protected

Magazine of National Parks Association of Queensland

Indigenous heritage

Understanding our past

PLUS

A visitors experience

ALSO FEATURED

- Our remarkable old trees
- State forest cultural heritage sites
- Kroombit tinker frog

Issue 21
JUNE - AUGUST 2018

Contents

Editorial team

Reece Pianta, Jeannie Rice and Marika Strand.

Contributor guidelines

If you have an idea for a *Protected* article we would love to hear from you. We can help with reviewing, editing and images. Contributions are always welcome. 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.

Cover image

Cover photo: Presho State Forest cultural heritage site (NPAQ Library)

Left image: Carnarvon NP (NPAQ Library)

Advertising enquiries

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

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.

About NPAQ

Mission statement

The National Parks Association of Queensland (NPAQ) promotes the preservation, expansion and good management of national parks in Queensland.

Contact details

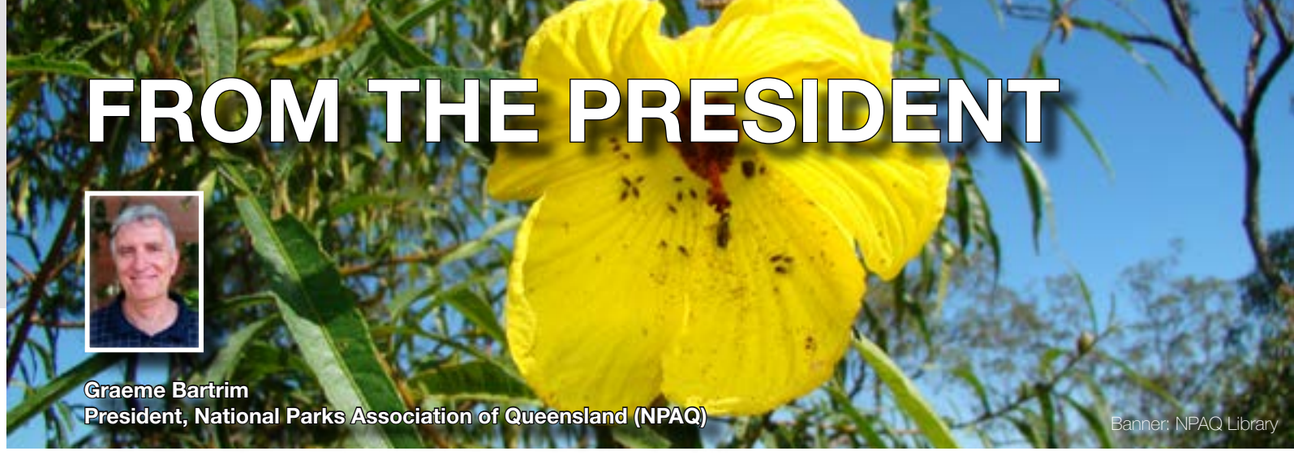
Office	Unit 10/36 Finchley St, Milton
Post	PO Box 1040, Milton QLD 4064
Phone	(07) 3367 0878
Web	www.npaq.org.au
Email	admin@npaq.org.au
ABN	60 206 792 095

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, Instagram and Twitter
- 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/get-involved



FROM THE PRESIDENT

Graeme Bartrim
President, National Parks Association of Queensland (NPAQ)

Banner: NPAQ Library

This edition embodies the enthusiasm many people feel for protected places.

Greg Siepen is passionate about old trees whose life span is on a different scale to ours. Denis McMullen informs us of the chequered link between protected areas and the preservation of traditional Indigenous lands. Allan Lance outlines research into cultural heritage sites in our state forests. Ana Rousseaud and Brian Egan share their experiences and enthusiasm for natural places. And, of course, we have the reassuring story of preservation work for the tinker frog at Kroombit Tops.

Appreciation for natural places, like national parks, is common in our community. In contrast to so much of our altered landscape, these locations are dominated by the weather, seasons, and the lifecycles of a diversity of plants and animals which can provide relief and encourage wonder.

Biodiversity, cultural protection, and encouraging community experience and awareness are the key purposes of parks. However, visitation and use of parks needs consideration as excessive human visitors can degrade the very values that are worth seeing. This is why visitor carrying capacity needs to be determined through scientific analysis and on a site specific basis.

