



## Newsletter July 2014

## Issue one

### Vale Heather Harford 1946-2014

CRC's first secretary Heather Harford died 30th May in Ballina NSW



Heather was born in at Epping NSW 1946. In 1970 she and her husband came to the Sunshine Coast to a farm in Palmwoods – growing macadamias, strawberries and kiwi fruit.

She became aware of environmental issues when local farmers were frequently spraying chemicals on their crops and hormone which resulted in massive soil loss on the surrounding farms.

In 1976 Heather read an article in the local paper by a teacher in Caboolture Greg Czechura (now Qld Museum). Greg wrote of the loss of trees and wildlife and adverse forestry practices. He organised a meeting in Nambour which Heather attended. Margaretann Stannard and others were there and before Heather knew it she was (willingly) involved in the then "Save the Conondale Range Committee". She became the first secretary and stayed in that position for many years.

Heather recalls many journeys with Richard Giles (Project Officer) to lobby and hassle the Forestry Department decision-makers and the National Party and Liberal Party politicians of that era. The aim was to put in place the first logging guidelines.

#### **The letter 'e' from Ian**

The Conondales owe a great debt to Heather Harford, or Heather Petersen as she was then. Although Heather's involvement (and that of her then husband Lutz) was before I became involved, I was there at the celebration when, thanks to the combined recollections of Richard Giles and Heather, the story of how the letter "e" saved the forests of Bundaroo, emerged and has

#### **A successful FOP grant**

A group from Sunshine Coast Bushwalkers, who are also CRC members, have been doing regular track maintenance on the Conondale Range Great Walk for several years. They were successful recently in receiving a Friends of Parks (FOP) grant to carry out major track works and repairs at Peters Creek on the Great Walk.



since become something of a legend in the conservation history of the Conondales.

At a particularly hyperactive time in the battle to save the Conondales, perhaps even at the blackest hour, Heather had somehow made contact with Joh Bjelke-Petersen's pastor who suggested that she ring him (Joh) at a particular time of day and she would get to talk with him. Heather followed the advice and to her surprise found herself speaking directly with Queensland's most controversial and conservative Premier. Joh was struck that Heather spelt her surname with an "e" as did he, and Heather managed to somehow sow the seed for what would become a scientific study, the Paired Catchment Study, leaving one catchment (Bundaroo) unlogged while logging the adjoining one and comparing impacts.

I believe Joh ended up announcing it as his idea, no doubt with a view that it sounded responsible but that as soon as it was over they could get on with logging Bundaroo.

Other events intervened however, and Joh fell from both grace and office as the Fitzgerald Inquiry dug ever deeper.

The forests of Bundaroo were saved and eventually became the centrepiece of the Conondale Range National Park.

I can't visit Bundaroo Creek now, without thinking of this wonderful story and a wonderful woman.

Ian Mackay June 2014

- see page 3 for information on  
Heather's amazing  
conservation journey at Byron  
and the story of 'Heather  
Helicopter Bird'



CRC also applied for the FOP State Government grant to produce a new information brochure on the Conondales. We were unsuccessful as Parks are gearing their information delivery to the internet.

While this may work well in some places, there is no mobile or internet service available at Booloumba Creek or Charlie Moreland so getting the relevant information could prove rather difficult.

# Presidential Ponderings

In this newsletter we pay tribute to Heather Harford (formerly Heather Petersen) an earlier CRC member, a very active member of SCEC for a number of years before moving to New South Wales. A gutsy lady, Heather, or Madam Lash as they called her at SCEC, and a passionate campaigner for the Conondales back in the days of Joh Bjelke –Petersen. Heather passed away recently after a battle with cancer. The wonderful story of how the letter “e”, Heather’s legacy to the Conondales, spared the forests of Bundaroo Creek from logging appears elsewhere in this newsletter.

In another part of this newsletter (and for totally different reasons) we honor long-time Conondale range supporter Jenifer Simpson for her recent recognition with an Order of Australia medal. Formerly a resident of Booloumba Creek, Jenifer was a great supporter during both the goldmine phase of the Conondales and the anti-dam campaign of the early nineties. This latter involvement brought her into contact with Des Ritchie who was forming a SCEC group to research effluent and water (“The Effluent Society” as it became known) and catalyzed Jenifer into a much greater involvement with the water industry (more details elsewhere this newsletter)

On another front, the state government announced recently that it had a preferred tenderer for the controversial Zip Line in Kondalilla National Park.

