

Cape York

Healthy Country Newsletter

Year in Review

Issue 21 - December 2014

The sun sets on a highly productive year for Cape York NRM.

This year the Company has funded, delivered, supported and managed works across the length and breadth of Cape York. Implementation of our Sustainable Agriculture program has been highly successful. We have visited over 20 grazing and horticultural properties, with property planning, weed control and training opportunities all underway. The initial focus area for this work, which will continue in the coming year, has been the Central Cape and Lakeland areas. Our involvement of people in the development of a Water Quality Improvement Plan for Cape York has commenced and we are working to provide the results in a way that is useful for those who live in and manage these east coast waterways. Natural resource management planning for the future of Cape York is almost complete, and early next year our online Atlas will be launched to provide an entry point to a world of information and stories about Cape York, by the people of Cape York.

Our partners continue to deliver beyond expectations. Through the Western Cape Turtle Threat Abatement Alliance, west coast ranger groups have culled thousands of pigs from Northern Peninsula Area through to Pormpuraaw Aboriginal Council area. South Cape York Catchments won the Qld Government Reconciliation Award and together with the Lakeland community and the Laura Rangers, successfully eradicated *Salvinia molesta* from the waterways upstream of Rinyirru (Lakefield) National Park.

Western Cape Landcare Group Inc. held successful clean-ups in Weipa and celebrates having made it through the groups first Annual General Meeting. Apudthama Rangers and Angkamuthi Traditional Owners, with the support of Origin Energy, have found a healthy community of Jardine River turtles, which haven't been seen for over 20 years. In July, over 120 participants travelled from across Australia to Steve Irwin Wildlife Reserve, Taepithiggi Country, to attend the 6th Cape York Indigenous Fire Workshop.

These are just a few of the highlights for the year, and we have worked with many more people and groups not mentioned here, in the quest for healthy country on Cape York.

Seasons Greetings

The Board, Management and Staff of Cape York NRM extend our fondest wishes to our members, partners, funders and friends for a peaceful, safe and happy Christmas and New Year. We look forward to working with you in the new year.

Please note our Atherton office will be closed from 4pm Wednesday 24 December through to 9am Monday 5 January 2015.

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Within this newsletter Cape York Natural Resource Management is shortened to Cape York NRM

Wildlife surveys with cameras

submitted by Charles Darwin University

In November Western Cape Turtle Threat Alliance Coordinator Johanna Karam and Apudthama Ranger Dale Motlop joined over 40 people from across Northern Australia for a workshop in Darwin on wildlife monitoring using motion detection cameras.

The Northern Hub of the National Environment Research Program ran the special session, which was part of the Territory Natural Resource Management 2014 Conference. It was based on research into improving methods for monitoring wildlife in Northern Australia, led by Northern Territory Government scientists.

Research Leader Dr Graeme Gillespie, from the Department of Land Resource Management, says motion detection cameras are an attractive option for surveying and monitoring wildlife because they are less labour intensive than traditional scientific animal trapping methods and anyone can learn how to use them.

“During our research we trialed different arrangements for setting up cameras until we found a method that consistently gave good detection rates for most species. Other groups can now benefit from our experience,” Dr Gillespie said.

“There will be a lot of value in groups adopting the same method when they are doing general biodiversity surveys, because then we will be able to compare results from different areas.”

The participants learnt about the different camera types, setting cameras up in the field, targeting different species, using baits and data storage.

Warddeken rangers who have already been using the method have produced a video to help explain some of the key points to others. You can watch it online at <http://www.nerpnorthern.edu.au/>

[news/2014/video-how-set-camera-trap-wildlife-surveys](http://www.nerpnorthern.edu.au/news/2014/video-how-set-camera-trap-wildlife-surveys).

The finer details of the method and helpful background information are being put into a free guide book that will be available in early 2015 as a hard copy, or through the NERP Northern Australia Hub website: www.nerpnorthern.edu.au



Left: A camera trap

Below: A black rat caught by camera trap

Below left: Johanna Karam and Dale Motlop joined over 40 people at the workshop

Below right: Djelk rangers setting up a camera trap.

Photos supplied.



