



kuranda.
envirocare inc.



Seasons Greetings – may your gifts be great and your
problem' small

NEWSLETTER – Dec 2015

PO Box 494 Kuranda 4881

Phone: 0409647714 or 4093 8989

Email: info@envirocare.org.au

Web Site: www.envirocare.org.au

COORDINATORS BIODIVERSITY FUND UPDATE

The Biodiversity project is into its 3rd year now with 2 years til completion. In the past 12 months we have had many more new volunteers coming to help with tree planting and nursery activities and a continued stream of groups from schools, international students, TAFE groups, JCU students and the local community on board helping us to revegetate the banks of the Barron River from Fairyland to Mantaka, 10 ha in total. We are continuing to connect wildlife corridors, minimize erosion, filter sediments, creating a more resilient environment and building a stronger community.

From July 2014-June 2015 we have planted 6525 trees. Again exceeding what the funding application asked for. Not surprising really with such dedicated, hard working volunteers! This year we have planted trees with Small World Journeys students from Tasmania & Canberra, Cairns TAFE students, given KEC presentation and info session at the JCU Sustainability Club, Eco Week celebrations and info stalls for Eco Fiesta, World Cassowary Day, Kuranda Day & the Kuranda Easter festival.



Volunteers from Tasmania after planting 140 trees at Wha Hae as part of the Biodiversity Project.

FROG PROJECT UPDATE

The Frog Friendly Face of Jum Rum Creek project aimed to increase community awareness of stream health and water quality, especially for the survival of the *Litoria myola* (Kuranda Tree Frog). The project increased community involvement in the restoration of habitat for the frogs by planting 1000 native plants along Jum Rum Creek and 40 property owners were assessed for having clean flowing streams, healthy & mature vegetation and then given a Frog Friendly property sign to raise awareness. This project is now complete however there are still signs available if you are interested in becoming a frog friendly property. We also continue with the current frog monitoring program which you can join us at one or more of our 8 sites with a site coordinator on the 3rd week of the month. We listen for the frog calls and record what we see and hear. Over time this gives us an idea of increases or declines in local frog populations.

Threatened species commissioner Gregory Andrews met with us last month for a night walk and talk and to listen out for our unique endangered local, the *Litoria myola*, Kuranda tree frog, recently listed by QLD as endangered. Gregory sat silently for a 10 minute monitoring session, with about 14 Kuranda locals and monitoring crew, and was rewarded with two Kuranda tree frogs and several Common green eyed tree frogs. Gregory has been appointed by Federal Minister for Environment, Greg Hunt. Gregory spoke passionately about the Federal Govt.'s Threatened Species Strategy, the need for recovery plans to be in place and his support to ensure these were being actioned. He also outlined the high priority feral cat eradication program to be put in place. Feral cats are

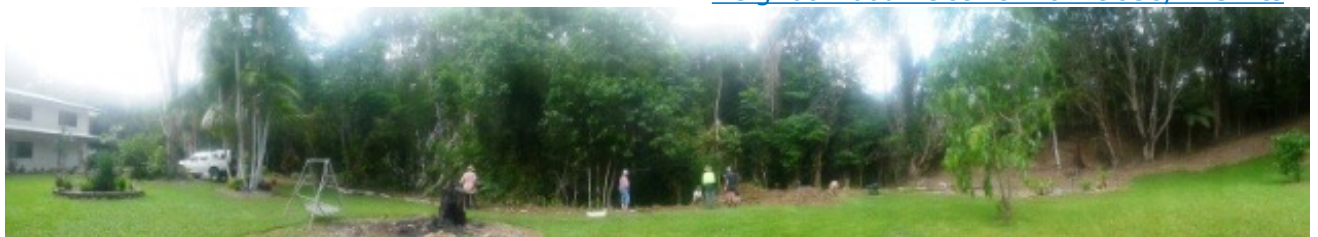
slightly less of a problem for us in the Wet Tropics than in drier areas but the massive 20 million feral cats population of Australia is estimated to kill around 4-5 animals per night each. Now that's a lot of Australian wildlife. The program will see a reduction in the feral cat population and an increase in species threatened by cat predation.

If you would like more information on Rainforest frogs we have a beautiful little book, 'Rainforest Frogs of the Wet Tropics' by Conrad Hoskins & Jean-Marc Hero for \$15 each.

We also have Wet Tropics book for \$50. Entitled 'Endemic vertebrates of the Wet Tropics' the book captures the extraordinary beauty and diversity of our Wet Tropics wildlife through high quality photographs. The Wet Tropics Management Authority's executive director had the opportunity to provide the foreword to the publication, endorsing the book as a 'useful and important resource for amateur naturalists, tour guides, the Wet Tropic community and all who share a passion for the splendour of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area.'



You can like our FB page to keep up to date with Frog Monitoring Week events and other fun frog information. <https://www.facebook.com/Kurandas-Frog-Friendly-Neighborhood-298928120249038/?fref=ts>



Frog friendly planting along Jum Rum Creek at Mike & Carolines property



The Sutherland boys at their frog friendly property on Jum Rum Creek



Redlynch College students enjoy a frog presentation

CATTANA WETLANDS

Our nursery volunteers hung up their aprons and gloves for a day out seed collecting and a BBQ lunch at Cattana Wetlands.

Cattana Wetlands started out as a sugar cane farm and sand mining quarry and has since been rehabilitated to form an enjoyable 80ha nature conservation park with a 420m boardwalk through feather palm forest, freshwater and salt water lakes and abundant plant and birdlife.

