

**Diary
for
Fraser Island
Bush Regeneration Week
Fraser Island Defenders Organisation
Eurong and Happy Valley
18th to 24th May 2014**

Summary

The week was particularly productive despite the weather (rain) hindering progress. It was made much more productive through the collaboration of the QPWS that made a tractor available for four hours to clean up a particularly bad infestation of rubbish and weeds just outside the Eurong Resort's south eastern boundary.

There were eight volunteers for the week who all contributed much more than the 20 hours asked of them. This enabled the team to achieve so much more.

The group was again indebted to the Eurong Resort for their support and assistance with accommodation and the Kingfisher Barge Operations for assistance with vehicle passages.

A further collaboration was with the Kingfisher Resort that again contributed many Coastal Banksia to plant around the resort and in the adjacent village area.

Another achievement was being able to extend the demonstration gardens in the resort area at the western entrance to Eurong Village and being able to build on previous achievements of eight other working bees.

While the main focus of the group was on Eurong and continuing the program there the team also put in a day working in Happy Valley

The group logged up an aggregate of **259** voluntary hours of on the ground-work. This excludes all travel to and from the site, all administration and organizing of the logistics. It was made up of:

Bush Regeneration (weed elimination & replacement):	222
Monitoring (establishment and refinement of monitoring stations to assess the volume and <u>impact of sediment movement from roads</u>):	37
Total:	259

Sunday 18th May

Arriving Talinga and sorting Out

Who would have thought when we maintained such good time management all day that we would end up dashing through the Fraser Island forest with lights blazing trying to make sure that we weren't catapulted out of the vehicles on some of the bumps.

We had left home at 8.00 am on the dot and after picking up Neil and Cathy in Brisbane we arrived punctually at Lake McDonald at 10.00am for morning tea and to pick up Penny. We were still on scheduler as we toured Maryborough looking at the vernacular architecture. Even bumping into Fearless Leader's oldest living cousin in Maryborough didn't put us off schedule.



Our predicament was because our scheduled crossing coincided with the tide an extraordinary low tide in Wangoolba Creek. It was so low that the barge couldn't use it and was forced to go to Kingfisher. However we couldn't even get ashore until the other barge piled out. Thus we had already lost 30 minutes. Then the crossing took 30 minutes longer so it was late when we arrived. However the adventure had stimulated us for a great Happy

Hour meeting and learning about the other members of our group.

It was only the tide at Wangoolba Creek and the fact that John Sinclair had opposed any further disturbance of this critical Fisheries Habitat Reserve the meant we had to be diverted to Kingfisher Resort and a longer way to Eurong. Luckily the recent rains had smoothed out and firmed up the tracks and so it took only from 5.10 to 6.15 to travel from Kingfisher to Eurong via Cornwallis Break.

Still it was a very pleasant day

Hours Worked:

Bush Regeneration:

Monitoring:

0
0

**Monday 19th May
Sorting Out and Southern Lakes**

The say began heavily clouded over but it resulted in only a few inconsequential sprinkles during the day.

After an early breakfast Fearless Leader had scheduled an orientation inspection and assessment of tasks. However everyone almost immediately got engrossed in various other tasks which delayed the inspection until just prior to morning tea.

John worked on doing an inventory of what gear and equipment we have in the Eurong base. His work was aided by Fearless Leader who swept out the shed and stacked things in place. Neill meantime was working on preparing the posts ready to establish the rain gauges at Central Station. The rest of the gang Minnie, Russell, Penny, Su and Cathy we discovering Coral Creeper and various other weeds in the area around the toilet bloc. This explosion of energy was brought to a holt at about 9.00 am when Fearless Leader called, "All Aboard" and set off in Supe to show everyone around starting at the Waste Transfer Station , continuing to see on of the monitoring sites, then down into Second Valley.

One of the most unexpected aspects of the inspection was noting the impact and severity of the drought that had resulted in the death of many very large brush box and scribbly gums

although the ration of dead brush box to dead scribbly gums were about 20:1 or better. It was also noted that Foxtails, banksia and casuarinas had also succumbed to the intense dry conditions in the latter half of 2013 and up to Mid March

After morning tea F.L and John went to the QPWS to liaise over the use of backpacks and arrangements for the tractor and rain gauge. Russell and Minnie went back to the challenge of the Coral Creeper behind the Toilet Block while Penny and Cathy worked on clearing the gardens at the back for the Resort's Tennis courts that were being smothered with weeds.

It was a busy and productive session and after John retrieved his preferred back-pack spray from Happy Valley we had lunch at 12.30.