The term "eco-tourism" which is in common usage has loose meaning.

The IUCN provides a definition:

"Environmentally responsible visiting of relatively unspoilt natural areas, in order to enjoy and appreciate nature (and any accompanying cultural features - both past and present), that promotes conservation, has low negative visitor impact, and provides for beneficially active socio-economic involvement of local populations."

The World Tourism Organisation justifies the commercial aspects of "eco-tourism" as follows:

"It supports the maintenance of natural areas which are used as "eco-tourism" attractions by:

- generating economic benefits for host communities, organisations and authorities managing natural areas with conservation purposes;
- providing alternative employment and income opportunities for local communities;
- increasing awareness towards the conservation of natural and cultural assets, both among locals and tourists."

It needs to be noted that the World Tourism Organisation's definition suggests that there should be "minimal" impact. Of course, this is open to very wide interpretation.

We have seen some recent examples of unbridled enthusiasm for "eco-tourism" including the $1 million of tax payers money to fund the business case for a tourist walk/cycleway and accommodation between Palm Cove and Port Douglas (ABC online, 30 May) and the seeking of expressions of interest for an "eco-tourism" project in the Whitsunday Island National Park (Courier Mail, 30 May). The enthusiasm seems to be for construction jobs, operational jobs and commercial activity and national parks appear to be a resource to be utilised. The newspaper article suggests a lack of a genuine ability to think long term and it appears that adequate justification is simply that Queensland should grow its tourism market share. It begs the question: what level of involvement has DES had in these proposals to date?

The reality is that Queensland's national parks already attract millions of visitors and result in tourism revenue of an estimated $952 million annually. Some 100 activity permits are in place. Wishing to grow the tourist industry should not blind us to evidence-based decision making regarding the long term integrity of our national parks.

Our wish is that national parks are managed to ensure the protection of biodiversity so many people can experience our parks as Allan, Dennis, Greg and the others featured in this edition have.

If you have an article idea - we want to hear from you!

We can help with editing, images and content.
Email us to find out how:
admin@npaq.org.au

www.facebook.com/NPAQld @nationalparksassocqld @NPA_Qld

NATIONAL PARKS:

The preservation of indigenous heritage.

Denis McMullen
Councillor - National Parks Association of Queensland

Images: *banner: Oyala Thumotang National Park; bottom: park track and landscape; right: Archer River (www.cape-york-australia.com, via Wikimedia Commons)*

Denis has researched the chequered history of indigenious rights and national parks. Here he reminds us that the ancient wisdom of Traditional Owners means they must be partners, if not leaders, in conservation.

When the subject of protecting Indigenous land by incorporating it in national parks is raised, the first response by most people sympathetic to these issues tends to be: of course! Great idea!

National park status for Aboriginal land, however, also brings with it limitations on access and/or usage, even by Traditional Owners. Local initiatives may have to be approved by comparatively, remote authorities in Brisbane who may not have full knowledge of local circumstances. Employment is subject to state government conditions, and budgets are set, again often by authorities remote from the local community. Standards of construction of walking tracks and stairs are influenced by central authorities and access protocols are required to conform with departmental authority.

With the creation of Rinyirru (Lakefield) National Park CYPAL (Cape York Peninsula Aboriginal Land), Lama Lama National Park (CYPAL) and Muundhi (Jack River) National Park (CYPAL), there is a lot of support for the concept and practice of incorporation of Indigenous land within the traditional national park structure. At face value, this would seem to ensure protection and security for the Aboriginal lands concerned. It also means visitors to these national parks can receive interpretive guidance to country and have their experience of the park enriched by awareness of the Traditional Owners.

The advantages of this change is that Indigenous people can reassume the role and legal authority for stewardship over portions of land. Local Traditional Owners people can find training and regular employment as park rangers, bringing cultural heritage, experience and understanding of country to the wider community. They also have

The struggle for land rights for Indigenous people of Cape York has many heroes, sacrifices and disappointments.

opportunities to educate visitors not only about the nature of the park, its wildlife, bush tucker and its legends, but can enhance visitor experience by identifying the legendary stories associated with aspects and features of the park. There are many parks which provide protection for indigenous art work, one of many examples being Flinders Group National Park (CYPAL). This park protects rock art images in the *Yindayin* rock shelters.