The land was purchased by the then Mulgrave Shire Council in 1993, primarily to protect the 30 hectares of lowland rainforest on the western end of the site. This forest, described as the Feather Palm Forest, is a remnant of a once extensive forest type that is now

confined to only a few remnant patches in the Cairns region.

Council has planted over 70,000 native plants and undertaken extensive weed removal enabling existing water bird populations to flourish.

Council and the Queensland State Government each committed \$1.5 million to the rehabilitation of the site. The works program included the construction of boardwalks, walking tracks, bird hides and viewing platforms, picnic areas, interpretative signs, car park, access road and toilet facilities. If you haven't been to this hidden gem its definitely worth a visit.



Terrys Lagoon



KEC nursery volunteers enjoy the Feather Palm Boardwalk

RAINFOREST BIRD MONITORING PROGRAM UPDATE

We have continued to undertake bird counts monthly in the three youngest planted stands (Mantaka, Wha Hae and Myola 4) and have compared these results with monthly counts in 2 reference areas and a control.

Although some species of rainforest birds respond almost immediately to restoration planting (particularly generalist insectivorous species like Spectacled Monarchs and Fairy Gerygones, others are slower. The older stands are attracting more species of rainforest specialist birds and for longer. In some cases this is clearly caused by the availability of key food species, e.g. fruiting Quandong are a drawcard for Wompooos. Other species are benefiting from more complete habitat linkages and a more complex understorey, e.g. Wha Hae's remnants and the odd fallen tree has become a focal area for Eastern Whipbirds.

Results to date have been graphed and some of these are included on the KEC website along with information on the various rainforest specialist birds. A full analysis and review of findings will be undertaken after the end of 2015 and a plan for future monitoring

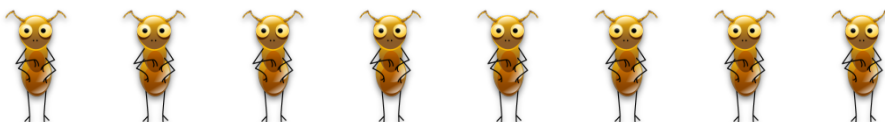
will be prepared at that time



Wompoo pigeon



Lewins Honey-eater



Yellow Crazy Ant Community Taskforce Kuranda

Checking the limits of ant infestation & ant abundance monitoring activities have been undertaken by Russet Park residents and members of the wider community in June.

This cutting edge model presents a new approach to tramp ant eradication that is the first we have heard of it's kind in the world.

There were 20 volunteers who turned up for the annual delimitation activities. They set out with cat food and jam ant lures and walked in pairs about 50 meters out from what was originally determined as the YCA infestation boundary and placed the lure concoction every 5 meters. After repeating this process along the boundary for 40 minutes they returned to where we started and collected the data.

Positives and negatives were recorded on the GPS units and could later be uploaded to maps showing a distinct line across the landscape identifying the boundary of the YCA infestation. The areas that we did not get to we're followed up and completed by WTMA and their Green Army field team.

The monitoring activity involved setting up pitfall traps to determine YCA density along a 50m transect. The cups are then collected a week later and a count of YCA in each pitfall trap is conducted which overtime can determine the effectiveness of treatments. This monitoring activity will be repeated after the June baiting treatment.

Results from the weekend determined that the YCA infestation has not blown out much further than the original area, which means that the work that WTMA has been doing over the last year and a half has been successful in containing the YCA infestation at Russet Park. However the YCA are still extremely prevalent and prolific within the 27 hectare infestation area, especially along the banks of the Barron River. This is a very scary thing as YCA have the potential to raft downstream during the next wet season and if a queen is amongst them, then YCA will start new colonies downstream. There are areas within Russet Park with no other native ants, lizards, frogs or invertebrates left at all. WTMA Eradication Program will fund baiting treatments until late 2016 but is unlikely to achieve eradication. The Eradication Program has a limited number of operations staff. This makes residential area baiting treatments a time consuming task and it takes up to three or four weeks to treat the Russet Park infestation. For effective eradication it is essential to conduct the baiting treatments in a shorter space of time. This is precisely why a community taskforce is needed in Kuranda to assist with treatments

and other activities like delimitation and monitoring. More people are needed on the ground to get the job done quicker, resulting in a much more effective impact to the YCA life cycles and therefore populations in Russet Park; especially along the banks of the Barron and creek-line. With the help of 10 volunteers, the last baiting treatment took just 4 days instead of 2 weeks.

You can help too! Please self-register to the Yellow Crazy Ant Community Taskforce of Kuranda at: kuranda.envirocare.org.au



Russett Park Community Task Force ready for action

Reminder - Annual Subscriptions due - Individuals \$5 p.a., Family \$10 p.a.

Pay by direct bank deposit via your internet banking

Our account Name Kuranda Envirocare Inc. BSB 633000 Account # 125749366 . Don't forget to add your name into the reference field so we can identify your membership payment

GENERAL MEETING DATES - 2016 - Check out our website and facebook events

Monthly general meetings on the first Thurs night of each month at Kuranda Recreation Centre, Fallon Road at 7:00 pm. Love to see you there.

Executive meetings dates - 2016 - 3rd Thursday of the month. All welcome. Contact Cathy 0419624940

Nursery hours are Mondays and Thursdays 9am - 1pm and Saturdays 10am - 12noon

All trees in our nursery are a \$2 donation. If you would like to help out in the nursery you are welcome to show up on those days or come along on a regular Saturday morning 7:30am till 9am to plant some trees.

For more information contact Sylvia, Biodiversity Co-ordinator at Kuranda Envirocare

➤ **Mob: 0409647714 Nursery: 40938989** or info@envirocare.org.au

➤ **Web:** www.envirocare.org.au or www.facebook.com/KurandaEnvirocare