

Natural Matters

NEWSLETTER FOR BURNETT MARY REGIONAL GROUP

Autumn 2014 EDITION 34



Planning for Change

BMRG is revising its NRM Plan in order to help direct future investment in NRM within a framework which considers the potential impacts of climate variability and change

Full story on page 4.



IN THIS ISSUE...



04 Revisiting plans to improve water quality



05 Taking turtles off the menu



06 BMRG employs 8 local job seekers



07 Banking on the Baffle - Systems repair in the Baffle Basin



09 BMRG Communications & Engagement survey



11 Bunya People's Community Open Day

At the Helm

The previous 12 months have given us an insight into what we might face as a result of the impacts of ongoing climate variability. Record flooding, followed by a dry winter, exceedingly warm spring weather, a drought declaration across almost 80% of Queensland. Thankfully however, many parts of our region have received some late season rainfall.

The variability in our climate is most felt by our region's primary producers who rely on consistent weather patterns for their ongoing survival.

It is against this backdrop, and with its consequences for our regional communities and natural resource resilience in mind, that we have been rolling out our programs.

Flood recovery by returning our agricultural lands to productivity has been high on our agenda. We are also embarking on the second phase of the Reef Rescue program including the establishment of two Systems Repair projects for the Baffle and Burrum River catchments to mitigate the impacts of sediment and nutrient entering the Great Barrier Reef Lagoon.

Along with the other 56 Regional Bodies around Australia, BMRG is reviewing our regional Natural Resource Management (NRM) plan with the view of it guiding potential future Commonwealth investment in our region. The Burnett Mary NRM and Climate Action Plan 2015, as it will be known, is a capture of the previous planning efforts of the 'Wide Bay Burnett NRM Plan' and the 'Country to Coast 2005 Plan'. The latest climate change information will be incorporated into the plan in addition to the latest information about the status and challenges our region's nrm assets currently face. A Regional Investment Strategy will be developed and will contain actions that we help our land managers adapt to the increasing issues within natural resource management.

Many of you took the opportunity to participate in our recent Community Engagement survey. This was an excellent exercise to get feedback and ideas on how we can improve our services in the future. I would like to take this opportunity to thank those who took the time to let us know their thoughts. We have already identified areas where we can improve our communications and engagement activities and look forward to implementing these and other changes.

I hope you enjoy this edition of our newsletter which will give you a sense of the great work we are doing to protect our region's land and water resources.

Penny Hall CEO



Board Matters Proposed Constitutional & Organisational Change

On behalf of the Board, Chair, Lindsay Cunneen recently distributed correspondence to all members to provide clear information on the status of the proposed constitutional and organisational change. These changes are the result of a series of member's meetings and the findings from the BMRG member's survey distributed late last year. The proposed changes have now been approved and recommended by the Board. Prior to this, proposed changes were forwarded to a corporate legal firm to ensure compliance under the Corporation's Act. We encourage all members to familiarise themselves with the proposed changes so that they can be considered at a general member's meeting in June 2014. The date and venue for this meeting will be sent to all members before the end of May 2014.

BMRG Staff Update



Stacey Hodge Wetlands Project Officer and INFFER

Stacey has a degree in Ecology & Conservation Biology and has worked for the Brisbane

City Council delivering catchment management programs. She has also worked as a Better Waterways Coordinator with Burnett Catchment Care Association (BCCA) and has held positions in freshwater and turtle management programs.

Stacey joins our Biodiversity & Coastal team and will be working to improve the health of our region's important wetland ecosystems.



Caroline Haskard Biodiversity Extension Officer Baffle

Caroline has been a land owner in the South Burnett for 25 years and has been involved in

community based NRM with BCCA and the Nanango & District Landcare. She has worked extensively in grazing and broad acre cropping systems and intensive horticulture production. She is well known in the region as a botanical and natural systems specialist and fire management expert.

Caroline is working to support landholders in the Baffle Basin implementing projects that aim to improve ecological condition and water quality.

Planning for Climate Change - Its Everyone's Business



Along with most of the 56 other regional bodies for NRM in Australia, BMRG has embarked upon a review of our regional NRM Plan to help guide future investment in NRM in our region.