It is important for those of us focussed on nature conservation that we understand the history of land rights. The struggle for land rights for Indigenous people of Cape York has many heroes, sacrifices and disappointments. For every Eddie Mabo success, there exists a swag of examples of hard work and dedication being met with disappointment.

An example of this begins in 1974, when a *Wynchanam* man, John Koowarta and a number of other Wik stockmen, planned to buy the Archer River cattle station which covered their ancestral lands with funds from the Aboriginal Land Fund Commission. The government of Joh Bjelke-Petersen blocked the purchase. Koowarta's battle went all the way to the High Court in 1981 in the case of *Koowarta v Bjelke-Peterson*. Eventually in 1988, the courts resolved the matter in Koowarta's favour. Subsequent to this decision the Queensland government declared the property a national park to thwart the sale and ensure that Aboriginal people could not purchase the property.

Koowarta's struggle was not extinguished by this move but was taken up by others after his death. In 2009 Premier Anna Bligh gazetted a large tract of Wik lands in the Archer River area under the Wild Rivers legislation, without consultation or the consent of the Traditional Owners. Court proceedings were initiated by Koowarta's widow, Martha, and other Traditional Owners from Cape York, this time against the Bligh government.

In subsequent years this decision was able to be reversed. In 2012, in the presence of Martha Koowarta, Premier Campbell Newman faced up to this tragic history, saying,

"Today I want to confront the issue. That is 35 years ago a great injustice was perpetuated and today we are here to put that right. We are here to make sure that it is right forever and to give back to people what was rightfully theirs. I am sure if all Queenslanders knew the story of what happened in 1977 and afterwards, they would feel as sorry as I do myself. So today, my apologies to those who have suffered the past 35 years."

The Premier then handed over the title deeds for the 381,000 ha *Mungkan Kandju* (now called *Oyala Thumotang*) National Park to the *Wik Mungan*, Southern *Kaanju Ayapathu* people and he also handed over the freehold title deeds to 75,000 ha of Aboriginal freehold land.

In 2014, Martha Koowarta was victorious in the High Court against the Queensland Government and the Wild Rivers declarations on the Archer, Stewart and Lockhart Rivers were rescinded.

There is tension between preservation of conservation values and the rights of Traditional Owners. This tension happens in the same context as the pressure more broadly on all protected areas: between economic demands – the jobs and income that can come from full use of land and rebalancing the historic lack of opportunity, and the priority to protect the environment from degradation. If Traditional Owners are not partners in conservation decisions we will perpetuate historic unfairness and lose a potential ally in our efforts to protect our precious places.

OUR REMARKABLE OLD TREES

PART 1

Greg Siepen, Daniel Cole and Jan Allen
VTGA - Veteran Tree Group Australia

When visiting forests or national parks, we often take for granted the large trees that we walk by or camp near. These big, old trees are remarkable, not only for their size, but also because they have many other important values, such as containing their own 'ecosystem', showing a slice of the region's history, significance for Traditional Owners, exceptional age, rarity, important habitat or ecological associations, and having exceptional landscape values and great beauty.

As a group, they are affectionately referred to as *veteran trees*. They need conservation and management to ensure they live their full life, which may be several hundreds or thousands of years.

National parks, state forests and other protected areas are the ideal sites for conservation of these valuable trees. They can be left to contribute to the local ecosystems unhindered, be available for viewing by visitors, and not pose safety issues which can occur if they are located closer to human infrastructure.

In this article we will cover characteristics and values of veteran trees, their specific relationships, historical importance, and significance to Traditional Owners. In part two the survival and sustainable management strategies for veteran trees will be discussed.

Brushbox, Lamington NP (G Siepen)

Characteristics and values of veteran trees

Veteran trees reflect the longer, slower cycles of the natural environment, on which we depend for all the essentials of life. By virtue of their longevity, veteran trees provide an enduring, stable habitat structure that determines the long-term survival of any ecosystem. Veteran trees have the following values:

Ancient DNA: Very old trees may be over a thousand years old and composed of DNA material of forests that were present before Europeans settled Australia. They are the remnant survivors of the original forests and for survival need protection by law, whether located in national parks, on farms, or in council reserves.

