

protected

Magazine of National Parks Association of Queensland

a focus on rehabilitation

LADY ELLIOT ISLAND: AN EXAMPLE OF EFFECTIVE HABITAT RESTORATION

PLUS

Austinville Landcare and Springbrook National Park

ALSO FEATURED

Volunteering Matters

Cuthbertson Grant 2021/23 Results

Should We Be Pedalling in National Parks

Cairns Birdwing Butterfly

Ranger spotlight



Issue 40
Winter 2023

Contact details

Office

Unit 9/36 Finchley St, Milton
QLD

Post

9/36 Finchley St, Milton QLD
4064

Phone

(07) 3367 0878

Web

www.npaq.org.au

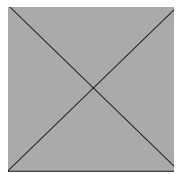
Email

admin@npaq.org.au

ABN

60 206 792 095

About NPAQ



Our Purpose

The National Parks Association of Queensland (NPAQ) advocates for the protection, expansion, effective management and presentation of national parks and other protected areas in Queensland.

Council

President	Susanne Cooper
Vice President	Steve Noakes
Secretary	Joanna Osborn
Treasurer	Clare Birnie
Councillor	Glenn Tozer
Councillor	Rod Diaz
Councillor	Emily Griffiths
Councillor	Simon Cavendish
Councillor	Peter Klein
Councillor	Christine Hatton

Staff

Chief Executive Officer	Chris Thomas
Conservation Manager	Simone Maynard
Operations Manager	Samantha Smith
Marketing & Communications Manager	Dania Pearson-Adams

Accounts

Glenys Wilkinson

Advertising enquiries

Please email admin@npaq.org.au or phone (07) 3367 0878.

Contributor guidelines

NPAQ invites contributions to Protected articles. Please email admin@npaq.org.au for a schedule of future editions.

Contributors, please include contact details and brief personal summary. Articles can be submitted via email or hard copy. Digital photos should be minimum 300dpi.

Images

Cover Photo: *Leptospermum scoparium* (Broom tea-tree) - Samantha Smith

Back Cover Photo: *Acacia melanoxydon* (Blackwood acacia) - Samantha Smith

Banner Photo (left): *Syzygium australe* (Brush cherry) - Samantha Smith

Banner Photo (pages 18-19): *Laridae* (Great crested tern) - Samantha Smith

Copyright and disclaimer

NPAQ retains copyright of Protected. Articles may be quoted provided that appropriate acknowledgement occurs in the reproduction and use of material.

Articles in Protected do not necessarily reflect NPAQ's opinion or position.

Advertising policy

Advertisements are required to align with relevant NPAQ policies. NPAQ reserves the right to refuse any advertisement at any time. Advertisement in Protected does not imply NPAQ's endorsement of products or services.

Editor Samantha Smith

Want to get involved with NPAQ?

NPAQ welcomes people from all walks of life and offers a variety of ways to be involved:

- Have fun in the bush – come along on a bush walk or other activity
- Get your hands dirty – participate in on-ground conservation efforts
- Join us – become a member
- Step up – become a National Parks
- Conservation member or a National Parks Protector
- Donate – support our work
- Volunteer on exciting projects
- Subscribe to Protected and Neck of the Woods via email
- Connect with us –
- Facebook, LinkedIn and Instagram
- Stay in touch – read regular updates on our website
- Share a bush adventure with children – download NPAQ's Kids in National Parks guide

SUPPORT NPAQ AND HELP MAKE A DIFFERENCE
BECOME A MEMBER, DONATE OR VOLUNTEER

www.npaq.org.au/



In this issue

- 4 From the President
- 6 Lady Elliot Island: An Example of Effective Habitat Restoration
- 8 Volunteering Matters
- 10 Jim Cuthbertson Grant 2021 - 23 Results
- 11 Should We Be Pedalling in National Parks seminar
- 12 Austinville Landcare and Springbrook National Park
- 14 Cairns Birdwing Butterfly
- 15 Kids in National Parks
- 16 Park in Focus
- 17 Ranger of the Month



6

Lady Elliot Island 2023
Photo: Susanne Cooper



10

Mani
Photo: Jessica Lovegrove-Walsh



14

Cairns Birdwing Butterfly (*Ornithoptera euphorion*)
Photo: Samantha Smith



FROM THE PRESIDENT



Susanne Cooper

Winter has definitely arrived, and I'm really enjoying the crisp days, cool nights and great weather for walking out in nature.

I recently spent time in Carnarvon Gorge National Park, Lady Elliot Island (southern Great Barrier Reef) plus Lamington National Park. The diversity of ecosystems and landscapes is inspiring. Luckily we are able to experience and appreciate them through our National and Marine Parks.

Two interesting developments over the past few months are an indication of positive change in how we manage our natural environment.

Firstly, the recent announcement that Victoria is stopping all logging of native forests by the end of this year.

This has been brought forward by 7 years, from the initial date of 2030. Hopefully this will add impetus to Queensland and other States for similar action, although we are seeing this logging in SEQ end by 2026.

Prof David Lindenmayer – a leading forest ecologist – commented on the extensive work required to rehabilitate logged areas where the dominant regrowth species are

largely unsuitable as food sources for significant fauna species such as koalas and greater gliders.

Interestingly, 86% of Victoria's logged native timber is turned into low value products such as wood chips and paper pulp.

Secondly, you have probably heard of the Australian government's recent announcement to create the new Macquarie Island Marine Park to over 475,000 sq km. This is an area larger than Germany!

This World Heritage-listed island, which lies halfway between Tasmania and Antarctica, is a breeding ground for millions of vulnerable seabirds and endangered wildlife, including nesting albatross, elephant and fur seals, whales and the royal penguin, which is found nowhere else on Earth.

The vast majority of the park will be a marine sanctuary, the strongest level of protection possible, which will give world-leading protection to a unique environment.

Lastly, two major NPAQ events were held recently: the Mountain Bike seminar and our Annual Dinner, both which were very well attended.

