BREMER CATCHMENT ASSOCIATION INC.

August 2016

Special points of interest:

20th October 2016 Annual General Meeting

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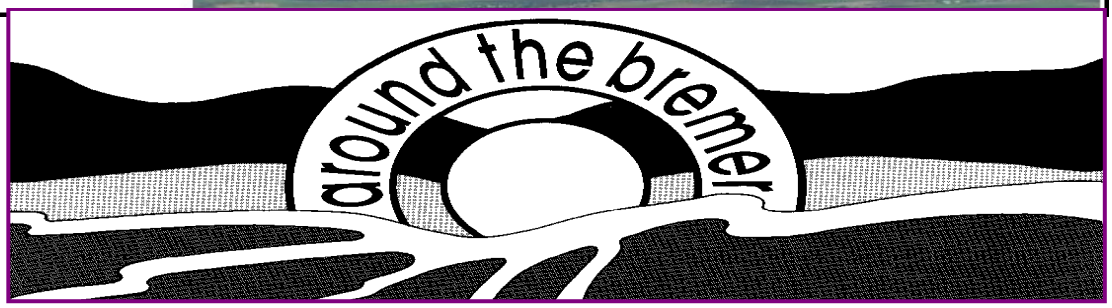

President's Message

Well the nights have been somewhat crispy, the mornings quite frosty, however it's a timely reminder for everyone that seasonal change is always evident.

Thankfully everyone survived the recent elections which went on for an extended period of time. Let's hope that this government again values the environment and provides opportunities for not-for-profit organisations like that of BCA to continue working on projects to make a difference to the community.

Bill Steentsma, Jocelyn Clarkson and I recently visited a Peak Crossing property situated on Purga Creek. Like many other landholders Len Allen's property has suffered massive flooding on his property in 2011 and then again in 2013. He has lost a significant amount of land through erosion (slump), so much so that much of the area we sighted had very steep riparian creek banks (i.e. 8 metres +).

The purpose of our visit and mission was to investigate 'first hand' the erosion situation with Len and to determine what may be done to deter further erosion. Len outlined the extensive work he has completed in the past, paying for all this work himself. Sadly natural flooding disasters like that experienced in 2011 and 2103 caused cloud's to burst over the headwaters of Purga Creek. This then provided a significant amount of fast flowing water to move through the creek with an immense amount of force.

As an intended project BCA will now research any applicable grants to assist in revegetating and controlling erosion in these damaged riparian areas. BCA Grants Officer (Jocelyn Clarkson) will maintain a close eye on any grants which may prove effective. Again I urge all BCA members to contact the BCA Secretary regarding possible projects in their region. Be aware that it would most beneficial for BCA members to be involved in the early stages of project consideration and perhaps some long term involvement.

Bill, Jocelyn and I also paid a visit to the Upper Mt Walker Hillside Erosion Project (UPWHEP) and were surprised at the amount of vegetation across the gully area. Recent rainfall in the area had been well received and showed great promise with the groynes holding up very well. I was greatly impressed with the response that the Vetiver grass has made in the gully area. Bill and I had planted this grass in the lower section of the gully, on a hot day when the soil was quite wet and clods of clay made planting that little bit more difficult. Much of this grass now stands over 1.5 metres tall and producing unfertile seed heads.

There has been a motion put forward at a meeting (and carried) with money set aside to purchase more Vetiver grass. This Vetiver grass will be planted in additional sections of the UPWHEP site. No doubt as the days begin to warm up Bill and I will again visit the site and carry out this work.

On another note the BCA would like to congratulate all the participants, finalists and winners in the 2016 Healthy Waterways Awards. The number of entries and various projects makes one feel quite pleased that awareness concerning caring for the environment is still quite strong. Well done to all.

Stay safe and drive steady on the roads.

Gary H Cochrane
President (Bremer Catchment Association)

New era for the management of land and waterways

A new era for the management of South East Queensland's land and waterways has been formally announced, with the official formation of Healthy Waterways and Catchments.

This new entity combines leading not-for-profit organisations **Healthy Waterways** and **SEQ Catchments**, whose members voted in the change on 28 June 2016.

A transition board for Healthy Waterways and Catchments has been announced to guide the organisation in its first year of operation. In the meantime, both organisations will continue to operate under their existing brands.

Taken from "Healthy Waterways News July 2016

The cooler nights and shorter days are now well and truly upon us as winter finally hits South East Queensland.

Green tips for winter

The cooler nights and shorter days are now well and truly upon us as winter finally hits South East Queensland.