Soil stabilization: Veteran trees, like all trees, have roots that bind the soil and reduce the potential for erosion, especially along waterways.

Prevention of salinization: All trees are great water pumps, not only pumping water from ground level to the highest leaves, but exerting pressure to keep water deep in the soil to prevent salinization.

Habitat: Veteran trees, like all trees, provide perches for raptors on which they can survey their kingdoms, find their prey, and *clean up* animal carcasses, acting as nature's recyclers. Trees provide foliage for many invertebrates and bird species, offering protection from predators. The foliage also provides shade and shelter for other plant species during the hot summer months or during violent storms.

Many tree species also attract a great variety of pollinators that keep the forests healthy.

One specific benefit provided by veteran trees is the development of hollows. Hollows are essential for many species of Australian wildlife that play a beneficial role in keeping our forests and general landscape healthy. Researchers believe that it takes about 200 years for large hollows to develop in native eucalypt trees which are used by mammals such as greater gliders. Smaller gliders and tiny insectivorous bats will also shelter in any size hollow. It has been estimated that 95 species of mammal and approximately 50 bird species use hollows for shelter and nesting.

While having veteran, hollow-bearing trees living in forested national parks is beneficial, it is also very desirable to have these ancient trees living in agricultural and pastoral landscapes to provide habitats for beneficial pasture and crop destroying predators, such as insects, spiders, micro bats, and insect eating birds.

Species specific relationships & partnerships: Trees and other life forms have co-evolved over centuries in Australian forests. Hence, they have built up close beneficial partnerships. For example, as a tree ages it starts to break down with the help of fungi and invertebrates (wood borers). In some instances one fungus species may be restricted to only one tree species. Some insects are found only at the tops of certain trees in our ancient rainforests.

Curtain Fig NP (NPAQ Library)

Historical importance and value to Traditional Owners

Historic importance: Veteran trees may be only a few hundred years old, but have witnessed European explorers traversing the continent, graziers and pastoralists opening up productive lands and new towns and cities growing up. Trees have played a vital role in all these activities.

Some veteran trees contain the *slash* marks of explorers or surveyors' markers. Graziers and pastoralists often marked trees to identify their paddock boundary fence lines. Early settlers also removed bark for roofing shingles. Unfortunately, few veteran trees containing marks remain in and around cities due to the mindset of housing and industry developers of clearing all their land to start with a 'clean slate' – a trait that is still done today when new suburbs are developed.

Aboriginal significance: Cutting bark off trees for Aboriginal uses has declined since European settlement began and many Aboriginal scarred trees are now well over 100 years old and are becoming rare as they age, die or are removed.

Aborigines removed bark to make shelters, canoes and containers, identify culturally significant trees (e.g. carving), manufacture artefacts (e.g. shields, spears), collect food, and to assist in climbing trees.

Scarred trees can tell us a lot about the history and development of an area. Firstly, scarred trees are a timely record of Aboriginal traditional places and events. Secondly, scarred trees can tell us where canoes were manufactured, where groups of people lived, or from which trees they collected food (e.g. toe holds on trunks of 'sugarbag' trees). Finally, the characteristics of the scar can tell us whether stone or metal tools were used.

Scarred tree, Cleveland (G Siepen)

Summary: Veteran trees have many important values and play a significant role in their ecosystems. They help maintain environmental stability and complement other parts of the landscape which may have shorter life cycles. In part two we will investigate the survival strategies of veteran trees and how we can manage and protect them.

Veteran Tree Group Australia (VTGA) organises workshops and has expert information about veteran trees and their management. More info: www.facebook.com/Veteran-Tree-Group-Australia

A VISITORS VIEW

UNESCO World Heritage and the broken promises of ecotourism

Ana Rousseaud

Images: *Banner: Whitsunday, a crowded view; bottom left: Fraser Island tour; centre and right: Daintree (Ana Rousseaud)*

Ana offers us an view from an international visitor drawn to Australia to connect with our natural spaces. What sort of face do we present to the world in our national parks and World Heritage sites?