Welcome to our new Directors

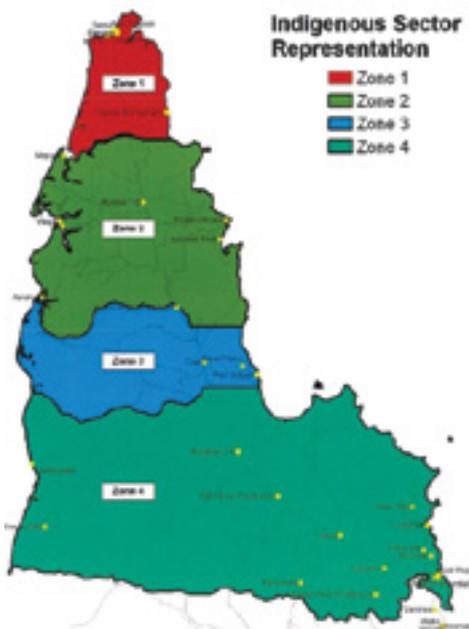
Cape York NRM welcomes two new Indigenous Sector Directors to our board.

Marilyn Kepple is the new director for Zone 3. Marilyn lives in Coen and looks forward to representing her zone and being a voice for the families who live in Zone 3.

Shane Gibson is the new Zone 4 representative. Shane is well known in his community, working across a range of roles including policing, community development and youth work.

We extend a big thanks to our departing directors: Gavin Bassani, who after three years on our board, has stood down to dedicate more time to Yintjingga Aboriginal Corporation; and to Alban Zingle for creating a stronger representation for the Kowanyama region on our Board.

Below left: Apudthama Rangers show Cape York NRM Directors and guests the recent work undertaken at Mutee Head. Below right: Directors Shelley Lyon and John Charlton get down to business on the field trip.

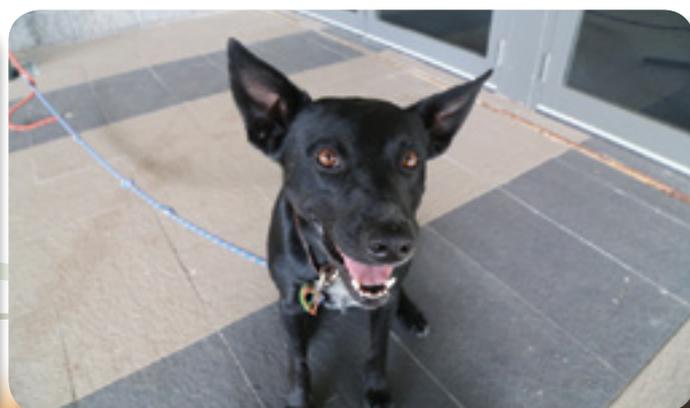


Regional Investment Strategy meeting

Fire, water quality and healthy soils were high on the agenda at the Regional Investment Strategy (RIS) meeting held in Cooktown recently. Cape York people involved in natural resource management were invited to provide comment on how and where Cape York NRM spend the dollars received from both the state and federal governments, and where to target future investment.

Cape York NRM will be talking with land and sea managers over the coming months to gain further feedback on the RIS. For more information contact Peta-Marie Standley on 1300 132 262.

Below: Land managers from across Cape York attended the RIS meeting at the Cooktown Events Centre in October, including Cooper (right).



NRM Planning Update

It won't be long now until anyone with an interest in natural and cultural resources on Cape York can access a world of knowledge with the click of a mouse.

Cape York NRM's Atlas will be launched in the new year. A collection of online sites will take you to your area of interest: whether it be how to build a dam; what Country plans are available on Cape York; how to kill sicklepod; or what's happening with your threatened species of interest.

Whether you're interested in mapping, a Traditional Owner, a grazier or a climate scientist, we reckon you'll find something for you on our site. We'll be bringing together a wide range of information aimed to help with the planning and practice of natural resource management on Cape York.

The Atlas is also the platform for Cape York NRM's

planning into the future. We aim to bring you lots of information and data, with the permission of the many groups and people on Cape York who have already undertaken masses of work in this area.

The collection of this information is also helping us to find where the major gaps are for Cape York. We will then be able to target government funding where it is needed most.

If you have information you would like to share with the world on its wide web, please give us a call.

This work is funded by the Australian Government's NRM Planning for Climate Change programme.

Below: The Atlas will share the knowledge and experiences of Cape York's land and sea managers including fencing, signage and turtle management.



