

**Diary
for
Fraser Island
Bush Regeneration Week
Fraser Island Defenders Organisation
Eurong and Happy Valley
23rd February to 1st March 2014**

**Sunday 23rd February
Arriving Talinga and sorting Out**

It was a timely early start from Camp Hill. Mars and Mike arrived early we all set off on time, John and Supe collected Harold before collecting the Noosa Quartet at Doonan and moving on to Lake McDonald for Smoko. In the meantime Su and the Orams had made it through to Gympie where they met up with Yoko for Morning tea,

The morning clouds kept looking as though they could drench the thirsty, drought-stricken countryside but alas there were only light sprinkles. There was a lot of wishing for more not only to benefit farmers but to help harden the soft loose sand tracks of Kgari. We thought that our wishes may be answered as we left Lake McDonald but alas it didn't last long.

As we pulled into the first service Station in Maryborough Greg turned up at that same moment. We left his car in the backyard of a nearby mate, CJR's and then headed for Queens Park. Su rang us before we arrive to alert us to the fact that there was the monthly small fair based around the display of live steam model trains and other replicas by the local society.



After lunch the group inspected some of Maryborough's wonderful assemblage of old

Queenslanders ad awed at the fascinating variations that could be accomplished using only a various used of timber and tin. The timber was turned to produce dowels and other ornamentations or used as mouldings to enhance some features such as verandah posts or shaped by fretwork saws into sculptures. Some was used in lattice and it was interesting to see the amazing variety of imaginative use of wood that evolved in Queensland colonial times that continues to persist in Maryborough which justly lives up to its title of the Timber Town.



A passing squall brought the inspection to an abrupt end just as a shower had interrupted our lunch and sent us on our way to Mary River Heads where we arrived at about 32.30pm and indulged in ice creams and another cup of tea before heading to the ferry and meeting up with passenger number 11, BMRG'S Kath Nash who was to spend two days on the island with us.

The scuds that had fallen during the day were enough to firm up the track to give us an easy crossing and we arrived at Eurong with plenty of light and good humour left.

Hours Worked:

Bush Regeneration:	0
Monitoring:	0

Monday 24th February Arriving Talinga and sorting Out

After a 6.30 am breakfast everyone was rearing to go at 7.30. However Harold and Greg couldn't wait and went to work to fix the dodgy gate to the tool shed early and were still at it when we began the assessment of the state of the village and the state of the weeds

Our assessment showed a lot of regeneration of the coral creeper on the southern side of the resort. It was resolved to return there later and work on this pernicious weed and any others in the process. We were concerned about the Pellagonium on the corner of the Surfside units. Fearless Leader took up the matter of a mechanical clean up of the area with the Resort (again) and the QPWS. It appears that the area of concern is USL just outside the resort's boundary. FIDO is now pursuing the possibility that QPWS might allow a tractor for an hour to be used to clear up this nest of weeds on public land so that they can be controlled much better in future in this corner.

Then there was to be a quick assessment of weeds in the Second Valley, mainly in Anderson and Jarvis Streets. However we were intercepted by David Andersen, President of the Fraser Island Association who alerted us to a major infestation of other weeds in Roper Street. We resolved then to work on the weeds nearer the resort until smoko and then on the weeds in Roper Street after Smoko.

Most of the group then went to work on coral creeper etc on the southern side of the resort but work was incomplete at smoko. While this was happening F.L and Harold were visiting the QPWS offices where they obtained 20 litres of glyphosphate and many healthy plants from the nursery and liaised with Lou Coles.

Following a very relaxed smoko we then headed for Roper Street (Espanade) where we found that the work required a lot of big tools so we ended up using all of the mattocks in the shed to remove a large area of Mother in Laws Tongues, several coconuts some cactus and a small patch of mother-of-millions as well as incidentally lots of Brazilian Nightshade and

Singapore Daisies. However there is still at least 40 person hours dealing with Mother in Laws Tongues and lots of spraying needed to control a huge infestation of Singapore Daisy.



Following trying to slake our raging thirsts and a pleasant lunch, while some sought refuge in the pool from the heat, Greg and John did a couple of runs to the dump to remove the bags of weeds collected. They were reluctant though to pass a clump of lantana and two evil Sisal plants. So despite being scratched by the lantana and stabbed by the sharp barbs of the evil Sisal they had a full load and a full afternoon and were just making it back in time for the afternoon walk to Wabby Lakes when they were intercepted by a NOR Ranger Gordon Mullens who discussed issues in tackling Abrus.



The walk to Wabby Lakes revealed a lot of interesting features.