The UNESCO World Heritage natural sites assemble the most unique and outstanding ecosystems in our planet. Australia hosts 16 natural sites (12 Natural sites and 4 mixed natural and cultural sites). By signing the World Heritage Convention, Australia is committed to the protection and conservation of these invaluable natural spaces.

According to the report World Heritage and Tourism in a Changing Climate (UNESCO, 2016) climate change is becoming one of the most significant risks for World Heritage sites. However, the increasing pressure for economic development driven by the tourism sector remains one of the key causes of the rapid and permanent degradation of the outstanding attributes that make World Heritage sites such unique, and hence popular, tourist destinations.

A wide range of activities and uses have taken place in natural fragile areas under the banner of ecotourism since the 1980's from low impact guided visits and kayaking, to glamping, five star resorts and four wheel drive (4WD) tours. The drift from the original purpose of ecotourism towards pure economic development in World Heritage sites is astonishing. Over exploitation and degradation of natural sites, growing pressure on ecosystems and wildlife, as well as the increased risk of introducing invasive species, all combine to diminish the visitor experience and therefore their understanding of the outstanding values and hence their commitment to preserving them.

...increasing pressure for economic development driven by the tourism sector remains one of the key causes of the rapid and permanent degradation of the outstanding attributes that make World Heritage sites such unique, and hence popular, tourist destinations.

In 2017, seeking to understand and to experience firsthand the challenges facing World Heritage sites with regard to climate change and expanding ecotourism services, I set forth on a 10 month trip across the South Pacific Ocean. I travelled from the Galapagos Islands to New Zealand and Australia. As part of this voyage I had the opportunity to visit the most iconic national parks and World Heritage sites in Queensland. From the Gondwana Rainforest in south east Queensland to the Daintree Rainforest in the north, I experienced a large range of ecotourism services and I was not disapointed.

On one side of the coin my visit to the Daintree Rainforest showed me that authentic ecotourism services do exist and that an equilibrum between conservation, local and economic development is possible. On the other hand I took part in a local family run 4WD visit to Fraser Island which had more similarity to a car rally on the sand. While authentic experiences are possible, I also was confronted with poor tour guide services and a stark lack of information on the natural values of the sites I was being shown. I also went on a boat tour to the Whitsundays where, despite the valuable information provided by my guide, the huge number of tourists on the site left little space for a connection with nature or pondering on the magnificence of this natural space.

My generation has the responsibility to protect and preserve these remaining pristine areas. They are a heritage from our past and invaluable for the generations to come. Thought and action by government institutions and local communities is urgently needed. It is imperative that we change course from the current trend whereby increasingly economic activities are prioritised in our natural spaces. Growing development pressure has taken a toll on heritage sites, in Australia and internationally under the cloak of “eco-tourism”.

Do you have an ecotourism experience you’d like to share with us? Contact admin@npaq.org.au to tell your story.

References

Markham, A., Osipova, E., Lafrenz Samuels, K. and Caldas, A. 2016. World Heritage and Tourism in a Changing Climate. United Nations Environment Programme, Nairobi, Kenya and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, Paris, France.

PARK IN FOCUS

State forest cultural heritage sites

Allan Lance
Heritage Consulting Australia

Banner Image: Ruined Castle Creek rock art site 1 showing yellow ochre boomerang stencil with superimposed hand stencils in red ochre. (NPAQ Library)

There are many significant cultural heritage sites in Queensland state forests. Here we look at our investigation into significant cultural heritage sites, primarily those of Aboriginal significance, in several Queensland state forests.

Here we summarise our study into nine state forests: Barakula, Boxvale, Bringalily, Bulli, Gurulmundi, Presho, Shotover, Whetstone and Yelarbon.

An initial assessment of the Aboriginal sites in these forests was conducted to determine which had the highest heritage values. This was done so that more detailed investigations could be carried out on the forests with the highest Aboriginal cultural heritage values.

Objectives

Our objectives were to establish whether known Aboriginal cultural heritage sites still retain their heritage values and identify whether the previously recorded sites survive, whether they can be located and if they still retain their heritage values. We also wanted to know whether these sites are being adequately protected and ascertain how additional sites might be identified through field surveys.

