

- ❖ Stephanie Govan and trainees, Greencorp
- ❖ Leisa Riggs
- ❖ Phil Trendell
- ❖ Phil Berrill
- ❖ Wendy Jones, Yarrillea Teacher

Significant Achievements: Putting together this launch was a real team effort by the staff and Executive of MRCCC. Deb Seal and Peg Berrill put in an enormous effort to prepare the fantastic food for the day. Everybody commented on the quality of the food, and went away with fond memories of MRCCC catering.

Deb insisted that all the food be “Produce of the Mary Catchment”. Her insistence paid off as everything that was eaten on the day came from the Mary Catchment, and the food was all donated by local business from the Mary Catchment too. Local business that kindly donated produce for the Launch were:

- ❖ Kenilworth Country Foods
- ❖ Urangan Fisheries
- ❖ Yeltukka Pineapple Plantation
- ❖ Dairyfarmers Milk
- ❖ Cooloola Milk
- ❖ Roddau Brothers (flowers)
- ❖ Endeavour Foundation
- ❖ Sandowne Pineapple Plantation
- ❖ Nolan’s Meats
- ❖ McIntosh Meats
- ❖ Excelsior Rd Fruit Market
- ❖ Pete & Kay’s Produce

There were many other people and organisations that helped on the day that deserve a thank you, namely:

- ❖ Wide Bay Water
- ❖ Gympie & District Landcare
 - Hervey Bay City Council – Greg Stuart and his workers (who helped prepare the ‘Good Ship Mary’)
- ❖ Forest Establishment – Tony Noonan (who cooked all day!)

Phil Berrill put in a tremendous effort. He worked tirelessly all day and for weeks preceding the event making sure that everything was perfect, especially the student activities.

The launch of this project shows what can be done with little funding, and a great deal of enthusiasm. The willingness of the local business to get behind a community group is also heartening.

- **First Round of Rivercare Grants**

The first round of Rivercare Grants closed on the 14th August 2001. At this point 11 Rivercare Grants are to be assessed on the 14th September 2001. The Rivercare Grants applicants are listed below:

Rivercare Grant Applicants

Name	Location	Waterway	Shire
Phil Vickers	Wootha	Geraghtys	Caloundra
Jeff Carlson	Miva	Mary	Tiaro
Michael Cowan	Crystal Waters	Mary	Caloundra
Paula Gillis (D Murtagh)	Kenilworth	Mary	Maroochy
Susan Bryce	Obi Obi	Coolabine	Maroochy
Angela Hood	Cedar Pocket	Deep	Cooloola
Gillian Crossley	Lower Wonga	Wonga	Kilkivan
Phil Casey	Lower Wonga	Wonga	Kilkivan
Greg Crosier	Lower Wonga	Widgee	Kilkivan
Peter Zulpo	Belli Park	Belli & Cedar	Maroochy
Tiaro & District Landcare	Tiaro	Mary	Tiaro
Noosa & District Landcare – Sean Rothsey	Cooroy	Six Mile	Noosa

Significant Achievements: The first round of Rivercare Grants has attracted some exceptional grant applications that meet the criteria of the Mary River & tributaries Rehabilitation Plan. Landholders from varied backgrounds have applied for Rivercare Grants. These landholders have volunteered their time, labour and land because they are motivated to do something about rehabilitating their Catchment.

Noosa Landcare Group and the Tiaro Landcare Group have applied for funds through the Rivercare Grants Program.

The Tiaro Landcare application involves fencing off three Mary River Turtle nesting sites. Recruitment of this species has been extremely low in recent years, mainly due to predation from foxes. Trampling from cattle can also have an effect on the recruitment of turtles, therefore fencing to restrict cattle access will have a positive effect on young turtles survival. Tiaro Landcare has successfully applied for Threatened Species Network funding to carry out predator control, artificial incubation of turtles, monitoring of turtle populations and education and awareness campaigns.

The Noosa Landcare application involves fencing the headwaters of the upper Six Mile Creek, from the Cooroy Mountain Beauty Spot to Lake Macdonald. A major revegetation program will also be undertaken (see separate paragraph).

- **Greenfleet Partnership**

In conjunction with Noosa Landcare, Lake Macdonald Catchment Care Group and Noosa Shire a major revegetation program will be undertaken in the upper catchment of Six Mile Creek. Greenfleet will provide 20 000 seedlings to achieve this aim. Greenfleet is a carbon-trading company that has been working extensively in the southern states of Australia. They are currently expanding into Queensland, and are keen to work with community groups and local councils. Noosa Shire Council has already undertaken some plantings with Greenfleet. Energex is working in partnership with Greenfleet in South-east Queensland.

Significant Achievements: By creating partnerships with groups such as Greenfleet means that our funding can be spread further, thus creating a better project. Partnerships with Landcare Groups and local councils allow people with varied backgrounds to become involved. People involved in Landcare Groups, such as botanists, with specialised skills can value-add to our projects. By including many groups and people in a project responsibilities can be shared, making a large project more manageable. It is also brings different opinions and views into a project, creating a better project.

Opportunities to work closely with Landcare Groups

The Rivercare Grants Program can assist Landcare Groups to help implement on-ground projects. The Rivercare Grants Program aims to work closely with Landcare Groups, where possible, to achieve mutually beneficial projects. At present Tiaro and Noosa Landcare are working on Rivercare Grant proposals.

Significant Achievements: By working closer with Landcare Groups, MRCCC gains a better picture of natural resource management issues faced by landholders at a local level.

- **Strong Relationships with Local Government**

The annual Mayors Forum is an excellent opportunity to form strong bonds with local government. A number of positive resolutions have come from MRCCC's annual Mayors Forum, one of these being the Rolling Rehabilitation Fund. The Rolling Rehabilitation Fund is now in its 2nd year, with local government from the Catchment contributing to the fund. This proposal was put forward at the 2000 Mayors Forum. The rolling fund was based upon water usage of each shire or historical funding towards rehabilitation. The Rolling Rehabilitation Fund was based on 0.3 cents per kilolitre of water used by the Shire from the Catchment.

Significant Achievements: This Rolling Rehabilitation Fund will help to ensure continued funding for the rehabilitation of the Catchment. A fund based on water usage is a transparent and equitable method to finance Catchment rehabilitation.

- **Maroochy Shire Council funding for Large Woody Debris Projects**

Maroochy Shire Council recently approved \$30 000 of funding for re-snagging (re-instatement of large woody debris) into the Shire's waterways – thanks to the help of Cr Herman Schwabe, and Maroochy Council staff. Coupled with these large woody debris projects will be revegetation, streambank fencing, monitoring and evaluation.

Significance: Re-instatement of large woody debris (LWD) is a new science evolving in the southern states of Australia. It is very much cutting edge technology, and while the use of wood in waterways is being developed in the southern states, Queensland has not embraced these new ideas. However the Mary Catchment is leading the way in Queensland, with this new science. Maroochy Shire has been a partner in our first LWD project, and our association with the council will continue as we try new ideas and intensify the scale of LWD projects in the Catchment.

- **Rivercare Grants Program – useful extension tool**

The Rivercare Grants Program has been a very useful extension tool to disseminate information on riparian vegetation and stability, as well as other information regarding agroforestry and farm forestry, managing remnants, threatened species in the catchment, such as the Coxen's Fig-Parrot, and control of environmental weeds.

Significant Achievements: Being able to visit up to 80 properties per year means that valuable natural resource management information can be disseminated directly to riparian landholders. By keeping in touch with what is happening in the Catchment, Project Officers can also keep landholders better informed of happenings within the Catchment.

Rivercare Officer – improve project delivery

Our local Rivercare Officer (Steve Dudgeon) has now been working in the area for 2 years, and in this time has gained invaluable local knowledge of the Mary Catchment. Steve has worked tirelessly during this time, trying to work with all community groups, such as has been the demand for his services. Steve will be moving on in October to work in the private sector, which will create a great void in rivercare knowledge in the Catchment.