Mountain biking is a controversial issue as it is a rapidly growing outdoor activity that puts increased pressure on our natural areas – including National Parks. More on this in current and future issues of Protected.

The annual dinner was a most enjoyable evening with a great range of attendees, including groups of our long term members, senior officers from QPWS, Councillors and representatives from other environmental organisations. We're already thinking about how to celebrate our 95th birthday in 2025.

A huge milestone!

Finally, welcome to our new Environment Minister, Leanne Linard, who enjoys camping with her kids in National Parks. We look forward to developing a constructive relationship.

Susanne Cooper

President, NPAQ

Photo Banner: Cleveland harbour - Samantha Smith

SHARE YOUR PHOTOS

Do you have photos from a visit to a national park or protected area? Send them to admin@npaqa.org.au or connect with us on Instagram [@nationalparksassocqld](https://www.instagram.com/nationalparksassocqld) for your chance to feature in the next edition of NPAQ's PROTECTED Magazine! The best photos will also be featured on NPAQ social media channels and go in the draw to win some awesome NPAQ prizes*.



Somerset Lookout (section of panoramic image)
Photo: Ian Lambert



Fungi at Main Range National Park
(@Tils - Instagram)



Humphead wrasse (*Labridae*)
Photo: Samantha Smith



K'gari (Fraser Island)
(@mrbenblanche - Instagram)

LADY ELLIOT ISLAND OF EFFECTIVE HABITAT

- Susanne Cooper

Island history

Lady Elliot Island is the most southern coral cay in the Great Barrier Reef with an area of around 40Ha. Owned by the Federal Government, the island is located 85 km off the Queensland coast, with the closest regional towns being Bundaberg and Hervey Bay. Lady Elliot Island is located within the 'Green Zone' of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park, with fishing and collecting prohibited.

The island is a striking and leading example of habitat rehabilitation and restoration from a largely cleared and denuded landscape. This article outlines what has been achieved, and what has been critical in shaping such a successful and effective program in a sensitive, highly ecologically significant location.

Lady Elliot Island first appeared above sea level roughly 3,500 years ago. Sea birds landed on the bare coral cay bringing with them the seeds necessary to establish vegetation on the island. Although the island was discovered by Europeans in 1816, real activity and vegetation clearing began in 1863 with the start of guano mining.

Guano miners first appeared on the island in 1863 and remained for a decade. Guano formed from the excrement of seabirds, and was mined for use as a fertilizer. The destructive practice of extracting the guano resulted in the removal of all vegetation. The island was bare and denuded, with around 1 - 1.5m

metres of material removed due to guano mining. In addition, goats were introduced on the island as a food source for stranded sailors.

Unfortunately, this prevented the establishment of any new growth, resulting in a barren island largely devoid of vegetation until the late 1960's.

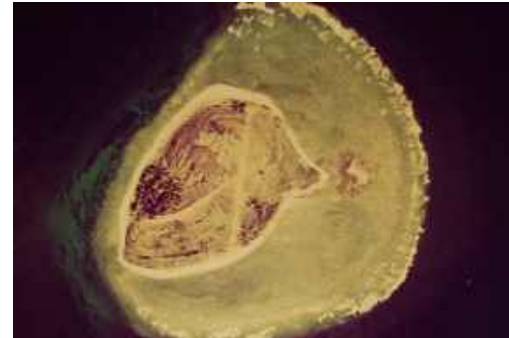


Island denuded of vegetation after guano mining and introduction of goats



A barren area around the lighthouse in the mid 1900's.

Although revegetation started in the late 1960's, rehabilitation work has ramped up since 2018, with the Great Barrier Reef Foundation providing \$3m of funding over 7 years through their Reef Islands Initiative.



1973, before rehabilitation work



Lady Elliot Island today

The rehabilitation program

Planting stocks are propagated in the island's nursery from cuttings and seed sourced from the island and other southern GBR Coral Cays to strengthen the genetic diversity of the vegetation communities.

The delivery of the rehabilitation program is based on a mosaic approach, with four habitat areas reflecting specific ecosystems and dominant vegetation species. A percentage of each habitat area is worked on annually. Key habitat areas are: Grasslands (especially as habitat for ground-nesting seabirds), shrubland; coastal zone with casuarina/pandanus and octopus bush; and pisonia forest (key bird nesting habitat).

ISLAND: AN EXAMPLE OF HABITAT RESTORATION

A challenge specific to the island is its remote location and isolation, which result in elevated costs. Development of a small scale resort on the island has given access to power, water, accommodation and some equipment, including a front-end loader which has been very effective with weed removal.

Central to the restoration program is a permanent program manager and volunteers due to the amount of hands on work required volunteers sign up to spend 7 days on the island, and work on the rehabilitation program for 30 hours of work over 5 days. The program pays for flights to the island, accommodation and food. Day 1 after arrival includes induction and a tour of the island. Time is made available for a (free) glass-bottom boat tour of the coral reefs, and exploration of the island and coral reefs after work.



A recent group of volunteers on their lunch break with diverse age groups and skill sets

The results

Jim Buck, the Ecosystem Management Officer overseeing the program says "I'm seeing results in 4 ½ years that I didn't think I'd see in my lifetime".

Regrowth has been helped over the past few years by good rainfall patterns from the La Nina weather system. The nutrient levels of the soil

are high compared to other coral cays, so they are quite productive.



Casuarinas planted in 2020

The island now supports over 200,000 birds in season, with 100,000 birds nesting on the island during the breeding season.

Over 100 bird species have been sighted, which makes the island one of the highest seabird diversity of any island within the Great Barrier Reef. Many of the seabirds had vanished from the island prior to revegetation.

Iconic bird species include the Bar Tailed Godwit, with the longest flight annually from Alaska to the island, without stopping to rest or feed. The Black Noddy has only nested on the island since the late 1980's. Now over 30,000 pairs are sighted at the start of the nesting season in September. The Red-tailed Tropic Bird is only found on one other island in the Great Barrier Reef.