The updated plan will be known as **"The Burnett Mary NRM & Climate Adaptation Plan 2015"**.

It will draw on work done recently on the Wide Bay Burnett Environment & NRM Plan 2012 - 2031 a multi partner collaboration made up of regional government, industry, community and environmental groups.

Significantly, the new plan will incorporate the latest science and understanding about climate variability and its potential impacts for our region's natural resources.

Another feature of the plan is a focus on the regional economy and developing a basis by which economic development and the challenges presented by climate variability are considered within the planning process.

To accomplish this, a wide scale engagement strategy is underway beginning with the BMRG Climate Summit on June 3. This will bring together foremost experts in climate science, carbon abatement and sequestration and representatives from local governments from other states who are currently implementing strategies and policies that address climate variability and change.

The engagement process will also involve key landuse regulation and economic development agencies as well as investment stakeholders, regional community and industry groups.

Our community's participation is an important part of the process. Your feedback will also be sought to ensure that everyone gets to have a say in how our region develops socially and economically in a landscape where climate variability and change are an important consideration for this region's future.

CONTACT

Rachel Lyons T: 07 5313 3489
M: 0417 078 432 E: rachel.lyons@bmrq.org.au

Burnett Mary Climate Summit

Climate experts from across the country will gather in Maryborough at the Brolga Theatre on the 3rd of June for the **Burnett Mary Climate Summit – the Science & Economics of Change**.



Professor David Karoly advisor to the Australian Government on Climate Change and regular panelist on the ABC's Q&A

This exciting event will feature addresses by atmospheric scientists, climatologists, climate extension specialists, ecologists and marine biologists to advance local debate on climate related issues.

Topics that will be discussed throughout the one day summit include: fire management challenges, projected economic impacts, community health, sea level rise, local government examples of implementing climate policy, climate adaptation and mitigation opportunities.



Dr Kathleen McInnes from the CSIRO Marine & Atmospheric Research Flagship will be talking about projected sea level rise in the Great Sandy Strait

Professor David Karoly from the University of Melbourne will provide the keynote address. Professor Karoly is a noted climate change authority and advisor to the Australian Government on responding to climate change and also a regular panellist on the ABC program Q&A. He will address specifically, the

cost of the impacts of climate change on our economy and community.

Who Should Attend?

The summit is a great opportunity for our region's community leaders to understand how best to position themselves and plan for a future where climate variability is a reality.

Registrations are open now

www.bmrqclimatesummit.bpt.me

Water Quality Improvement Plans Revision

BMRG is currently in the process of revising our water quality improvement plans (WQIPs). This project is being funded under the Systems Repair and Urban Grants component of the Caring for Our Country Reef Rescue program. With the Reef Rescue theme in mind, a heavy emphasis of the WQIP will be to reduce pollutant loads discharging from the region's catchments.

One significant aspect of the WQIP work is determining ecologically relevant system loads which looks at the amount of discharge from each catchment system that is needed to achieve and maintain long term sustainability of highly valued marine assets. This component of our work is being conducted in collaboration with TropWater at James Cook University. Individual targets are being set



BMRG Water Quality Improvement Plans aim to improve the quality of water entering the Great Barrier Reef lagoon

for each catchment for nutrient, sediment and pesticide loads.

Once appropriate load targets are set, the objective is then to determine the most feasible and cost effective pathway to realizing them.

The contribution to system loads made by our region's prominent primary production is also being considered in some detail with sophisticated bio-economic modelling developed to study cane and grazing land use. This modelling will help determine how improved land management practice at specific locations can assist with load reduction. It also simultaneously estimates the costs associated with improved practices.

Urban land use is also being considered. An estimated 5% of total regional sediment loads originate from urban areas with the proximity of urban areas to the coast multiplying these effects.

The Burnett Mary Water Quality Improvement Plan is expected to be available for public comment in July 2014.

CONTACT

Dr Fred Bennett T: 07 4181 2999 ext 112
M: 0490 031 204 E: fred.bennett@bmrq.org.au

Communications & Engagement Survey

In March, BMRG invited the regional community to partake in an online survey. The survey was designed to gather information about how well we engage and communicate our work and what improvements could be made in this area.