Significant Achievements: Steve brought with him extensive knowledge of Rivercare activities from NSW. The knowledge and ideas that Steve brought with him were new to our Catchment. Consequently some new ideas have been trialled, such as the Large Woody Debris project on Obi Obi Creek. These new ideas are now filtering through to our mainstream projects, making them more professional and enhancing the effectiveness of the project. Steve also brought with him a network of contacts that are invaluable to progress the rehabilitation of the Catchment. The projects that have been undertaken in the Catchment are now equivalent to those in the southern states, mainly due to Steve's involvement. The community was always foremost of Steve concerns.

Industrial Placement Project – Obi Obi Creek

Special Project Officer, Luke Brown

Introduction

I am currently undertaking an Industrial Placement with MRCCC. Industrial Placement is a necessary component in the 3rd year of a 4 year, Bachelor of Environment Management (Natural Systems & Wildlife Management) degree at Gatton College, University of Queensland. Before moving to Gatton to study I lived in Tiaro, on the Mary River, for 16 years.

My project or Industrial Placement sees me working on a large woody debris (LWD) site, which is located in the lower Obi Obi Creek catchment at Pryor's Farm, off Kidaman Creek Road, Obi Obi. I too am living, while on Industrial Placement, off Kidaman Creek Road, at our property, which incidentally overlooks my LWD site.

Progress to Date

Negotiations have been successful between Mr John Pryor, myself and MRCCC and the project is ready for implementation pending approval. The collection of baseline data for the LWD site at Pryor's is nearing completion having sampled vegetation on both western and eastern banks, and thus providing reference quadrats enabling continued vegetation monitoring of the site in future. Five other representative vegetation quadrats have been selected, both above and below the Pryor site so as to gain a better picture of the Obi Obi Catchment. This will aid in the selection of the correct species needed for the planting on the site.

Water quality data collection has commenced which facilitates the comparison of parameters prior, during and post project completion.

An Index of Stream Condition (ISC) will be completed following the collection of the vegetation data. Some macro-invertebrate sampling has been undertaken, further in-depth sampling will occur later.

Procuring suitable logs has been difficult, but recently a number of potential sources have been identified, which need to be inspected.

I am working closely with Steve Dudgeon (Rivercare Officer), and Brad Wedlock (Project Manager) in sourcing the required materials for this LWD project.

A final reference will be produced in the form of a case study style report, which can be used for future reference of similar projects.

Voluntary Riverbank Restoration Grants Scheme

Project Manager, Brad Wedlock

Project Assistant, Phil Berrill

Introduction

Since 1995 the Voluntary Riverbank Restoration Grants Scheme (VRRGS) has been a successful and effective mechanism for rehabilitating riparian land on freehold land. The VRRGS was one of Australia's first Devolved Grant Schemes (meaning that the money is "devolved" down to the landholders), and the proven formula established by MRCCC has been duplicated across Australia. There is definitely a philosophy of education, not regulation, in this process. This recognises that in practice responsible and effective management can only be carried out by landholders who are there day-to-day.

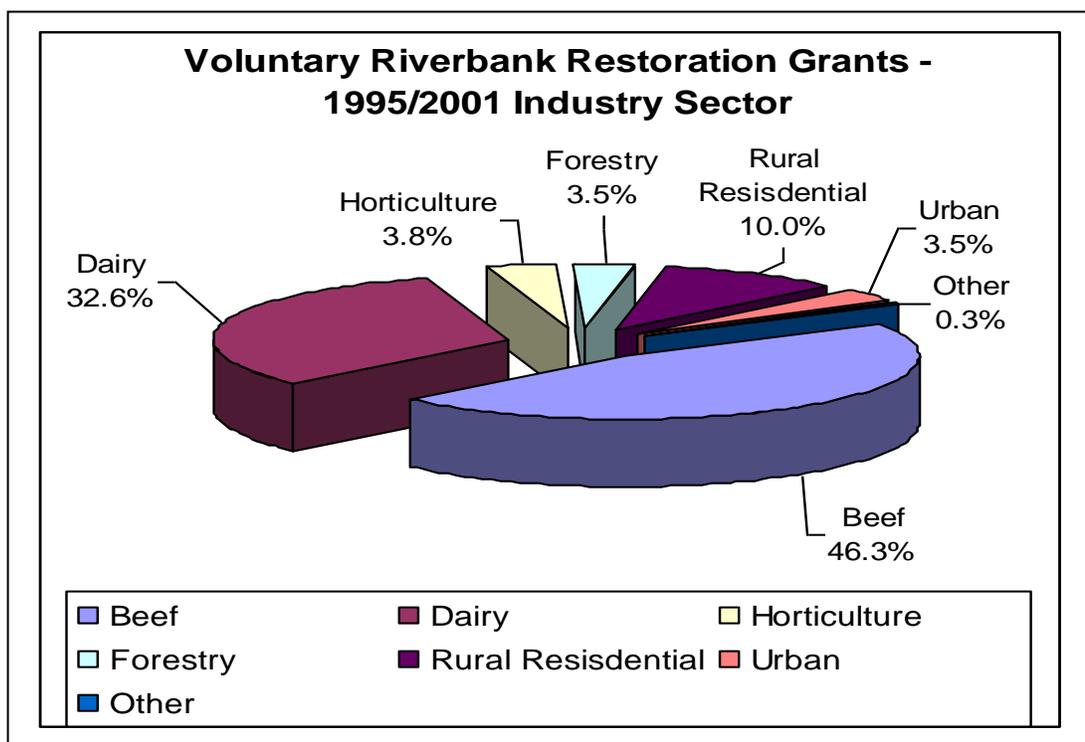
Initial funding for the Scheme came from a combination of sources. Cooloolool Shire surveyed their ratepayers, with the biggest issue - as determined by the ratepayers - being riverbank stability. Therefore in 1995 a combination of Drought Landcare & Cooloolool Shire funds initiated an innovative scheme called the VRRGS. From 1996 to 1997 the National Corridors of Green Consortium (a Greening Australia initiative) provided the funds, and from 1998 to 2001 the Natural Heritage Trust, and many local councils have been the funding providers of the VRRGS.

Snapshots from the last 5 years – Significant Achievements

- **1999 QLD Rivercare Award winners**

The success of the VRRGS was recognised in 1999 when the MRCCC received the QLD Rivercare Award for its efforts towards rehabilitating waterways in the Mary River Catchment.

Significance: This award recognised the dedicated landholders of the Mary River Catchment to help rehabilitate their Catchment. Many landholders are now working towards a healthy Catchment.



- **220 rehabilitation projects undertaken through the VRRGS**

In total over 220 projects were undertaken through the Scheme, with over 200 landholders involved. MRCCC would like to thank all the landholders that have taken part in this Scheme, because without the cooperation of landholders this project would not have been the success that it has been. This has been totally voluntary on the part of the landholders because incentive and support has been provided without regulation whatsoever.

Significance: Since 1995 over 150 km of waterways have been fenced, with reduced cattle access of over 15 000 head of cattle to the riparian zone – the equivalent of 50 000 people. Over 100 000 native riparian plants have been established in the riparian zone, and over 150 off-stream watering points installed.

- **Monitoring & Evaluation , an essential component of the VRRGS**

During the past 5 years two (2) evaluations of the projects were undertaken by university students. The first evaluation in 1998, and the second evaluation was undertaken in 2001. The first evaluation was conducted by Che Murray (from Gatton College – University of Queensland), she visited 50 project sites from 1995 to 1997, and evaluated their success. The second evaluation was conducted by Phil Berrill (from James Cook University – Townsville), he visited 40 new projects from 1998 to 2000, and 10 projects already surveyed in the 1998 evaluation.

Significance: Monitoring and evaluation is essential to determine why an individual project has been successful or a failure. Obviously we can learn a great deal from going back to visit and evaluate project sites. Talking with landholders to gain their ideas on why the project worked or didn't work is essential. Monitoring and evaluation can identify methods that can be utilised on new projects to help produce better projects for both the landholders and the Mary River Catchment.