Black noddies nesting in Octopus Bush immediately adjacent to cabins and walking tracks, and effectively co-existing with island visitors.

Over 120 introduced plant species are being managed for removal. A key flora species is *Pisonia grandis*, which now covers 30% of the island after 5 years of planting.



Pisonia grandis planted in 2000

The success of the restoration work on Lady Elliot Island has been due to some key factors – the vision and passion of those involved, a practical and clear plan for rehabilitation work, and appropriate resources (people, equipment, plants) to allow long term planting, monitoring and follow-up management.

These are factors in nearly all rehabilitation programs – but to see the impacts of putting them into practice is very motivating. This story shares the knowledge and insights gained from experience, and demonstrates what's possible.

Photo Banner: Lady Elliot Island - Catlin Seaview
Photo Inline: supplied - Susanne Cooper

VOLUNTEERING MATT

- Ian Witheyman: D'Aguilar Project Ranger

Last year I wrote an article about NPAQ's vegetation management group in D'Aguilar National Park for NPAQ's 80 year anniversary, but there's so much more going on with volunteers in the D'Aguilar area.

There are six other groups out and about contributing in a big way to park management. While many of us are sleeping in on weekends, or even mid-week, there are dedicated, passionate volunteers out doing their thing.

There are three main categories of volunteer groups working in and around D'Aguilar. They are made up of three bush-care groups, two recreation trail maintenance groups, and a visitor engagement group.

The groups include Moggill and Bunyaville Conservation Park Bush-care group, NPAQ Vegetation Management Group, Northside Trail-care Alliance (NTCA), Brisbane Bushwalkers, and D'Aguilar Mobile Public Contact Volunteers. A total of about 60 active volunteers currently contribute to these groups.



QPWS has finite resources, so the groups need to be self-sufficient and have motivated group leaders to organise and lead the activities. This is key for volunteer groups to be successful and self-sustaining.

For this article, I'll focus more on the D'Aguilar Mobile Public Contact Volunteers (MPCV) to help celebrate their 20 years of volunteering with the program. But before I do, it's important to recognise the significant contribution made by the other groups whose activities have also been running for many years, with the two other bush-care groups being in their 15th year, the trail care group in their 21st year, and the NPAQ group up to their 33rd official year (their 37th unofficial year).

The bush-care groups have made significant inroads into reducing threatening processes from invasive plant species impacting the natural diversity of the parks. They primarily target riparian corridors in Moggill and Bunyaville Conservation Parks. Thousands of volunteer hours have been spent treating highly invasive species. The outcomes from their pest control activities have been incredible, resulting in a significant reduction in the spread of pest-plant species in the parks.

The same can be said for the trail-care group NTCA; they are equally committed to maintaining trails to achieve best practice for both trail sustainability and ride quality.

Brisbane Bushwalkers also undertake an annual large-scale working bee focusing on walking tracks, signage maintenance, remote bush-camps and other park infrastructure.

Other volunteer groups that also contribute significantly to park protection include the multiple Rural Fire Brigades situated in and around the D'Aguilar Range, the local SES groups that assist Queensland Police





with search and rescues, and the Mount Nebo/Glorious Environmental Protection Association (MEPA) who undertake significant pest-plant control works in the southern part of the D'Aguilar Range.

20 years of D'Aguilar Mobile Public Contact Volunteers

Kudos for this initiative goes to Denis Taylor, a long-term volunteer now in his 38th year of volunteering in D'Aguilar National Park, starting with the 'Go Bush' program in 1985.

Denis organises the roster for several volunteer activities each month, with alternating volunteer patrols to both the northern and southern parts of D'Aguilar National Park. Denis has had some long-term support from Alison Davis and Mike Corrie who have also been volunteering in the park, each for 25 years. Newer members of this volunteer team also bring a breadth of knowledge and experience to the group.

The initial idea of the volunteer patrol was to supplement ranger patrols with public contact volunteers who could provide information and advice to the public about the park's natural history and attractions. They visit key visitor sites and interact with the public. In

addition, they report issues like facility breakdowns and vandalism to the local work unit, and they clean and maintain boardwalks, carparks and interpretive nodes with blower vacs to improve presentation value. They initiate general litter collection at picnic areas, and they deliver visitor guides to key visitor centres and businesses around the D'Aguilar Range.

Once a month, they also provide a visitor-counter download, which involves collecting visitor data from trail counters out in the park. Counters are located on walking tracks, mountain-bike trails and horse trails, at facilities like toilet blocks, and at vehicle entrance roads and carparks. This data collection is crucial for management planning to monitor trends of use, and to assist with decision making around capital works planning. The visitor data helps assist with the prioritisation of site re-developments for visitor facilities like day use areas, trail hubs and campgrounds.

This group of volunteers also undertake visitor surveys from time to time to get a snapshot of the public's feedback about the many visitor sites across the range. Having a volunteer patrol frequenting the

park a couple of times a month, and flying the conservation flag, helps with combating negative behaviours.

Managing D'Aguilar protected areas so close to a major capital city is challenging. There are multiple visitor nodes that each experience very high numbers of visitors, and the parks suffer increasing edge effects with widening urban interface zones.

It's difficult for rangers to keep up with the demands of working in such a busy space, however working in partnership with such supportive community groups is one way to relieve some of the pressures.

Welcoming and harnessing this support from the community is a positive way to assist in managing our protected areas.

Ian Witheyman

Photo Banner & Inline: Supplied



JIM CUTHBERTSON GRANT 2021-2023

- Jessica Lovegrove-Walsh: Friends of Nerang National Park

This is an excerpt from the final report for the Jim Cuthbertson Grant 2021-23. The full report is available on the NPAQ website.

The past two years have been a period of significant activity and progress for Friends of Nerang National Park. Since receiving the prestigious Jim Cuthbertson Grant from the National Parks Association of Queensland in 2021, we have successfully carried out a series of small mammal trapping surveys, conducted in-depth research on the distribution of greater gliders within the park, and undertaken comprehensive frog surveys throughout its expanse...

