BREMER CATCHMENT ASSOCIATION INC.

around the bremer

June 2018

Special points of interest:

Our next Meeting in 2018 is on 21st June 2018 Everyone welcome

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Have you all paid your BCA Membership for the current year?

President's Message by Bill Steentsma

This is another bi-monthly issue for our newsletter. Apart from our members, the Executive has also decided to forward a copy to some of our stakeholders, e.g. the two Councils within the Catchment.

I have been attending two Bremer River Network meetings, of which the latest was held in Boonah. The idea was to meet other environmental group leaders within the two shires.

Myself, as a Bremer Catchment nominated representative on the Healthy Land & Water Board, have the opportunity to liaise on their behalf, when major landuse issues arise.

On the 26th of May at the Francis Street Project, we had the first planting day. Members of the Booval Rotary Club assisted us. It was also their "Rotary Club Annual Tree-planting" volunteer community project. They decided to take the opportunity to help improve the Scout's property to their benefit.

Thank you Mark Waud, from Healthy Land and Water, for having been our Guest Speaker at our May meeting.

Tree planting at Francis Street Project

CRT FarmFest 2018;

When: Tuesday 5th, Wednesday 6th & Thursday 7th June 2018.

Not long now until CRT FarmFest 2018!

Queensland's premier primary industry field day, CRT FarmFest, is proudly sponsored by your very own Farmcraft Rural and Dalby Rural Supplies. The massive agricultural event showcases the latest in agricultural innovation and technology. With over 2,500 suppliers showcasing everything from brush cutters to electric fences, harvesters and tanks, this is an event you won't want to miss! Also if you purchase any product from the CRT site you will receive an entry in the draw to win a trailer full of products...so why not head to CRT FarmFest 2018?!

This year CRT FarmFest will have special edition blue cattle canes available for $5 with all profits going to charity partner 'Dolly's Dream'. This charity aims to raise awareness of bullying, anxiety, depression and youth suicide and we are so very proud to be able to get on board and support this cause!

Come and visit our CRT site at CRT FarmFest 2018 to view the latest and greatest in agricultural products and technology and to take advantage of some of the fantastic FarmFest specials we have on offer!

CRT FarmFest 2018;

When: Tuesday 5th, Wednesday 6th & Thursday 7th June 2018.

Where: Kingsthorpe Park, Warrego Highway, 20km west of Toowoomba.

Open Hours: 9am-5pm Tuesday & Wednesday, 9am - 4pm Thursday. *Car park gates open from 7:30am daily.

Entry: $5 per person for adults, seniors, pensioners & children 12+. Children under 12 are free.

Weed Spotters in action: A new cactus for Queensland

While on a recent routine weed inspection, Logan City Council's Liam Gill noticed an unusual looking cactus over the fence on a neighbouring property. Liam contacted his local Weed Spotter regional coordinator and Biosecurity Officer Lyn Willsher for assistance. The team sent photos and a specimen to the Queensland Herbarium where their suspect cactus was confirmed to be wheel cactus (*Opuntia robusta*), a Prohibited species under the *Biosecurity Act 2014*.

While common in Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia, wheel cactus has never before been recorded growing in Queensland. The Logan specimen has now been destroyed and it is hoped that its early detection and eradication mean that for now at least, we have stopped it from becoming a highly invasive pest in Queensland too.

If you think you have seen wheel cactus in your region, please contact the Queensland Herbarium on **(07) 3896 9323**, email a photo to:

Queensland.Herbarium@ qld.gov.au or contact

Biosecurity Queensland on **13 25 23**.

Wheel cactus (*Opuntia robusta*), a Prohibited species under the *Biosecurity Act 2014*.

Members of the Weed Spotters Network aim to find, identify and document new occurrences of potential weeds at an early stage so that preventative actions can be taken. Are you ready to start spotting weeds in your region?

Weeds of South East QLD and Northern NSW

Weeds of South-East Queensland and Northern NSW is an invaluable resource to advisors, researchers, students, landcare and bush care volunteers, weed control officers and anyone interested in learning more about the weeds of south-eastern Queensland and north-eastern New South Wales.

This mobile app includes:
A Lucid identification key to over 700 garden and environmental weeds found in south-eastern Queensland and north-eastern New South Wales.