Publicity & Promotion

Field Days/Promotion	Where in Catchment
1998 Farmex – Gympie	Landholders in Gympie Area
1998 Farming the Future – Cooroy	Landholders in Pomona area
1998 Seafood Festival – Hervey Bay	General Community
1999 Cooloola Environment Awards – Gympie	Landholders & General Community in Gympie area
1999 Farmex – Gympie	Landholders in Gympie area
1999 Farming the Future – Cooroy	Landholders in Pomona area
1999 Researchers Forum – Gympie	General Community & Delegates of the Researchers
1999 Seafood Festival – Hervey Bay	General Community
2000 Water Quality Field day – Kilkivan	Landholders in Kilkivan area
2000 Bridge the Gap – Maleny	Landholders in Maleny Area
2000 Clean-up Australia day tree planting - Gympie	General Community
2000 Gympie Show – Gympie	Landholders & General Community in Gympie area
2000 Environment Day display – Gympie	General Community
2000 Olympic Landcare tree planting at Kenilworth, Gympie, Tiaro, Maryborough & Hervey Bay	General Community
2000 Weedbuster Display – Gympie	General Community
2000 NHT television advertisement - Gildora	General Community
2000 NHT Journal article – VRRGS successes	General Community
2000 Woodford Folk Festival – Woodford	General Community & Landholders of the Maleny area
2001 Centenary of Federation tree planting event – Gympie	General Community
2001 Cleanup Australia Day tree planting event	General Community
2001 Tree-planting event – Bells Bridge	General Community & School Children
2001 Friends of Wonga Ck tree planting event – Widgee	Friends of Wonga Ck
2001 Tree-planting event – Mothar Mt	General Community

2001 Tree-planting event – Mothar Mt	General Community & Landholders of the Mothar Mt area
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- **Cost/Benefit Analysis**

In 1998 a cost-benefit analysis (CBA) of ten (10) projects undertaken through the VRRGS was conducted. Funding for this analysis was provided by Land & Water Australia.

Significance: A cost/benefit analysis helps to verify that waterway rehabilitation has more than just community benefits, as it proved that some landholders get a tangible economic benefit from waterway rehabilitation. This helps to convince other landholders the benefits to undertake waterway rehabilitation.

- **Riparian Landholder Attitudinal Survey**

In 1998 a riparian landholder attitudinal survey was undertaken by Sillar & Associates Consulting. This survey asked participants a number of questions regarding riparian management on their property. Funding for this survey was provided by Land & Water Australia.

Significance: The riparian landholder attitudinal survey identified that the longer the landholder had owned and lived on the property, the more motivated they would be to rehabilitate their waterway.

- **Strong Partnerships with Local Government**

Strong partnerships with local government have been forged in the last 5 years. Cooloola Shire Council helped to initiate the VRRGS, and has remained a loyal partner over this time. Recently Noosa Shire Council has invested in the VRRGS, focusing particularly on the Lake Macdonald Catchment - Lake Macdonald is one of the water supplies for Noosa Shire. Maryborough and Hervey Bay Councils have also been consistent investors in the VRRGS. Maroochy and Caloundra Councils have been involved in the Scheme over the past 5 years, through their Community Grants programs.

Significance: Local councils recognise the efforts of landholders to halt the degradation of the Catchment, as a result most local councils are now contributing funds to the VRRGS. By local councils contributing to Scheme's such as this we are able to attract further funding from agencies such as Natural Heritage Trust, this enables funds to go further and achieve better outcomes. Scheme's such as the VRRGS can also help implement local council's strategic plans. Generally for local councils to effectively implement their strategic plans involves working on freehold land. Therefore the VRRGS, which provides incentives to landholders, can provide a local council a mechanism to implement their strategic plans on freehold land.

- **Strong Partnerships with Landcare Groups**

In the last 5 years the VRRGS has worked with all Landcare & Catchment Care groups within the Mary River Catchment. During this time we have seen the formation of the Lake Macdonald Catchment Care Group, which has strong relations with the Noosa & District Landcare Group, MRCCC and Noosa Shire Council. In the lower end of the Catchment, two Landcare Groups were formed by landholders interested in natural resource management. These are the Tiaro & District Landcare Group and the Lower Mary Landcare Group. There are now seven (7) Landcare Groups and two (2) Catchment Care Groups in the Mary Catchment.

Significance: The formation of two new Landcare Groups in the lower Catchment, helped to fill a void in this part of the Catchment. The Lake Macdonald Catchment Care Group has also helped fill a void in the upper Catchment. The upper Six Mile Creek helps form a water supply to Noosa Shire, and is also habitat for the endangered Mary River Cod.

While filling a void, the formation of recognised natural resource management groups helps to gain local views on local natural resource management issues. These groups help to identify natural resource management issues that might not be as prevalent in other parts of the Catchment. The VRRGS can help to address some of these natural resource management issues.

- **Working Group Membership**

Since 1998 membership of the Working Group has remained reasonably stable. For this reason this group has realised a number of remarkable achievements. This group of people have been fantastic to work with. There have been some changes to the membership though. Membership of this Working Group has been:

- Bob Watson (Landcare Coordinator, 01)
- Jim Buchanan (MRCCC Chairman, 00 – 01)
- Brian Stockwell (ICM Coordinator, 98 – 00; Manager, 00 – 01)
- Alan McGrigor (Community Rep 99 – 01)
- Steve Dudgeon (Rivercare Officer 99 – 01)
- David Anderson (Community Rep, 98 – 01)
- Glenda Pickersgill (Community Rep, 98 – 01)
- Peter Buchanan (MRCCC Chairman, 98 - 00)
- Marilyn Connell (Greening Australia, 98 – 00)
- Steve Barry (EPA, 98 – 99)
- Bill Bishop (Community, 95 – 98)

Significance: This Working Group understands the needs of landholders, because most are community members or have a strong community background. All community members are riparian landholders, while the other members have good riparian skills. With a strong sense of community and understanding of the needs of riparian landholders, a Working Group such as this, provides an excellent platform to make decisions on behalf of other riparian landholders.

Significant Achievements of 2000 – 2001

- **2001 Monitoring & Evaluation program – including ISC**

The focus of the evaluation of the VRRGS was to determine the positive and negative findings of 50 VRRGS projects, established between 1998 and 2000. Another component of the evaluation was whether the VRRGS strategy has been an effective model in addressing the goals, objectives and outcomes set out by the MRCCC and NHT. An ‘Index of Stream Condition’ survey was carried out on all 50 project sites sampled. This method of assessing the condition of the stream is used widely by community groups in Victoria. This allows the condition of one reach of stream to be compared against another completely different reach of another stream.

Significant Findings

- 1. The overall major positive finding obtained from the results of this evaluation report is that native riparian vegetation is dominant at the overstorey and understorey canopy levels at the project sites sampled. When the trees mature and develop a deep root network it will reinforce riverbanks using a cost effective methodology.**
- 2. The average riparian width within project sites was excellent at 24m; this is 7m more than the average riparian width published in the ‘State of The Rivers Report’ on the Mary River Catchment.**
- 3. A high percentage of grant recipients rated restoration of the waterways on their properties as a high priority and have an understanding of the patterns and processes directly affecting their section of the river. The results also revealed that the majority of participants are interested and aware of the**

causative factors and possible solutions to riverbank erosion. These outcomes contribute to an informed community, the attitudinal change from cannot do to can do a major objective of the VRRGS methodology.

- 4. The percentage of projected foliage cover from grass was very high across the catchment, grass provides little bank stability and hinders natural regeneration, tree growth and subsequent canopy closure will reduce the negative impacts of pasture grasses in the longer term.**
- 5. Landholders voiced concerns that continuing degradation of adjoining and upstream areas from their properties greatly decreased the effectiveness of rehabilitation work on their property. Landholders sharing waterways expressed a desire to group together to develop a holistic rehabilitation plan for homogenous reaches.**

Other significant findings included;

- The percentage of projected foliage cover for native trees and shrubs was high considering the average age of trees planted was less than three years old.
- All landholders surveyed responded positively to undertaking further work using the VRRGS methodology for restoration projects.
- The percentage of projected foliage cover for exotic trees and shrubs averaged less than 2% over all the sites visited.
- The exclusion of cattle from project sites is visibly helping rehabilitate project sites, in some cases controlled exclusion has also proven effective.