Our ambitious fauna survey project commenced with the development of a Nerang National Park-specific Fauna Survey Guideline. This comprehensive resource encompassed various survey methods, including camera trapping, small mammal trapping, bird surveys, frog surveys, and aquatic macroinvertebrate surveys. Thanks to the generous support of the Jim Cuthbertson Grant, this invaluable guideline has not only guided our surveys within Nerang National Park but will also serve as a reference for future endeavours within the park for years to come.

Regrettably, our surveys also revealed the presence of widespread pest species within Nerang National Park. Cane toads (*Rhinella marina*) were observed throughout the park, and our camera traps captured evidence of two species of deer (*Axis axis* and *Rusa timorensis*) as well as European red foxes (*Vulpes vulpes*) in multiple locations. Figure 1 presents a map displaying the large, feral mammals detected by our camera trapping efforts, excluding the black rats (*Rattus rattus*)

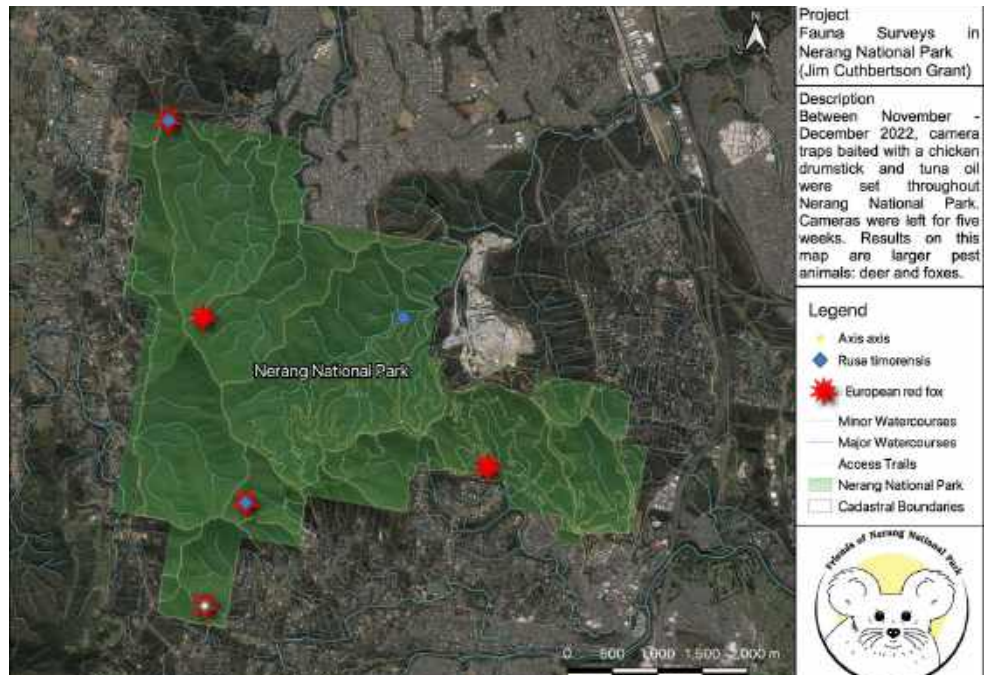


Figure 1: Pest animals found by camera trapping various locations in Nerang National Park

and house mice (*Mus musculus*) recorded during the small mammal trapping surveys.

While the identification of three large feral vertebrate species is undoubtedly an undesirable outcome, it is crucial for park managers to have an understanding of the composition of both native and pest species in order to make informed decisions regarding park management...

Friends of Nerang National Park also made several unexpected and positive discoveries during our small mammal trapping, spotlighting, and trail-based surveys. These endeavours resulted in over 200 fauna records, encompassing birds, frogs, mammals, and invertebrates. Notably, we were delighted to observe the presence of Richmond birdwing vines (*Aristolochia praevensosa*) along Mooyumbin Creek and the surrounding Coombabah Creek area. Within these regions, we

encountered eight individual Richmond birdwing butterflies (*Ornithoptera richmondia*).

A significant portion of the Jim Cuthbertson Grant was allocated to small mammal trapping, a labour-intensive task requiring expert assistance for accurate species identification. The most noteworthy and exciting outcome of our fauna surveys was the first-ever documented presence of a common dunnart (*Sminthopsis maurina*) in Nerang National Park.



Photo Banner: Friends of Nerang NP - Supplied
Photo Inline: *Sminthopsis maurina* - Supplied

MOUNTAIN BIKING SEMINAR

- Simone Maynard

Should we be pedalling in national parks? That was the question discussed by participants at the NPAQ seminar held in June. The aim of the seminar was to bring the cycling industry, conservation sector, government, and other interested people together to discuss the contentious activity of mountain biking in national parks and hear the latest research and each other's position and perspectives on the topic.

The seminar attended by over 40 people was mostly represented by government, followed by the non-government sector, the cycling industry, cycling clubs, the private sector, academia, and several retired people. Regardless of the sector they represented, most of the participants cycled in nature at least once a week or once a month, whilst others cycled in nature 1-10 times a year, or previously cycled but were retired from the sport. Only four participants had never cycled in nature. Chris Thomas (CEO, NPAQ) opened the seminar by introducing Simone Maynard (Conservation Manager, NPAQ) who engaged participants throughout the seminar collecting their perspectives via questions using Mentimeter.

The latest research on mountain biking impacts was presented by Catherine Pickering (Griffith University). Some of the impacts

were erosion, vegetation trampling, weed introductions and conflict with other park users. The establishment of illegal trails and the long-distance mountain bikes can travel were identified as the most damaging to national parks.

Participants said they were familiar with most impacts, and many had experienced conflict with bikers whilst hiking and noticed extensive erosion and illegal tracks.

Participants were less familiar with the impacts of e-bikes and the popularity and pressures of mountain biking close to urban areas. As well, that on a per metre basis the impact of mountain biking is relatively the same as hiking, and that bikers and hikers have been found to share the same values for nature although their motivations of participating in the activities were different.