However, this does not have to mean costly bills for extra heating and lighting. Take a look at these useful tips for being sustainable in your home during winter.

- Dress for the cooler weather and snuggle up by putting an extra blanket or doona on the bed, so you don't need to put the heater on.
- Prepare delicious hearty meals in the slow cooker, enough for two dinners, and reheat using the microwave.
- Wash your clothes in cold water and pop them on the clothes line in the morning to dry in the warm winter sun. This could save you up to $100 per year!
- Check your house for gaps in floors, doors, walls and window frames, then seal them up to keep the heat in and the cold out.
- Set the water heater to between 50 – 60 degrees Celsius. Every degree over 60 means significantly more energy consumption.

Set your room heaters between 18 – 20 degrees Celsius, and only heat the rooms being used.

Source: Indigiscapes (Redland City Council). Image: Alliance to save energy.

Commonwealth announces two years of funding for NLN

National Landcare Network Chair Terry Hubbard OAM met today with Environment Minister Greg Hunt as the Minister announced the continuation of funding for community Landcare for the next two years. The National Landcare Network (NLN) and its member organisations, the Landcare peak bodies from each state and territory, will together receive $1m per year until 2018 to continue their work supporting grass roots Landcare across the country.

Mr Hubbard said, 'The NLN is delighted that Minister Hunt has made this commitment to Landcare ahead of the election in July. Commonwealth Government investment has over recent years enabled the establishment of new Landcare representative bodies in those states and territories which did not previously have them, and strengthened capacity where they were already in place. We are especially pleased that Minister Hunt has announced two years of funding, as this will give our members more certainty in planning for the future which will in turn make them more able to service the Landcare groups and networks they represent.'

Volunteer Landcarers spend hundreds of thousands of hours each year working to protect Australia's unique species and habitats, and enhance our productive lands. The value of their contribution is incalculable, the state of our natural environments would be much poorer if it weren't for their efforts. At a time when the effects of inappropriate land management and climate variability are becoming painfully apparent through the coral bleaching events on the Great Barrier Reef, Landcare is an important part of the approach to tackle these challenges. The government's continued assistance will help us to ensure that Landcarers continue to receive the support their need to carry out their critical work.

From Enews—QWaLC June 2, 2016

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To all BCA Members and Friends

The 2016 Annual General Meeting will be held on

Thursday 20th October starting at 6.00pm

Membership for 2016/2027 is due in October

Safe burning is in the planning

Fire in the landscape

There is good evidence that much of the Australian landscape has been shaped by fire. Many of the land types that produce beef in south-east Queensland are eucalypt woodlands with varying degrees of development. Where the production system is based on native pastures, these land types are well adapted to fire. Land types that are quite sensitive to fire include rainforests and scrubs. Highly developed sown pastures, especially in the higher rainfall areas, can also be sensitive to fire.

Regardless of the type of country or its level of development, wildfires are damaging. A well-planned fire regime, conducted to avoid or actively prevent wildfires, is an important management tool for improving land condition and animal production.

Preparation for the day

A permit to light a fire that will cover an area of more than two metres is required from your local warden. This is a legal document that stipulates conditions for burning, such as notifying your neighbours of dates of burning and not burning when wind speeds exceed 25 km/hr.

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Graded firebreaks should be prepared well in advance to a minimum of two grader blade widths (3-4 m). An alternative to grading breaks may be the ability to safely burn breaks on the day
The width of breaks will depend on the intensity of the fire and the expected conditions on the day.

Equipment and assistance

Good communications, mobility, equipment and labour are essential for a safe burn. If something goes wrong, it will be necessary to arrange a base (such as the homestead) to operate as the organisation centre to arrange extra assistance, monitor weather conditions and direct containment efforts. To ensure the fire is correctly lit and contained and personnel are safe, the following checklist is suggested:

- Communications,
- Mobility,
- Fire lighting equipment,
- Fire suppression equipment,
- Safety equipment and Labour

Sustainable Dairy Farming

Harrisville Dairy farmers, Duncan, Ross and Morris McInnes do manage their business to a fine art. The business has many challenges to endure, such as market forces, cattle husbandry and weather conditions.

Morris (a long term BCA member) is not on his own grappling with these issues, reporting there are still 400 or so dairy farmers in Queensland. A massive drop from 3,200 dairy farmers 39 years ago.