The results of the landholder survey showed that overall the VRRGS methodology has met landholder expectations, with ongoing maintenance identified as the major issue for review.

This evaluation found that the Voluntary Riverbank Restoration Grants Scheme has addressed, or will address in the future, each of the objectives and criteria set out by the MRCCC and the Natural Heritage Trust.

Issues Needing Review

- **The major negative finding of this evaluation is ongoing maintenance. Landholders as a whole found it very difficult finding the time to maintain project sites, especially those landholders who currently derive a living from the land.**

Other issues identified included;

- Low percentages of native groundcover due to the dominance of pasture grasses.
- In some cases the width of the area fenced is not sufficient to provide significant additional bank stability.
- The invasion of project sites by exotic vine species like Madiera vine and Cats claw creeper is cause for concern.
- The need for increased exposure through the media, community networks and producer groups to expose new participants to the values of this scheme.

○ **Mary River Cod rehabilitation**

26 projects in Mary River Cod habitat – 60.7 hectares of improvement; 32 km streambank fencing; 28 500 riparian plants established.

Significance: Cod numbers are rising – researchers found tangible increases in population after recent electro-fishing, and interest in the Cod constantly increasing in the community. A number of fingerling releases have occurred on VRRGS project sites.

○ **Joint QPWS – MRCCC Frog projects**

With the widening and re-diversion of the Kenilworth – Eumundi Rd near Belli, some rare frog habitat was disturbed, these rare frogs being the Giant-barred Frog and the Cascade Tree-frog. Therefore Main Roads contacted QLD Parks & Wildlife Service to assist in rehabilitating the rare frog habitat that was to be disturbed. QPWS believed that funds from Main Roads would be better spent on extending frog habitat in undisturbed areas, principally on freehold land.

Therefore QPWS and Maroochy Landcare held a field day at Belli inviting interested landholders along willing to rehabilitate their riparian areas for frog habitat. Three landholders were keenly interested, and all three properties were prime frog habitat. One landholder was already well underway revegetating and extending the riparian area. To extend the Main Roads funds, Rowena Thomas contacted MRCCC regarding a grant for the two properties. By combining VRRGS funds with Main Roads funds the frogs were the real winners!

Significance: By working with QPWS new contacts have been created, which potentially can lead to further projects such as those detailed above. MRCCC is now investigating further frog projects in the area, with landholders and the local council – Maroochy Shire. QPWS has shown their interest to assist with these new proposals. Further monitoring of frog populations will also be undertaken, possibly through QPWS’s Naturesearch Volunteer Program.

- **Working with Landcare Groups**

A major focus of the VRRGS has been to work with Landcare Groups, to tie in projects as much as possible. This past year has been no exception. Apart from a multiple of Olympic Landcare tree-plantings, where MRCCC worked with four (4) other Landcare Groups to establish these revegetation sites (see attached report). Some joint projects with Lake Baroon Catchment Care Group, Lake Macdonald Catchment Care Group, Noosa Landcare & Barung Landcare were undertaken. The VRRGS worked with Gympie Landcare with their tree-planting events.

Significance: MRCCC needs to be working in partnership with Landcare Groups within the Catchment. By working in partnership obvious benefits can be derived, such as sharing the costs, sharing the responsibilities, and having someone else to blame when the project goes wrong (but this never happens – of course!). Partnerships can also give MRCCC greater profile within the community.

- **Olympic Landcare Projects** (see separate report)
- **Obi Obi Creek Cod Habitat Project** (see separate report)
- **Dow Agro Project** (see separate report)

2000 Olympic Landcare Tree-planting Events

Brad Wedlock

As 2000 was the year of the Sydney Olympics, and with the Sydney Olympic Games being the “Green Games” it was fitting that tree-planting events were held along the torch route, sometimes coinciding with the arrival of the Olympic torch run, in August 2000.

At each Olympic Landcare tree-planting event a past or present Olympian was present.

MRCCC applied for four (4) Olympic Landcare Grants of 2000 trees. Each of these Olympic Landcare projects were run in conjunction with four partner Landcare Groups from the Catchment, with MRCCC helping to organise the event with the partner Landcare Group. The four partner Landcare Groups were:

- ❖ Lake Macdonald Catchment Care Group
- ❖ Maroochy & District Landcare Group

- ❖ Lower Mary River Landcare Group
- ❖ Kenilworth & District Landcare Group

Lake Macdonald Catchment Care Group – Figtree Lane, Cooroy (Power Plant)

The Lake Macdonald Catchment Care Group chose to revegetate a parcel of council-owned land on Figtree Lane, just off the Cooroy – Tewantin Rd, Cooroy. Approximately 40 volunteers helped out on the day, and a school group from Cooroora Secondary College, Pomona, helped to mulch and plant some remaining trees 2 days later.

Noosa Shire Council through Dave Burrows (Vegetation Management Officer) obtained some funding from Greenfleet to continue revegetating the site. This 2nd planting was undertaken on National Tree Day – 29th July 2001, with 35 people attending. This site was accidentally burnt recently when bush-fire came through the area. Approximately 60 trees died from the fire.

However, this site is looking exceptionally good, considering the prevailing conditions since the initial planting. Phil Moran, from Noosa Landcare, has taken this site under his wing, and looks after the site like a baby....

Maroochy & District Landcare Group – Obi Obi Ck Crossing No. 2 (Wrestling Waterway Weeds)

The Maroochy Landcare Group selected MRCCC's Mary Cod large woody debris project site to revegetate. This site – the 2nd creek crossing on the Obi Obi Rd, required revegetating to provide shade for the Mary River Cod. This planting was organised for National Threatened Species Day (7th September 2000) by the WWF Mary River Cod Recovery Project. The symbolic nature of the day fitted well with the nature of the project – recovery of the endangered Mary River Cod. School children from Imbil State School and trainees from Gympie Landcare helped to revegetate the site.

However, floods caused some losses on this site. But WWF volunteers have undertaken further revegetation.

Lower Mary River Landcare Group – Aquatic Park, Maryborough (Welbeloved Walk)

The Lower Mary River Landcare Group revegetated Aquatic Park in Maryborough. This project had considerable assistance from Maryborough City Council. In total about 300 school children helped to revegetate the area. Maryborough State High School, Aldridge State High School, St Marys College and Maryborough Special School students helped out on the day. This site had some losses, as a result of the lack of rain. The site is now progressing well with some care and attention from the Landcare Group. The possibility exists to in-fill plant later in the season.

Kenilworth Landcare – Polly's Island

Kenilworth Landcare revegetated Polly's Island, behind Kenilworth township. Helping on the day were Maroochy Shire staff, Forestry staff, Dept of Natural Resources staff, school children from Kenilworth P-10 State School, and local volunteers from the Landcare Group. Some losses occurred on this site, due to the lack of rain in the area following the planting.

A follow-up planting by Leisa Riggs, and the Kenilworth P-10 State School, was undertaken late last year; and at Easter 2001 a scout group planted approximately 250 more plants on the island, and also undertook some Madiera Vine and Dutchmen's Pipe control.

Dow AgroSciences Project – Final Report

Brad Wedlock

The Mary Catchment encompasses 9595 km² and incorporates 12 Shires and 10 Landcare groups from the headwaters of the Mary River at Maleny in the Sunshine Coast hinterland to River Heads where the river flows to the sea 305 km from its source. The Mary River has several major tributaries including Obi Obi, Yabba, Little Yabba, Six Mile, Amamoor, Kandanga, Tinana, Deep, Munna and Wide Bay Creeks.