Following this, Lynn Forrester (QLD Government) shared the government's position noting that most cycling in national parks is a carry-over of state forest conversion.

Whilst cross-country cycling is considered most compatible in national parks, the role of the value based Management Framework and taking a landscape approach to recreational planning was vital to determining appropriate areas.

The key to sustainable biking was identified as zero tolerance to illegal trails, following guidelines developed by the International Mountain Bike Association, the establishment of trailcare groups, adequate resources for trail maintenance, and supporting privately operated mountain bike areas.

Lisa Davies Jones (Bicycle Queensland) discussed the benefits of mountain biking such as physical and mental health, social and family cohesion, and bringing people closer to nature. Determining sustainable solutions to the demand of diverse park users is a recognised challenge, balancing these with environmental and cultural conservation, and funding and resourcing new and existing trails. Bicycle Queensland calls for the development of a robust environmental framework which guides the construction of sustainable trail networks in national parks and other land tenures.

A full recording of the event and presentation slides can be accessed on the NPAQ website: <https://npaq.org.au/should-we-be-pedalling-in-national-parks/>

Photo Banner & Inline: NPAQ MB Seminar - Samantha Smith

AUSTINVILLE LANDCARE SPRINGBROOK NATIONAL PARK

- Wal Mayr

Austinville Landcare has been working for 18 years to improve the biodiversity of the Austinville Valley in the Gold Coast Hinterland. Part of Springbrook National Park covers approximately one third of our 17km long catchment. We work across the whole valley, on City of Gold Coast (COGC) Reserves, Private Properties and Springbrook National Park.



Austinville location - supplied

We are an unincorporated group of approximately 30 members. When we work on council land, we are strongly supported by their Naturally GC Landcare team. We alternate our volunteer work on council land, with work in Springbrook National Park. In 2016 we received the inaugural Healthy Habitat Award from our regional Natural Resource Management (NRM) Group, Healthy Land and Water (HLW).

We work with our volunteers to help them develop a love of our valley and an appreciation of its biodiversity. We educate and train them to increase their knowledge and skills. In this way they are more productive on our field days, and hopefully they employ better practices on their properties, and influence and educate their friends, family, and politicians.



Volunteers working - supplied

However, from the outset we realised that part-time volunteers could never achieve the change we desired over the entire catchment. To achieve the productivity to create landscape change we needed to employ professional restoration contractors. These contractors have the skills, equipment, and time to restore large and difficult to access areas that are beyond the capability of volunteers.



Contractors working - supplied

This approach has been highly successful. Our volunteers worked in Council Reserves with the Naturally GC Landcare Program and our contractors worked adjacent to private properties along the rest of the creek line.

Austinville Landcare employs these contractors as an unincorporated group. This has been possible with the support and sponsorship of the regional not for profit group, Watergum. For a 5% fee on grants Watergum acts as a sponsor for grants, provides Queensland Water and Landcare (QWALC) insurance, and manages our funds in a dedicated bank account. Watergum supports 44 member groups in the Gold Coast area in this way to enable the volunteer groups to concentrate on on-ground action.

Springbrook National Park

In the 1930's a large area of the upper Austinville catchment was cleared for a Banana Settlement which was established to provide employment during the depression. The area was subdivided into farms and 50 families moved there in 1934. The community boasted a school, store, and tennis

courts. Unfortunately, the conditions were too difficult, and the farms were too isolated and by 1940 the Settlement had been abandoned.



Austinville banana plantation - supplied

The tragedy is that much of the vegetation which was cleared is now classified as critically endangered subtropical lowland rainforest. Once the bananas had been removed the area was overrun with lantana and other weeds. The land was gazetted as a State Forest in the 1960's and several small Eucalyptus grandis plantations were established. In 1992 the Regional Forest Agreement changed the tenure to National Park. So, over a period of 60 years, the land had transitioned from critically endangered tropical lowland rainforest on private land to a weedy addition to World Heritage Springbrook National Park.

In 2016, Austinville Landcare considered whether we could restore the old Settlement area, now in Springbrook National Park, back to rainforest. It was a daunting task with hundreds of hectares of weeds to be restored. The scale was tipped when Paul Donatiu of HLW partnered in the project and provided us with over \$170,000 worth of funding to start the process.



Cleared hills at Austinville - supplied

RE AND NAL PARK

HLW's initial grants funded contractor work from 2016 to 2019. At the same time Austinville Landcare worked in the park in a volunteer capacity. The volunteers achieved a great deal, and the community was emotionally engaged in the project, but it should be emphasised that the bulk of restoration work was achieved by the grant paid contractors.

The major challenge of using contractors was the constant need to secure new grants. Without continuity of work there was a risk that partially restored areas would revert to weeds. Maintaining a steady flow of grants is challenging as they come from a variety of sources including federal and state government, NRM groups and other not-for-profits. Each source has different application and reporting requirements. Despite the challenges we have managed to keep winning grants and continue using contractors to restore the old Settlement area with great success.



Contractor restoration result - supplied

Renowned Botanist, Dr Bill McDonald independently assessed our work in December 2022 and concluded: *I commend Austinville Landcare and their community members and contractors for the quality and scale of their efforts towards rehabilitation of this most significant area adjoining the Gondwana Rainforests of Australia World Heritage Area.*

In response to the catastrophic fires in 2019, Landcare Australia and QWALC offered grants to provide for better management of the likely increase in the

number of climate induced fires in the future. Austinville Landcare recognised that the rainforests in the Austinville Section of Springbrook National Park were highly vulnerable to fire.

We also learnt that limited resources meant that state and local government, including the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service & Partnerships (QPWSP), prioritised the protection of human assets over the biodiversity of natural areas. Therefore, many of the fire trails in our relatively remote valley were in a bad state of repair or unusable.