Our afternoon program was to explore and check out the Southern Lakes. At 1.30 we headed off checking three monitoring Stations. We made stops to relish Lake Birrabeen and Lake Boomanjin and saw some interesting wildlife on the beach in the pinkness of the evening as we travelled from Dilli Village to Eurong where Happy Hour was luring us home just before darkness fell.



Monitoring: Surprisingly there was little sediment recorded at the three sites on the Southern Lakes route although other stations look to have accumulated more sediment deposits. The surprise was that almost every sediment trap along the roads seemed to have accumulated a great volume of sediment.

Observations

Dhinkar (where old tramway separates from road to Lake Birrabeen) 14 mm of sediment was measured;

Botharum (Lake Birrabeen toilets) nil sediment deposit

Wallum (between (DM Mineral and Dilli Village)

10 mm of sediment was observed. It appeared that the road had not breached at this site in recent rains.

We made stops to relish Lake Birrabeen and Lake Boomanjin and saw some interesting wildlife on the beach as we travelled from Dilli Village to Eurong where Happy Hour was luring us home just before darkness fell.

Another wonderful dinner was presented by Su and eaten with relish.

Hours Worked:

Bush Regeneration:

43

Monitoring:

10

Tuesday 20th May

Cleaning up Surfside & Kingfisher

It was a wonderfully clear morning with a colourful sunrise which always looks great at Talinga. For the first time for over a wee it didn't shower all day and it enabled us to get a huge amount of work done.

Fearless Leader, Neill and Russell set off early to examine the site of the tractor operation and to begin preparing for it. The tractor was scheduled for about 8.30 am and a work plan was evolved with us dragging many of the more awkward items that had been tossed into the pile of rubbish. This included clothes lines and many trees that had been cut down. Some of these like banksia were rotting away, but others such as the casuarina has not started to rot and it was decided that these should be taken to the dump to be burnt. Altogether four massive trailer load of rubbish and weeds went to the Eurong dump for the morning session.

Brad arrived with the John Deer and a mechanical bucket at about 9.00 am and soon

called for a chainsaw to help him access the work area. Then Brad cleaned out a hole in the gully that was infested with weeds including coral creeper and Singapore Daisy and then collecting the accumulated rubbish and tipping it in the hole before covering it all with sand he was able to dig from the site. It was a four hour operation but a wonderful collaboration with QPWS and volunteers to deal with a major problem in the worst weed infestation in Eurong. It will take many flow ups to ensure that there is no recurrence of many difficult weeds that we removed including also Sisal, Clivia lilys, mother in law's tongues, Easter cassia Syngonium and more but at least they are all much more accessible

In the meantime John continued his spraying regime work progressively and systematically around the resort area and finding that the dumping of lawn clippings across the road from the resort had resumed. In the meantime the team kept identifying new areas where the weeds were so thick that they needs to be treated with chemical spray.



Before morning tea, Cathy and Penny worked hard cleaning up the demonstration garden areas and the roundabout at the back of the Resort. After morning tea they moved to clean up the area between Surfside and the dingo fence that was infested with coral creeper and the other usual suspects plus sisal. It was heavy going and they had a grandstand view of Brad working the John Deere when they spared time from their back-breaking work to look up

In the meantime Minnie and Su were working their way along the dune on the southern side of

the resort purging it of Coral Creeper. They filled lots of bags but we may run out of time to complete they sweep along that bank given the density of weeds there.

It was a very busy morning with lots of hard work but an enormous accomplishment when we look at the total outcome.

After lunch add an extra hours to the log resulting from work of the four remained behind. While some rested and caught up Russell and enticed John to add an extra three hour to the aggregate tally as they put in an effort over and above the requirement.

At 1.30 the other four set off for a multipurpose trip to Kingfisher. This was scheduled to pick up plants needed for the bush regeneration but also to record some of the monitoring sites to check out the changes to the sediment deposition since it was last recorded in March 2013. There are still more sites to be monitored but this enabled three stations to be recorded. While the drainage patterns have redirected sediment in the case of Dhomba and Pibin they both still continued to more slowly accumulate sediment although this was much less than Wongul where the sediment flowed straight off the road. *See Pibin photo monitor below:*



Monitoring sites Checked:	Reading:
Dhomba: Main site	50 mm
Southern satellite	40 mm
West Satellite	10 mm
Wongul: Main site	60 mm
South satellite	70 mm
West Satellite	15 mm
Pibin	40 mm

The Kingfisher Nursery was the next destination. Here the quartet of Fearless Leader, Cathy, Neill and Penny collected about 60 advanced *Banksia integrifolia* and a couple of very advanced Pandanus as well as a wonderful very advanced King Fern (*Angiopteris evecta*) in a pot that we plan to place in the foyer of the resort. It was a busy trip for which only a few hours of actual work has been claimed.