FIDO discussed this issue of obtaining certification with BMRG's Kath who is now going to explore training for all volunteers on the use of sprays and increasing the budget for

FIDO to be able to acquire our own chemicals in future without needing to draw on Parks. It has been a useful and productive time having Kath along for today just to experience the operation and our most effective modus operandi which is improving community relationships.

The afternoon walk to Wabby Lakes started late due to all of the chit chat with visitors but eventually we got away and as we arrived at the lake it was all but deserted. There were just three remaining FIT male backpackers. It was as always a fascinating walk never to be tired of. The story of the ancient melaleucas is now more interesting with advice today that the University of the Sunshine Coast scientists are keen to follow up this issue. It was also interesting to observe the cyanobacterial outputs and the Aboriginal artefacts as well remnants of the perched dune lake. F.L though was queried in a phone message as to why we used the walking track he has used for 27 years since it was first built.

Hours Worked:

Bush Regeneration:

Monitoring:

53

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as we headed to Happy Valley. Here we made a brief assessment of the problems awaiting there for us with the Abrus and leaving the invitations there for locals to join us to see what we are doing to combat this menace. We left one of the large posters in the Rotary shelter because it was almost too big for the FIDO notice board.

We scooted past Eli Creek, the Maheno and the Kgari camp as we had a tight schedule to meet up with Ranger rendezvous with 2IC of Dundubara, northern Region, Ranger Matt Palmer, the 2IC at Dundubara who would be waiting to meet us at Lake Allom and deliver us the keys to provide access to the QPWS locks in the northern half of Fraser Island. We paused only briefly to check the monitoring station but so far due to the exceptionally dry period over the last 8 months there has been no build up of sediments at any of the monitoring stations.

At the barracks while everyone else took smoko, Harold and Greg had out tape measures and books and efficiently checked the size and dimensions and chores necessary to make the barracks ship-shape and habitable. They measured doors and empty spaces where doors might be. They inspected the roof and foundations and the dimensions of the tank-stand. Meanwhile Matt checked the water. It couldn't all be fully tested because with a tap missing there wasn't enough pressure to allow more than a trickle of a flow into the toilet cistern. While Graham and F.L cleared away some of the regrowth around the barracks the rest sought refuge in Lake Allom itself.



A brief stopover in Happy Valley on the way to Lake Allom revealed what a daunting task awaited us when we returned later in the week.

**Tuesday 25th February
To Lake Allom & Kingfisher Resort**

This was the longest and most challenging day. Su had breakfast ready and waiting at 5.30 am and we were on schedule heading up the beach at 6.30 am, stopping only to deposit our rubbish



The monitoring station inspected on our way to measure up the Lake Allom barracks

With mission accomplished we then headed from Lake Allom on to Lake Coomboo where we arrived before 11.000 am. We were unsuccessful at downloading the data from the Hobo rain-gauge and finally resolved to remove device and take it back to work on it in Eurong. It was an embarrassing admission but proved to be the wisest move when the two Mikes could work in tandem to solve the mysteries of the gauge and how to download. We took the opportunity to have an early lunch while we had the amenity of a barracks to serve in and then we were on our way.

We travelled via the Puthoo fens where ten minutes were allowed for the team to have a brief fens experience. It was a true experience that almost ended in someone falling into a flark. Certainly the depth of water in the flarks was tested first hand by at least one person who remarked that it was surprisingly deep.

Then it was a long bouncy drive to Kingfisher Resort with one break demanded for R&R about 30 minutes before reaching Kingfisher Resort.



At Kingfisher Resort while some tested the wares in the bar half went with Peter Burnett down to the nursery where a fine crop of pots were collected. At 4.30, we farewelled Kath who was headed for the 5.00 pm ferry. We opted not to go anywhere but express back to Eurong. F.L. chose Cornwalls Break.

It was a slow trip but not quite as bouncy as it might have been. About 100 metres from the beach though the car came to an abrupt halt and for the first time on the trip we had to resort to using the bog boards. It proved to be a costly delay because when we arrived back in Eurong the shop was shut and the raged thirsts couldn't

be quenched with the much craved for cold beer.

Hours Worked:

Bush Regeneration:	10 hours
Monitoring:	10 hours

**Wednesday 26th February
Planting Out at Eurong**

We were all recovered from the ride of hard knocks, (or nearly recovered as in the case of one of the Mikes). Thus after a 7.00 am breakfast everyone was ready to spring into action

Fearless Leader and Mike O took Harold and Greg into Second Valley where the huge pandanus and some other plants were put out for planting in front and behind Mike West's place and left these two veterans to plant these out in the hope of more rain. This didn't eventuate. They did though coopt the enthusiastic support of one of the house occupants who undertook to water the plants daily until she left.