A few months back, at a meeting in the Montville hall, I was part of a panel , with Paul Donatiu of National Parks Association of Qld, Narelle McCarthy of SCEC and Deb Davis of the Montville Village Association. We'd expected a fair mix of attitudes among the audience but found very little support for the project. As well as re-writing the legislation to allow commercial development within national parks, the process appears to turn the normal planning process on its head. There is no indication that there will ever be an Environmental Impact Assessment available for public scrutiny and comment.

Indeed it strikes me the only way the public

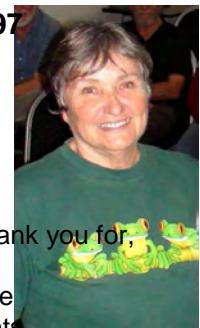
may get to express the disapproval that we felt on the night would be through the ballot box at the forthcoming state election.

As the Zip Line is in the electorate of State Environment Minister Andrew Powell, it's lead me to make the call that it could cause him to be the third state Environment Minister to lose his seat over environmentally ill-advised, unpopular governmental initiatives (Molly Robson for the Daisy Hill highway, Andrew McNamara for Traveston Crossing dam).

And on the subject of Traveston Crossing dam, it's almost five years since Peter Garrett's federal veto gave the Mary an enormous reprieve and many of the properties bought up for the dam are now finding their way back into private ownership. This year's Mary River Festival in Kandanga on Saturday November 8 will be a joyous celebration of resilience of both human and ecological communities that live in the Mary catchment .

## Farwell for Heather Harford – 1997

Madame Lash, they called her,  
.....Though not at all unkind;  
The organiser par excellence,  
No better would you find.



Heather, there's much that we must thank you for,  
And tonight we take that chance;  
But the biggest glow I'm sure you'll take  
Is Bob King.. out on the seat of his pants.

But I recall another tale,  
Heather told in '91;  
How Bundaroo was saved by the letter "e"  
That forests battle won.

How Heather with initiative  
Took on another Jo(h);  
And stayed destruction's ugly hand,  
And Bundaroo spared the blow.

So I always think of Heather  
As I walk there... 'mongst forests tall;  
I thank her courage and her modesty,  
May they be present in us all.

Yes, we're going to miss you Heather  
We'll miss your energy and your pranks;  
We wish you well whatever you do,  
The Sunshine Coast Environment says "THANKS"

- Ian Mackay



## Memories from Byron Bird Buddies

Sadly our dear friend and birding buddie Heather Harford, died on the 30 May after a two year battle with cancer. Heather's unveiled enthusiasm and knowledge for all things birds and the natural world was inspiring and she will be missed by all who knew her.

With her family and husband Jim, she moved to Byron Shire in 1997. She became a committee member of Byron Environment and Conservation Organisation (BEACON) and a hands-on member of Federal Landcare.



Heather joined Byron Bird Buddies (BBB) in 2007. Besides being involved in monitoring activities at our sites in the Byron Wetlands, Vallances Road, Brunswick River, Belongil Estuary and the BBB education program, she also kept a tireless vigil on the beach-nesting birds in the Belongil Estuary and the Brunswick River.

During the breeding season at Belongil she visited two to three times a week to check on the Pied Oystercatcher nests especially if there were chicks. With a shoulder bag full of "educational" material, look-out anyone who entered her patch with a dog! – with the bag swinging and that small-step stride of hers, up she rushed and gave them some education. At the Brunswick River in 2008, Heather took on the role of a surrogate mother again when the threatened Beach Stone-curlew successfully nested in 2010. The chick banded A1 can thank Heather for its life.



As part of BBB education program and collaboration with the Northern Rivers Regional Shorebird Committee, Heather was responsible for the design of the "Shorebird in Byron Shire" signs, now erected at key shorebird sights in the shire. The signs have been transformed and erected in other shires from the Tweed Coast to the Clarence River and beyond. From that sign design, thousands of brochures have been distributed through Tourist Information Centres, Shire Councils and National Parks.

In 2012 Heather resigned from BBB, but continued her birding work with the Birdlife Australia Shorebird 2020-Ballina program. She was an active member of the subcommittee to save the coastal Emu in the Clarence Valley and despite her illness she joined the Ballina Shire Coastal Group Advisory Committee and up until her death she was a committee member of BirdLife Northern NSW.



She was a passionate member of Brunswick Valley Birdwatchers (BVBW) group and one friend Faye Smith tell the story of when she first joined, "Heather was an instant friend and enthusiastic mentor. I well remember her taking me around the West Byron Wetlands to show me a 'lifer' at the time – a Golden-headed Cisticola. With great enthusiasm, animated body movements and laughter, she demonstrated how the bird performed what she called it's 'helicopter flight' of course, she gave me one of her well-known 'bird calls' to match the animated helicopter flight! The Golden-headed Cisticola will forever be the Heather Helicopter bird for me."