Hours Worked:

Bush Regeneration: 40 hours
Monitoring: 10 hours

**Wednesday 21st May
 Planting Out at Eurong**

Yesterday was fine and sunny so it was most unexpected that it would rain overnight and rain heavily. The nearby QPWS registered 20 mm. At least it made conditions for planting more suitable but it also stopped JOHN's planned spraying program. Instead everyone focussed solidly on planting and following up yesterday's work.

Most of the plants were distributed in Easton Street between Talinga and the toilet. The re was a flurry of activity as people filled buckets of water ripped out weeds to clear space to help establish a new forest of Banksias where there had once been a rubbish depository. With work well underway Fearless Leader, Neill and Russell left the four women and John busily establishing their forest and went off to follow up where the tractor had finished. They raked and shovelled and smoothed out the finish and were advised by Bob, the Resort Maintenance manager that he had plans to accelerate the conversion of the smoothed out bare sands to lawn.

At 9.30 we paused for smoko and then switched tasks. Su who was busily gathering plants from hidden spots was moving solo on consolidating the demonstration gardens to suit the mode of the lawn mowers which disliked small diversions when mowing. She ambitiously established a new much larger area behind the signs and determined to fill it with whatever suitable native plants she could acquire. Except

for a break for lunch she then worked on that for the rest of the daylight.

Penny and Cathy went off to the QPWS nursery where they met Smiley Burns, one of the Butchulla Rangers who showed them the facilities. They then worked to lunch on repotting Melaluecas and Banksias into larger pots to help make them more resilient when planted out. These have been identified as FIDO's but FIDO would prefer to plant when the good follow up rain is most probable.

Russell and Neill continued their work at the newly cleared area to capitalize on the opportunities to access the Syngonium scourge that was clinging tenaciously to the pandanus and the decaying Banksias even on some lantana . Lantana was stomped and green panic was eliminated. A Kingfisher Pandanus was planted there as well as a banksia. When they finished work for lunch they took their third load of garden waste for the day, mostly Syngonium, to the dump. They felt well pleased with the work and feel that they have transformed an area.

In the meantime, ON waled the dingo fence around the village to assess the weed situation and planning priorities for his next working bee

After lunch regrettably Russell had to leave us but the work continued combined with some recreation. We travelled in to Central Station and then while the four walkers made their way to Pile Valley taking note of the large load of sediment washed down from the road above across the walking track and into the creek, F.L and Neill planted the ran gauge station. The activation of the rain gauge wasn't complete before they had to rendezvous with the walkers at Pile Valley.

There was a huge shock awaiting everyone as they arrived in Pile Valley. A huge Pibin (*Syncarpia hillii*) has been recently laid flat right beside the main visitor area. The stup was 1.5 metres high and had a gbh (Girth at breast height) of 3.1 metres. The tree that had once stood 47 metres high now lays flat on the forest floor. The irony is that for more than 100 years this area had been a sacred site. The Forestry

Department refused to log it and set it aside as a gazetted Beauty Spot. The destruction was even more incomprehensible because a 40 metre brush box that hadn't stood in the way of the Pibin had also been felled. These trees though were solid to the core and there is no rational explanation for their destruction except for an ill-founded paranoia that these trees might present a risk to the public. On the basis of that we can expect to see Fraser Island progressively transformed.



On the return to Eurong three more sediment monitoring stations were inspected. Kunyam near the junction of the two one way roads just west of Eurong had not been recently impacted by deposit because the wall beside the road has not been recently breached.

Monitoring Readings	
Coolooli:	
Main station:	300 mm
First satellite:	225 mm
Second satellite	250 mm
Kunyam:	
Main Station	70 mm
North Satellite	80 mm
East Satellite	40mm
South Satellite : Bypassed by the stream	0 mm
Narang: (control above the road)	5 mm

It was a quieter evening with Rusell missing but we had a superb dinner, beef stroganoff and Apple Crumble being the highlight and then a lively game of cards kept the gang awake longer than usual

Hours Worked:

Bush Regeneration: 52
Monitoring: 8

Thursday 22nd May Happy Valley and Eli Creek

The work program had to be rearranged in case the second rain-gauge planed to be placed at Lake McKenzie (Boorangoora) arrived. Plans were afoot before last night's dinner to leave for Happy Valley at 7.30 am.

