

Diary for Eurong Bush Regeneration Week

25 November — 1 December 2012

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A Satisfying Week

There were eleven volunteers for the week. Helen Moriarty and Harold Charles had been in the group that 12 months earlier had embarked on a systematic plan to transform Eurong and rid it of major weeds. Keith Cordwell who had been on a similar bush regeneration week in March was returning with his wife Christine. They had encouraged their friend Sue Ward to join the group. Noel Plumb has had years of experience as a professional bush regenerator in Sydney. His wife Jennie Minifie, added further strength. Another volunteer was a local from Maryborough, Robin Hyde who brought a great wealth of experience. The coordinator for the team and Fearless Leader was John Sinclair who was assisted as ever by his wonderful partner Tokiko Dawson who catered superbly during the week. The group was joined by BMRG representative, Kath Nash, who pulled her share of weeds and contributed much to the group in the two days she was present. As well as the formidable bush regeneration task on hot dry days, the group also had an additional monitoring task to establish the extent of change on Lake McKenzie (Boorangoora) through photo monitoring and trying to establish the scale of sediment movement off the roads.

Sunday, 25 November

The group left Camp Hill at 8.00 am punctually to stop at Michelton to collect Helen and Harold before driving on to Yandina for morning tea. We arrived in Maryborough 12.40 pm for lunch at Queens Park but we had a surprise waiting for us.

It was Fair Day in Queens Park with the band playing and the model trains working and the Mary Ann replica plying the once fabled "Golden Mile" of QGR (Queensland Government Railways). For him the Fearless Leader was a time of great reveries and chatting while the rest of the group ate lunch by the riverside waiting for him to return with hot water for tea and coffee.

After refuelling it was off to Dundathu to deliver material to Gary Hansen before arriving at Mary River Heads and catching the 4.00 pm barge. It was a slow dry trip across the island arriving at "Weeroona" in Eurong at 6.00 pm in daylight.

The team wasted no time in unloading and going to work. While Su and co organized the catering inside the house the team lost no time in going to work organizing the signs as part of the monitoring project. The plywood timber was cut into sign sizes,

painted both sides and wording for the signs discussed and started on.

Dinner on the deck was fish and prawn green curry and rice with dessert of pears in red wine and yoghurt or cream.

Bush regeneration: 0 hours

Monitoring: 5 hours

Monday, 26th November

People started responding to the early morning light before 5.00 am by starting to paint the signs and checking out the equipment. Then after a breakfast it was serious business.

Everyone but Keith who was left at Weerona to practice his sign-writing skills piled into Supe with the requisite weeding gear and headed for Second Valley. While the five women went to work on weeds. They spent the morning there working on many weeds with their efforts being later complemented by both Keith and Noel.

The mainly female weeding team undertook a lot of work focussing mainly on Asparagus fern, Mother of Millions, Corky Passion Fruit and Madeira Vine. All weeds were bagged and a trailer load of rubbish was accumulated and moved to the Eurong Waste Transfer Station.

While they set about their challenging work, Harold, Noel, and John headed off to the QPWS office to meet Kimberley Fliefresher to collect the timber being donated by the QPWS and the herbicides necessary for spraying. The material made available wasn't what was expected and although it was helpful it fell a lot short of the requirements for the week's work.

He whole group reassembled at the Second Valley at 10.00 am for smoko. After which Noel and Fearless Leader inspected the little charted Secret Valley between the Second Valley and the Resort to see what weeding and spraying efforts would be required there. Following this for the next two hours, Noel sprayed. In this area largely targeting Mother of millions and any Singapore Daisies that had survived Michael's recent spraying.

Then while the rest of the team concentrated on weeding especially in the Jarvis Street area opposite the Taxi base, the Fearless Leader and Harold went off to establish the first sediment monitoring site near the road junctions just west of the Eurong village.