Springbrook NP fire trail before restoration - supplied

Austinville Landcare was successful in winning a grant to upgrade the 20 km of fire trails in Austinville valley which ran across land owned by National Parks, City of Gold Coast and Private owners. The bulk of this grant money was allocated to the upgrade of National Park fire trails. These trails are being used for major ecological burns in 2023.



Springbrook NP fire trail after restoration - supplied

Conclusions

The model of working as volunteers and using grant paid contractors to have a greater impact has been very successful for Austinville Landcare. We have raised over \$1,000,000 of grants in total, \$420,000 of which has been invested directly into Springbrook National Park. We would recommend this as an

approach for other groups, although we would make several points.

Volunteer groups need to diversify their membership mix and look beyond on-ground doers and look for people with office, computer, and mapping skills to manage the large tasks of applying for, managing, reporting on, and acquitting grants.

Through our work with Springbrook National Park, we have always had a close working relationship with the rangers. We can call and discuss projects and have joint workdays with our volunteers and Springbrook Park staff. What has been frustrating has been getting letters of permission and support for grant applications. Invariably our local ranger is supportive, however obtaining the required sign off from middle management has been difficult and stressful.

Watergum has been central to our success by providing grant writing assistance, grant sponsorship, QWALC insurance and banking services. However, Watergum only offers this service in Southeast Queensland. Fortunately, the new Friends of Parks Qld organisation has formed with the express purpose of helping volunteer groups working in National Parks over the whole of Queensland. If your group wants to avoid the burden of incorporation and associated administration, and to apply for grants to pay contractors, we recommend contacting Friends of Parks Qld.

Friends of Parks QLD

Website: <https://www.friendsofparksqld.org/>

Email: admin@friendsofparksqld.org

Phone: 0411 382 810

Photo Banner & Inline: Springbrook NP fire trail - supplied

WILDLIFE FEATURE

Ornithoptera euphorion: The Cairns Birdwing Butterfly

The Cairns Birdwing Butterfly (*Ornithoptera euphorion*), also known as the Cairns Birdwing, is a captivating and iconic species that graces the tropical rainforests of northeastern Australia. Renowned for its impressive size and striking colours, this butterfly holds a special place in the hearts of nature enthusiasts and conservationists alike.

Appearance and Distribution:

The Cairns Birdwing Butterfly is one of the largest butterflies in Australia, with the males wingspan reaching up to 20 centimetres, while females are slightly larger, reaching up to 25 centimetres. The males flaunt vibrant wings of black and emerald green, with elegant splashes of gold and electric blue. In contrast, the females exhibit more subdued colours, with a predominantly black wing base adorned with iridescent green and yellow markings. This species is endemic to the rainforests of northeastern Australia, particularly the region around Cairns in Queensland.



The lush vegetation and abundant flowering plants of these tropical habitats provide an ideal environment for the Cairns Birdwing to thrive.



Life Cycle and Behaviour:

The females lay their eggs on specific host plants, mainly from the Aristolochia family, which serve as food sources for the caterpillars. The caterpillars go through several molting stages, voraciously feeding on the leaves of their host plants. Once fully grown, they pupate and emerge as stunning adult butterflies.

Conservation Status and Threats:

The Cairns Birdwing Butterfly faces several threats to its survival. Habitat loss due to urban development, land clearing, and deforestation remains a significant concern. Additionally, the introduction of non-native plants, such as the Dutchman's pipevine, has affected the availability of suitable host plants for the butterfly's caterpillars.

To protect this iconic species, various conservation initiatives have been implemented. Efforts focus on habitat preservation, promoting the use of native host plants, and raising awareness among local communities and tourists about the importance of conservation. Additionally, organisations collaborate with

authorities to enforce regulations against the collection and trading of these butterflies.

Conclusion:

The Cairns Birdwing Butterfly stands as a symbol of the beauty and fragility of Australia's rainforests. Its vibrant colours and impressive size captivate all who encounter it, reminding us of the awe-inspiring diversity of nature.

By valuing and protecting the Cairns Birdwing and its habitat, we ensure the continued existence of this majestic species and contribute to the preservation of the unique ecosystems it calls home. Let us appreciate and conserve the splendor of the Cairns Birdwing Butterfly for generations to come.



Photo Banner: Cairns Birdwing Butterfly (*Ornithoptera euphorion*) - Ray Bilcliff on Pexels

Photo Inline left: Cairns Birdwing Butterfly (*Ornithoptera euphorion*) mating - Bernard Spragg

Photo Inline centre: Cairns Birdwing Butterfly (*Ornithoptera euphorion*) - Yoa via Wikimedia Commons

Photo Inline above: Cairns Birdwing Butterfly (*Ornithoptera euphorion*) - CSIRO via Wikimedia Commons

KIDS IN NATIONAL PARKS

- Samantha Smith

In today's digital age, it's become increasingly important to reconnect children with the wonders of the natural world. The National Parks Association of Queensland (NPAQ) understands this need and has taken a proactive step with our Kids in National Parks program.

This remarkable initiative aims to inspire children to explore, appreciate, and protect the diverse natural landscapes of Queensland's national parks. Let's delve into the transformative effects of this program and how it's shaping the future stewards of our environment.

Igniting Curiosity and Adventure

The Kids in National Parks program serves as a gateway to ignite curiosity and adventure in the hearts and minds of young nature enthusiasts. By organising a series of engaging activities and educational workshops, the program captures the attention of children and instills in them a sense of wonder for the environment. From wildlife encounters to bushwalking and rock pool explorations, these experiences help children develop a deep connection with the natural world and foster a lifelong love for the outdoors.



Environmental Education and Conservation

At the core of the Kids in National Parks program lies a strong emphasis on environmental education and conservation. Through hands-on

activities and interactive learning sessions, children gain an understanding of the intricate ecosystems that exist within the national parks of Queensland. The program aims to teach children about topics such as native flora and fauna, sustainable practices, and the importance of preserving biodiversity through different themed activity days.

Children learn about the threats facing our environment and are encouraged to take action in their daily lives to protect and preserve it. These lessons go beyond the boundaries of the national parks and instill in children a sense of responsibility towards the planet they call home.