Everyone was ready but it was raining quite heavily. However a check of the Mt Kanighan radar showed that while it was heavily raining at Eurong, Happy Valley was relatively free of rain. So we loaded into Supe and headed for finer weather. It proved not to be as fine as everyone would have liked with light sprinkles and sometimes heavier showers ensuring that all our clothing was saturated before smoko.

Conditions were too wet to anticipate spraying. However as we advanced we pulled any Abrus down from the vegetation and marked the sites to be sprayed in the future. We also identified and marked an isolated Abrus much closer to Yidney Rocks than we had previously seen.

John assigned us our task and we advanced from the Yidney Rocks Road towards the beach but inside the dingo fence. We were all armed with tool belts and bottles to tackle cassia and lantana. A heavy shower as we finished this run caused us to seek shelter behind one of the houses. That was when we met Julie Dunn who with her husband has just been appointed managers for Sailfish Resort. She was most welcoming of our efforts and offered us a dry and very scenic option for morning tea in the front deck.

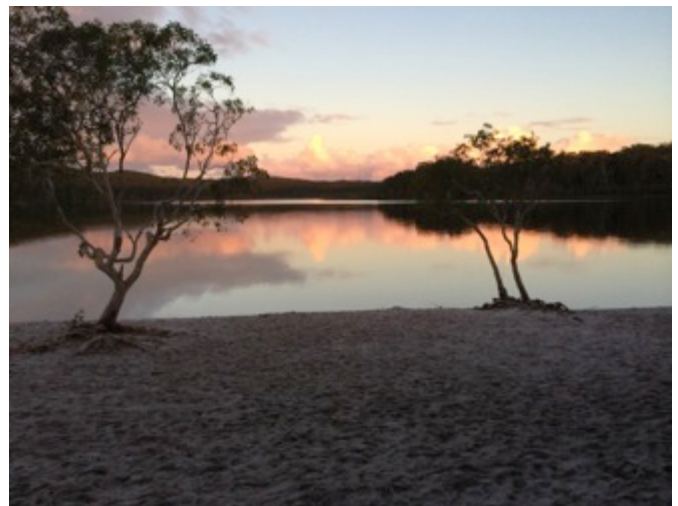
After Smoko we turned our attention to the weeds across the roads from Sailfish and found a massive challenge. All of the usual suspects were there in most unhealthy numbers. Neill who had earlier found a cassia with a diameter of 2.5 cms here felled one 3 cms through.

At 12.30 we stopped for lunch. While we were enjoying pleasant lunch in a most salubrious setting a very unhappy Happy Valley woman who had been photographing Minnie while she was weeding and cross-examined Su about what she was doing, came on to the verandah

came up. She photographed us eating, questioned us, and abused us in that order before indignantly marching off. We were specifically questioned about who gave us permission to remove weeds from public land in Happy Valley.

We reckon that today's work would have lifted the number of Cassia that FIDO has removed both inside and outside the dingo fence to about 2,000 although we were too busy to keep count. We are basing our estimates on the fact that each volunteer removed on average between 40 and 50 Cassia per day. That is 32 person days.

Because there were three buses at Eli Creek we continued on to check out the *Maheno* that is now noticeably deteriorating between each visit. Then we returned to Eli Creek where there were still three large buses. There are now portaloos parked on the beach to the north of the boardwalk while contractors replace the toilet to the south of the boardwalk. In the meantime a female dingo walked amongst the passengers from the three buses, and dug up some food from the beach near a bus. She was absolutely unconcerned about the people just as the young males from the buses seemed oblivious of here as they played around with a football.



Evening light at Boorangoora 23/05/2014

The menacing black clouds were a deterrent to us doing our proposed walk into Wabby Lakes and we went home early. However John was soon busy work cleaning the spraying equipment and cleaning up. Su was keenly adding to her new project garden. A fig found in

Happy Valley was relocated to hopefully become a feature tree. F.L and Su did a little more relocating and checking on previous plantings at the resort before darkness fell.

It was a most relaxed evening with card games extending into the night

Hours Worked:

Bush Regeneration:

Monitoring:

37

4

**Friday 23rd May
Eurong, Wabby Lakes & Lake
McKenzie (Boorangoora)**

The weather was kinder today. It didn't rain but it took a while for things to dry out to enable any spraying to begin.

We had all resolved to work on our priority tasks to finish off our working week and reassess the remaining tasks at smoko. Su returned to her demonstration garden where Neill salvaged some of the turf he had dug up. Then he and F.L. went and planted it in the area left bare after being cleared up by the tractor. This was later to be most welcome news to the relevant resort staff who were already enthused by the Angiopteris addition to their foyer.