State Forest	Site Numbers
Barakula	48
Boxvale	3
Bringalily	1
Bulli	2 (6 isolated stone artefacts)
Gurulmundi	2
Presho	86
Shotover	30
Whetstone	16
Yelarbon	1

Table 1. Aboriginal cultural heritage site numbers in each of the nine state forests.

Methodology

A desktop evaluation of Aboriginal cultural heritage values in the nominated Queensland state forests was carried out from published site records. This was followed by a review of site cards for previously recorded sites in these state forests including an assessment of the likely accuracy of site locations, the potential for rediscovery and ease of access. We then modelled site occurrence and mapping of potential high sensitivity areas for later field inspection.

The theoretical work preceded engagement with relevant Traditional Owner groups enquiring about their priorities regarding heritage values in state forests. Locations of significance to them would only be investigated with their approval.

Once these engagements occurred, we conducted a site inspection program revisiting previously recorded sites, documenting conditions, and recording any evidence of deterioration since they were originally recorded.

We document these outcomes, and discovery of incidental sites of cultural heritage in our full report.

Our aim was to contribute to the case for the conversion of state forests to national park in those areas with highly significant Aboriginal site occurrence and very high archaeological sensitivity.

Results

While Indigenous cultural heritage site numbers are not the only indicator of site importance, the number of sites for each state forest is listed in table 1.

Desktop studies revealed three state forests with significantly important Aboriginal cultural heritage sites: Boxvale State Forest, Presho State Forest and Shotover State Forest.

Boxvale State Forest

Boxvale State Forest has only a small suite of Aboriginal sites. The one rock art site that was relocated appeared not to be affected by cattle scuffage or rubbing of the rock art. Animals use the shelter and have affected the integrity of the occupation deposit in the shelter floor. There are few additional cultural heritage sites likely to be found in the Boxvale State Forest. With a current management regime for the regular cattle grazing and no short to medium term timber harvesting to threaten the cultural heritage values of Boxvale State Forest, further conservation action is not essential.

Presho State Forest

Presho State Forest has a very large suite of highly significant sites, predominantly rock art sites with stencilled art currently affected by cattle. The proximity of Presho State forest to other national parks with high cultural and natural heritage values suggests transition to national park may be a cost effective means to protect the cultural heritage values together with the natural heritage and biodiveristy benefits. There are currently grazing rights held on Presho State Forest so a negotiation of the surrendering of these rights would be required to facilitate ongoing management of Presho's cultural heritage sites. As cattle rubbing against the rock art is the greatest threat to Presho State Forest sites, exclusion of cattle would help protect the heritage values of the sites.

Shotover State Forest

There are significant rock art sites in the Shotover State Forest including stencilled and painted art sites that are significant to the *Gaangalu* People. *Gaangalu* People are currently involved in site protection work in national parks and state forests on their traditional lands. Additional grant funding from State, Federal and independent funding agencies would help ensure that the sites in the Shotover State Forests are adequately protected. Cattle grazing also poses a threat to the integrity of important rock art sites in Shotover State Forest and exclusion of cattle from important sites is a priority.

The site location data on the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Database is inaccurate. There is a desperate need to update the database and check on the location and condition of significant sites throughout Queensland.

There is a need for increased and regular involvement of Traditional Owners in the protection and management of sites in State Forests. This is taking place in Shotover State Forest as there are *Gaangalu* Rangers employed by QPWS who check on the sites as part of their normal duties. Additional funding should be made available for Traditional Owners to undertake appropriate site protection work, such as fencing, signs and site visits in Shotover State Forest.

Art panel at the Conciliation Hill art site showing image en-hancement using i-Dstretch. Note erosion of pigment around base and sides of hand stencil. This may have been due to cattle rubbing (NPAQ Library).

Lessons for other forests

The Shotover model should be applied to other state forest land whether or not transition to national park is pursued (though this would be the most cost effective route to protection).

It was noted from discussions with QPWS officers working in Presho State Forest that there are limited resources for the protection of Aboriginal cultural heritage sites. Whatever the future of this site, it requires an increase in personnel and funding to fully record and regularly monitor the condition of sites. This could be leveraged through the Indigenous Sea and Land Rangers program.