MRCCC is a community-driven, non-profit organisation dedicated to achieving a sustainable and productive catchment. MRCCC was established in 1993 to facilitate a collaborative and co-operative approach to riparian land and water management and currently comprises representatives from the following interest sectors: Grazing/Beef, Landcare, Irrigation, Extractive Industries, General Community (Lower and Upper Catchment), Environment, Local Government (Lower, middle and upper catchment), Farm Forestry, Commercial Fishing, Education, Dairying, Horticulture, Sugar, Indigenous people and State Government representatives from Department of Natural Resources, Department of Primary Industries, State Development and the Environmental Protection Agency.

Background of the Project

The project aims to:

1. Highlight to landholders throughout the catchment the threat posed by viney environmental weeds in riparian zone of the Mary River Catchment;
2. Trial and demonstrate mechanisms of ecosystem rehabilitation targeting areas of local or regional conservation significance identified in the Mary River & tributaries Rehabilitation Plan threatened by invasions of Cat's Claw and Madeira vine infestations (i.e. adopt an ecosystem approach rather than a single weed species eradication approach)
3. To implement aspects of priority strategies and actions contained within the Mary River Catchment Strategy and the Endangered Mary River Cod Recovery Plan by focussing activities on areas of significance for habitat of a range of endangered or threatened species in the catchment including: Mary River Cod, Mary River Turtle, Giant Barred Frog and Brown Breasted Quail.
4. To deliver on-ground actions through providing incentives to landholders to involve themselves in the delivery of the project, and supplement weed management with stock management and revegetation initiatives where appropriate.

Project Success

The grant from Dow AgroSciences has allowed the MRCCC to rehabilitate the riparian ecosystems of five high priority sites of regional conservation significance. Four sites chosen are public reserves, and one private property. The public reserves consist of local government reserves, with intact remnant vegetation. In most cases the surrounding landholders have also been involved. These sites were chosen due to the presence of rare and threatened flora and fauna. Madiera Vine, Cats Claw Creeper and Privet have invaded all five sites (to varying degrees).

MRCCC has worked in conjunction with three Landcare Groups (Noosa, Gympie & Barung), Greening Australia and one local council (Maroochy Shire) to undertake a multiple of activities with this grant. With this grant from Dow AgroSciences, MRCCC could attract further funding, which allowed each project to expand. Other activities undertaken on these sites include:

- ❖ Resnagging waterways
- ❖ Streambank Fencing
- ❖ Revegetation
- ❖ Off-stream Watering

Our large woody debris project site has been the most successful to date. This site was infested with Madiera Vine - however the reach of the creek has been identified as the endangered Mary River Cod habitat. Therefore before we could undertake any rehabilitation works on the site we needed to control the Madiera Vine. The Dow AgroSciences grant enabled MRCCC to remove and control the Madiera Vine (using latest research findings from Alan Fletcher

Research Station); this then allowed the logs to be placed into the creek for Mary River Cod habitat. A grant from the Threatened Species Network and Maroochy Shire Council funded the large woody debris component of the project. The adjacent landholder was then keen to fence the cattle from the creek and install off-stream watering, funding for this aspect was sought through the WWF Mary River Cod Recovery Project. With the help of local school students and numerous volunteers the site has been revegetated.

The Gympie Landcare site involves Cats Claw Creeper control on the lower Six Mile Creek area, in a public rest-area. This site is frequented by travellers, and is a popular stop-over. An interpretative sign will be erected on this site with information detailing the problems with Cats Claw Creeper and methods for control. This area is high priority for rehabilitation due to the presence of Mary River Cod.

The Noosa Landcare site involves environmental weed control, mainly Camphor Laurel saplings. This site is located in the upper Six Mile Creek area, below Lake Macdonald. Noosa Landcare will revegetate some areas once the weed control is finished.

The Greening Australia project also involves QPWS and landholders, and is undertaking cats claw creeper control in a high priority conservation area, adjoining National Park.

Obi Obi Creek Large Woody Debris Habitat Restoration Project

Stephen Dudgeon- DNR Rivercare Officer

SUMMARY: The benefits of Large Woody Debris (LWD) are well documented and include bed and bank stability, hydraulic diversity, carbon and nutrient processing and aquatic habitat. Removal of LWD from stream channels was one of the dominant factors leading to extensive altered channels common throughout Australia today.

Obi Obi Creek in South East Queensland is an incised, over widened, regulated high-energy stream. The mid reaches of the creek contain a known population of the endangered Mary River Cod. The section of Obi Obi Creek from below a headwaters dam to the Mary River is classified as a fish link where there is anecdotal evidence suggesting Mary River Cod were fished. Restocking of Mary River Cod in Obi Obi Creek has taken place over the last 3 years.

A reach within Obi Obi Creek was chosen to trial the installation of LWD. The reach chosen had reasonable riparian vegetation, instream habitat and a small amount of LWD ($0.0044\text{m}^3/\text{m}^2$). The site was a 4 metre high and 15 metres long sheer eroding bank. The method chosen was a bank revetment, which consisted of 6 large lateral logs with rootballs and two large parallel logs. The logs were secured with a combination of ballast rocks and anchors. There was also two large hollowed logs installed instream, which were deemed suitable for cod spawning. LWD loading was increased to $0.01\text{m}^3/\text{m}^2$.

In conjunction with the LWD addition project there was an intensive weed removal (mainly Madeira vine) and revegetation project. The reach was surveyed and monitored to assess the pre and post treatment environmental conditions.

This is a relatively low cost and labour saving method that other agencies and the community can adopt to create aquatic habitat and stream stability.

THE MAIN POINTS OF THIS PAPER

- Replacing LWD in high-energy streams is possible and an effective method for stabilising an eroding bank and increasing habitat diversity.
- The work was stable in a minor event (1:3 year flood event).
- This technique can be a relatively low cost option that could be adopted by community groups.
- Always attempt to use 'natural' material for instream restoration.

1. INTRODUCTION

The physical and ecological importance of large woody debris (LWD) in stream, is described in Land & Water Resources Research & Development Corporations (LWRRDC) Riparian Land Management Technical Guidelines (1999), these values include the following. Large woody debris is an essential part of a natural healthy stream system in Queensland. Snags are important for creating a variety of flow conditions that are an essential aspect of the habitat requirements of fish and other river animals and also provide instream shelter. Snags also act as sites for carbon and nutrient processing.

Snags are important for maintaining bed and bank stability. They settle in the bed of streams to form 'hard' or control points that are important for reducing the potential of bed scour or erosion. They also help to store sediment and hold pools in the stream system. They are particularly important in sand or loose material beds. Stable beds are important foundations for stable banks.

Gippel (1999) found that there is little direct evidence to support the argument that desnagging reduces flood frequency or that it significantly improves the capacity of the river to carry floods. LWRRDC, along with many other researchers, is now recommending the retention and reintroduction of LWD as a part of overall river rehabilitation

and management practices. This report describes one such project in South East Queensland, which aims to trial methodologies in this area in order to develop best management practices.

The Mary River Catchment Coordinating Committee (MRCCC) received funding to undertake a Demonstration Project for habitat restoration for the Mary River Cod at Kenilworth, through the Threatened Species Network and Maroochy Shire Council. In conjunction with the Mary Cod World Wildlife Fund Extension Project and Scott Babakaiff, a visiting Canadian Fluvial Geomorphologist, a site on the Obi Obi Creek (Crossing No 2) was selected for the project.

The planning for the project was protracted, as these type of works have not been undertaken in Queensland before. The project included:

1. Initial training workshop and site selection (conducted by Scott Babakaiff)
2. Habitat restoration and physical stabilisation using Large Woody Debris (Threatened Species Network and Maroochy Shire Council Funding)
3. Riparian fencing and revegetation in adjacent park and with interested adjoining landholders (Using NHT Voluntary Riverbank Grant Scheme Funding, Olympic Landcare and Maroochy Council contributions to that scheme);
4. Environmental weed control (MRCCC) – funded by Dow Agro Science Grant.
5. Gully stabilisation
6. Interpretive Signage
7. Monitoring and assessment of pre and post treatment environmental condition (DNRM and Griffith University)

The Department of Natural Resources & Mines, North Coast Regions Rivercare Officer (partly funded by NHT's Rivercare program) developed the design, undertook reach assessment, prepared budgets and provided project management with respect to the in-stream works. Officers from the Department also undertook the physical labour of installing the LWD.