We have activity days structured around different focal themes including bush tucker, animal identification and bird watching. We also have urban bridging programs, for those who are more reserved about going out into national parks.



Connecting Children with Nature

The Kids in National Parks program recognises the vital role that direct contact with nature plays in children's overall well-being. With the rise of screen time and urbanisation, it has become increasingly crucial to provide opportunities for young minds to disconnect from technology and reconnect with the natural world. The program achieves this by offering a wide

range of nature-based activities that allow children to immerse themselves in the beauty of Queensland's natural areas.

By engaging with their surroundings, children develop a sense of belonging and appreciation for the natural environment. They learn about the delicate balance between humans and nature and gain a deep understanding of the interconnectedness of all living things. The program is not just about exploring nature; it's about forging a lifelong connection that fosters a sense of stewardship.

Inspiring the Next Generation

By encouraging children to explore and discover the wonders of nature, the program is sowing the seeds of passion and responsibility that will shape their future actions and inspire the next generation of environmental leaders.

By nurturing a generation of environmentally conscious individuals, the program plays a vital role in creating a sustainable future for Queensland's national parks and the planet as a whole.

Conclusion

The National Parks Association of Queensland Kids in National Parks program is a remarkable endeavour that has the power to transform the lives of children and the future of our environment. As we support and encourage initiatives like these, we pave the way for a brighter and more sustainable future, ensuring the protection of Queensland's national parks for generations to come.

Photo Banner & Inline: Kids in NP activity days - supplied

PARK IN FOCUS

Davies Creek National Park

Davies Creek National Park, located in tropical Queensland, Australia, is a hidden gem that showcases the breathtaking beauty of the region's natural landscapes. Nestled within the picturesque backdrop of the Cairns Highlands, this park offers visitors a tranquil retreat filled with lush rainforests, crystal-clear creeks, and captivating waterfalls. Spanning over 2,100 hectares, Davies Creek National Park is a paradise for nature enthusiasts and outdoor adventurers alike. In this article, we will explore the unique features and attractions that make Davies Creek National Park a must-visit destination.

Flora and Fauna

Davies Creek National Park is renowned for its rich biodiversity and stunning array of plant and animal species. The park's diverse ecosystem encompasses tropical rainforests, open woodlands, and eucalypt forests. As you explore the park, you'll encounter an abundance of native flora, including towering trees, vibrant ferns, and a colourful tapestry of wildflowers.

The park is also home to a variety of wildlife, providing ample opportunities for animal encounters. Keep an eye out for agile wallabies, majestic platypus, and a wide range of bird species that call the park home. Birdwatchers will be delighted by the chance to spot species such as the kingfisher, honeyeater, and rainbow lorikeet.

Activities and Attractions

Davies Creek National Park offers a wide range of activities to cater to every nature lover's interest. Hiking enthusiasts can explore the park's well-maintained trails, which vary in difficulty and length. The popular Kahlpahlim Rock circuit offers panoramic views of the surrounding mountains, while the Lower Davies Creek circuit takes you on a journey along the creek, offering glimpses of cascading waterfalls and secluded swimming holes.

well-equipped camping areas. Set up camp under the starry night sky and immerse yourself in the tranquility of nature. The park offers basic facilities, including toilets, picnic tables, and fire pits, ensuring a comfortable camping experience.

Conservation and Sustainability

Davies Creek National Park plays a crucial role in conserving the unique ecosystems of the Cairns Highlands region. As a visitor, it is important to practice responsible ecotourism. Stay on designated paths, refrain from disturbing wildlife, and ensure you leave no trace behind. By respecting the park's natural environment, we can contribute to its long-term sustainability and preservation for future generations to enjoy.

Conclusion

Davies Creek National Park is a natural wonderland that showcases the extraordinary beauty of tropical Queensland. With its lush rainforests, glistening creeks, and diverse flora and fauna, this park offers a serene escape from the bustling city life. Whether you're hiking along scenic trails, cooling off in the creek's pristine waters, or simply immersing yourself in the serenity of nature, Davies Creek National Park promises an unforgettable experience. As you explore this tropical paradise, remember to appreciate and protect its fragile ecosystems, ensuring that the allure of Davies Creek endures for generations to come.

The park is also a haven for water enthusiasts. Davies Creek provides a refreshing oasis for swimming and picnicking, surrounded by the serenity of the rainforest.

For those seeking a camping adventure, Davies Creek National Park provides

Photo Banner: Davies Creek - Owen Allen

Photo Inline (left): Little Kingfisher (*Ceyx pusillus*) - JJ Harrison

Photo Inline (centre): Davies Creek - NeilsPhotography

RANGER SPOTLIGHT

Insights into the diverse backgrounds and day-to-day activities of Queensland's park rangers

Ranger Jessica Harris
Queensland Parks & Wildlife Service (QPWS)

For Ranger Jess, building a career in environmental management and conservation as a Ranger was the obvious path to pursue. Having always had a passion for the natural environment and wildlife, growing up going camping every school holidays, Jess was often found by her family out looking for animals around the camp site. This continued into Ranger Jess' adult life where she loves being in nature at every chance she gets—whether it be camping, hiking, swimming in creeks or spotlighting for wildlife at night.

How long have you worked in national parks?

I began my career in government back in 2015 as a Wildlife Officer and then progressed to working as a Ranger in 2017 and have been doing it ever since.

Which parks have you worked in?

I have spent my time being a Ranger in the greater Cairns and Atherton Tableland region in North Queensland. The first two years I spent working around Lake Eacham and Mareeba where I fell in love with the Davies Creek area of Dinden National Park. I then moved to Cairns and have since managed the parks between Cairns and Port Douglas and out west to Kuranda and Speewah. This includes Barron Gorge, Kuranda and Macalister Range National Parks and several smaller conservation parks including Earl Hill, Smithfield and Jumrum Creek.

Where do you work now and what is special about your current park?