In digging the 60 cm datum post hole it was noted that the whole depth of the site was in material

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washed from the road. The post though was sited so that photo monitoring could be carried out in almost 360 degrees by selecting three clearly defined focal centres. The western focus was the base of the stump of a tree looking the road. The second focus point chosen was about 10 metres to the south east on a freshly painted spot on a brush box 60 cms above the ground level. The third siting point for photographs was about 10 metres to the north east with a line painted in the scar of a gum tree about 10 metres to the north east. After fixing the post it was realized that the ruler could not be easily read from the road. To make it more visible it was decided to paint behind the ruler with a pale paint

It was decided that some innovative work would be necessary to meet our aim to install 8 sediment monitoring sites and four photo monitoring sites and that this task could not be completed without additional supplies that we would ask Robin buy in Maryborough today and to bring over with him when he joins us on Tuesday. Further it was realized that the most monitoring sites would be located near Lake McKenzie (Boorangoora) and more preparation was needed to achieve this and so it was decided to defer the visit to Lake McKenzie (Boorangoora) to another day to have the posts ready to install there in a single session.

That is how the afternoon recreational activity was changed to a walk to Wabby Lakes. There was a quiet time in the afternoon until 3.00 pm when the group set off to walk to Wabby Lakes along the Northern Track. There were many signs of scratching and foraging along the track especially in the dried leaves. The evidence of bandicoots was clear and we found one dead bandicoot on the track. However the more exciting observation was of the many circular scratching's of the Black Breasted Button Quails. There were unidentified scratching's also that raised curiosity especially the half demolished elevated and rotting Banksia trunk. The other observation was the amazing dieback in the lantana.

After a rejuvenating swim in the lake shared with only two others we made it back the beach in the fading light and home to Happy Hour and dinner.

One trip was made to the dump with rubbish.

Bush regeneration: 34 hours
Monitoring Project: 14 hours

Tuesday, 27th November

Work began very early with Harold chipping away at the timber acquired from the waste transfer station and preparing more monitoring Datum posts. Others were also busily engaged preparing for the day's activities.

Noel and the weed team set off at 7.30 am for work in Second Valley and the Secret Valley with the main mission for the day was to focus on Asparagus fern. The infestation of asparagus fern was formidable. There were several hundred Easter Cassias removed as well as a remnant Madiera vine infestation near the Fire Station. Su also found some bridal veil creeper which we are keen not to get a hold. A small infestation of Umbrella trees was located and destroyed

Meanwhile Keith with his preference for larger challenges than the smaller weeds devoted his considerable energies into removing lantana from the Eurong Resort. He has created a vast pile of rubbish and will seek assistance from the resort staff to remove it.

Harold and John stayed at Weerona preparing the Datum Posts until the arrival of Robin at almost 10.00 am. With so many Datum posts prepared it was decided that two should be established on the road to Central Station near the Eastern Break where there are two very obvious alluvial plumes. Thus the Dhomba and the Wongul sites were established. There is still work to be done to get the photo sites finalized a GPS point for the Wongul site.

The access to the sites was difficult due to the very dry condition of the road. At one stage the trailer had to be abandoned. This caused the Post Planters to reconsider the plans to incorporate the planting of the Datum posts at Lake McKenzie (Boorangoora) that had been scheduled for the afternoon. This involves the planting of eight (8) posts and it was resolved that this work would be deferred to a special run on Wednesday morning. This left the afternoon free for general recreation

After lunch the group left at 1.30 pm for Lake McKenzie (Boorangoora) for recreation. It was a pleasant and relaxing experience.

Bush regeneration: 32 hours
Monitoring: 14 hours

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Wednesday, 28th November

By mutual agreement it was resolved to start an hour earlier in the morning to finish before the hottest part of the day. So instead of starting at 7.30 some started at 6.00 am.

The weeding party were dropped off at 6.30 am Secret Valle, top of the hill and the eastern facing slope more asparagus fern asparagus and cassia while Su and Helen continued their private war on Madiera Vine in the vicinity of the Taxi residence.

Keith meanwhile was waging his private war on lantana outside the resort. Keith had coopted the resort staff (groundsmen) to assist in the removal of the wreckage of the destroyed shrubs which he attests are much tougher than the lantana near the waste transfer station that in March. He had been able to uproot by most clumps of lantana by hand earlier in the year. However despite removing most of the canes, some of the stumps in front of the resort need a tractor to pull them from the ground.