Staff from the Mary River Catchment Coordinating Committee and the World for Wildlife Threatened Species Network undertook the revegetation rehabilitation of the site and also assisted with the physical labor of installing the LWD. They were also responsible for liaising with adjacent landholders and the community regarding their involvement.

2. SITE LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

The site is located on the Obi Obi Creek at crossing number 2. The Obi Obi flows into the Mary River at Kenilworth, SE Queensland.

From calculations (Parfait 2000) the creek has over widened at the site by over 50%. The site has an eroding bank approximately 4 metres high and 15 metres long. The site is located on an outside bend with a riffle above and pool below. The site also has some LWD instream and a point bar on the opposite bank.

3.0 OBJECTIVES

For this project the placement of Large Woody Debris (LWD) has the following objectives:

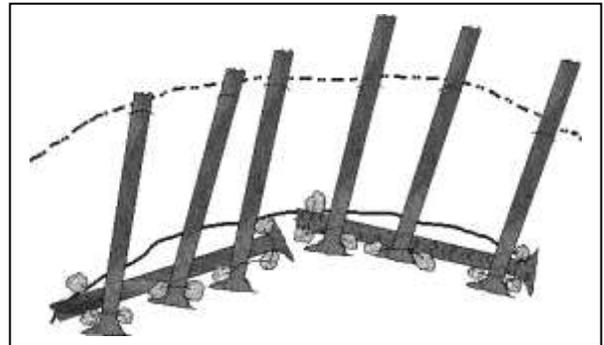
1. To provide habitat (hydraulic diversity) for instream aquatic fauna (e.g. Mary River Cod)
2. To improve geomorphic diversity

3. To slow the rate of bank erosion at the site
4. To trial techniques for the placement and construction of LWD
5. To locate and formulate methods of transport (to site) of LWD for future works.

4.0 DESIGN

The designs have been derived from British Columbia’s Ministry of the Environment Lands and Parks Watershed Restoration Program. These designs have been adapted to Australian conditions by the following modifications. Consideration had to be given for the higher density of our wood, higher banks, lower stream power, lower sediment loads and a greater variability in flow and lesser frequency of channel-forming events.

Figure 1: Schematic plan view diagram (flow from right to left).



5.0 METHODS

5.1 Site Survey

LWD was measured throughout the study reach (Gippel 1999) within the active channel (over 75m stream length). There was found to be a $0.0044\text{m}^3/\text{m}^2$ loading. The proposed amount of LWD that had been added increases the loading to $0.01\text{m}^3/\text{m}^2$. Most reasonably intact Australian streams should have a loading between $0.01\text{m}^3/\text{m}^2 - 0.1\text{m}^3/\text{m}^2$ (Rutherford *et al.* 2000).

Initially the site longitudinal bed slope and a cross section were surveyed through the reach. The purpose of this survey was to assess the creeks geomorphic variables for the purpose of calculating appropriate rehabilitation methods.

After considering various options we decided to construct a multiple LWD structure. This involved large logs, ballasted by rock and joined together with steel cable, placed in log revetment design. In order to design this structure we had to make the following investigation.

5.2 Calculating Rock Ballast Size (guide only)

5.2.1 Single and multiple-LWD structures – Log Revetment

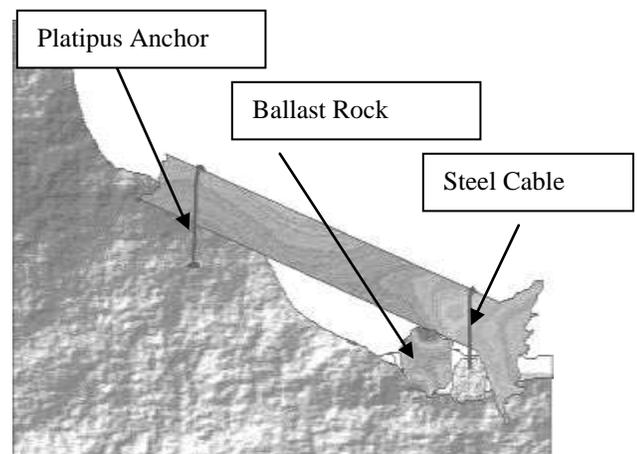
The single LWD are to be anchored in-stream with the use of boulders. It is intended to use Platipus (earth load locking) anchors in the upper stream bank. Steel round strand cable was wrapped around the LWD and tied back on to itself with split bolts (used on overhead electricity lines).

The ballast required to withstand an average design velocity of 2.5m/s while providing a design safety factor of 2.0 was calculated using the design charts of D’Aoust *et al.* (1999) The LWD characteristics are D_L (log diameter) = 0.6m and L (length) = 7.5m

Figure 2: Schematic cross-section design.

From the design charts in D’Aoust *et al.* (1999):

1. The ballast required per metre of LWD is about 300kg



2. Therefore the total ballast requirements = 7.5m (log length) x 300kg = 2250kg
3. This will require 2 boulders of 0.95m diameters.

5.2.2 Single-LWD structures with intact rootwads – Single Log in stream

Using the design charts the ballast we require needs to withstand an average stream flow velocity of 2.5m/sec while providing a factor of safety against sliding of 2.0

Available LWD characteristics: Hardwood, $D_L = 0.6\text{m}$, $L = 7.5\text{m}$, D_{RW} (average rootwad diameter = 2.0m)

- a. Ballast mass required to counter the root wad drag (M_{DRW}) = 5500kg
- b. Ballast required to counter the LWD buoyancy (although it is doubtful that Australian Hardwoods would need this as they are not buoyant) =

$M_{BL} = 1750$ (using high density for Australian Hardwood e.g. double the density of Cedars)

- c. Ballast required to counter drag and lift forces acting on the anchor boulders

$$M_{DRW} + M_{BL} = 7,250\text{kg}$$

$$M_{DB+LB} \text{ (ballast required to counter boulder drag and lift forces)} = 1,400\text{kg}$$

Therefore, the total mass required to anchor the LWD parallel to the flow is:

$$M_S = M_{DRW} + M_{BL} + M_{DB+LB} = 8,650\text{kg}$$

70% of M_S must be provided at the upstream end of the LWD (6,000kg) and 30% at the downstream end (2,650kg).

This equates to 2 boulders of 1.3m diameter at the upstream end and 2 boulders of 1.0 metres diameter at the downstream end.

In the field the lower part of the LWD was ballasted with boulders of 1.3m diameter. The upper part of the LWD was secured using Platipus anchors.

5.3 LWD Installation Methods

The site was initially slashed and cleared of weeds and Maderia Vine. The logs were sourced through a local tree lopper (from a building block) and the Department of Main Roads (new road construction). The wood was contributed for free on the condition that we removed it. The logs were transported using a truck with a hydraulic tray and winch and stored in a hollow on the floodplain. The bank was battered back using an excavator, creating a bench approximately 1.5m above the bed of the stream. Key LWD was placed along the toe of the bank. The ballast rocks were placed either side of the lower end of the LWD. (The rocks were secured to the logs by steel round strand cable of 8mm diameter. The cables were attached to the rock using Epoxy glue. Holes were drilled into the rock with a 10 mm diamond drill bit to approximately 20cm, ensuring that the hole was properly cleaned out by rinsing. Eight mm steel cable was wrapped around the log and the ends placed in the hole. The cable was then tensioned and tied off). LWD laterals were placed down the bank with the rootball in the creek, ensuring adequate ballast rock between logs.