It was also an opportunity for people to let us know what they saw as the major issues in NRM within the region and how we might best be able to help to address them.

More than 200 people within the region took the time to fill in the survey and a random selection of 50 were contacted by telephone and invited to provide their thoughts.

Demographically, approximately half the respondents defined themselves as primary producers and half as belonging to an environmental or community group. Responses were geographically very evenly spread with almost all areas within the BMRG region evenly represented.

One key outcome from the survey indicates that the realms of natural resource management and primary production are inextricably linked with most landholders and producers keen to understand how they can better manage their businesses so as to increase production and profitability whilst minimising impacts upon land and water resources.

Another key learning was the degree to which recent natural disasters have impacted upon the social and economic framework of our rural communities and the role that BMRG can play in helping to redress this.

Feedback about how we can improve our communications and engagement was detailed. A particular focus was on the need for developing strong interpersonal relationships with our stakeholders through face-to-face communication.

Social media and our use of electronic mailouts about our activities through our BMRG Bulletin and website are generally well received and a need for a greater emphasis on technical support and better targeted workshops have also been noted as an area on which we can improve.

A detailed analysis of the survey results is currently being compiled and will be put up on our website in the near future.

CONTACT

Chris Stone T: 07 4181 2999 ext 205
M: 0429 462 464 E: chris.stone@bmrq.org.au

Taking Turtles from the Menu

WWF recently teamed up with BMRG to trial a device which protects turtle nests from goanna predation at Wreck Rock Beach. Located in the Deepwater National Park, the beach is the second largest mainland nesting site in the South Pacific after Mon Repos.

30 predator exclusion devices were trialed and sensor cameras were set up at both protected and unprotected nests to record goanna behaviour and to measure the success of the exclusion devices.

The devices are installed with aluminium grills with sides that are placed over and around the nests. Baby turtles can squeeze through the grill, but they are small enough to stop goannas and do not interfere with the Earth's magnetic fields which the hatchlings use for navigation.

WWF Australia Species Conservation Project Coordinator, Christine Hof, said that the devices may prove to be a wonderful option to protect loggerhead turtle nests into the future.

"Australia's eastern beaches support the only significant



Predator exclusion device - keeping the local goanna population from loggerhead turtle nests at Wreck Rock Beach

population of loggerhead turtles in the South Pacific and after being pushed to the brink projects such as this are needed to help them to rebuild their numbers."

The trial has been assisted through the efforts of Nev and Bev McLachlan who have monitored turtles at Wreck Rock each year since starting on their honeymoon in 1977.

"During the season, each night we patrol 22km of beach tagging turtles that come in to lay their eggs and when the baby turtles emerge, we check how many hatch and look at ways in which we can improve the success rate." said Mr McLachlan.

Based upon the success of this trial, the Moore Park Beach Turtle Monitoring Group has requested devices for next season for excluding predators from nests on Moore Park Beach.

CONTACT

Saranne Giudice T: 07 4181 2999 ext 119
M: 0407 777 023 E: saranne.giudice.org.au

Turtle Conservation on Lady Musgrave

Between December and January each year for the past 27 years, Jim and Annie Buck and a small dedicated group of ten volunteers make their annual migration to Lady Musgrave Island to monitor the nesting of the region's marine turtle species.

Data from the Christmas nesting period was gathered from 787 individual Green turtles (up from a total of 44 from the previous year). This was considered an above average result and was reflected across the various rookeries in the Great Barrier Reef.

"Whilst green turtle nesting numbers can vary widely due to weather and climate patterns which affects the availability of food, it was pleasing to see that numbers have bounced back so quickly following the severe flooding of the previous years," said Mr Buck.

This year also saw 17 endangered Loggerhead turtles nesting on the island which again pleasingly represents an upward trend in nesting Loggerhead numbers.

The monitoring on Lady Musgrave Island is part of a broader annual "turtle nesting population census" undertaken by the Department of Environment & Heritage protection's Queensland Turtle Monitoring project.