Mike O and F.L. then rushed back to Talinga to help get everyone else started. However, Su had already taken charge and set various tasks all aimed at getting all of the plants on hand into the ground with the largest effort being staged at the back of the resort behind the tennis court.



Everyone was too busy in the morning to record the varied and busy activity in planting out but there were lots of photos taken at Lake Birrabeen and Lake Boomanjin in the afternoon.

With their tasks in the Second Valley complete Harold and Greg returned only to be recruited for further tasks back at Second Valley. While

they planted F.L. found some errant *Luecaena* in a block where we not only had permission but had been urged to remove. This done, the trio were returning for Morning tea when they discovered a stray cassia that F.L hadn't been able to remove on his own previously. They soon had disposed of this only then to discover two nearby very mature groundsel they were swiftly despatched to doom and the local rubbish. Three alien weeds weren't on their schedule.

Su's teams worked on continuing to remove clivea lilies, cocos palms in the area just north of the pub and replaced them with Picabeen palms and a pandanus.



The receding waters of Lake Boomanjin created stunning patterns close to the water's edge

A lot of work was done near the Maheno Anchor near the fuel bowsers. These are now to be adorned with native wisteria, midyim, *Hibertia scandens*. Near the tennis courts some disjoint smaller gardens have been linked up and now display a variety of new plants including a display fig, callistemon, hop bush and two types of banksia.

The laundry area and the roundabout were also titivated with new replacement plantings including pigface, Melaluca and callistemons. The roundabout is surely and slowly shaping up and getting constant attention from a succession. There was a maintenance clean up in the entrance gardens to the Reception area. This included planting some wisteria both sides eliminating Mossman River grass and other weeds

The feature plants though were the Fraser Island creepers and wisteria that have been established in the lee of the restaurant building where we envisage potential grand displays. The sad saga of the foxtails was written off and in those pots are now two incredibly healthy looking fig trees. And two of the macrozamia have been repotted into very large pots. It is hoped that these slow growing plants may eventually be repotted as display pots in the foyer to Reception

After morning tea Greg and Harold strapped on the knapsack sprays. For the first time we were using dye that FIDO acquired to show up all of the spraying undertaken. However in hitching up the brand new spray pack Harold's lid came off and he was instantly covered in pink dye from his shoes to his shirt and he was a sorry sight. Unperturbed he battled on against syngonium and other weeds in the waste dump near the surfside units.



They then moved up to where F.L. was working on the Mother-in-Laws Tongues to spray the crop of Singapore Daisies and Coral creeper in front of Judy Daniels. They missed some because Greg kept his distance from a wasp's nest.

Then while F.L.. continued to battle away with the Mother-in Laws Tongues Harold and Greg played around with the snath strap eliminating an Oleanders and some more evil Sisal plants. They had a very successful and exciting day when like the others they headed off for lunch at 12.30. However most of the team headed for the pool rather than for lunch.

Lunch though was delicious with wraps. It was interrupted by the arrival of Bruce Knuckey

who came to see what was to be done about the freight that QPWS is committed to carrying up to Lake Allom. Then there was the ordering of roofing iron and rainwater tanks and the concern over the operation of the Hob rain gauge that Fearless Leader left the two Mikes to work over for the rest of the afternoon.

At 2.15 with only six for the afternoon tour of the Sothern Lakes, F.L. took TAHKA that was more comfortable, especially for those in the back. There was a very relaxing interlude at Lake Birrabeen and a revelling in the aesthetic delights around Lake Boomanjin. These were mainly around the water's edge and a function of the retreating water and the growth of the beach area.

Arriving back at Eurong at 6.30 pm they found the four men left behind were already happy and sampling cold beers. They were celebrating that they had found the secrets to downloading the and working out the mysteries of the rain gauge and the software and were planning other improvements. By the end of the discussions Fearless Leader had presented a new pole for the rain gauge to be placed on after it is returned to Lake Coomboo.

It was a very successful day of hard work and great re-creation. All of the plants acquired were in the ground. There were offers from residents and others to help maintain the plants and far more had been accomplished in one morning than F.L. thought was possible.

Hours Worked:

Bush Regeneration: 52
Monitoring: 8



The very photogenic shores of Lake Boomanjin

**Thursday 27th February
 Happy Valley and KIRRAR Sandblow**

It was an efficient start. Breakfast at 7.00 am and then sorting out everything necessary to go up to Happy Valley. However by 7.30 am we were on the beach headed north. F.L. took the back road into Happy Valley where we discovered some Abrus outside the dingo fence, one infestation was almost a kilometre outside. Later in the day, Greg who was carrying the knapsack was able spray these and we propose to see if spray has any effectiveness.

