The CREEC Experience (cont)

- Understanding how nature fits together and if it has a purpose, courtesy of the Queensland Museum resource kits and the imaginations of the group.
- And frogs and toads, birds and bees, weeds and seeds, riverine rainforests, pluviometers, photosynthesis, potable water, recycling, ecosystems, composting, worm farms, and if and but and where and why and how and when,

AND they didn't have time for the children's playground, as orienteering was much more fun.

Planet Ark National Tree Planting Day
Roseberry Place Bushcare Site
UBD Reference 69 : E16

You are invited to a Family Bushcare planting at Roseberry Place, Burpengary commencing at 9am.

Sunday 29 July 2007

Park in Roseberry Place or Brownsea Place off Lakewood Drive.
Tools and plants will be supplied.
Wear protective clothing (hat, closed in shoes, work clothes)
Bring water bottle and sunscreen.

!!!! FREE SAUSAGE SIZZLE TO FOLLOW !!!!

Notice of Annual General Meeting of Friends of CREEC Association

Thursday 16 August 7.00 pm at CREEC

Please recycle this newsletter by passing it to friends or neighbours.

This newsletter is produced and distributed by volunteers. We believe in its value in communicating information to members of our community who are interested in the environment and the work of CREEC. Contributions welcome

We thank the Caboolture Shire Council for their assistance.

Caboolture **R**egion
Environmental
Education **C**entre
Ph : 3888 8751
Fax : 3888 3211
Email :marshw@
caboolture.qld.gov.au

This Newsletter is on the web at www.creec.org.au

Inside this issue:

FOC Annual General Meeting 16 Aug At CREEC 7.00pm

Friends of CREEC
Winner of
Excellence in
Business Award
2005

C.R.E.E.C.

caboolture shire

July 2007

The Big Tree Planting Day

Sunday 29 July is this year's ***National Tree Planting Day***, set aside in the environmental calendar in recognition of the need to add to our stock of vegetation.

If we look at a map of remnant vegetation in the shire, it soon becomes apparent that almost all of our lowlands have been cleared. Only about 25% of our original forests are left, mostly on the steeper hillside slopes, unsuitable for cropping or grazing.

Within the urban footprint, housing development, partly on land previously cleared for pine plantations, has resulted in less than 10% being covered by remnant vegetation. There are few reminders of what the country looked like 150 years ago, and what it could be like in the future.

Caboolture Shire has had an active Bushcare program for more than 10 years. Almost half a million trees have been planted, as well as clearing weeds and rubbish to allow natural regeneration on public reserves.

This year's local ***National Tree Planting Day*** community event, which is part of the national effort, is scheduled for the parkland at Roseberry Place, situated beside Little Burpengary Creek (UBD 69 – E17) commencing at 9 am. Wear hat, work clothes, closed in shoes and bring a water bottle and the whole family.

Australia Day Awards Ceremony

The contribution of community volunteers to the Council's Bushcare program was recognised at the Australia Day Awards ceremony earlier in the year. The Weier Road Group, working along the right bank of the Caboolture River at the waste water treatment plant, has converted a bladey grass paddock to a bushland of regional significance.

With mulch from the waste transfer station, recycled water from the treatment plant, plants from the CREEC community nursery, advice from Parks Department and regular muscle power from dedicated people, the area has been transformed. It is an excellent example of what needs to be done along our creeks and rivers to restore the biodiversity they once had.

"Without additional water supplies, the economy and future quality of life for people in South-East Queensland will be severely affected. Billions of dollars of projects are planned and under construction." Queensland Government .

…….

The 47 km long, underground water pipeline from Landers Shoot to Morayfield will carry 65 ML daily and for the most part, follow Energex easements.

…….

"Upon this handful of soil our survival depends. Husband it and it will grow our food, our fuel and our shelter and surround us with beauty. Abuse it and the soil will collapse and die, taking man with it."
Sanskrit – 1500 BC!

……...

Food production requires three quarters of the world's usage of freshwater. About 7% is used in cities for non-commercial purposes. Both of these requirements will double by 2050. Unless there is a larger contribution from snow and ice, current supplies aren't enough.