The team is also part of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority's "Eye on the Reef" program which coordinates other groups and organisations contributing to a greater understanding of the Great Barrier Reef environment.

In March each year, Jim and his team return to Lady Musgrave to revisit nests identified in December and January and assess the success of the season's hatchings, adding to the overall body of data collected.

Jim is keen to stress that although the collection of data is the primary objective of his work, of equal importance is education and increasing awareness about the life cycle and biology of turtles. "Folk from the camping and yachting communities join us most evenings when we are on the island to witness and enjoy the spectacle of sea turtles nesting and hatching and this is one of the keys to their ongoing conservation," he said.



A member of the Lady Musgrave Turtle Monitoring team assessing the hatching success of a Green turtle nest

Saving Eli Creek Wetlands

The Eli Creek wetland complex is situated within the Point Vernon area of the Hervey Bay township. It contains both palustrine and estuarine components with high connectivity values for both terrestrial and marine species.

It contains stands of EPBC listed Littoral Rainforest and Coastal Vine Thicket which provides essential habitat for vulnerable populations of Black-breasted Button-quail.

A bund wall of approximately 2.5km was installed by a former landholder in 2004 to make way for proposed housing estates, which had significant impacts on the natural hydrology of the site. The removal of the



Black Breasted Button Quail - one of the vulnerable species found within the Eli Creek Wetland which has been saved from a proposed private housing estate development - photo courtesy Chris Barnes

bund wall was court ordered after an investigation and subsequent issue of an enforcement notice by the Queensland Government (Department of Environment and Heritage Protection).

Other impacts on the site have come from 4WD access, illegal dumping of rubbish, access to the wetland by cattle, weeds and feral animals.

Installation of suitable fences will ensure 4WDs and cattle are excluded from the site and biodiverse plantings will increase habitat and connectivity of terrestrial vegetation.

The wetland component has been surrendered to the state for inclusion in a conservation reserve.

By restoring this site and mitigating some of the key threats to its sustainability, we can return it to a naturally functioning wetland with significant environmental, social and financial benefits, as well as aesthetic appeal.

CONTACT

Stacey Hodge T: 07 4181 2999 ext 120
M: 0410 687 646 E: stacey.hodge@bmrq.org.au

Reward for Effort

Eight local job seekers have been employed by BMRG to help with continuing flood recovery efforts in the region.

Prior to being employed, these job seekers were meeting their work for the dole requirements by assisting with flood debris cleanup activities.

Through the course of this work, they gained work experience and were able to undertake a Certificate II course in Rural Operations.

They are now employed on another flood recovery project that is restoring and stabilising riverbanks through the planting of native trees and shrubs.

The riverbank restoration project is part of the Queensland Government's On farm Productivity and Riparian Recovery program which is assisting landholders with returning to production and building resilience to future events.

Over the coming months, BMRG's riverbank restoration projects plan to revegetate more than 40 hectares of riverbanks and streams damaged as a result of flooding caused by Ex-Tropical Cyclone Oswald.

BMRG Project Officer, Brad Crosbie, said that what started out as a call to help local primary producers with flood recovery clean-up has turned into a model of community engagement.



One of 8 local unemployed who have been employed to undertake revegetation works after undertaking voluntary work for the dole work

"It is a great example of creating a win-win for local landholders struggling to recover from the floods and local job seekers looking for employment opportunities. We have made a difference to the lives of a lot of people and have really given the community a boost," Mr Crosbie said.

For more information on the On-farm and Riparian Restoration program, contact Brad Crosbie.

CONTACT

Brad Crosbie T: 07 4181 2999 ext 115
M: 0405 382 981 E: brad.crosbie@bmrq.org.au

Banking on the Baffle

BMRG is delivering an exciting Australian Government funded project that is involving the Baffle catchment basin community and encouraging improved natural resource management across riparian areas (creeks and wetlands) in the entire Baffle system.

The Better Banks for a Better Reef project targets a wide range of land management issues such as weeds, vertebrate pests, erosion, grazing management practices and fire management. A key aim of the project is to assist landholders in managing the causes of erosion, run-off and sedimentation to improve the quality of water entering the Great Barrier Reef lagoon.