The other part of the group, Harold, Robin and the Fearless Leader set off at 6.30 to install the bulk of the monitoring stations. They inspected and GPSed them all and installed sediment monitoring posts at:

- The Crossroads near Pile Valley
- The edge of Lake McKenzie (Boorangoora) where road sediment was entering the lake
- The swale below the picnic area toilets
- The swale to the west of the main stairs to the beach; and
- An alluvial plume at the eastern end of the junction of the two one way roads

In addition four photo monitoring sites were established overlooking the two beaches of Lake McKenzie (Boorangoora). These were all placed to be able to compare with older photos although there are no old photos of the Second Beach of Lake McKenzie (Boorangoora) where a post was established for comparative purposes.

Just prior to lunch, the group was joined by Kath Nash of the Burnett Mary Regional Group who was checking on the FIDO projects.

Following lunch most of the party including Kath Nash who had already made herself familiar with our work toured the Southern Lakes circuit.

We were met by the team from the Fraser Coast Regional Council for happy hour for a mutual exchange on the progress being made.

Bush regeneration: 32 hours

Monitoring: 18 hours

Thursday, 29th November

Today is the day for the big, long-scheduled sign shift. At 6.00am Colin Zemek of the Fraser Coast Regional Council came down to check the proposed siting for the relocated sign. Having that established Robin and Harrold were busy soon digging the holes for the new sign and then following over to dig out the posts from around the sign where it stood. We were expecting the QPWS tractor during the day but had no confirmation of when to expect it.

In the meantime Keith and Kath Nash had been busy further ripping out lantana on the public land in front of the Eurong resort. Already Keith had accumulated a mountain of lantana canes and the Resort had provided a utility and trailer to take it off to the dump. Unfortunately they didn't provide the labour to help the loading so John started on this process while Keith kept creating new mountains. He was soon joined by Harold and Robin and the piles were reduced. While Robin and Harold were emptying the first load, the Fearless Leader who had previously been wrongly accused of only working on the monitoring and not pulling out a single weed was able to demonstrate his prowess by removing the stumps of the huge lantana bushes and a few large Easter Cassia that Keith had been unable to get out.

The lantana work continued throughout the morning while waiting for the QPWS machine. At one stage John and Kath went to the QPWS office to discover that the work was going to happen but there was a delay due to the need to get some of the equipment down from Kgari Camp to lift the sign. However there was a great opportunity to meet various staff and to receive the QPWS data base identifying weeds and problem areas in Eurong. It was agreed that FIDO would add to this work sheet because most of the problem areas we had identified were between the Resort and the Second Valley.

With the Lantana cleaned up in front of the resort it was time to catch up with the others in the team. Sue Christine and Noel had started at 6.30 am and moved into the Secret Valley that seemed to harbour some of the most virulent weeds.

Noel continued to spray mother of millions and fishbone fern. There was a problem. They Council team had also reported spraying in Second Valley for these weeds and others and we did not know where they had been nor they know where we had been and there was possibly much duplication on the edges although with their vehicle based spraying they had not been in the Secret Valley nor had they identified the weeds in there that we saw.

Meanwhile Christine and Sue worked diligently on other weeds particularly asparagus ferns, Easter cassia

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and umbrella trees with great effect. During this work they retrieved a wallet identified as Conway Burns. John knew that he was an Aboriginal ranger working at Kgari installing the new dingo fence there so it was resolved to deliver the wallet to him when we went north passing Kgari that afternoon

Still near our Second Valley Base Helen, Su and Jennie, worked on the intractable Madiera vine problem that was emanating from the piles of garden waste that had been deposited there. This led to a decision that the garden waste needed cleaning up and John took the first load to the dump to be able to access the offending heap that harboured the evil Madeira.

After an exhausting morning we finished various times between 11.00 and 12.00 because the tide was most suitable for a beach run. While we were assured that the QPWS would shift the sign shelter we assumed that would happen the next morning.

