BREMER CATCHMENT ASSOCIATION INC.

around the bremer

January 2021

Special points of interest:

The First Operational Meeting will be

18-02-2021

Inside this issue:

President's Corner	1
Eradication milestone passed—Fire Ants	2
Cats claw creeper brings biocontrol bugs to battle an invasive weed that is all but impossible to kill	3
The tiny beetle combing destructive weeds along our creek banks	4
Council turns the tide on dumped trolleys in watery grave	5
Blue gum on alluvial plains	6
Pepper Tree Gully Project— Lott's property	7

President's Corner by Bill Steentsma

. Another year has passed and another BCA Newsletter starts the New Year. Thank you Marianne and all who contributed last year!

A lot has happened within the Catchment since 1996. The year when Ipswich and Boonah Councils formed BCA, having a community group liaising with the wider community. "Great pioneers"!

This Newsletter is dealing with challenging and relevant topics, like "Under the Microscope" . This is the Fire Ants treatment group within greater Ipswich and other areas.

HLW, our partners, their Officers have been busy with their SeqWater funded project to combat the Cats Claw Creeper along the Bremer River. This is through the release of the Jewel Beetle, a biological controlled project, within difficult areas. Riparian areas along our waterways are most valuable; therefore vegetation management is of high priority.

The Bremer River has again been graded low in a health code. In order to improve the situation, this is also related to the overall "health" of the Catchment. All stakeholders, including businesses and the general public, have to release their environmental ignorance. Management actions, like continuation and expansion of community education programs are required. BCA plans to advise the public through workshops, guest speakers at meetings, newsletter and hands-on activities during 2021.

I wish you all a Happy and Prosperous 2021.

Eradication milestone passed—Fire Ants

National Red Imported Fire Ant Eradication Program

"We are working on multiple scientific approaches, which could be game-changers in the long fight to rid Australia of the fire ant menace once and for all."

We are pleased to announce that we are on track with our eradication treatment in our new target area (Area 2) including parts of greater Ipswich and western Logan.

We are applying an accelerated treatment regime, which includes combinations of slow-acting insect growth regulator and fast-acting baits. Both products are not harmful to humans or animals and their active ingredients are widely used in mosquito control programs and flea collars.

This follows three years of intensive treatment in Area 1, including parts of the Lockyer Valley and Scenic Rim regions. Our focus for Area 1 has now moved to clearance — the 'mopping up' stage of our fire ant eradication plan. This means replacing broad-scale aerial and ground treatments with more targeted surveillance and spot treatment, when required.

Surveillance across South East Queensland over the past few months was successful. This has included parts of Area 1 and the Western Boundary, with more than 13 000 ha of surveillance completed since mid-June 2020.
Find out more about our 10-year fire ant eradication plan

Super minds versus super pest

Fire ant bait that can be used in wet weather, backyard bait stations, interfering with ant DNA and spotting fire ants from the sky are just some of the projects being perfected by some of the best scientific minds in the world.

Our Science Leader Dr Ross Wylie said every available weapon was being used in the battle against one of the world's most invasive pests.
"Fire ants are tough, highly-adaptable and relentless — we have to outsmart them at every turn," he said.

Cats claw creeper brings biocontrol bugs to battle an invasive weed that is all but impossible to kill By Jennifer Nichols

South American beetles and bugs are being used as biocontrols in the battle against a serious environmental weed that is spreading through coastal Queensland and New South Wales.

The cats claw creeper was introduced to Australia as an ornamental plant and aggressively strangles everything in its path beside waterways and in rainforests from Sydney to far north Queensland.

This year's stunning spring show of yellow flowers will be followed by millions of seeds spreading on papery wings by wind and water.

The cats claw creeper in full flower

The cats claw creeper has smothered all the native vegetation on this steep hill near Gympie

The cats claw creeper was introduced to Australia as an ornamental plant and aggressively strangles everything in its path

Cats claw has smothered a steep site at Fishermen's Pocket Road, west of Gympie, carpeting the forest floor and using its three-clawed tendrils to hook onto native vegetation to climb high into the canopy.