Feral pig damage at the headwaters of Granite Creek

The funding is targeting land managers that may need a hand to effectively control weeds such as Giant Rat's Tail Grass, Rubber Vine, Cats Claw Creeper and Lantana, and pests animals such as feral pigs, which have huge impacts on riparian areas and water quality.

BMRG Biodiversity Extension Officer, Caroline Haskard is extremely enthusiastic about the project and says that her job is not just about biodiversity but the whole of the Baffle Basin and catchment system.

"My role is about involving land managers and helping them to tackle issues on their properties, in collaboration with their neighbours or other landholders nearby. Incentive funding is available to landholders to assist them with getting on top of

"Incentive funding is available to landholders to assist them with getting on top of pests"

pests, such as feral pigs and weeds. The funding initiative also supports fire and stock management to further reduce impacts on creek banks and around wetland areas."

When required, the project involves outside technical expertise and the use

of contractors to accelerate the effectiveness of the individual works that land managers are undertaking. For example, BMRG will be engaging contract pig trappers that utilise advanced trapping technology such as remote surveillance systems, to bust up feral pig populations for good," she said.

By getting as many land managers involved as possible, implementing a variety of works within the same time period across the landscape can have a significant effect upon reducing factors that impact upon water quality. These works will additionally result in the retention and protection of native vegetation that is key to the healthy functioning of ecological processes and overall catchment health.

Of particular note is the subsequent protection of an important vegetation type in the Baffle Basin which



Lowland Sub-tropical rainforest in Bulberin - classified as an Endangered Ecological Community characterised by a tall forest with a closed canopy that usually occurs below 300 m above sea level, in areas that receive more than 1300mm average annual rainfall

is classified as an Endangered Ecological Community. Lowland Subtropical Rainforest is a Critically Endangered rainforest community and home to several federally listed threatened species of flora and fauna.

Whilst a collective of land managers in the Colosseum area are already on board, there is still abundant scope for landholders and community groups around Baffle Creek to participate. To be involved or for further information, contact Caroline Haskard.

CONTACT

Caroline Haskard T: 07 4181 2999 ext 118
M: 0427 588 580 E: caroline.haskard@bmrq.org.au

Addressing a Burning Issue

In an exciting new initiative being undertaken jointly by the BMRG, Condamine Alliance, Fitzroy Basin Association, South West NRM and Reef Catchments, the BMRG are implementing a project to meet fire management objectives under the Caring for our Country -Matters of National Environmental Significance (MNES) program.

The project builds on a previous initiative that was undertaken in the Northern section of Brigalow Belt and aims to achieve:

- Conservation of threatened species and ecosystems
- Overall reduction of wildfire risk to these species and ecosystems
- Production of a regional fire guideline
- Continued planning, prioritisation and field assessment.



Regional fire management guidelines will help to reduce the risk of wildfires

Project Manager, Rod Buchanan, is currently focused on developing the regional fire guideline which will consider appropriate fire management regimes across 20 regional landscapes. Once finalised, the guideline will provide a simple, but balanced prescription for burning for wildfire risk reduction that will be delivered by key project partner the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service (QFRS) and used by fire wardens and brigades.

How will it work? The guideline divides the landscape into land/fire management units and then defines a simple prescription which aims to balance risk, productivity and biodiversity. It will also assist in helping to get everyone to agree when and how to burn. This is the first major step in reducing wildfire risk.

The project team plans to form a Fire Management Working Group to ensure that both science and practice are taken into consideration in the formation of the guideline document.

CONTACT

Rod Buchanan T: 07 4181 2999 ext 182
M: 0488 063 790 E: rod.buchanan@bmrq.org.au

Carbon Farming Project

The Burnett Mary was a hive of activity recently with a series of workshops on the Carbon Farming Initiative. 107 people participated in the workshops.



Ben Keogh, from Australian Carbon Traders spoke about International and National policies that have created and are impacting on the current carbon market.

