

NORTH EAST DOWNS NEWS

APRIL 2018



NED HAPPENINGS:

NED AGM: The AGM was held on 18th October 2017 in the Jondaryan Room at the Oakey RSL. This year's guest speaker was Jarrod Kath from USQ. Jarrod gave a presentation on a project he is involved in called "Mapping pasture drought risk and recovery across the Darling Downs." The aim of the project is to map the vulnerability and recovery capacity of pastures to drought across grazing lands of the Darling Downs using satellite data. The maps show how pastures responded to drought and rainfall events in the past, which pastures are likely to be most vulnerable to current and future droughts and which are best likely to recover after drought.

The following were elected as management committee position holders for NED for the following year:

Chair: Graham Cooke

Vice Chair: David Lange

Secretary: Glenys Bowtell

Treasurer: Davida Schemioneck

Management Committee Members: Ashley Volz, Cheryl Vonhoff, Desley Spies and Lindsay Evans.

Gomaren & Doctors Creek Photographic Competition Exhibition: Toowoomba Regional Council Mayor Paul Antonio opened the exhibition and awarded section winners with their prizes at Kingsthorpe. This is the second year the competition has run and received 148 entries over 10 categories. Winning entries toured in the Mobile Library throughout the months of November.

Sections and Winners were:

Working on the Farm: Chris Bartkowski

Australian Native Animal: Jean Gundry

Australian Native Bird: Jean Gundry

Australian Native Flora: Kaja Schneider

Local Weather: Chris Bartkowski

Feral Species: Kaja Schneider

Best Farm Buddies: Jessica Hanson

Sunrise or Sunset: Chris Bartkowski

Any Aspect of Rural Life: Jessica Hanson.

Best Photo Promoting a Landcare Activity: Nicki Laws



Holistic Land Management Project: Seven landholders in the Goombungee/Haden area are participating in a project to identify and implement suitable solutions to address soil health and groundcover issues. Works include soil tests and targeted pasture renovation strategies for individual sites. Glenn Perkins, Senior Agronomist from Norco Rural discussed the results of the preliminary soil tests and listed a number of recommendations for each property. Glenn emphasized the need to keep work simple, cost effective, utilize existing equipment and have short, medium and long term goals. Healthy soil is the basis for pasture health and subsequently animal health. Poor soil health can place many limiting factors on nutrient uptake. When considering the nutrient strategy, you should factor in whether it is simple to apply, cost effective, how effective the application is ie how much reaches the plant and organic versus chemical. This project was supported by Condamine Alliance.

Reducing Weeds in North East Downs Project: North East Downs Landcare has partnered with five landholders in Brymaroo, Peranga, Plainby, Aubigny and Meringandan to successfully treat 513 hectares of African Boxthorn and Lantana on grazing and cropping land in vegetation and remnants. 259 hectares of African Boxthorn at Brymaroo was successfully removed using a modified mechanical machine. This was a massive effort by the landholder who contributed 75% of the total cost. This has prevented large quantities of chemical being sprayed into the environment. 254 hectares of African Boxthorn and Lantana Camara was treated with foliar spray at Peranga, Plainby, Aubigny and Meringandan. This will improve productivity on grazing land and improve biodiversity in remnants. This project was funded with the assistance of Condamine Alliance.



MYALL PARK REFUGE: North East Downs Landcare Group with the support of Condamine Alliance is working with the owner of Myall Park Refuge at Jondaryan to remove mother of millions and improve the biodiversity in this twenty hectare block. As we wished to retain the integrity of this area, refuge tracks were not pushed through the vegetation. Instead a contractor with a motorised knapsack spray unit is working through the area. This is a slow and tedious process but gives the best results.



Oakey Urban Landcare Group: Oakey Urban Landcare Group became a subgroup of North East Downs Landcare Group Inc in 1996 and this year were awarded Community Group of the Year at the Oakey Australia Day Awards. They have completed many tree planting projects in the Oakey area, participate in Clean Up Australia Day and are pivotal in helping to maintain and develop many of the bushland reserves in the Oakey township area. Trevor Cockburn was presented the award.