I am very lucky to live and work in the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area of tropical north Queensland which is home to some of the oldest rainforests in the country. We are also bordering the Great Barrier Reef! Unlike many of the great parks in Queensland that are vast and remote, many of my parks are surrounded by residential or urban areas, bordered by major highways or have major attractions that

see millions of visitors a year (Barron Falls, Barron Gorge National Park) and attract world class sporting events (Smithfield Conservation Park). There are many stakeholders invested in these parks including Traditional Owners, neighbours, other government agencies, researchers, commercial operators, interstate and international visitors and local visitors. This brings a great level of complexity managing the needs and expectations of everyone while ensuring conservation values are maintained. This makes managing these parks both interesting, challenging and rewarding all at the same time.

What is your most memorable moment as a ranger?

It's hard to pick a particular moment in time but I've had some great opportunities to be deployed to respond to some large wildfires, the most memorable being in the northern dry tropics region of Forty Mile Scrub National Park and the famous K'gari in Great Sandy National Park. Although it's always sad to see the devastating effects of these large and damaging wildfires, it also reinforces the importance of planning and implementing a robust planned burning program to try and avoid these large and unstoppable fires from spreading across the landscape. Watching fire race through the crown of a forest canopy while the sky turns black is very sobering and reminds me of the immense power of fire and the vulnerability of ecosystems.

Can you describe your favourite national parks experience?

My favourite way to experience the beautiful national parks within the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area that I call home is to venture out hiking to pristine waterfalls or mountain summits with sprawling views. There are so many tracks to walk and creek lines to explore you could never get bored! I am truly thankful to live in such a gorgeous place with so many wild and untouched areas.



One of my favourite spots to sit and ponder life is taking in the views of the Cairns area and out to the Great Barrier Reef while sitting atop Kahlpahlm Rock in the Lamb Range of Dinden National Park!

What is the best part about working in a National Park?

The most rewarding part of managing our national parks is seeing our hard earned management actions like fire management result in noticeable improvements in the landscape and structure of forests. Fire management, if done correctly, is the best tool we can use to manage large fire adapted landscapes. Re-introducing planned burning to areas that have lacked fire for many years and monitoring the change over the years and seeing it slowly return a healthier ecosystem is immensely satisfying and reminds me why I love doing this. I'm proud to be a caretaker of our national parks!

What is your top tip for visitors to your park?

Just get out there and enjoy them! Plan ahead and find the walking tracks in your area that you haven't explored yet and just do it! Prepare a hiking pack with plenty of water, snacks and safety gear, tell a friend where you're going and go climb that mountain or swim under that waterfall! Life is too short to not get out into nature at every opportunity, you will never regret what nature will do for you!

Photo Banner: Views from Kahlpahlm Rock, Dinden National Park - Jessica Harris

Photo inline (above): Macalister Range National Park - Jessica Harris

NPAQ thanks Jessica for taking time to answer our questions. We appreciate the work all QPWS rangers undertake in protecting Queensland's national parks.



<http://parks.des.qld.gov.au/>



<http://parks.des.qld.gov.au/camping>



facebook.com/qldnationalparks



[@QldParks, #QldParks](#)

WHAT'S



NPAQ Activities

Vegetation Management Group

Date: 22 July / 19 August / 23 September 2023

Meet: 9:00am - Jolly's Lookout Lower Car Park, Mt Nebo Road, D'Aguilar National Park 4520

Cost: Free

Leader: Angus McElnea (0429 854 446)

Birdwatching Kumbartcho Sanctuary

Date: 23 July 2023

Meet: 7:30am - 15 Bunya Pine Ct, Eatons Hill QLD 4037

Cost: \$5

Leader: Ian Peacock (0416 943 280)

Birdwatching Week, Maryborough

Date: 13 August 2023

Meet: 2:00pm - 22 Ferry St, Maryborough QLD, 4655

Cost: \$30

Leader: Ian Peacock (0416 943 280)

NPAQ Major Events

NPAQ Members Meeting

Date: 29 July 2023

Time: 10:00am - 11:30am

Venue: Carindale Library (Westfield Carindale, 1151 Creek Rd, Carindale QLD 4152)

Cost: Free

Organiser: Samantha Smith

Romeo Lahey Memorial Lecture

Date: 9 September 2023

Time: *to be confirmed

Venue: Brisbane City Hall

Cost: *to be confirmed

Organiser: Samantha Smith

NPAQ AGM

Date: 14 October 2023

Time: *to be confirmed

Venue: *to be confirmed

Cost: Free

Organiser: Samantha Smith

WANT TO RECEIVE PROTECTED TO YOUR DOOR?

YES! I WANT TO BECOME A NPAQ MEMBER AND RECEIVE PROTECTED EVERY QUARTER

As part of your NPAQ membership you receive four PROTECTED magazines every year both digitally and in hard copy, if you choose. You will also receive our monthly Neck Of The Woods newsletter for members with organisation updates, including advocacy work and NPAQ event information.

Membership Registration Details

Title _____

First Name _____

Middle Name _____

Last Name _____

Date of Birth / /

Street (or PO BOX) Address _____

Suburb _____

State _____ Postcode (Australia)

Telephone ()

Mobile

Email _____

Type of Membership

- Individual (\$45)
- Household (\$70)
- Conservation Partner (Individual) \$245
- Conservation Partner (Household) \$370

*Conservation Partner membership include one year registration + a tax deductible donation

I would you like to receive print copies of

- PROTECTED
- NECK OF THE WOODS

Payment Details

- Visa
- MasterCard
- Cheque
- Cash

Card Number

Expiry / CVV/CVC

Name on card _____

Please send GIFT registration to

Name _____

Date of Birth / /

Winter 2022

Street (or PO BOX) Address _____

Suburb _____

State _____ Postcode (Australia)

Mobile

Email _____

Missed one of our recent issues?

Order a backdated issue with your registration

I would like to receive the marked back copies with my first edition of PROTECTED.



Spring 2022



Summer 2023



Autumn 2023



Celebrating 93 years.