Ross Anderson from the Burnett Inland Economic Development Organisation (BIEDO) gave an extremely insightful presentation on the Clean & Clever Energy project. He has been conducting one-on-one energy audits across the region and encouraging landholders to monitor their meters and check which tariff they are on. For a free energy audit contact Ross on biedobusiness@burnett.net.au

The workshops were a joint initiative of the BCCA, Bundaberg Fruit & Vegetable Growers (BFVG), BMRG and



Ben Keogh presenting to the Smalls Creek Landcare Group

Landcare groups based in the North and South Burnett, and in the Mary and were funded by the Australian Government.

Emissions Reduction Fund & the Carbon Farming Initiative

With all the talk about Green Paper and White Paper on the Emission Reduction Fund (ERF) and the repeal of the carbon tax, you may be wondering what's happening with the Carbon Farming Initiative (CFI). Here's a summary from Carbon Farming Coordinator, Michelle Haase;

The ERF White Paper was released by the Australian Government in the last week of April this year. The White Paper sets out the Australian Government's proposed design of the ERF. The ERF is the main mechanism by which the Australian Government is hoping to achieve its target of reducing national greenhouse gas emissions by 5% based on 2000 levels by 2020.

The ERF has three primary functions: crediting emissions reductions, purchasing emissions reductions, and safeguarding emissions reductions. The White Paper

indicates that crediting and purchasing processes of the ERF will commence when the Carbon Pricing Mechanism (the carbon tax) is repealed.

The CFI has for the last three years provided, and continues to provide, opportunities for emissions to be reduced by the land sector (e.g. primary producers, local government, and other land managers). The CFI will continue but it is intended to be rolled into the ERF so that there is only one program. Existing CFI projects can transition into the ERF and methodologies that have already been developed for the CFI will **continue to be available under the ERF for existing projects and new projects approved before 1 July 2015**. CFI projects will continue to be approved and credits issued under the current CFI legislation until the ERF legislation is passed

“reducing the national greenhouse gas emissions by 5% based on 2000 levels, by 2020.”

The ERF is proposed to be simpler for land sector stakeholders to be involved. For example, the ERF will enable landholders to select either a 100-year or 25-year permanence

option for carbon sequestration projects. However, if the 25-year permanence option is adopted, the number of credits issued will be discounted by 20% relative to 100 year projects. CFI participants will also have more flexibility in the frequency of their reporting which has potential to improve cash flow for some projects.

The ERF aims to encourage and is designed to support 'aggregation' – i.e. it will aim to be more financially favourable for large groups of individual farms, households and businesses that are reducing their emissions to be represented collectively by one entity as the project proponent. A number of methods aimed at large, aggregated projects will be developed as a priority.

Existing barriers to aggregation will be streamlined. For example, the property rights issue which currently makes aggregation of individual landholders in a CFI project difficult, is going to be simplified to encourage and support aggregation. It appears that under the ERF the project proponent will only require the agreement of landholders to participate.

Clear as mud? For further information Norton Rose Fulbright and MyCFI have undertaken separate CFI projects with the support of funding from the Australian Government under the same program as our Carbon Farming Project.

Links to these websites can be found at:

<http://www.bmrq.org.au/our-programs/sustainable-landscapes/carbon-farming/>.

CONTACT

Michelle Haase T: 07 4181 2999 ext 122
M: 0448 862 941 E: michelle.haase@bmrq.org.au

Staff in Profile

Nikki Hellyer - Regional Landcare Facilitator (Bundaberg)

• Can you tell us a little bit about yourself?

I grew up in a small dairy farming and forestry town called Heyfield in Gippsland, Victoria. I completed a Bachelor of Agricultural Science at LaTrobe University Melbourne and have been involved in agriculture one way or another all my life. I have worked particularly in the dairy and grain's industries and now enjoying mainly working in the beef industry. My interests particularly include agronomy, climate variability, carbon farming and farming family welfare.



• What does the regional landcare facilitator's role involve?

As Regional Landcare Facilitators, we are really 'enablers' who support regional community groups and help to increase their capacity and confidence.

• What do you consider to be the major issues facing natural resource management in the Burnett Mary?

I feel the declining terms of trade and farm income is the biggest issue facing natural resource management in our region. Our farmers hold the majority of our natural resources. It is very tough for many people out there at the moment and for natural resource management to become a priority, our farmers need to be a priority. It may be a cliché but it's hard to be green when you are in the red.