Photo: Kerry Trapnell



Healthy Country Hub: our new home in Cooktown

It's a building everyone wanted, a place where people love to call in, and an historical landmark in the main street of Cooktown. Cape York NRM, South Cape York Catchments and Cape York Weeds and Feral Animals Inc. are now proud to call the old Westpac Bank home.

Steeped in history the bank was first built in 1874 in the heyday of gold on Cape York. The new occupants have settled in and are already bringing new energy to the building.

Visitors are welcome, and staff are seeing daily walk-ins of up to ten people, wanting to have a peek at the inside of the majestic building.

Where: 2/122 Charlotte Street, Cooktown.

South Cape York Catchments: 07 4069 5443

Cape York NRM: 07 4069 5368

Cape York Weeds and Feral Animals Inc: 07 4069 5064

Please note the office will be closed from Friday 19 December and re-open Monday 5 January 2015.

Keeping Country Healthy at Melsonby Station

by Jessie Price

The Balnggarrawarra Rangers from Melsonby station (70 minutes north east of Cooktown) know that good fire and soil management is essential for healthy Country. Over the past 2 years the team has worked hard to incorporate traditional and scientific fire management and best practice erosion control. The Rangers main concerns were late season wildfires impacting on wildlife and erosion of firebreaks and tracks.

Soil conservation is particularly important on Melsonby. The sandy soil found in the area is very susceptible to erosion caused by hot fires removing ground cover and from vehicle access tracks. Erosion not only prevents access to Country to undertake natural and cultural management activities but also impacts upon aquatic habitats. Excessive sediment run-off decreases water quality, in-fills waterholes and wetlands and then ultimately spills out into the Great Barrier Reef.

Knowing this, the Rangers decided they wanted to reduce the erosion from their access tracks and fire breaks and worked with Jeff Shellberg, Northern Gulf Resource Management Group and Cape York Landcare to survey the roads on Melsonby and determine the correct placement of woo-boys and silt drains. Severely eroded sites were also identified, and targeted for repair. Rangers are currently constructing drop structures which act like mini-dams to slow water flow and trap sediment run off. The captured sediment builds behind the

structure allowing plants to grow which further traps sediment.

To manage fire on Melsonby station the team used a combination of mosaic early burns from quad bikes and aerial burns in the more remote and inaccessible sand stone escarpment country. To understand the effectiveness of their fire management 30 fire monitoring plots were established which will be monitored twice a year to see if the changes in fire regime will benefit the plants and animals. Keeping an eye on the ground cover after fire is an important indicator of how well the soil will be protected from erosion.



Above: Fire management on Melsonby Station



Above: Building a drop structure

The FULCRUM application has been adopted by the Balnggarrawarra Rangers to record and monitor their work in fire and erosion. Data collected can easily be reviewed to see if erosion control is effective or where previous burns were conducted.

By adopting effective fire and soil management practices and monitoring the effectiveness of their work, the Balnggarrawarra Rangers are now more confident their efforts will ensure the health of Melsonby Country in to the future. Thanks to Dr Jeff Shellberg, Northern Gulf Resource Management Group, QPWS, Cape York NRM, Cape York Landcare and South Cape York Catchments.

Photos supplied.

New faces in the field

Michael Goddard: Sustainable Industries

If you live in the Lakeland area, or manage land in central Cape York, chances are you've probably already met Michael Goddard. He's the Cape York NRM bloke in khaki, working with farmers and graziers to assist with property mapping, weed control and risk assessments, and helping them to access the information needed to make informed decisions on best management practices for their properties.

Michael has lived in Far North Queensland for over 16 years and has extensive experience in the irrigation and water infrastructure industries. He's also got strong knowledge and practical experience in conservation and land management and has worked as a contract CALM trainer and assessor in remote communities.

If you'd like to know more about what our Sustainable Industries program does, give Michael a call on 1300 132 262.



Will Higham: Planning and Implementation

The newest 'bloke on the block' at Cape York NRM is Will Higham. Will, who has over 15 years of experience with community-based natural resource management groups and projects in North Queensland, recently started working for Cape York NRM in a planning and implementation role.

With the added benefit of a family background in agriculture, Will understands the risks associated with primary production and likes working with farmers and graziers to develop practical solutions to local challenges.

Will works out of the new Cooktown office, and welcomes you to call in and say g'day, although he's in the field a lot, so you are best to call first on 07 4069 5368.