"To get our guys out here to try and even begin to maintain it, cutting it back and spraying it, is just too expensive," said Gympie Landcare's biocontrol technical officer Yvonne Hennell.

"We don't have the manpower, time or money to do that, so insects are our other option."

The jewel beetle is a natural predator of the cats claw creeper in South America.*(ABC Rural: Jennifer Nichols)*

The tiny sap-sucking jewel beetles and tinged bugs that are being bred in a poly tunnel at Gympie Landcare have a big job ahead of them.

They will not kill the creeper, but they will help reduce the vigour of widespread infestations by attacking its leaves.

"We can harvest 5,000 jewel beetles per moth, 3,000 in winter," Ms Hennell said.

"In the last 12 months we have bred and released 60,000 jewel beetles and they're breeding out in the wild too,"

The tiny beetle combating destructive weeds along our creek banks

Healthy Land and Water is currently delivering one of the most extensive invasive vine weed management projects undertaken in South East Queensland. With funding provided by Seqwater, up to 100km of creek bank will be cleared of destructive weeds such as Cats Claw Creeper and Madeira over five years.

The project is helping to combat these invasive vine species through the release of a biological control agent –- specifically, the Jewel Beetle, native to South America. The beetle attacks the weeds and given enough time, will weaken the plant, reducing seed set and allowing other pathogens to take hold and reduce the weed's vigour. While biological control agents will never destroy the host plant entirely, their presence lowers the impact of the weed, giving the native vegetation a chance to recover and eventually outcompete the weed.

Invasive vine weeds pose a huge threat to deep rooted remnant trees and shrubs and are capable of overgrowing and completely smothering trees which will eventually die. The loss of trees along a creek bank can be detrimental, causing erosion, lowering water quality and reducing biodiversity and available habitat for native insects, birds and animals.

Usually vine weeds are manually cut and treated with appropriate herbicides classified for use in aquatic areas. However, because of the extent of the vine weed infestations in the creeks in South East Queensland, it is inevitable weeds will flourish outside of the areas where manual removal which risks the reseeding of the cleared areas.

Where conventional control methods can be expensive, difficult and very labour intensive, costs associated with biological control raising and release remain relatively low. This financial year more than 58,000 Jewel Beetles have already been released at 16 locations across South East Queensland bringing the total beetles released to 90,000.

Healthy Land and Water purchases the Jewel Beetles from three community-owned Landcare Groups: Gympie Landcare, Moololah Landcare and Gold Coast Catchments Association. By supporting these community groups, we are ensuring the rearing facilities remain well maintained and productive. This in turn enables the groups to continue growing and releasing agents into infestations outside our project area.

The more Jewel Beetles released, the better the chance we have of slowing the growth of destructive weeds threatening our creek banks.

Notice the beetle damage on the leaves?

Council turns the tide on dumped trolleys in watery grave

Ipswich City Council has kicked off a Bremer River blitz to remove abandoned trolleys.
Following several community requests and complaints about the number of shopping trolleys accumulating in the Bremer River below the bridge at Riverlink, council engaged a river clean-up crew to remove all of the metal monsters from the water.
Day one (18 December) resulted in about 30 trolleys plucked out of the river and off the muddy banks.
The on-going blitz is being conducted in partnership with Healthy Land and Water.
Council's Environment and Sustainability Committee Chair Cr Russell Milligan said council had identified the shopping trolleys accumulating in the Bremer River to be a growing issue, despite increasing security measures being undertaken by retailers of the area.
"Council's appreciation for the health and cleanliness of our river is shared by local residents, with significant concern expressed from community members about trolleys being dumped into the river," he said.
"While rivers like the Bremer are a state-owned asset, council takes the responsibility of rubbish removal for the benefit of the environment and community, despite not being obliged to do so.
"Abandoned shopping trolleys reduce the amenity of the local area, can cause safety hazards and damage the environment, especially if they end up in waterways.
"Council currently has a significant focus on investment in improving our waterways and has commissioned a clean-up program to remove these trolleys, along with any other rubbish encountered throughout the river.
Cr Milligan said the dumping of trolleys and rubbish into the river is an on-going issue, and we asked for community support in discouraging these actions.
"Council can seize trolleys and does so if required. There have been no changes to council's approach to managing abandoned trolleys," he said.
"Council officers continue to respond to service requests regarding abandoned trolleys, engaging retailers and their trolley collection contractors to achieve the best outcome and recovery of the trolleys.
"Over the past 12 months, council has collected 34 trolleys. These are currently impounded at a council depot and relevant retailers have been advised via an impoundment notice."
Healthy Land and Water CEO Julie McLellan said the partnership was important to help mitigate the impacts of litter on waterway health.
"By collecting floating and bank-bound litter from the Bremer River, we not only immediately improve the local amenity of this well-loved river, but we also remove this pollutant from out of the waterway, ensuring that it does not cause harm to wildlife or impede the flow of the river," Ms McLellan said.
"Dumped shopping trolleys are a significant hazard when they end up in our waterways, and we urge people to consider the negative impacts that dumping litter in waterways has on the health and wellbeing of the river itself, and also on the communities that these important natural assets flow through."