• What is it about your role that you enjoy the most?

I really enjoy talking to the community especially the farmers.

• What three words best describe you?

Passionate, committed and just.

• What activities do you enjoy outside of your work at BMRG?

I enjoy chatting with friends, going to the gym, clay target shooting, reading, baking, camping, travelling (in Australia and overseas) horse riding and walking my miniature foxy, Moses!

• Do you have a favourite book or author or movie?

A Fortunate Life by A.B Facey. It is always good to read as a reminder of how lucky I am.

• What is one thing that you can't do without?

Coffee!! And not just any coffee, but good coffee. You don't want to see me without it!!!

Farewell to the Shorebirds



The Red-necked Stint weighs in at as little as 25g and migrates to our region from as far away as Siberia

Every year from late March onwards, thousands of birds leave the shores of Australia to embark on their arduous 10,000km journey northwards to their breeding grounds in Siberia and the Arctic. The smallest of these birds is the Red-necked Stint that weighs as little as 25g, whilst the largest are the Eastern Curlew which weigh over 1Kg.

Shorebirds are under considerable stress as wetland habitats are lost throughout their flyway – an aerial corridor or ‘highway’ for shorebirds that extends from within the Arctic Circle, through East and South-east Asia, to Australia and New Zealand. The East Asian - Australasian Flyway that stretches across 22 countries is one of 8 major waterbird flyways recognised around the globe.

Shorebirds have to fly long distances with some species such as the Great Knot and Bar-tailed Godwit breeding as far north as far north-eastern Siberia and Alaska, while other species like the Lesser Sand Plover flying to central and north-eastern Asia. Bar-tailed Godwits also have the longest non-stop flight of any migrating bird. The birds stay airborne for almost one week, making a 6,800-mile beeline from wintering grounds in Southeast Asia, Australia, and New Zealand to their breeding range in Alaska, Siberia and Scandinavia.

For all of these birds, the time that they spend feeding



The Bar-tailed Godwit travels non-stop on a migration of up to 11,000km and loses upto 80% of its body weight in flight

and resting on our beaches is essential if they are to make it back to their breeding grounds next year. During their migration shorebirds lose up to half their body weight, so they have a lot of building up to do. This involves eating, resting and not using excess energy.

To achieve this, it is essential that the birds be permitted to feed and roost without disturbance. Much feeding is done on banks well off shore which are less attractive to people, but some feeding is done on foreshores. One extra ‘lift’ off a beach following a disturbance from people, dogs or even vehicles may be the difference between life and death for shorebirds preparing for the long haul back to their breeding grounds.

To celebrate this incredible journey, BirdLife Australia is launching an exciting nationwide event, Farewell Shorebirds, focusing on the fascinating lives of some of the 35 species of shorebirds. Farewell Shorebirds will run from mid-April until mid-May, concluding on World Migratory Bird Day (10 May). This campaign highlights the captivating story of the shorebirds’ annual global migration from Australia to the Arctic, and explores why the birds make this incredible journey and how they rely



Eastern Curlew - the largest of the migratory shorebirds that are found in the Great Sandy Strait

on Australia’s wetlands, coastlines and estuaries for their survival.

‘Farewell Shorebirds’ is an online campaign that will be supported by new and existing on-ground activity. People are invited to register - www.farewellshorebirds.org.au to follow up-to-date news of this year’s migration, receive weekly webcasts, find out about local birding activities and enter a draw for amazing prizes.

For more information about BMRG’s shorebirds initiatives, please contact Sue Sargent.

CONTACT

Sue Sargent T: 07 4181 2999 ext 204
M: 0429 462 041 E: sue.sargent@bmrq.org.au

Reviving Indigenous Influence on the Bunya Mountains

More than 120 people attended the Bunya People’s Open Day on March 22 to celebrate the long history of traditional gatherings on the mountain.