For more information go to: Weeds of South East QLD (on the internet)

NATURE CAN BE GOOD FOR FARMERS

The enhancement of Scenic Rim's environment presents an opportunity for primary producers to develop a strong regional nature based brand to assist local producers to create new and niche markets.

Scenic Rim farmers face a challenge; the sector is changing with markets requiring greater volumes from the farm at lower prices. Scenic Rim farmers often find it difficult to expand to obtain the efficiencies of scale required to make a farm profitable as local land prices are currently being driven by population growth and urban encroachment.

The enhancement of Scenic Rim's environment presents an opportunity for primary producers to develop a strong regional nature based brand to assist local producers to create new and niche markets.

The Scenic Rim already produces a wide range of premium local products including meat, fruit, vegetables, nuts and dairy, along with processed and packaged food and beverages that are recognised in Australian markets.

The region has an evolving food and wine culture, a strong environmental ethos and a wide variety of culinary tourism experiences that help showcase our premium food products to local, domestic and international tourists. But to gain and keep a premium nature brand the region will need strong natural resource management practices together with environmental protection frameworks.

These credentials will support our quality food and wine reputation across a range of products, from niche and novel brands, to high-quality bulk commodities, and tourism experiences.

Positioning the Scenic Rim agricultural sector to better reflect its inherent quality will help producers achieve price premiums, attract market share for food products and encourage investment and development in our food and beverage sectors.

Joshua Baker

Team leader - Environmental Policy and Services

Scenic Rim Regional Council

What Factors have Affected Land Degradation in the Catchment?

Climate

The Bremer Catchment has a sub-tropical, sub-humid climate. That is, the summers are warm to hot and wet and the winters are cold and dry.

Rainfall varties from about 680 mm to 1250 mm per annum. The average annual rainfall is about 880 mm.

A high proportion of rainfall comes from the 40 or 50 thunderstorms occurring each year. This rainfall is variable and of medium high intensity.

A combination of the heavy rainfall during these thunderstorms (which occur in late spring to early summer) and the farming practice of leaving the soil fallow (bare) at this time, leads to rill and gully erosion.

Raindrops falling onto exposed soil expend their kinetic energy by breaking up soil crumbs and moving earth particles. Heavy rainfall can also cause the soil surface to become sealed. As a result the infiltration rate decreases and the runoff rate increases. Thus it is important to keep the soil covered with vegetation to protect it from soil erosion.

Sheet erosion is the major form of land degradation recorded in the catchment.

Other forms of erosion such as rills and gullies are also caused by water running down unvegetated slopes.

Burning of dry pasture occurs throughout the region. This practice can lead to extreme sheet erosion if pasture is burnt when vegetation is very dry.

Using land according to its capability: the steeper slopes and shallower soils suitable for growing pastures, and the lower slopes and deeper soils suitable for growing crops.

Sheet erosion is the major form of land degradation recorded in the catchment.

Bare soil under trees is susceptible to erosion

Roadside Erosion

Given the storm intensities in Queensland, a major problem with management of roads is that of runoff and the destructive potential it represents.

Roadside soil erosion is one of the many headaches a Council or Main Road Engineer has to deal with. I speak from experience when I was in the DPI as a soil Conservationist. We had to present a good engineering plan suitable for the road and the neighbouring Farm plan. (by Bill Steentsma)

Road construction and maintenance authorities are charged with responsibility for managing roads and road corridors. However, their activities can affect the properties adjoining the road corridor. The question is how to operate so as to maximise the benefit to all parties. By using a co-ordinated, flexible approach, road standards can be maintained while utilising the roadside ecosystems and water resources for other purposes.

Given the storm intensities in Queensland, a major problem with management of roads is that of runoff and the destructive potential it represents. However these costly and troublesome runoff problems can be reduced or eliminated by:

- Simple changes to road construction and maintenance techniques
- Co-operation between owners of adjoining land, and road construction and maintenance authorities.

Roads and road corridors need to be seen as an important component of land scape management. The management of both soil and water resources of road reserves, is more difficult if road authorities have to operate in isolation from the surrounding land.

Integrated management is a very practical approach.

Disclaimer

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