The CREEC Experience (JP)

Over the past year, about one in 45 of Caboolture Shire's population made use of the facilities provided at the Environmental Education Centre. Since each ratepayer's annual contribution is only $2.80, (with about four times this "value" from the volunteers and others who contribute to its activities), CREEC is not of critical importance to our livelihoods or financial situation. Not true.

Following behind about 40 kids from the Morayfield Leisure Centre during the school holidays, trying to keep them in a bunch and to listen and learn, to get some exercise for body and brain, to work in teams and to respect others strengths and weaknesses, made me think about how fortunate they are to have access to CREEC, as do hundreds of other students during the year.

Apart from fresh air and sunshine, containing essential ultraviolet and a lazy south-westerly, four hours at CREEC provided plenty of stimuli for active minds. Here's a list of just a few of them:

- Being in the propagation area of the plant nursery when the misting sprays come on, feeling the textures of mosses and algae and seeing how plants start.
- Estimating how many different kinds of plants there are in the shire and how many are available each year for Bushcare, Land for Wildlife and other projects.
- Guessing at the reasons for a barbecue–like structure, used for opening banksia cones and smoking seeds so they germinate faster.
- Planting fan flowers around the new lagoon, wrestling with hard clods of clay, and roots that didn't want to leave the comfort of the tube.
- Finding out about floodplains and the use of wetlands and water plants to reduce the quantity of nutrients and sediments going into creeks.
- How macadamias are the main native species to be cultivated for food and the need to preserve the germplasm (and remember, an hour later, how many A's in "Australia's macadamias".
- Guessing how old the strangler Moreton Bay Fig might be and how it is such a great habitat for a large number of creek birds, insects and other plants.
- Seeing how long it takes, and how many steps, to run around the Endeavour Bend pathway (from 39 to 174 – the two metre strides of one very small child were not ridiculed; as he had his big boots on).
- Working out the difference between the energy requirements of incandescent filament light bulbs and compact fluorescents.
- If the windmill harvests water, and the 60 solar panels on the administration building harvest the sun's energy to produce electricity, are the green and blue sails flapping over the amphitheatre harvesting the wind?

(Cont page 8)

Sustainable Living in the Suburbs: (Brian Rigden)

One of the talks at last month's Sustainable Living Fair looked at how a modern suburban house could be made more energy and water efficient.

The main points were as follows:-

1. Insulation – many roofs are poorly insulated – putting in good ceiling insulation will make a house much cooler in summer and warmer in winter. Metal garage doors facing north will turn a garage into a hot box, spreading heat to the rest of the house. Door insulation can cool a garage in summer by 15˚C.

2. Hot Water – replacing an immersion heater HW system with solar, heat pump or gas will greatly reduce power consumption. Solar HW systems generally are best but can be the most expensive to install on an existing house. A heat pump can often simply replace the existing HWS with minimal plumbing and electrical installation costs. It may be the best value for retrofitting.

3. Rainwater Tanks - with the current government and council rebates, these are very good value. Plumbing into toilets and laundry may be very expensive for an existing house.

4. Screening West-facing Walls – The use of trellises, trees and patio blinds and screens to keep the afternoon sun from walls and paved surrounds can greatly reduce internal house temperatures in summer.

The house in question (2 people) was able to reduce water consumption to 52 kL per year and electricity to 1850 kWh per year.

THOSE OF YOU WHO ARE DOING BETTER, TELL US HOW YOU ARE DOING IT!

It Isn't Easy Being Green (Brian Rigden)

It is relatively easy to reduce our power consumption and greenhouse emissions around the house. Energy-efficient light bulbs, solar hot water, insulation, turning off appliances at the wall. By now we all know how it is done and hopefully we are all doing it – at least making an effort to!

However, when it comes to saving some of the energy we use for transport, the answers are not so simple. We could all buy hybrid cars, but they cost around $10,000 more than the equivalent petrol car and still use 5L/100 km. A modern turbo-diesel car can achieve about the same economy. We could buy a small motorbike or scooter but the most efficient of these still use around 3L/100 km, and are not much use for taking the kids to school or collecting a week's groceries. Bicycles are great for shorter trips (most car trips are less than 15 km) but are no good for school trips or shopping, and, given the lack of bike tracks or bike lanes, are not safe in modern traffic conditions.