Heather was full of great stories but the one I loved was where she found a nest of abandoned Red-browed Finches which she hand-raised, keeping them alive with constant feeds from an eye-dropper, a feat in itself. They survived and would follow her everywhere as she worked in the paddock, landing on her shoulders and in her hair. They eventually flew off but would return for an occasional visit. One day she was talking to a couple of men in the paddock (probably Mormons) and the finches flew in and landed on her head, can you imagine, guess they did not think she needed saving after that.



Heather had a wonderful appetite for life and an infectious laughter and she will be a great loss to conservation.... Farwell Heather and as her friends Denise and John Ewin have said "RIP Heather and wherever you are, may you be enjoying he joyous song of birds."

Heather is survived by her two children Kurt and Kim Petersen, step-son Todd Harford and two grandchildren Jude and Chanti, sadly Heather's Husband Jim, died in 2007.



Jan Olley, Byron Bird Buddies

## **UNESCO rejects bid to de-list Tasmanian Forest**

UNESCO's World Heritage Committee has summarily dismissed the Abbott government's bid to wind back protection of Tasmanian forests. The committee meeting in Doha took just seven minutes to consider the bid, which member nation Portugal called "feeble", and setting an unacceptable precedent for the future. No country spoke in favour of the bid to de-list 74,000 hectares of old-growth forest, which official cultural and natural values advisers told the meeting would weaken the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area.

Advertisement

Environmental lobbyist Alec Marr, who was in Doha, said: "The World Heritage Committee saw through the deception of the Australian Government's efforts here, and the high quality science and professionalism of the advisory bodies was exemplary."

"Today is vindication for every Australian, and people around the world, who love Tasmania's forests and want to see them protected," Mr Marr said.

Also in Doha, Environment Tasmania spokesman Dr Phill Pullinger described the decision as "a great relief for the wild forests of the Great Western Tiers, Weld Valley, Butlers Gorge and the Upper Florentine Valley".

However, "much of Tasmania's natural heritage remains at risk, with the Tasmanian Government aiming to turn vast areas of protected forest into logging zones", Dr Pullinger said.

When the 21-nation committee eventually came to it on the agenda, it was treated as an embarrassment. No one spoke for it, and there was no indication Australia wanted to speak either.

The International Union for the Conservation of Nature advised the World Heritage committee that the wind back would be "clearly inappropriate", and diminish the wilderness' outstanding universal values.



Photo: Steven Siewert

## **Jenifer Simpson received OAM**

Jenifer Simpson received a well-deserved



Order of Australia Medal for service to conservation and the environment in this year's Queen's Birthday Honour list.

CRC would like to congratulate Jenifer who is an Honorary Life

Member of Sunshine Coast Environment Council and the Water Management Project Officer. Sincere appreciation for your selfless, significant and often humorous contributions to SCEC and water conservation over many years.

- Sunshine Coast Daily, 9/6/2014

*WATER has been a prominent theme through most of Jenifer Simpson's adult life, from sailing the world as a young woman to educating the community about water efficiency in her later years.*

*Today, her 20-plus years of promoting water recycling has been rewarded with an Order of Australian Medal "for service to conservation and the environment".*

*The Twin Waters woman said she was "dumbstruck" by the honour.*

*"It hasn't really sunk in yet," the 79-year-old said.*

*She said she hoped her award would give the cause of recycling water greater credibility. Her interest in water efficiency began when she lived at Booloomba Creek, between Kenilworth and Conondale.*

*Mrs Simpson and her husband retired to the Coast in 1977 and bred donkeys for 16 years. She said it taught her a lot about managing bureaucrats.*

*"When you're winning (the battle of wills) you find, with the donkeys and the engineers, their bottom lip starts to tremble a little," she laughed.*

## **Kenilworth Poets Breakfast 2014 Saturday 3rd October**

**8am to 11am  
Hosted by Ian Mackay  
enquiries Ian 54460124**



# Charlie Moreland camp ground has a makeover

THE POPULAR Charlie Moreland camping and day-use area (*pictured left*) in Imbil State Forest is undergoing a total revamp by Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service over the next 14 months at a total cost of \$1.539 million.

Member for Glass House, Andrew Powell MP, said the hinterland campground in open forest beside Little Yabba Creek was one of Queensland's most popular for families and large groups, but was looking very tired.

