BREMER CATCHMENT ASSOCIATION INC.

June 2017

Special points of interest:

Next BCA Operational Meeting 13th July 2017

Please watch the changed date

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around the bremer

President's Message by Bill Steentsma

SEQCatchments Members Association Board meeting (25th May) was a great opportunity to meet other representatives of their respective Catchments. The meeting was held at the Mt. Nimmel Community Hall, Austinville. Our BCA members, Morris McInnes, and Roy Steinheuer respectively representing the Qld. Dairy Organisation and the Natural Area Management Association. It indicates the broad expertise we have in our BCA organisation! With respect to the objectives of the majority of representatives, I felt several do not include, within their focus, good agriculture land.

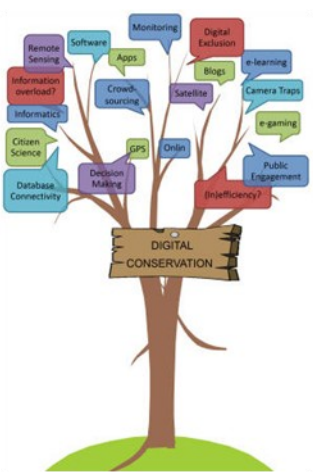
Citing World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) Climate Smart Agriculture News (Autumn Newsletter), *"pleasantly amazed by the sudden attention agriculture and related issues have been receiving in major global meetings and in the media"*. At the meeting, several issues were discussed i.e. Raising the profile of HLW.

BCA was notified to have been successful with the Grant application for the "Francis Street Bushland (Scouts) Project". Jocelyn our Grants Officer did a fantastic job. Also, the tireless help by Brian towards this application is very much appreciated.

Brian and I, met local State Member, Jim Madden MP to receive it at the project site.

From l to r:Jim Madden MP, Bill Steentsma, Brian Pepperall and Ken Millers

On the 2nd June I attended the EnviroForum:"Nature Conservation in the Digital Age", presented by Ipswich City Council.



The Facilitator and Manager of the Ipswich Innovation Hub, Fire Station 101 was Mr. Chad Renando Esq.

Qualified speakers presented topics i.e. Robotic Technology in Practice, Embracing Technology, Tracking Together/Working Together, Marketing your Digital Campaigns, Citizen Science and Areal Technology. My thoughts are that we will hear more about Digital changes in years to come.

Fireweed (*Senecio madagascariensis)*

It has been brought to my attention that an outbreak of fireweed is occurring in the Bremer catchment areas.

"Around the Bremer" (Dec. 2014) published a short article about Fireweed.

Native to southern Africa, fireweed is a daisy-like herb. Fireweed was first recorded in Australia in the Hunter Valley in 1918. It is thought to have arrived in the ballast of ships trading between Australia and Europe via Capetown. Fireweed spread slowly at first, but, in the past 30 years, has rapidly increased its range, most likely aided by modern transport and rural practices.

Fireweed can easily be mistaken for closely related, native *Senecio* species, particularly *Senecio pinnatifolius.(See Picture)*

Fire Weed

Senecio pinnatifolius

Description

Annual or short-lived perennial herb.
Plant varies greatly in size and shape depending on conditions.
In dry harsh conditions, may be less than 20cm tall with narrow leaves, no branching and few flowers.
In ideal conditions, grows up to 50cm tall with multiple branches, long, wide leaves (6cm x 2cm) and about 100 flowers.
Leaves are generally 2-6cm long, alternate, dark green, with serrated margins.
Flowers are bright yellow, daisy-like, with diameter of about 2cm, producing up to 100 seeds each.

Habitat

Seeds germinate in mild, warm conditions with light and moisture.
Light infestations can produce 1 million seeds per hectare.
Dry summer followed by autumn or winter rains leads to heavy infestations.
Competes with pasture species.
Toxic to livestock, particularly cattle and horses, causing illness, slow growth and poor conditioning, which can result in death.
May taint meat and milk.
Seeds spread by wind, stock, in pasture seed, hay, turf, mulch and with stock transport.

Legal requirements

Fireweed is a restricted invasive plant under the *Biosecurity Act 2014*.
The Act requires everyone to take all reasonable and practical steps to minimise the risks associated with invasive plants and animals under their control. This is called a general biosecurity obligation (GBO).
At a local level, each local government must have a biosecurity plan that covers invasive plants and animals in its area. This plan may include actions to be taken on certain species. Some of these actions may be required under local laws.

Contact your local government for more information.

Fireweed is a restricted invasive plant under the *Biosecurity Act*

Control of Fireweed

There are various ways to control Fireweed.

Physical control

Prevent establishment by ensuring dense cover of pasture in autumn and winter.
Remove small infestations immediately.

Mechanical control

Chip out, bag and burn isolated plants. Wear gloves when handling fireweed plants.
Slashing is usually not effective, as it increases poisoning risk to stock and only delays flowering and seeding.
Cultivation is not recommended.
Fireweed remains toxic after being cut and becomes more attractive to stock.

Herbicide control

Herbicides are most effective if sprayed before plants reach maturity. However, application during flowering will be effective if higher recommended rates of herbicide are applied.
Research is ongoing for herbicide controls, including residual control methods. Trials have shown herbicide application in the autumn period during April provides good control. Before undertaking such programs, landholders are advised to determine infestation levels.
Effective application method in an open pasture situation is a boom spray. Follow this up by spot spraying, or pulling and bagging any regrowth or missed plants.
Boom spraying is also suitable for follow-up treatments, as it allows destruction of immature plants, which may otherwise grow to re-seed the area before they can be noticed. Unfortunately, fire weed control is often not considered until the highly visible flowers appear and it is too late for effective control with herbicide.