A daunting challenge awaited us at the Rotary shelter. There were no options but to start and a very good start was made.

Greg shouldered the backpack and sprayed along the dingo fence and any escapees outside the fence (and there were quite a lot). He sprayed between the western grid and the gate near the southern grid.

First of all the women went to work with secateurs to remove as much seed as possible while the men began grappling with this aggressive smothering weed working out towards the east from the Rotary Shelter. Having removed the vine the trick was to find the root and to grub them out. A substantial area was covered — about half the area between the shelter and the houses.



Sonia was engaged in disentangling the vine in the trees and then cutting and painting the same. At the end of the day a map was drawn to define the different methods employed.

Su's methodology on the island between the road and the picnic shelter was to untangle all

of the vines and cut them off from the root and then identify every root with a pink ribbon ready for the next stage of total removal. There were hundreds of roots over the area and all were deep. It was possibly to remove only a very few by hand pulling. F.L. thought he would solve the problem easily. He rooted away for two hours and when knock-off was called at 12.15 he still had only half of the roots in this small area out of the ground. Part of the problem was that previously the Abrus above the ground had been removed but the roots weren't and all were suckering from ground level. We are seeking to find out how this island was treated in December 2008 (five years earlier) so that we might develop a better approach. The roots in the ground though were deep and it would take a lot of poison to kill them.

After working hard for almost five hours the team stopped for a very relaxing lunch at the picnic shed on a hot very sunny and totally dry day (a great day for spraying). Then it was clean up, and plan strategies for the morrow while waiting to 2.00 pm for the heat to abate.

At 2.00 pm with all of the equipment left behind in the shed at Happy Valley we headed back south. We stopped briefly for a while at KIRRAR sandblow to explore it with its many fascinating features created by laterite, fulgarite, wind and rain. It was an enjoyable interlude on our way back to Eurong where cold beer and a swimming pool awaited.



Mars' group photo in KIRRAR Sandblow

Hours Worked:

Bush Regeneration:
Monitoring:

50
2

Friday 28th February Happy Valley and Indian Head

It was another 7.30 start heading off to Happy Valley with our group not quite as energetic as the previous day but equally determined to make some impact on the Abrus invaders. On the back road from Yidney Rocks into Happy Valley they identified and tagged many infestations that had escaped detection the previous day. Greg later returned to deal with these outliers with spray but a formidable task awaits the people who need to follow up this initial treatment to get complete eradication.

Once based back at the Rotary Shelter everyone found their tasks to continue except that it was decreed that we should eradicate the outliers near the Resort's shed and the adjacent island. Dianna began this task but was soon joined by others. Alas they were making headway and thought the end was in sight when the stop work "Yuckabacoo" call rang out. Dianna was most disappointed not to be able to complete the project she had begun.

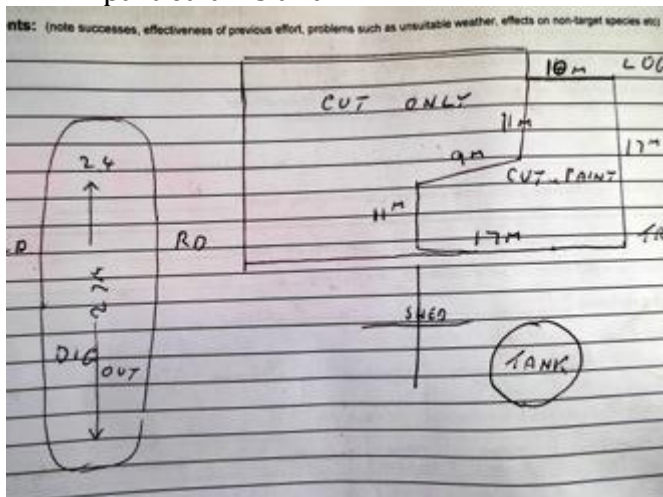
The work continued in for main approaches:

1. **Spraying.** Greg continued to work with Roundup along the fence line. The weather was perfect for spraying, little wind, hot and dry. The conundrum was though whether Roundup is the best chemical to apply. Before the next session much research will be done on spraying and sprays and we should see some results in March to help us develop a more coherent Abrus Strategy based on the results observed in a month's time.



