



The Creek to Coral Echo

Issue. 2

Season. June

2007



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Gustav Creek, Magnetic Island. Riparian vegetation management and bank restoration work has been undertaken in May and June.
Photo: John Gunn

Creek to Coral reshuffle

Creek to Coral has experienced a lot of changes in the past couple of months!

Chris Manning, formerly the Water Quality Improvement Plan (WQIP) Officer, has taken on the acting Creek to Coral Coordinator and WQIP Manager position previously held by DJ MacKenzie.

Adrian Turnbull is providing support for the development of the WQIP, while also implementing the Community-Based Education and Involvement component of Creek to Coral. John Gunn provides project management support for the WQIP project.

The Creek to Coral team is dedicated to implementing a rigorous, transparent and effective program with strong ownership and involvement from the community. The program provides efficient and innovative responses to total water cycle management in the city.

The months to come are filled with many exciting events in Townsville and you may see the Creek to Coral team at some. We also have the "Capturing our Catchment from Creek to Coral" competition, which is open to both primary schools and individuals.

Don't miss this great events- stay up to date and connect on www.creektocoral.org for more information. You can also contact us on creektocoral@townsville.qld.gov.au



Events

June-July 2007

Capturing our Catchment from Creek To Coral catchment tours

See article on page 3.

Tuesday 7 August 2007

"Capturing our Catchment" exhibition launch

Perc Tucker Gallery. The exhibition will showcase artwork from various primary schools and Individual who have submitted entries for the Competition. Artwork will be exhibited at the Gallery during the month of August, and visitors will be able to vote for their favourite artwork

Friday 17 August 2007

Save the World day at Townsville Cultural Fest

Save the World Day will present ideas, debates and displays on what individuals can do to take responsibility for saving the environment as a part of their lifestyles. It will be part of Townsville's annual cultural fest- and Creek to Coral will be there to display its work and answers your questions!

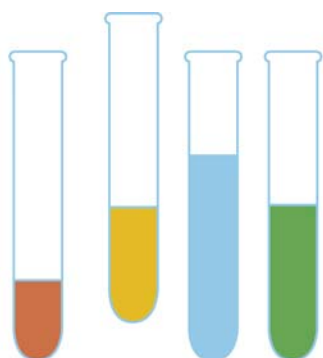
28 September 2007

Announcement of winners for the Capturing our Catchment competition

The winning school and individual will be announced and will receive prizes.



A combined Townsville/Thuringowa and State Government (infrastructure-based) initiative to maintain and enhance our healthy waterways in the coastal dry tropics.



Links + Facts

- Tilapia is an introduced species which is commonly found around Townsville and Thuringowa's catchments
- Rumour has it that Tilapias were originally introduced in New Guinea as a protein and they spread from there
- Tilapia is edible but tastes better if water quality of the fishing area is good
- There are regular Tilapia Fishing Competitions organized in Townsville and Thuringowa.



Science Scene

Monitoring of Townsville-Thuringowa Waterways: 2007 Wet season- from ACTFR

Landcare group volunteers from across the Townsville Thuringowa Region and staff from the Australian Centre for Tropical Freshwater Research, James Cook University monitored waterways at 20 sites during the major rainfall events that occurred in late January/early February this year. This sampling effort is part of a water quality monitoring program that ACTFR is conducting for the Creek to Coral Coastal Catchment Initiative to determine the pollutants of greatest concern in the major catchment waterways and urban stormwater drains within our region. Samples were measured for suspended sediments, nutrients (nitrogen and phosphorus species), pesticides, total petroleum hydrocarbons and trace metals. As the majority of pollutants are transported during these major flood events, samples were collected from the rising, peak and falling stages of river flow. Sampling sites were selected to represent the major land uses associated with the region, including urban, industrial, rural residential, natural and agricultural lands, and included the major rivers from Rollingstone to Alligator Creek. Due to the considerable river flow that occurred in the Black, Bohle and Ross Rivers, marine sampling was also conducted in the freshwater flood plumes within Cleveland and Halifax Bays. The results from this monitoring program will be available at the end of July.

For further information please see Chris Manning on 4727 9520 or Zoe Bainbridge, 4781 4595 or zoe.bainbridge@jcu.edu.au.



Bohle River (north-bound lane) during the peak of major event (2/02/07).