After lunch we headed off in the two vehicles to Indian Head with stops along the way while coming and going at Indian Head. These were Eli Creek, Maheno, the Red Valley and Kgari. It was a pleasant relaxing afternoon after a morning of our heaviest morning's work.

At Indian Head John was planning to photograph the rampant Siratro that was smothering all of the vegetation on one side of the track for the FINIA display signs only to discover that the QPWS had recently sprayed this and the Corky Passionfruit vines. However the conundrum of why the weeds persisted only on the eastern side of the track up to the Headland lookout was possibly solved when Helen postulated that it seemed to have benefitted from the sand scoured off the rock-face. In other words it was the beneficiary of the sediment movement. This theory was to be tested by further observation on the following days.

We arrived back at Eurong just after 5.00 pm to the surprise of seeing our sign shelter dangling from a machine at the entrance to Eurong. QPWS Ranger Jason was assisted by the team of Aboriginal rangers from Kgari and had extricated the sign and was shifting it into position. We watched with fascination and assisted in placing it in position to end a very satisfying day.

While Mike West didn't join us for Happy Hour he did join us after a fine dinner of fish provided by our neighbours who were occupying "Talinga" and put in a huge fishing effort.

Bush regeneration: 50 hours
Monitoring: 5 hours

Friday, 30th November

Noel had raised the alarm at the spread of the red flowering lily (There was a question as to whether these were a *Hemiopsis* or *Clivea*) that was spreading along the front of Eurong and getting close to the lagoon. The plants were widely separated and it looks as if it has been spread by wind blown seed. It was resolved that this should be a target species for the morning before it could become too well established.

Noel, Christine, Su, Helen, Jenny and Sue set to work eliminating all the plants and bagging the bulbs. There were over a dozen bags. In the process they also discovered and removed a much larger volume of Sisal agave and all of this was later gathered and deposited in the waste bins at the Waste Transfer Station for removal from the island.

Later, Su, Jenny and Helen moved on to continue with their work near the Second Valley base and while they were keen to eliminate the Madiera Vine from the Garden Waste pile they thought that it may be better if the garden waste wasn't removed until March when it should be possible and easier to deal with any new plants that may emerge from the site.

John had left Keith, Robin and Harold tackling the Brazilian Cherries while he loaded some of the garden waste. He couldn't get out of the Valley though due to the mountain of fallen Brazilian Cherry debris particularly from the front of Mike West's house. Some was added to the load to clear a path and was the first of five loads to go to the dump that morning.

Due to the lack of success with the previous painting of the Brazilian cherry stumps, it was decided to drill holes in the bases of stumps that showed signs of suckering and the trees felled and fill these holes with a mixture of diesel and Roundup. We will look forward to seeing the results next time. The ambition to extend past Mike West's house faded when we ran out of time just dealing with the volume of material that site generated. It was also decided that in future we should have a chainsaw to help us deal with the remaining Brazilian cherries and eliminate them from Eurong. The urgency of this was underlined when Su Dawson's discovery of a small forest of Brazilian cherries springing up around a playground in the Secret Valley was discovered. This also will have to wait for our next assault on weeds in March.

When the Cherry team thought it was time to pack up and close the Second Valley base it was thought there was only a small amount of cleaning up to be done at the Lily clearing site. The volume of

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material there was astonishing and the density of weeds of all sorts harboured behind the Coral Sea Units of the Resort was even more amazing. We added several more Agave sisals to the load before heading to the dump, finishing this last delivery at noon.

FIDO's Equipment: Before the group could head off for the long promised visit to Yidney Scrub there was an hour of work for three men sorting out FIDO's amassed equipment and gear in the Council's storage shed. There are now separate identified boxes for different tools and categories. This may hopefully avoid future unnecessary duplication.

The group did however identify a few more items that need to be added including dye so that we can know what areas have been sprayed

New bow saws and blades and more sharpening implement such as files as well as a new extension shears, hand spray bottles, ladder and a brace and bit as well as tougher plastic bags

Yidney run: The last of the two monitoring poles were proposed for placement in Yidney Lake and this was the objective for the afternoon outing.