Each ribbon marks at least one Abrus root. They were thick and difficult to remove

2. **Clear the vine and physically remove the root.** This is the most challenging method. The island between the Shelter and the road was done this way but due to the difficulty of removing the long fleshy roots a mattock was necessary and most of the soil in the island was turned over. Some idea of the density of the roots can be gauged by looking at the roots that were left after the cutting and marked with pink ribbon. Fearless Leader did all of that rooting on his own and was left exhausted. However there were signs that many of the plants had sucked from the roots after previous treatment in December 2008. The question is whether they were cut and painted or just cut. More research is needed on the methodology used on this particular island.



A map of the Abrus Attack trial area near the Rotary shelter showing the relative sections and different approaches used.

3. **Cut and paste.** Harold and Graham wrestled the vines off the trees they were smothering after removing the seed than cut off the vines and poisoned the roots with Roundup. The area done this was mapped.
4. **Cut and remove:** Clearly this will need further treatment but the new shoots may be easier to detect and more vulnerable to spray when we return.

Having located so many outliers outside the dingo fence on the road to Yidney Rocks, before leaving the area the group decided to investigate if any outliers of Abrus could be found along the road west from Happy Valley.

We were staggered by the extent of the invasion that extended 500 metres west of the grid on the dingo fence almost up to the canoe trees. This is a serious threat and while we had to move on we decided that we need to place this on a higher priority than the control work within Happy Valley. Our concern is to find allies and resources to help attack this. It needs the same dedication as applied to eliminating Bitou Bush on the Island because Abrus poses a threat potentially greater than Bitou bush that was confined mainly to the coastal and sub-coastal strip.

We packed up and left our tools and equipment in the shed at Happy Valley ready for our next assault scheduled for mid-May.

Our afternoon run was the long promised run up the beach to Indian Head. We ate a leisurely pleasant lunch at Eli Creek after which Su & Harold returned to Eurong and eight people continued on to Indian Head and even to view the Champagne Pool at Middle Rocks. Alas we had to contain ourselves because the toilet was being completely reconstructed. The beach was in splendid condition for the run home. Our subjective monitoring was focussed on the very severe erosion at the summit of Indian Head (Takky Woorroo).



The erosion of Indian Head isn't confined just to the summit. The access tracks are being gouged ever deeper and wider into the landscape and these are visible for a considerable distance but alas long overdue rehabilitation and better management for this important site has been stalled for six months.

Hours Worked:

Bush Regeneration:

45

Monitoring:

5

**Saturday 1st March
Heading for home**

Saturday was a flurry of activity to get away on time. A very light shower made a minor improvement to the track but it looked promising as though some long overdue rain might finally fall. It didn't so we had a dry trip across the island.

While waiting at the ferry terminal the ever vigilant and dedicated Su found lots of Mossman River grass and had everyone working to eliminate these pests.

Back on the mainland we inflated tyres and headed to Tinana where we shared our morning tea with Col Reeves an old mate of F.L.'s who had kept Greg's car. Then it was on to Gympie.

We had our last lunch together beside Lake Alford and Fearless Leader thanked everyone for their cooperation and friendship that made this such a productive week with a special thanks to Su who coordinated the catering so brilliantly as well as weeding.



Egrets and Moorhen at Lake Alford lunch stop.

Hours Worked:

Bush Regeneration:

Monitoring:



Wabby Lake



The aggressiveness and spread of the Abrus is clearly evident. What was surprising was how far it has travelled outside Happy Valley village.

Summary

It was a wonderful and enjoyable week with some good outcomes and some alarming, even daunting discovery of the problems to bring Abrus under control. It was a great team. The cooperation and support of Eurong and Kingfisher Resorts is developing into a very healthy and mutually beneficial partnership. Kingfisher Resort provided more plants and the free ferry service for our two vehicles and Eurong Resort supplied two rooms that made the stay for the rest of us much more comfortable. David Anderson's work in the second valley was very evident and most appreciated.

As well as achieving so much at Eurong a start has been made at Happy Valley on the Abrus problem that will need to be pursued for years to come. FIDO is now formulating a strategy for a fuller head on attack in the coming year that aims to bring other FINIA parties into engagement.

Monitoring: Hervey Bay's driest summer on record (according to the BOM) has meant that there has been no significant rainfall run-off and also no sediment movement to monitor. There was a lot of subjective monitoring as we inspected various parts of the island but these were all informal. They have not therefore been logged under this project. Time did not allow us to monitor Lake McKenzie (Boorangoora) as well as Lake Allom on this trip so no photo monitoring was done. However this is a priority to be undertaken in May. Lake levels have dropped rapidly over summer.

Voluntary Hours Worked for the week: <i>(Excludes travel time and administration)</i>	
Bush Regeneration:	215
Monitoring:	30
Total	245 hours