Mr Powell said, "The QPWS upgrade will feature vegetation belts, new toilets and associated waste water treatment systems, renewed water infrastructure with an environmentally friendly solar pump, new furniture and rebuilt pathways in the day-use area, redesigned roadways to enhance traffic flow and visitor safety including a rebuilt causeway that's longer and more resilient to flooding.

"Some mature trees are being removed, as they drop large limbs. These will be replaced by hundreds of new trees and shrubs, in belts of vegetation to provide shade. Habitat trees that are home to birds and possums will be kept, where they don't pose a risk.

"Until then, every effort will be made to keep the campground open by staggering the works. We're asking visitors to be patient, be understanding, observe signage and check park alerts at [www.nprs.qld.gov.au](http://www.nprs.qld.gov.au) for updates."

National Parks Minister Steve Dickson said the campground normally takes 380 campers at capacity, which will be reduced to a maximum of 100 while the work's going on.

Work starts after Anzac Day, subject to weather, in the meantime campers are encouraged to try other options: Boolumba Creek in Conondale National Park, Peach Trees in Jimna State Forest, Amamoor Creek and Cedar Grove in Amamoor State Forest, Glastonbury Creek in Brooyar State Forest, the Kenilworth showgrounds and private campgrounds.

Kenilworth Realty owner Carol Gilmour said that the community will be excited to see the results of the revamp, "The site is already very popular with campers and the improvements to the facilities will encourage more visitors to come and extend their stay," Ms Gilmour said.

"Ultimately this will result in increased visitor expenditure in our town centre, and the positive flow-on effects will be felt throughout the local economy.

Due for completion in 2015, Charlie Moreland will be an ever better spot to camp.



Charlie Moreland Campground



Black Bean Pod Boats

## New Course for this year's Brownwater Classic Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> September

In preparing for this year's Brownwater Classic, organisers have announced both a venue and a date change.

With this year marking the twenty-fifth Brownwater (for the extremely prestigious and highly-coveted Numabulla Cup), organisers were devastated to find that construction of the new bridge at Moy Pocket had not only removed the iconic old timber Pickering Bridge but had altered the rapids that were an integral part of the course.

A site inspection, as well as trials at the site, showed it to be no longer up to the high standard competitors have come to expect, and further, that safe access to the starting line had been considerably hampered by the bridge's construction.

Undeterred by such a setback, the Commodore of the Moy Pocket Yacht Club has advised that this year's event will take place on rapids slightly further upstream, on the property at 918 Moy Pocket Road.

The date has been set further back too, to Saturday, September 6, a couple of days before the full moon.

The race itself will be at the customary 3pm, but boat building yards will be open from midday to facilitate construction of boats from locally-grown black bean pods. The race will be followed by the rock-skipping championships and evening barbecue and campfire.

Mark the new date on your calendar and get ready for a great day to celebrate both the 25<sup>th</sup> event and the beginning of Spring.



2014

# Conondale Range Conservation Newsletter

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## MEMBERSHIP FORM

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Conondale Range Conservation  
PO Box 150 KENILWORTH 4574  
Email: admin@exploreconondales.com  
[www.exploreconondales.com](http://www.exploreconondales.com)

**Mt Allan fire-tower – good news!**  
Public access to the fire-tower has been closed for the past 12 months due to damage to the pole structures. The poles have recently been scanned and the results found significant dry rot damage to the structure. Parks are hoping to get funding this financial year to repair the damage. New technology will be used and the poles will be injected with a very tough, durable compound that will stabilise and



Fire-tower view

## Support Conondale Range Conservation Wear a Conondales T Shirt



STILL... WATCHING  
OVER  
THE CONONDALLES



The Marbled Frogmouth  
can now relax in the  
Conondale National Park  
It's taken 25 years!

**'Let it Be' and 'Frogmouth' T Shirts**  
Available on line: [www.exploreconondales.com](http://www.exploreconondales.com)

## Conondales 'Wilder Side' Books

Available at:

- \*Kenilworth Information Centre
- \*Fairhill Native Plants, Yandia
- \*Bellbird Teahouse, Kenilworth
- \*Coop bookshop Sunshine Coast University
- \*Qld Museum Bookshop, Brisbane
- \*Barung Landcare, Maleny
- \*Rosetta Books, Maleny
- \*CRC Mail Order or on line

[www.exploreconondales.com](http://www.exploreconondales.com)

*A must for any visitor to the Conondales,*

*this book includes history, a comprehensive bird list, description of walks, recreation and maps of the area, plus lots of great photos.*

prevent further dry rot from developing. The other option was to demolish this historic icon and put up a metal tower, still with public access but void of character.

Conondale Range Committee Issue One 2014