Steel cable was wrapped around the top of the logs and secured with Platipus anchors. The LWD was backfilled to create a reasonable batter for planting (approximately 1:3). Jutemaster (environmental matting) was initially installed and direct seeded with annual grass. Native vegetation was densely planted (one tree per 2m²) on the slope using good toe species such as *lomandra*.

6.0 COSTS

The total cost of the entire project was approximately \$10,000 dollars, this included all weed control and a revegetation program for the reach.

Table 1: Approximate costs of individual items

ITEM	COST
Transport of LWD (approximately 2 logs /load)	\$90/hr
Excavator	\$80 – 120/hr
Platipus anchors	\$50each
Drive Rod (for anchors)	\$200
Steel cable (8mm)	\$5/metre
Steel cable cutter	\$350
Ramset Battery Drill (plus bits)	\$2000
Inverter (to run drill recharger in field)	\$300
Epoxy Glue	\$60/tube, \$70/gun
Jutemaster	\$1.80/m ²
Cable split bolts	\$2.50 each
Ballast Rock (delivered)	\$20/tonne
Monitoring (fish and macrophyte assessment)	\$600/assessment
Survey	\$500/assessment

7.0 MONITORING

The creeks bed and bank at the restoration site was surveyed to assess changes. Griffith University assessed fish and macrophyte assembly within the vicinity of the LWD. Basic water quality and macroinvertebrate samples have been collected from the area for the Mary River Rehabilitation Plan, however, the objectives of collecting these parameters is to assess river health on a large scale and there would be no perceived change as a result of the restoration project. Photo points will be set up to visually assess changes in vegetation.

8.0 CONCLUSIONS

The LWD was installed over two days, by 4 people, in a cost effective manner that would allow other organisations and community groups to undertake this type of work. Methods for construction and transport of LWD were refined during works and are at a stage where they can be produced in a technical fact sheet.

LWD loading in the reach is now comparable to other intact Australian streams. Although the effectiveness of the works has not been rigorously evaluated, we are confident that geomorphic diversity and fish habitat has been improved and erosion protection for the unstable bank has been provided.

The revegetation, weeds maintenance and monitoring will continue over the next two years and after major flood events.

Future LWD restoration projects are planned and wood for these projects has already been sourced.

Mary River Waterwatch Program – 00/01

Co-ordinator: Phillip Trendell

INTRODUCTION

Over the last year, the MRCCC Waterwatch program has continued on collecting water quality data, raising community awareness and education and involvement in a range of activities to increase participation by the catchment community. From August 2000 to February 2001, the Waterwatch coordinator position was for one day/week. This ended one stage of NHT funding and in May 2001, a new NHT funded project was started with the position now 2 days/week. This report is aimed to highlight the year's activities and to expand on some of the more important events.

COMMUNITY AWARENESS

One of the key components of the Waterwatch program is raising the awareness of the whole catchment community. With this increased knowledge about waterways and good water quality, the community can help participate in the collection of data and also in the education of others.

Displays:

Many different people from all over the catchment have visited a Mary River Waterwatch display over the last year. The main aim of these displays is to not only educate but to encourage participation.

- Maroochydoore Landcare Conference 2000 with waterbugs and waterweeds on display for children and parents.
- Farmex - 4,5/10/00 – Static display but plenty of questions.
- Maleny Show – 1/6/2001. The Waterwatch equipment was on display and people were showed how to use it (over 40 people)
- Cooloolo Environmental Expo – 15/6/2001 Waterwatch had a combined display for wetlands and waterways with the WWF Mary River Cod Project. (Over 700 kids and 20 teachers).
- Mary River and Tributaries Rehabilitation Project Launch at Rivers Head – Yarralee School helped participate in some fish and bug ID.

Presentations:

A presentation was given to the Mary River Catchment Landcare conference on the 6/8/2001 outlining the new partnership between the MRCCC Waterwatch project and the EPA and the goals we are trying to achieve throughout the catchment. The aim of this was to spark interest amongst the group and to get them thinking about how they can participate.

Field Days:

- **TAFE** – A visit to the Amamoor Creek sites previously visited last year near the Muster Site. Riparian Assessment and water quality tests completed with TAFE class (6 students) and also at the Cedar Grove camping site. The same lecturer brought her class out last year with Phil Berrill and went to Cedar Grove.
- **Hervey Bay** – Scrub Hill Farm - Two days were spent up near Hervey Bay working with 2 different Aboriginal Work for the Dole groups at their Scrub Hill farm. The idea for the day was to talk about how monitoring water quality can be of benefit to the farm and to train them in collecting data – combined group numbers: 29 plus 3 staff.
- **Splash** – Maroochydoore River 15/10/00 - A meeting of the waters and a variety of performances and activities for the community from groups from all over the catchment.

Rivers of the Range Congress

Maleny Showgrounds 21/10/2000. This was a great day and involved not only a variety of different activities, but excellent performances from many of the schools. There were plenty of static displays on Waterwatch and catchments, plus a range of activities like fish ID and smoking acid sulfate soils. The James Nash Year 9 class had a display of the assignments they did from their trip to Gympie Weir through the MRCCC Waterwatch program. Well over 120 school kids participated plus teachers and parents. At the Coordinators Meeting during the year, an evaluation on the congress was discussed, with plenty of encouragement to have this event continue.

- Good Points – student's efforts and materials, workshops, politicians present.
- Bad Points – having it on a Saturday, parents leaving after the kids had finished.

SCHOOLS

Group/School and Site	Number	Activity
Imbil Primary School Gr6/7 – Yabba Creek Anabranh	2 groups (25 + 27)	Riparian Assessment of Yabba Creek Anabranh (4 days)
James Nash Gr9 – Mary River – Gympie Weir	48	Riparian Assessment at Gympie Weir, Albert Park. (2 Days)
Chatsworth Gr4/5/6/7 Science Group – Bells Bridge Mary River	12	Water Bug Survey on Mary River, Bells Bridge. (3 Days)
Kandanga Gr4/5 – Creek near School (Tributary of Kandanga Ck.)	23	Water Quality testing and Water Bug Survey on Kandanga Creek. (2 Days)
Cooran State School - Six-Mile Creek at the Yellowbelly Hole	27	Water Bug Survey and testing (2 days)
Yarralee State School – Hervey Bay		Information and Sheets River Rehab Launch – Bug ID
Jones Hill State School – Gympie		Information and Sheets
Kenilworth State School		Information and Sheets
Gympie South State School. Gympie Weir – Mary River	23 + 25 students.	2 days were spent doing tests near the weir
Wolvi State School about Waterwatch Grades 4/5/6/7.		Water samples were brought in by students from home (tanks and dams).
Two-Mile State School – 3 sites along the Mary River	27	Testing done at various sites and also a riparian assessment - Travestons Crossing, Gympie Weir and Widgee Crossing
Brisbane Girls Grammar School Gr 11 Geography Class	23	Water Tests done around Yabba Creek above the township of Imbil (2 days)
Brisbane Girls Grammar School Gr 11 Multistrand Class	21	Water Tests done around Yabba Creek above the township of Imbil (2 days)
Conondale Grade 7	23	Tests done on the Mary River near Conondale (1 day)
Gympie Central Grade 5/6	52 2teachers	Testing done near Little Yabba Creek and Travestons crossing – Mary River (2 days)
One- Mile State School Grade 5/6/7	126 kids 5teachers	Water Quality testing and Bug ID on Deep Creek near the school (2 days)

REPORTS

In February 2001, the NHT final report for the first stage of the Waterwatch program was completed. This highlighted many great events and activities over the last few years. This also helped to have old NHT reports sent to the office so that the Waterwatch NHT file is complete and up-to-date. With this stage finished, funding for a second stage was successfully applied for in 2001 and the second stage of the Waterwatch program could be initiated. As this funding is received in early 2001, an NHT continuing application form needed to be completed and this was done through the help of Bob Watson and myself. This had some changes from the original application and also now includes the funding from the EPA.