Penny and Cathy went to finalize the small sector near Surfside where they found still more Coral Creeper. Minnie found all sorts of weeds both inside and outside the fence.

On their way to the Second Valley to see if the mechanic could quieten down Supe, they went as directed by Noel to remove four large Sisals in front of the pub. It turned out to be a very prickly job with over a dozen Sisals being found and removed. They then went on to Second Valley hoping to have Supe fixed. On the way back from Happy Valley Supe seemed to have lost a muffler and had abruptly roared more loudly. The mechanic wasn't available but surprisingly the exhaust had rectified itself. They then turned their attention to another prickly job in seeing how they could address the insidious Dragon fruit invasion. It was a task that they continued with surprising success after smoko. FIDO is now encouraged to more

actively address Dragon fruit impacting Eurong's largest fig.

The wet conditions especially in the bush made John wait before he donned the spray backpack and then over the next few hours he was able to cover a significant area with Starane which has less collateral damage than Roundup. It was frustrating that we couldn't get as much sprayed as we would have liked.

After lunch F.L raced up to the QPWS nursery seeking both Pigface and the only fig there. He came home though with only six pigface that Su planted out

Dashing about and winding up meant that we were late leaving for the afternoon field trip that was to take in the remainder of the monitoring sites north of Eurong. Our longer trip though added to the observations. Our travels took us up Cornwalls Break where we observed a new rainwater catchment in a beach camping area. After a measurement on the way, we walked to the Wabby Lakes lookout, a Sinclair sacred site. in addition to Lake McKenzie (Boorangoora). We witnessed lovely sunset reflections at Boorangoora from the pink clouds. It meant it was well after dark when we returned. However another dash in the dark was rewarded by us seeing a Long-nosed Bandicoot prowling about in the middle of the road under our headlights.

It was again another lovely meal prepared by Su followed by a loud game of "Oh Hell" with some strange local rules.



Overlooking Lake Wabby

**Saturday 24th May
Heading for home**

Monitoring Sites Checked out:

Mambu (road to Wabby Lakes)	100 mm
Gunda (Lake McKenzie (Boorangoora))	80 mm
Ti (Uphill comparison)	15 mm
Yirra (LMKB swale west)	0 mm
Billai (LMKB swale east)	30 mm
Kumbartcho (West of LMB bottom hill)	30 mm

After taking all of the registrations it was concluded that these stations don't adequately record the data at least in the short term because there are too many local variables including the fact that in addition to many roads down cutting there are many lengthy sections of elevated roads where sediment is not smothering vegetation at the bottom of the slopes. Then there are other places where the build-up on the side of the road contained the flow and thus no sediment was washed off the road. In other cases new drainage patterns bypassed the monitoring stations. However they are showing a longer-term trend which justifies the continuation with the project over a long term.

Hours Worked:

Bush Regeneration: 45
Monitoring: 5



A dead Pandanus at Eli Creek

The group was disturbed by the death of so many Pandanus especially at such a most heavily visited spot as Eli Creek. This combined with the death of so many other trees as a result of the drought was somewhat depressing. The death of very old Brush Box, some exceeding 1 metre diameter, and large Scribbly gums is a portent of the potential impact of climate change yet awaiting.

It was a very early start for Su who was up early preparing lunch and clearing out the kitchen. It was all hands to the deck as we seemed to get packed up and cleared away in record time. While Su was working on the domestic clean-up John was sorting packing the FIDO equipment left in the shed and preparing an inventory of the stocks.

We had thought to deliver the last domestic rubbish to the Eurong tip. This then was the inspiration to salvage some long 6x4 treated timber that we will need to erect the new Lake McKenzie rain gauge when FIDO returns in August. These were stashed and we were underway by 8.10 am.

The enthusiasts found time in half an hour waiting for the ferry to find and eradicate more weeds there. Back on the mainland there was still a further chore. The equipment at Eurong was deficient with a leaky backpack spray and there was no spray for Happy Valley. Also lacking was a decent spade and brush hooks that were also needed for the George Haddock Track and which had been unprocurable in Brisbane. A quick stop at a Rural Supplies place in Maryborough procured a new backpack spray but no Brush hook.

While in Gympie for lunch, Fearless Leader was inspired to try the local Mitre 10 hardware with instant success and these tools were added to the equipment for future working bees.

At Gympie Penny's husband met us for lunch before we finally went separate ways after yet another amazingly effective and enjoyable week

Hours Worked:

Bush Regeneration: 5
Monitoring: 0