Sampling at upper Sach's Creek during the first flush event (25/01)



Projects

Coastal Catchment Initiative update

The Water Quality Improvement Plan is progressing along nicely. Currently the team is working on several sub-projects including:

- Gathering information on the rivers and catchments in the Ross and Black Basins (Townsville and Thuringowa local government boundaries).
- Defining the current condition of these waterways through three separate studies focussing on:
 - Riparian zone condition
 - Instream water quality condition
 - Pollutant sources and types

This information will be used in the next major step in the WQIP development, determining draft environmental values for these waterways. This is the prelude to a community consultation phase to determine the final environmental values and water quality objectives for these waterways.

Tilapia Terror

The Ross River recreational fishing enhancement plan is currently being reviewed with the issues previously identified being reassessed and prioritized. Tilapia was identified as one of the main issues that need to be managed in the Ross River Weirs in conjunction with the Fish Stocking Program which is undertaken by the Twin Cities Fish Stocking Association. Recommendations from the review will be presented to the next Fishwatch committee meeting.

Community-Based Education & Involvement (CBEI)

What is Community-Based Education Involvement (CBEI)?

CBEI is a Townsville City Council initiative to transform water management culture and paradigms through enhanced community participation in environmental activities. The vision is for communities to have ongoing, long-term ownership of local environments and habitats. Creek to Coral is facilitating CBEI across Townsville and Thuringowa regions.



Reef Check News

Beeramundi version two a success

Reef Check Australia launched the "Beeramundi beer" for the second time this year as a way to raise awareness on Reef conservation while fundraising. This year again, it proved to be a great success. The beer was launched once again this year on the 29th of May and gathered many community members interested in coral reef monitoring and conservation. The evening was a great success and included a presentation and fun quizzes, facilitated by Quiz Master David Wachenfeld from the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA). The winning team was awarded the "Ar'team'ia" with a double pass to visit Kelso Reef, courtesy of Sunferries. "Sweetlips on the sexy checkers" won the best team name and a voucher redeemable against food and drink at the Brewery. More than 50 litres of Beeramundi were drunk by the attendants on the Quiz Night!

Reef Check benefits from every Beeramundi sold, so if you haven't done so already (and if you are over 18!), head down to the Brewery and get some before this year's batch runs out!

Beeramundi branded clothing and merchandise is available at www.cafepress.com/reefcheck

Reef Check will be running more quizzes in the future to help raise awareness on coral reef conservation issues so if you have missed the last round, jump on the opportunity! Stay attuned and jump on Reef Check Australia's website <http://www.reefcheckaustralia.org/>

You make a difference



Capturing our Catchment from Creek to Coral Art competition Register your interest!

Creek to Coral, in partnership with Perc Tucker Gallery, is organising an Art contest to design artwork showcasing the city's catchments and how they are affected by human activities such as agriculture, industry, fishing, gardening and urbanization. The contest aims to raise awareness on the importance of water bodies such as creeks, rivers and wetlands.

The competition is open to all members of the Townsville and Thuringowa communities. The artwork should showcase some of the main features of Townsville and Thuringowa (e.g. Ross River, Castle Hill, Mt Stuart...) and should show how human activities affect the water from creek to coral. Any computer software can be used, but you are also welcome to use your own hands and a piece of paper!

Selected artworks will be displayed at Perc Tucker Regional Gallery during the month of August 2007. Gallery visitors will be able to vote at the Gallery for their favourite artwork. The winners' artwork will be used in all Creek to Coral communication tools, including brochure, newsletter, posters and emails with acknowledgment to the successful artist.

So if you'd like to do something for your environment, express your creativity and promote your work around the Twin Cities, this is the perfect opportunity for you!

If you are interested please register online on <http://www.creektocoral.org/ven/contest/register.html>. The deadline for registration is 25 July 2007. If you would like more information on this contest please contact Haidi Egan on 07) 4727 9520 or Anne Caillaud on 07) 4727 9310.

CURRENT CREEKWATCH PROJECTS

Your local neighbourhood **Creekwatch** is aimed at involving the local community with their local environment. It is also a great chance to meet new people and see different parts of the Townsville region. **Louisa Creekwatch** is the longest standing project with over six years of water quality data in its database. The team of volunteers has been devoted to improving Louisa Creek's water quality for a long time.