What about air travel? There are no hybrid or pedal power options here. Air travel accounts for a significant and rapidly growing percentage of our carbon emissions. At present our only options are to offset the carbon emissions of our journey by paying to have trees planted. A recent newspaper article suggests that the CO_2 emitted on a return trip to the UK can be offset by planting 18 trees per passenger. Some airlines, including Virgin, Qantas, and BA are now offering this as a voluntary option. Alternatively, you can sign up with organisations such as Greenfleet and Carbon Neutral which will plant trees for you.

The long term solution to the transport energy sustainability problem is to redesign our towns and suburbs so that we do not have to transport people and goods over long distances. This will only happen when there is political will to do it. Don't hold your breath - but do get out there and harass a politician – they do listen to what the voters have to say sometimes – especially in an election year.

What are your thoughts on the transport energy problem?
Let us have your ideas or suggestions.

Weeds, weeds and more weeds: (JP)

We are regularly being reminded of the nastiness of introduced plants gone wild, how it costs farmers 4 billion dollars a year in lost production or the expense of control methods, with a similar figure for environmental losses (which we don't pay for in dollars, or do we?).

A recent survey found that only about 4% of Australians thought weeds to be an important issue. Weeds are mostly green, aren't visually ugly, not "sexy", like tree clearing or logging of old growth forests. NIMBY (not in my backyard) doesn't work, because they **are**. There are 3700 garden plants, already here, waiting to escape, and to spread across the landscape like triffids, or like rubber vine, mimosa, lantana, gorse, blackberry, willow and parthenium.

Climate change might be the trigger, ignorance the catalyst. A hotter, wetter climate, as the effect of an enhanced greenhouse moves the tropical weather systems closer, will stress the existing vegetation and play into the hands, seeds, roots and leaves of the woody weeds and bushfire-loving denizens of the deep north.

Because we have the greatest range of climate of any country, we have the greatest potential problem. Weeds, like other immigrants, won't respect state borders.

Caloundra City has recently released its draft Pest Management Plan for community consultation; Caboolture's will be similar. There are 11 lists, based on how serious they are or are likely to be, with a total of 429 species. 117 pose a threat and legislation is prescribed for their management or control, depending on where they are - already here or close enough to be a serious concern. A further 312, which don't require a response under existing legislation, may become a problem locally and another 80 need to be watched carefully.

Difficulties include how to identify which is which and their management. The plan sets out all the operational strategies and actions for 56 of them. There will need to be strong Council and landholder cooperation to

achieve the goals (desired outcomes), perhaps a CREEC role.
Managing our weeds will involve early detection and eradication, preventing reproduction and spread of the ones we don't have yet, and containment and reducing the impacts of the ones we do. It will be a challenge and failure will be very costly.

There are (a few) people who believe that (some) weeds are of value; they begin a healing process for the land, make use of changed soil or climate conditions, accumulate carbon, bring up nutrients from below, stop the landscape dying. Don't depend on them; a weed is a weed.

Short-beaked Echidna (Brian Rigden)

The echidna is a member of that very exclusive group known as monotremes. The platypus is the only other Australian monotreme and the long-beaked echidna of P.N.G is the only other monotreme worldwide. They are egg-laying mammals which carry the developing young in a pouch.

In the case of echidnas, a single egg is laid directly into the pouch, hatching after about 10 days. The youngster (known as a puggle) stays in the pouch for about 3 months.

Echidnas are toothless and feed on ants or termites, breaking into nests with their snouts or forelegs and sticking their tongue into the nest and back into the mouth. Adult echidnas vary in length from 300 to 450 mm and in weight from 2 to 7 kg. Males are generally larger than females and the southern population is generally larger than the northern.

Echidnas are surprisingly common in rural and semi-rural areas of South-East Queensland but are very secretive and mainly nocturnal. They can frequently be seen around CREEC, squashed on roads! If you do squash one, inspect your car tyres as the spines can make a mess of tyres.