Sustainable Property Management: North East Downs Landcare hosted a workshop with Brian Johnson, ex Pasture Researcher for the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries to enable landholders to receive advice on soils and pastures and discuss problem areas on their properties. Twenty three people attended the workshop at Kaimkillenbun. Brian advised that poor ground cover with undesirable species (weeds etc) in pasture was causing many other problems people were currently experiencing.

Some of these were erosion, incorrect pasture for soil type, weeds in pasture and hard setting soils.

To improve ground cover, poor soil conditions and reduce erosion it is necessary to

1. Establish pasture ensuring there is a full soil profile of water
2. Reduce competition
3. Don't skimp on planting rates
4. Ask for germination test of seed
5. Understand the cost and amount of coated seed required
6. Use correct inoculant on legumes
7. Fertilise for good growth

This project is supported by Condamine Alliance through funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Programme.



Habitat & Biodiversity Project: The aim of this project is to use modified mechanical machinery to remove African Boxthorn from 8km of creek banks on Moola Creek and remove African Boxthorn in two remnants on properties at Moola, one with "of concern ecosystem". An experienced licensed ACDC operator has been engaged to spray lantana in remnant using chemical (starane) at Bunya Mountains. Starane does not affect vegetation. This property is extremely steep where a modified mechanical machine is unable to operate in the area. In addition to this 2km of environmental fence will be erected in the Emu Creek area and lantana controlled in this remnant.

"This project is supported by the Queensland Government's Community Sustainability Action grant program"



2017 Queensland Landcare Awards We are pleased to announce 2 members of North East Downs Landcare received awards. Ashley Volz was awarded **Austcover Young Landcare Leader Award** for an individual between the ages of 15 -35 years who carries out and/or promotes excellence in Landcare through on-ground or awareness raising activities, as a volunteer or paid employee. Chair of South Myall Landcare and a member of the NED management committee. Ashley and his family run a mixed cropping and cattle enterprise on their property at Peranga. Ashley has been aware for some time of the need to better utilise his pastures to maintain carrying capacities throughout the year. Having attended a Mick Alexander Grazing Best Practice workshop, Ashley identified an opportunity to implement a rotational grazing system.

David Vonhoff was a finalist for his work in tackling salinity on his property. David operates a 170-200 cow dairy and has been at the forefront of tackling salinity in the Brymaroo area. With the assistance of Landcare and other volunteers he has planted some 20,000 trees on his property to assist with this. Since purchasing his property at Brymaroo in 1983 David has overcome the many problems associated with overstocking, poor soil and plant nutrition, erosion, lack of water retention during rain events and major salinity problems.



COMING EVENTS

Thursday 5th April 2018 10am Cabarlah Hall – CCMA – Weed and Fire Ant Workshop

Monday 14th May 208 DDRL Meeting Oakey RSL (all welcome) – details to be advised

NOTICE BOARD

QMDC Community Garden Library Resources: QMDC has some resources available to borrow from their library relating to Community Gardens. These resources are free to borrow and they will be happy to post your selection if you are unable to come into their office. Included in their resources are various interactive kits on Soil PH Testing, Composting and Poultry.

For a comprehensive list of resources available, you can call QMDC on 07 4637 6200 or visit <http://www.qmdc.org.au/resources/library-services.html>

Expressions of Interest for Future Projects Enclosed with this newsletter is an Expression of Interest form for any projects you may be interested in. Please take the time to think about this and return the completed form to Glenys Bowtell, PO Box 544, Highfields. Qld. 4352.

Change of Address/Update Contact Information: If you change address or no longer wish to receive information from NED, please advise us at North East Downs Landcare Group Inc., PO Box 544, Highfields. Qld. 4352. or email committee@nedlandcare.org.au