Happy Valley: We called into Happy Valley to assess the state of the weed problem there. The aggressive spread of the *Arbrotus* throughout Happy Valley in such a short time raised alarm bells and this is really a very serious and very aggressive pest that needs eliminating even if it might mean possibly removing any native *Arbrotus* in the process. It seems to be out of control. There was a discussion with Bree Jashin and the need for both a better means of sediment control as well as more monitoring of sediment movement in the valley.

Monitoring sites: We found water in Yidney Lake. One pole was planted with the base of the pole in water and about 30 cms above the water level near a large Blue gum. The second was on a shelf above the old lake level and seemed to be an area of normal sand movement. This will be assessed over coming years.

Umbrella Trees: The biggest discovery though was that there were umbrella trees growing between the road and the lake. While these were removed it raises a very scary question of how many other umbrella trees might be lurking in the bush many kilometres away from Happy Valley, the original centre of infestation.

The rest of the trip through Yidney Scrub and on to Lake Garawongera was pure delight but we firmed our support for Helen's thesis on the nexus between the occurrence of lantana and sedimentation.

Bush regeneration: 59 hours

Monitoring: 3 hours

Saturday, 1st December

Although we had resolved to have breakfast at 6.30 am. Most people had eaten by 5.30 and all finished by 6.00 am. This left time to shift further equipment to the shed and for some to engage in a litter drive along the beach.

We left at 7.55 am stopping in at the dump and then continuing through without trouble to Wangoolba Creek. After reinflating Supe's tyres and refuelling we went to have a very pleasant and relaxed lunch on the front verandah of Robin and Marcia Hyde's home overlooking the Mary River.

From there it was almost express with a loaded Supe to Brisbane where we arrived at 4.30 pm

Summary

Total work output 261 hours

Bush regeneration: 207 hours

Monitoring: 55 hours

The principle weeds dealt during the week with were:

Sisal Hemp	<i>Agave sisalana</i>
Asparagus Fern	<i>Asparagus aethiopicus</i>
Brazilian Cherry	<i>Eugenia uniflora</i>
Easter Cassia	<i>Senna pendula</i>
Fishbone Fern	<i>Nephrolepsi cordifolia</i>
Bush lily	<i>Clivia miniata</i>
Lantana	<i>Lantana camara</i>
Madeira Vine	<i>Anredera cordifolia</i>
Mother of Millions	<i>Bryophyllum delagoense</i>

Several other incidental weeds were also dealt with as the team moved through including Singapore Daisy, bridal fern and coral creeper and other significant infestations were noted for future weeding operations in 2013.

The estimates of hours worked are conservative and based only on physical hours working in the field. The many hours spent on preparing planning and provisioning for the week nor the hours spent on administration, consultation and liaising have not been included.

The sign shelter was relocated but time did not allow the display panels to be refurbished. This will be done next time with posters for FINIA, FIDO and a panel on Garden Waste. There was great rapport with the QPWS rangers who assisted shifting the shelter.

The front of the Eurong Resort has been tidied up and cleared of alien weeds. The target for the work in March will be the weeds at the back of the Coral Sea Units. There was also closer collaboration with the Council and the QPWS over the weeds.

The work of clearing the Second Valley has progressed significantly with maybe the remaining Brazilian cherries being cleared up in two days of work.

We have assessed and begun to address the extent of the weeds between the Resort and Second Valley with Fishbone ferns Mothers of millions being sprayed and Asparagus Fern being seriously assaulted.

There was more support from the residents and the Resort. We will be urging the Resort to develop a landscape plan with the planner working in consultation and cooperation of the Resort staff to develop strategies to prevent further infestation particularly in dealing with garden waste including lawn clippings.

A significant start to more measured monitoring had been established with the installation of Datum measuring poles and Photo monitoring poles at Lake McKenzie (Boorangoora) .

Pages describing the Lake McKenzie (Boorangoora) photo monitoring project on behalf of FINIA and FIDO's sediment monitoring project will be placed on FIDO's Web site (www.fido.org.au). Photos of the week will be found on John Sinclair's Picasa web site.