Planning for healthy water on Cape York

Cape York NRM has started work on a water quality planning and implementation framework for Cape York.

Over the next 12 months the focus will be on the rivers that flow to the eastern side of the Cape into the Great Barrier Reef lagoon. These waterways include the Jacky Jacky, Olive-Pascoe, Lockhart, Stewart, Normanby, Jeannie, Endeavour and Annan Rivers.

The aim of the project is to develop practical actions to maintain or improve the water quality values of the area's rivers, wetlands and springs that are important to the community. Over the next 12 months Cape York NRM staff will meet with people across the Cape to talk about the water they use for drinking, recreation, fishing, stock and irrigation. We will also be asking about the systems importance in

traditional practices and culture.

"We really want to work with our community to build a water quality improvement plan which provides a framework for a way forward. It needs to be a plan which provides guidelines for the future and which identifies and prioritises the actions needed to improve, or in many cases maintain, the quality of water moving through our waterways and wetlands" said Bob Frazer. "We will be working closely with South Cape York Catchments to get out and learn about the social, cultural, economic and environmental values of these water bodies that make them important to the people of Cape York".

The water quality improvement planning process is funded as part of the Australian Government's commitment to protection of the Great Barrier Reef.

New Climate Report reveals potential impacts for Cape York

A new report has been released about the impacts of a changing climate in the north Queensland region.

This report follows a comprehensive review of potential climate impacts for North Queensland. The Adaptation Pathways report draws together up-to-date scientific information from around the world and discusses the implications for the communities, natural environment and industries in our region. Scientists from James Cook University and CSIRO have worked with NRM organisations to identify practical options for adapting to increased temperatures, more variable rainfall, more intense cyclones, storm surges and sea level rise in the Torres Strait region, Cape York, the Wet Tropics and the Mackay- Whitsundays-Isaac regions.

“There are 14 Natural Resource Management (NRM) organisations working across Queensland to support strong communities, sustainable industries and a healthy environment” said Cape York NRM’s Bob Frazer.

“The impacts of a changing climate will force us to rethink what, how and where we can live and do our business in this region. Cape York NRM is working with the community to plan ahead and come up with ideas about how we can minimise or adapt to the impact of variations in rainfall, increased temperatures, more intense cyclones and sea level rises. We also need to do our share in Cape York to reduce emissions by actions such as minimising wildfires and storing carbon in the landscape.” Bob said.

“There is a large body of scientific evidence from all over the world that tells us climate change is already happening and will continue to affect every industry, every community and the environment” said Professor Steve Turton of James Cook University in Cairns.

“Communities will be better off if they plan their responses to these impacts. The alternative would be to wait for catastrophic flooding or cyclones to force change, but this wouldn’t give us the chance to take advantage of any opportunities, such as the

development of new industries and new ways of doing things.”

Cape York NRM has been asking communities about what’s important to them over the past year and will continue discussions over coming months to come up with ideas for adapting to the changes that will be felt in the region.

The Adaptation Pathways and Opportunities report identifies pathways that can be taken by people in North Queensland to account for the worst impacts of climate change. However, the report points out the need for urgent and decisive action at all scales to reduce global greenhouse gas emissions. Without these actions the extent of change will eventually make our current ways of life impossible and have devastating impacts on our wildlife and environments.

“The information in this report will support communities to negotiate how we build a future that is economically, socially, culturally and environmentally sustainable” said Bob Frazer.

“We hope that all sectors of the community take the opportunity to learn more about the changing climate and get involved in working out solutions for our region.”



Above (from left): Cape York NRM’s Peta Standley and Vicki Wundersitz discuss options for adaptation with Bruce Lansdown and Andrew Hartwig at the recent RIS workshop in Cooktown.

Supporting Cape Yorks future land and sea managers



Cape York NRM is proud to support the end of year awards at Western Cape College and Cooktown State School.

Each year we are encouraging a Year 10 student who is excelling both at school and in the community in the area of natural resource management, to continue their studies and enter a natural resource management career.

This year Ethel Ware from Western Cape College and Kaitlin Williams from Cooktown State School were the recipients of a Samsung Tablet loaded with some great natural resource management apps.

Congratulations girls, we wish you well in your future studies.