The present McInnes management started in 1977 with 60 cows and now are milking 520 cows. This number varies according to time of year and the number of heifer replacements. The average production life of a cow is 6 to 7 years with the oldest finishing at 10 to 12 years. Average life time production is 30,000 litres, with 107,000 litres of milk being the highest life time performance by a single cow (finally sold as a 12 year old). The herd consists of 90% Friesian and 10% cross bred cows.

Milk production is affected the most through the late summer and autumn period**.** 'This is due to a combination of factors including; longer days in lactation, hotter weather, lower quality tropical grasses, increased fibre in the diet, and more parasites, particularly flies and ticks,' said Morris.

The herd is split into fresh and stale cows. 'The fresh cows are fed a larger amount of higher quality diet to maximise dry matter intake, while the stale cows spend more time grazing to keep the costs down,' said Morris. 'During summer the grazing component contributes from 10 to 40% to the fresh cow's diet and about 50% to the stale herd. Morris said 'Splitting the herd has also reduced the time cows stand around off feed by up to 3 hours per day.'

The aim of the nutrition program is to balance all feed aspects (especially protein, energy, fibre & minerals) to maximise the dry matter intake (DMI). 'All cows receive 2.5 – 3 kg grain in the dairy,' said Morris. 'Fresh cows are fed up to 7 kg of grain and 2 kg of cotton seed per day, while the stale cows currently receive around 4 kg grain per day. The fresh cows are fed the highest quality ration available from January to July, or until there is sufficient rye grass. This is when we feed out a higher protein rye, clover, barley and lucerne silage.'

Morris said 'We don't like cows calving over summer and avoid the mid-October to mid-January period. We stop the AI program around Christmas time. The heifers and young cows are calved from late January.'

Rye grass is the main winter pasture, with a small amount of clover. In spring rye, clover, forage barley and lucerne are ensiled into one pit. 'This is a valuable component of the fresh cow diet,' said Morris.

About 8 ha of Kikuyu are grazed in rotation for the night feed in summer and autumn. Because summer irrigation is sometimes limited, more water is being used to produce corn silage rather than summer grazing.'

Article by Morris McInnes, BCA Member

Business Snapshot

Herd: 470 Cows (90% Friesian, 10% cross bred)
Farm Size: 190 ha, 305 ha leased
Dairy: 16 double up herringbone
Production: 3.5 million litres 7400 L Rolling Herd Average
Feeding System: Partial Mixed Ration
Calving pattern: February to mid October
Irrigation: 800 ML from Moogerah dam
Soil type: Creek flats to forest ridges.
Pastures/Crops: Rye, Clover (W), Kikuyu, Cowpeas, Rhodes, Paspalum (S)

Key Strategies

Split herd
_ High quality temperate silage fed to fresh cows from January - June
_ Switching from forage sorghum to cow peas
_ Shade shed over feed pad
_ Calve heifers and young cows from late January
_ Allocating more irrigation water to corn silage rather than summer grazing

Life stock Management in and Around Waterways

You can pump river water to a header tank or small trough away from a riparian zone

Appropriate management of stock access to waterways is important to prevent riparian zone degradation and stream bank erosion. The following options can be presented as alternatives for managing stock access to waterways:

- Fencing to exclude stock from particularly degraded riparian areas;
- Create access points to waterways which allow stock to access a waterway at a particular location which has a graded slope and may be further protected by concrete or compacted graves;
- Using alternative water supplies, such as farm dams, in some areas;
- pumping river water to a header tank or small trough away from a riparian zone;
- Controlling the grazing pressure at particular times, such as when plants are starting their annual growth; and
- Allowing recovery periods for the riparian vegetation, as continual grazing pressure will result in severely degraded riparian areas.

There is also the opportunity for proposed NRM legislation to develop Codes of Practice for sustainable use of natural resources. This legislation may also have the ability to prevent management practices which are clearly unsustainable and which result in severe degradation of a natural resource.

Where voluntary mechanisms have proven to be unsuccessful and severe degradation is continuing, the NRM legislation may be able to issue restraining notices and penalties for inappropriate management practice.

Other options which may also suit a particular situation and needs include:

- Where bank stability and water quality are a priority, one or more off-stream watering points can be installed.
- Where stock access is down one bank only, a restricted accesspoint can be constructed.
- Where stock are requited to cross a watercourse, a bed level crossing, culvert or bridge can be constructed.

Managing stock access to waterways requires both planning and effort. Issues such as the cost of installing and maintaining fences, the potential for weed and pest infestations, and providing shade and alternative watering points need to be carefully considered.

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