Smoking ceremony and Welcome to Country conducted by Aunty Vera Sullivan and Uncle Tommy Daniels

Before the early 1900’s, Aboriginal peoples from across southern Queensland, northern New South Wales and beyond would come together for what was the largest Aboriginal gathering in Australia to feast, trade, share stories, conduct marriages and lore business. This historical gathering coincided with the ripening of the Bunya nut and was an important cultural event.

The community day opened with a Welcome to Country and Smoking ceremony by Aunty Vera Sullivan and Uncle Tommy Daniels. The Cobble Cobble and Wakka



Wakka Wakka dancers entertaining the crowd with the next generation keeping the culture strong

Wakka Dancers then entertained the crowd, and were a highlight of the day. The next generation of dancers are coming through the ranks, with young people from the age of 3 and up showcasing their cultural practices.

The tours of the grassland balds and the bunya rainforest with the Bunya Mountains Murri Rangers and Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service were also

a hit. The tremendous effort of the Murri Rangers in restoring the cultural and natural values within the Bunya Mountains was not missed by anyone attending the event. Mayor Kratzman from the South Burnett Regional Council was one of the dignitaries who addressed the crowd, stating his pride in the Bunya Mountains and Bunya Peoples’ Community Day.

The Bunya Peoples’ Community Day was supported by the Burnett Mary Regional Group (BMRG), who auspice the Bunya Mountains Murri Ranger Program on behalf of the Bunya Peoples’ Aboriginal Corporation (BPAC), Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service who manage the National Park facilities, the Australian Government’s Working on Country Program who resource the successful Bunya Mountains Murri Ranger program, El’s Café and the Bunya Mountains Accommodation Centre.

CONTACT

Paul Dawson T: 07 4181 2999 ext 325
M: 0429 462 040 E: paul.dawson@bmrq.org.au

Is Your BMRG Membership Current?

Call us TODAY to Renew or to refer someone to join

(07) 4181 2999

Only \$10.00 per year to have your say in how our natural resources are managed



What's on?

May	When	Where	Contact
RCS Kit Day <i>Improve your business and develop your strategies and vision</i>	Wednesday, May 14, 2014 9.30am - 4.00pm	Hazeldean MURGON	1800 356 004 email: kcrozier@rcs.com.au
Canapes & Callistemons <i>Native Flora in Fashion</i>	Saturday, May 24 6.00pm - 8.00pm	The Outrigger Little Hastings St Resort & Spa NOOSA	http://www.noosalandcare.org/support-landcare-event.php
Food & Agribusiness Forum <i>Unlock the potential in your Agribusiness</i>	Wednesday, May 28, 2014 9.30am - 3.00pm	Isis Cultural Centre CHILDERS	wbbbusinessesvents@dsdip.qld.gov.au
Site Specific Rehabilitation Workshop <i>A workshop to explore challenges and opportunities through case studies on coastal ecosystems, riparian flats and hilly country</i>	Thursday, May 29, 2014 5.00pm - 7.00pm	Rural Futures Centre Pavilion St POMONA	info@noosalandcare.org

June	When	Where	Contact
Burnett Mary Climate Summit <i>The Science & Economics of Change</i>	Tuesday, June 3, 2014 8.30am - 4.00pm	Brolga Theatre MARYBOROUGH	admin@bmrq.org.au
Disaster Resilient Leadership Workshop	Friday, June 13 & Saturday, June 14, 2014	Highway Christian Church 70 Edenvale North Rd KINGAROY	Michael Hunter or Wendy Kruger 4189 9171

Follow us on Twitter

For the latest Landcare news and updates on Carbon Farming initiatives and the Clean Energy Futures Fund, follow us on Twitter [@BMRG_RLF](https://twitter.com/BMRG_RLF)

Like us on Facebook

and keep up to date on NRM happening in the region.

www.facebook.com/bmrg4nrm

BMRG Bulletin

Our regular e-newsletter updates you on what's happening in NRM in the region.

Email BMRG to subscribe today -

admin@bmrq.org.au



Office Address: 193 Bourbong Street, Bundaberg Qld 4670 Mail Address: PO Box 501, Bundaberg Qld 4670
T: 07 4181 2999 F: 07 4154 1427 E: admin@bmrq.org.au



Australian Government



Queensland Government