Blue gum on alluvial plains (Ref: SEQ Catchments and Co)

Land Resource Area	Fine textured alluvial plains
Landform	Flat to gently undulating alluvial plains, and terraces (0-3% slope) along rivers and creeks.
Broad vegetation description	Remnants of Queensland blue gum woodland with a grassy understorey. Also Swamp mahogany, Moreton Bay ash, Gum topped box and Broad-leaved Apple.
Native trees and shrubs	Queensland blue gum *(Eucalyptus tereticomis)* (T). Gum topped box (*E. moluccanas*), (T), Moreton Bay ash *(Corymbia tessellaris)*, Swamp box (Lophostemnon suave *(Corymbia olens)*, Brisbane wattle (*Acacia fimbreata*), Maiden's wattle (*A. maidenii*), Hickory wattle *(A. disperrima)*, Black tea-tree *(Meleleuca bracteata),* Broad-leaced apple (*Angophora subvelutina*). (T) = Suitable timber species.
Pasture composition	
Desirable pasture species	Queensland blue grass, forest blue grass, kangaroo grass, black spear grass, Rhodes and creeping blue grass, scented top, paspalum and native legumes.
Intermediate pasture species	Tambookie grass, pitted blue grass, barbed wire grass, couch grass, native panic, umbrella grass, spring grass, slender bamboo grass and liverseed grass.
Legumes	Rhynchosia, creeping tick trefoil, glycine pea and woolly glycine.
Suitable sown pastures	Rhodes (Callide), creeping blue grass, angleton grass, leucaena, clovers, medics Pangola paspalum, kikuyu, Setaria, panic Lucerne, Siratro, burgundy bean, clovers, medics and lotononis (coastal).
Introduced weeds	Chinese celtis, lantana, green cestrum, annual ragweed, blue heliotrope, lippia and fireweed.

Pepper Tree Gully Project by Jenni Lott

This is a progress report of a recent BCA project. The work has been done on the Lott's property, all before the gully has been fenced.

Photo shows the western end of the repaired contour banks; nearly the highest point of the banks.

Contour banks have been refurbished and realigned where necessary to allow drainage to gully to be remedied (prior to the fence being installed)

Repaired contour banks are east of the previous photo. You can see the severe erosion gully in the middle of the photo.

Area between the contours is ready to be planted with a mix of grass and legume seed.

Contours are feeding into this dam that was a salt pan area with tunnel erosion and a small sump. The refurbished area is now this dam.

Photo shows an area where matting and rocks have been used to slow the water entry. The dam banks have been sown with a mix of grass and legumes (vetches) and growing well.

Posts and wire have been purchased and have been delivered and are placed along fence line ready for installation.

The fence line has been pegged.

Access ramps in and out of gully placed so fence line can be accessed for construction and maintenance.

We have closed up large areas of land to encourage grass cover and sown a mix of improved and native grasses and vetch seed, and forage sorghum (cover crop). The drought really reduced growth rates but when we did receive rain the country is slowly recovering.

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