Left: Western Cape College Award Recipient, Ethel Ware, pictured with Cape York NRM's Agricultural Sector Director Emma Jackson. (Photo supplied)

Below: Caitlin Williams (right) from Cooktown State School (pictured here at the recent Conservation and Land Management camp) was the schools 2014 award winner.

Do you have exciting environmental activities happening at your Cape York school?

Cape York NRM would love to share your stories through our newsletter, website and social media. We can help to put stories together, and would love to run a natural resource management or communications workshop at your school.



Contact us to find out how we can work together:
1300 132 262 or
media@capeyorknrm.com.au

Cooktown State School Conservation and Land Management Camp

In October, Cape York NRM were pleased to support Cooktown State School's Conservation and Land Management Camp. We helped coordinate transport, ran workshops and organised activities for the students. The learning activities showed the importance of looking after the land and water to maintain a healthy environment for generations to come.

"It was great to work with kids in the field and encourage different ways of learning" said Cape York NRM's Lyndal Scobell. "Getting outdoors provided a great opportunity for the students to learn by doing, and show their abilities to excel in this area."

Cape York NRM looks forward to working with the class in 2015.



Above: The CALM class banner



Above: Fishing workshop with Desmond

Below: Learning film techniques and how to make fire



Below: Peta talking about fire management



Below: Dr Tommy George telling Hann River stories



Around the Cape . . .



The Wenlock Catchment Management Group plan to hold a whole of catchment meeting in late March.

More information will be available early in the new year.

Left: Rangers from Napranum, Mapoon and Steve Irwin Wildlife Reserve met recently in Napranum to discuss plans for the lower Wenlock group in 2015.

Below left: Bob Frazer and Mike Berwick discuss NRM issues while at Mutee Heads. Below right: Robyn May (left) and new director Marilyn Kepple enjoy an early morning Seisia boat trip.



On the ground: Mapoon managing natural resources locally

with Mapoon Land and Sea Rangers

One hundred and thirty five feral pigs were culled during the latest culling operation in Mapoon.

Mapoon Land and Sea Rangers and the Animal Management Officer completed the aerial pig cull at the beginning of October. This was a great effort by all involved.

The Land and Sea Management Unit carries out four culls per year and this is the first completed using local staff. Huge thanks to Lee Ase and Thomas Pitt for their efforts and also big thanks to our chopper pilot Bungie Scott.

Mapoon should be proud!

Photo supplied



Resourcing Women of the North

Cape York NRM is proud to have been the major sponsor at Northern Gulf Resource Management Group's Resourcing Women of the North event, held in Mareeba in October. The highly successful event was attended by approximately 100 women who travelled from Cape York, the Gulf country and the coast to attend.



Top left: Northern Gulf's Erica Blumson organised the event (with Vickie Mylrea) and kept things running smoothly. Top right: Cape York's Franziska Inderbitzen was a panel presenter. Bottom left: Pat Daley talks pumps and water at the events farm tour. Bottom right: The crew from Cape York (from left) Kath, Kama, Lyndal, Maria and Franziska.

Cape York NRM invites schools, groups and community members involved in natural resource management to send in your stories about the work you are doing.

With your permission, we'd love to tell our newsletter subscribers, our Facebook friends and our Twitter followers about all of the great things happening on land and sea from across Cape York.

You can send your stories in to media@capeyorknrm.com.au or give us a call to discuss your ideas on 1300 132 262.

We hope we never need it but...

Cape York NRM staff updated their first aid recently with colleagues from CSIRO and Northern Gulf.

Peta is looking pretty comfortable here in the blanket lift.



Board of Directors



David Claudie
Chairperson
Indigenous Sector, Zone 2



Shelley Lyon
Conservation Sector

Penny Johnson
Deputy Chairperson
Local Government Sector



Vacant
Indigenous Sector, Zone 1



Sandra Woosup
Indigenous Sector, Zone 1



John Giese
Community Sector

Emma Jackson
Primary Industries Sector



Marilyn Kepple
Indigenous Sector, Zone 3



Shane Gibson
Indigenous Sector, Zone 4



John Charlton
Tourism, Small Business,
Mining and Other Industry
Sector

Calendar of Events

www.capeyorknrm.com.au/calendar.html

December

- 11** Wenlock River Catchment Group Executive Committee meeting
- 25** Christmas and Cape York NRM Office Closure

January

- 5** Cape York NRM offices reopens

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Australian Government



Queensland Government