EPA PARTNERSHIP

In 2001, a new partnership between the MRCCC Waterwatch Program and the EPA was started to help in the collection of baseline water quality data from all over the Mary River Catchment. The EPA have provided funding for the Waterwatch program to help have volunteers and other project staff (Landcare Groups) collect water quality

data from various sites, but on regular occasions. The EPA sites are spread out over the catchment and include many of the tributaries, so it is important to involve riparian landholders.

To help work out more details and some of the issues, a meeting was held at Nambour on the 18/7/2001 between Andrew Moss and Melanie Cox from the EPA, Christina Dwyer, the Regional Waterwatch Coordinator and myself. Many points were discussed about the new partnership between the MRCCC and the EPA and some of the most important ones were:

Equipment and Data Collection – One of the main points of discussion was the availability of equipment throughout the catchment and the willingness of volunteers to collect this data. At the present I have given a rough outline of the availability of equipment and how this is fairly limited. After discussions on this topic, the EPA is currently looking into the purchase of some materials such as Turbidity Tubes, Sample Containers and other Equipment. I will also be providing all of these groups with training and data sheets so that they are all doing identical testing from one end of the catchment to the other.

Quality Assurance – The equipment needs to be used by a trained person and must be accurate and regularly calibrated. This is all about having quality assurance on the data collected. One possible way of doing this is to have specific equipment such as the MRCCC Horiba calibrated and maintained to have quality assurance over its results. This would be checked on EPA equipment regularly. Once we have QA equipment, this can then be used to test the accuracy of various equipment being used around the catchment.

Flood Events and others – One other point that came up was the importance of collecting information during flood events. Of particular importance is the collection of turbidity data during these events and if possible it may require testing every one or two hours during a flood.

TRAINING

Co-ordinator

During the year, the SouthEast Queensland Waterwatch Coordinators Meeting was held at the Nambour DNR&M office on the 26/3/2001. This helps provide a great forum to meet other coordinators and to learn helpful ideas in many different areas of the Waterwatch program. I will list some of the relevant points to come out of the meeting:

- Development of new marketing material. This is to involve all Waterwatch groups in the area and is aimed at securing sponsorships, partnerships and volunteers. The plan is to produce an A3 poster that list all the different work being done. This required some photos and written material to be sent to Christina Dwyer.
- The need to network between all the groups so that there is no duplication of work. This means that there should be regular contact by e-mail and phone. This will also help cut down on travel costs.
- The issue of having regional coordinators was discussed. At the present there is a state coordinator and then catchment/subcatchment coordinators. The group came to a decision **that it would** probably be better to stay in the current position and to integrate more between the catchment/subcatchment coordinators, taking some pressure off of the state coordinator.

Volunteer Training

The first training day to be held with the new EPA work in mind was in Maleny on the 17/8/2001 with the Lake Baroon Catchment Care Group in Maleny. Mandy Botterell organised everyone that she will be working with in collecting water quality data (Barung Landcare, Landholders etc.) to have a lunch and training session in the afternoon. The day involved briefly talking about what we are trying to set up (monitoring flood events, quality assurance on data) and then training in the correct use of equipment was conducted on Obi Obi Creek. This also included how to collect and identify macro-invertebrates.

Mandy can now also train any other new volunteers in the same procedures so that all data collected follows the correct method and can be stored at the MRCCC office in the Waterwatch Database. I was also part of a Lake Baroon catchment tour on the 22/6/2001 with a busload of 16 community members. I helped talk about the VRRGS evolving into the River Rehab. Plan and also about many different Waterwatch issues plus some training with the Horiba.

The are plans for more training days in October (Tiaro, Noosa and Gympie) as many of the groups were not prepared for days in August and September due to commitments and limited equipment. This will allow a meeting between the EPA and myself to calibrate and test the accuracy of the MRCCC Waterwatch equipment and to confirm the correct procedures for collecting samples and using equipment.

SALTWATCH

Early in 2001, with the raise in concerns over salinity in the catchment, many water samples have been brought in frequently by people, particularly in the Widgee/Wonga Creek area (creek/bore/dam). The main concern is the electro-conductivity or salinity of the water. Nearly all the bore samples show EC values above 3000 (eg. 3400 and 3875 uS/cm). Creek samples are now also coming in above the recommended level for freshwater ecosystems of 1500 uS/cm, especially from Wonga Creek. Gillian Crossley (VRRGS) has one site that has been monitored over time (1980 – 1100, 1998 – 1230, 2000 – 1340) and if the trend continues, salinity levels will increase above the maximum standard level. To do these test we ask for a gold coin donation and this has helped purchase equipment for macro-invertebrate testing such as tweezers and brushes.

SITES

Some of the regular areas that are visited over the last year have been – please note that there are many sites in these areas such as above and below the Gympie Weir:

Mary River – Gympie Weir, Travestons Crossing, Junction with Yabba Creek, Bells Bridge.
Yabba Creek Anabranch
Yabba Creek – between Borumba Dam and Imbil.
Deep Creek – near One- Mile School
Six-Mile Creek – Yellowbelly Hole

FISH KILLS and other ISSUES

During the last year, there were two unfortunate fish kills on Pie Creek near Mooloo. In the first case, the affected landholder, Renata Miller invited me onto her property to test the pool where the fish were found. The EPA then asked if I would go out and visit the site with them to compare results and work out what happened. The main cause was seen to be a major input of dairy effluent at a time of very low flows and no rain. The second fish kill occurred about 2 months later and this time it was during good rain and there was a nice flow in the creek. A visit to the site two days later showed very murky water with the smell of manure strong in the air. The conclusion was that the cause was similar to the first case and the EPA was forced to talk to landholders upstream. There haven't been any reports over the last 6 months of any more kills.

One issue that did raise concerns during the year was the impact on Amamoor Creek from the yearly event, the Country Music Muster. In 2000, the Landholder downstream from site had toilet paper, rubbish, sanitary napkins and other nasties wash up on their banks. Tests done around the site show that there is a large increase in phosphorous and nitrogen right in the middle of the camping site and low dissolved oxygen. An alga is also present in this reach but is not seen above the site. These concerns and results were passed on to the Forestry Ranger in charge of the site and there have been no similar impacts from the 2001 event, except from the minefield of toilet paper along the creek.

World Wide Fund for nature – Mary River Cod Recovery Project

Project Officer – Phil Trendell

Over the last year, the WWF cod recovery project has been based in the MRCCC office and this is one of the main reasons why I feel that it has been so successful. This is not only from the support of the MRCCC and staff, but also of the resources available and the ability to be part of a catchment wide network. The cod recovery project has focused on two major areas over the year:

Community Awareness – this has included a variety of activities from displays, presentations and articles in local newsletters and media releases. Whenever I am doing these, it is impossible to not talk about Waterwatch issues as well and I use the Mary River Cod as an example of how freshwater animals are affected by poor water quality and why it is important to have a healthy waterway. There is also education on rehabilitation and protection techniques from fencing off to revegetation of riparian species. At displays I had a weed ID challenge so that people could start to easily recognise what are weeds and how they can control them. These are providing simple ways for people to start to become involved in helping protect and rehabilitate cod habitat. Once again I would like to thank the MRCCC for providing display boards and tables when necessary and the use of MRCCC posters in making the display have more variety.

On-Ground Works – This has seen various project sites around the catchment with activities including removal of weeds, revegetation, fencing off and off-stream watering. Some of these sites have also now been included in the DPI re-stocking program including new sites on Scrubby Creek, Diamondfield Creek and North Deep Creek where habitat is very suitable but no records of cod have been taken in recent times. Priority Sites include Upper Tinana Creek, expansion of work around Yellowbelly hole on Six-Mile Creek and a couple of secret spots along the Mary River where known cod holes are located. WWF also helped participate in the LWD project on Obi Obi Creek and has involved the landholder upstream to fence off and revegetate the banks. WWF cod project also contacted John Pryor from further up-stream about some on-ground works and this is one of the new sites for a second LWD project and some fencing off and revegetation. The project is currently finishing up its first stage of NHT funding and has been successful in receiving funding into 2002, with a focus on in-stream works and some priority areas.