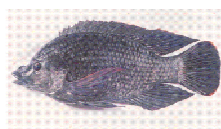
Sach's Creekwatch has also been collecting and analyzing data for over two years. Sach's Creek runs through Oak Valley south west of Townsville. Water quality in Sach's Creek is important to all of us because the creek feeds directly into Ross Dam. The team is made up of committed locals that appreciate the relatively pristine condition of their local creek and wish to preserve this naturally beautiful environment.

Mundy Creekwatch is a more recent initiative. Mundy Creek (sometimes called Captain's Creek) is in the Belgian Gardens/Rowes Bay area. Like all of our Creekwatch projects this one is public driven. Even before the team was formed, locals were requesting the sort of attention to Mundy Creek the program is centred around. Monthly water quality monitoring, creek bank revegetation, and surveying of fauna and flora are what we get up to.

Bluewater Creekwatch is another Creekwatch project. The landowner of the upper reaches of Bluewater Creek, Ron Gordon and the Grade Seven class of Bluewater State Primary School help run this project. We are looking for other volunteers. that live in the Bluewater area, especially those residents backing onto Bluewater Creek.



Juvenile Tilapia
(*Oreochromis mossambicus*)



Mature Tilapia



Native Eastern Rainbowfish



FISH POPULATION, NATIVE AND INTRODUCED

Most people have heard of Tilapia and know it is an introduced fish species that can do harm to our waterway ecology. But do you know that it is one in a long line of exotic escapees breeding in our local creeks?

Exotic species can affect water quality. General creek health, including water quality is determined by the state of its ecology. Ecology is simply the interrelationships between living organisms and their environment, including non-living parts.

Health can either be measured as relating to humans or relating to the organisms living in the ecosystem. Measuring creek health needs to take them both into account, to be able to differentiate between a creek with a natural ecosystem and a drain with a highly unnatural ecology.

The presence of exotic fish species is an indicator of potentially degraded creek ecology. Monitoring native and introduced fish population levels helps us determine if displacement of natives is happening. Monitoring programs need to extend across the whole year, in order to catch any seasonal variations in breeding cycles and food availability.

SCHOOL NOTES



Capturing our catchment from Creek to Coral competition on the go!

The Creek to Coral school competition "Capturing our Catchment from Creek to Coral" has stirred a lot of interest from primary schools in Townsville and Thuringowa. More than 350 students from eight different schools have already completed a special "Capturing our Catchment" Eco-Catchment Education School with Creek to Coral staff. The Tour aimed to show the students the connectivity between river systems and the marine ecosystem and to showcase how humans impact on their urban environment- both negatively and positively.

Artists coordinated by Perc Tucker Gallery have started to visit the participating schools to help students come up with an artwork. All artworks will be exhibited at the Gallery during the month of August and gallery's visitors will be able to vote for their favourite artwork. The winning school will be awarded with a certificate as well as prized and they will see their artwork promoted on Creek to Coral website and communication tools.

If you are a teacher and interested in entering the competition with your class don't miss this great opportunity! Call us in Integrated Sustainability Services on (07) 4727 9520 (ask for Anne) or email creektocoral@townsville.qld.gov.au



Students from Hermit Park State School (left) and Wulguru State School (right) learning about catchments during one of the competition tours

URBAN NATURE-YOUTH ECOTOURISM FORUM II

The **Urban Nature-Youth Ecotourism Forum (UN-YEF) II** was successfully held on the 15th and 16th of May, 2007. The Forum was a follow-up of the first UN-YEF ([link](#)) and linked with the [Global Ecotourism Conference held in Oslo](#) ([link](#)), Norway in May 2007.

Partners of the Forum were Reef HQ, the Great Tropical Drive, Burdekin Drive Tropics NRM and Creek to Coral. TCC and Reef HQ staff facilitated the Forum.

Around fifty students from the Cathedral School of Saint Anne and Saint James, St Patrick's Secondary College and Townsville State High School attended the Forum and the videoconference held on the next day.

Students were able to connect with their youth delegate, Madeleine McGann, who was representing them in Oslo. They also connected with young people from France and Brazil, as well as an expert from Thailand.

The report and proceedings of the Forum are available on <http://www.soe-townsville.org/ecotourism/youthforum2.html>



REEF GUARDIAN SCHOOLS UPDATE

Reef Guardian Schools continues to establish new and exciting partnerships in the Twin cities with Stuart State School being new to join with an exciting partnership with Conservation Volunteers Australia. In this school the banks of Stuart Creek alongside the school will be revegetated and the water quality monitored here to give students an opportunity to learn about the role of catchment management in keeping our Great Barrier Reef great!