Biological control Organisms can be found attacking fireweed, but any effect they have is temporary and isolated.
Orange rust (*Puccinia lagenophorae*) is common and often affects fireweed, particularly in lower country.
Blue stem borer moth (*Patagoniodes farinari*) is also common, but larvae usually develop too slowly to have an impact.
Two moths imported from Madagascar have been host tested. In controlled tests they were found to feed on important non-target plants so no releases were made.
Other potential biological control agents have been identified, but rigorous testing is needed to ensure that they do not feed on closely related Australian native plants. Investigations in South Africa are presently being undertaken.

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A Synopsis from the Bremer River Blog Autumn 2017

Dani Andlemac from the Bremer River Fund.

What's New within the Network?

The Bremer River Network has had some very exciting progress over the past few months. Behind the scenes, we are busily creating a webpage for the Bremer River Network, and have created a BRN email address. The BRN has also been actively networking with volunteers, trainees and students, to provide engagement opportunities for the Network. The Network is providing students and volunteers with the opportunity to link up with our fantastic Landcare and Catchment groups and local volunteers. The Network hopes to obtain a mutually beneficial outcome, whereby volunteers gain industry experience and are given the opportunity to participate in various exciting projects. Meanwhile, local groups will benefit from the enthusiasm and hard work of these inspired individuals. As they say… many hands make for light work. We look forward to seeing the buzz of productivity grow in the Bremer Catchment over the coming months.

Future of $1 billion National Landcare Program secure—9th May 2017 - Press release—a synopsis

The Coalition Government is investing more than $1 billion over 5 years in the National Landcare Program (NLP)
The NLP is jointly administered by the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources and the Department of the Environment and Energy

Minister Joyce said the program continues to focus on practical, on-the-ground ways to improve issues like soil health, erosion management and water quality, making the program relevant to all land managers—but especially farmers.

"Our farmers manage about 53 per cent of our landmass and with global demand for food and fibre set to double by 2050 it's important that we keep Landcare front and centre to assist them to manage our natural resources," Minister Joyce said

Fast facts:

- **In Australia, there are around 5400 Landcare groups and 100,000 active volunteers in those groups.**
- **Over 80 per cent of Australian farmers are involved in Landcare.**
- **The annual economic cost of managing pest animals in Australia is estimated at about $1 billion. The cost of managing weeds in Australia is four times that, at $4 billion.**
- **More than 80 per cent of our mammals and 90 per cent of our trees, ferns and shrubs occur nowhere else on earth.**
- **The Great Barrier Reef is a World Heritage Site encompassing 3000 coral reefs. It is worth approximately $5.2 billion to the tourism economy alone.**

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Healthy Waterways News

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.

View the updated Frequently Asked Questions on our website for more information

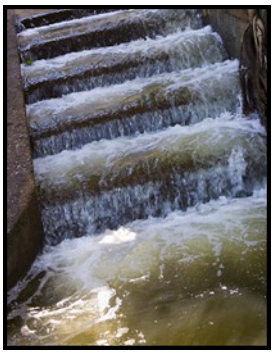
www.seqcatchments.com.au/news/latest-update

Source Protection at Seqwater by Simon Brown – Seqwater

In recent years, Seqwater has commissioned an internal team which works to develop projects aimed at Source Protection. Source Protection is a term developed in the Drinking Water supply industry. It generally refers to the process of understanding what risks are present in the source raw water and then targeting (where practical/cost effective) the high risk issues with the aim of reducing the likelihood that contaminants will overwhelm the water treatment system.

Key risks that Seqwater is working to address in catchments across the region include pathogens, chemicals and turbidity. Activities to manage these risks have included;

Riparian engineering and revegetation to improve bank resilience
Dairy/intensive livestock property improvement programs
Riparian canopy killer weed control (i.e. cats claw and madeira vine)
Riparian stock management programs.



Protecting our water assets

Cats Claw is a South American vine weed which quickly smothers and kills mature riparian vegetation.

Disclaimer

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Cats Claw Control in Reynolds and Coulsons Creek

by Simon Brown – Seqwater

Over recent years Seqwater has invested in Cats Claw control upstream of its storages in a range of catchments, including Reynold and Coulsons creek (upstream of Moogerah Dam). Seqwater's focus on riparian vine weeds like Cats Claw is based on the premise that existing riparian vegetation is extremely important in reducing creek bank erosion – and will take a long time and significant investment to replace. As such, Cats Claw control is seen as a preventative measure aimed at ensuring that the turbidity reduction service that our existing riparian ecosystems provide continues long into the future.

Cats Claw is a South American vine weed which quickly smothers and kills mature riparian vegetation. It was introduced into South East Queensland as an ornamental and has quickly established itself particularly in riparian forests. Generally speaking, control is aimed initially at mature (seeding) vines. They are cut and pasted with herbicide. Follow up treatment is essential as the plants have a large tuber/energy storage from which they can reshoot very quickly with the right conditions.

Contractor shows off one of the largest cats claw vines they have seen – probably one of the original vines planted in the Moogerah catchment.

Simon Brown – Seqwater Source Protection Project Planner

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