Also news in Reef Guardians is the announcement of the dates for this year's Future Leaders Eco Challenges. For Townsville/Thuringowa the date has been set for Tuesday 17th July with a focus on Climate Change. This year the challenge will look at "In an ever changing world, what does climate change mean to YOU?" Stay tuned for more information, and your invitation to this exciting student centred forum.

www.reefed.edu.au/guardians/

SCHOOLS OCEAN FORUM REPORT- *by Dylan Furnell*

On Friday 8th of June, 2007 the Schools Ocean Forum was held at Seagulls Resort. This forum built on the first Schools Ocean Forum, which was held in 2005 in conjunction with the Pacem In Maribus XXXI conference. It was held to discuss the increase in youth involvement in the current issues that are affecting global ocean health. Students discussed three themes, which ranged from the state of the oceans and the current challenges and future prospects for youth, the involvement of youth in the Millennium Development Goals and how to alleviate world poverty using the oceans resources and lastly how to engage youth in actively participating in ocean governance and protection issues. It was a very successful day with many good ideas, being put forward. From this years Schools Ocean Forum a declaration will be presented to the Pacem In Maribus XXXII conference, being held in Malta during the month of November.



Thuringowa looks after its Wetlands

Thuringowa's stunning wetland ecosystems are being well looked after.

Thuringowa City Council is currently undertaking a project entitled 'Improving the Management and Protection of Wetlands in Thuringowa'. The project comes under the Great Barrier Reef Coastal Wetland Protection Program (GBRCWPP) administered and funded by the Federal Government.

A report reviewing the current status, protection and management needs of Thuringowa's wetlands has been produced for Council.

The review revealed four key threats to wetlands that are otherwise in good condition. The report also identifies a number of generic management responses to limit the impact of these threats. Finally, the document nominates broad areas and specific sites as priority areas for investment in wetland management and protection.

Subsequent stages of the project have focussed on the review and application of 'tools' available to deliver wetlands protection or rehabilitation and a review of the Planning Scheme in respect to wetlands protection and management coverage.

The on-ground component of the project involves an allocation of works/incentive funding to landholders to carry out particular wetland management and protection measures.

If you would like to find out more about this project please call Thuringowa City Council's Environmental Management team on 07 4773 8411

Contact

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C/o PO Box 1268, Townsville 4810
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Creek to Coral Coordinator Connects

By Chris Manning (A/Coordinator)

Welcome to the Creek to Coral Echo. As you have read, the Creek to Coral team has undergone some changes recently with the departure of DJ Mackenzie. So as the acting Creek to Coral Coordinator it is my pleasure to connect with you in this edition of the C2C Echo...

Firstly I would like to wish DJ well in his new role with Logan City Council. I know I speak on behalf of you all when I say that his passion and commitment will be missed by the C2C program and across the wider community.

However with that said the C2C program is still bubbling along, with various water quality and community projects progressing since the last update.

The C2C team has coordinated several key tasks for the development of the Water Quality Improvement Plan including gathering background information for the Environmental Values Identification process to be undertaken shortly in partnership with the EPA. We have also been working with Townsville City Council and the City of Thuringowa to progress the development of Water Sensitive Urban Design guidelines for the Dry Tropics.

The Community-based Education and Involvement program is proving very successful, with community support for activities such as Creekwatch and Seagrasswatch at an all time high. In addition, our eco-certified catchment tours have also been very popular with local schools recently.

The "Capturing our Catchment from Creek to Coral" competition, developed with the Perc Tucker Regional Gallery has also captured your interest. The competition runs through June/July so there is still time to enter the primary schools or community competition by calling 4727 9524 to register.

The C2C team has been working hard on our new website, creektocoral.org. It has heaps of new and interesting information so please log on and have a look. We hope you like it!

Finally while I have your attention, my thought for this edition... we all contribute to declining water quality but will you choose to be involved in the solution?

Photographs: Cover | TCC-ISS- Creekwatch | Internal spreads: Science Scene- TCC | Gustav Creek-John Gunn | Fishes- Creekwatch | Schools-TCC -ISS| Creeks-John Gunn |