The future of protecting cultural heritage in Queensland requires active resourcing and empowerment of Traditional Owner's leadership of mapping and protection work.

WILDLIFE FEATURE

Kroombit tinker frog *(Taudactylus pleione)*

Harry Hines
QPWS

Banner image: Harry Hines, QPWS
Inset: Ed Meyer

The Department of Environment and Science's Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS) and Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary (CWS) have commenced a collaborative project to undertake captive breeding of the critically endangered Kroombit tinker frog *(Taudactylus pleione)*. This comes on the back of a successful captive breeding trial using the closely related Eungella tinker frog (*T. liemi)*, by Professor Jean-Marc Hero (formerly of Griffith University), Dr Ed Meyer (consultant ecologist) and Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary.

In early February 2018, Ed Meyer and Harry Hines, Senior Conservation Officer QPWS, undertook a field trip to Kroombit Tops National Park to collect a small number of tinker frogs for captive breeding. We focused our efforts on finding an adult female but were unable to locate one (due in part to the very wet, cold and windy conditions prevailing at this time). We did however locate and collect an indeterminate, possibly subadult female and an adult male on this trip. A subsequent collecting trip in March 2018, with Saskia Lafebre and Kimberly Revelly from Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary (CWS), Harry Hines of QPWS and Ben Revelly (a QPWS volunteer), resulted in the collection of a second indeterminate individual and a partially gravid adult female. Animals collected from the wild were carefully transported back to a dedicated husbandry facility at Currumbin within 48 hours of capture. They have all settled in to their new home and are eating well. We are hopeful that the adult female will develop a full complement of eggs over the coming months with a view to breeding in spring.

Amphibian chytridiomycosis, a fungal disease responsible for declines and disappearances of frogs across the globe, is a major threat to the tinker frog species both in the wild and in captivity. The preceding work with the captive population of Eungella tinker frogs at CWS, developed safe treatment protocols to rid adult and subadult tinker frogs of amphibian chytrid fungus. In keeping with these protocols, treatment of Kroombit tinker frogs for chytrid commenced in the field, 12 hours after capture. Pretreatment chytrid infection status was assessed by carefully swabbing the flanks and ventral surfaces of the frogs and subsequent DNA analyses. After swabbing, each frog was treated with a 10 minute bath in an antifungal solution. This same treatment was repeated every 24 hours for 10 days after capture. Analysis of skin swabs of the frogs immediately post treatment and in subsequent weeks, has shown that all four animals collected from the wild are now chytrid free.

Depending on the sex of the subadults collected in February/March, additional animals may be collected from the wild this spring. The Kroombit tinker frog husbandry team will regularly assess the progress of captive frogs and evaluate the need for additional animals as required. In the longer term, we hope to release captive bred animals back to the wild.

Fitzroy Basin Association (FBA) helped finance this important project and have supported survey and monitoring of threatened frogs at Kroombit Tops over many years. Their ongoing support of this project and other conservation work at Kroombit Tops (in particular feral animal control) is critical to the continued survival of the Kroombit tinker frog. Other important contributors to this project include present and former staff of CWS, including Michael Vella, Saskia Lafebre, Natalie Hill and Matt Hingley. Department of Environment and Science staff (past and present) and numerous volunteers have also contributed over many years to our understanding of the distribution and abundance of the Kroombit tinker frog, its status, and the need for captive breeding. Thanks are also owed to the local QPWS staff for use of the barracks (warm, dry and mostly leech free!) and their ongoing efforts in controlling feral animals at Kroombit Tops.

THE NATIONAL PARK EXPERIENCE

Personal reflection on why our parks must be valued

Brian Egan
Past NPAQ President

Banner: *Mt Bellender Ker from Bruce Highway (Matthew Palermo, Wikimedia Commons)*
Insert: *Josephine Falls, Wooroonooran NP (LecomteB, Wikimedia Commons)*

Articles in the February/March issue of Protected by President Graeme Bartrim and Tony Groom mention how experiencing aspects of nature can trigger an interest in conservation and may also provide real mental and physical health benefits.

You've probably all felt your spirits uplifted in this way at times when visiting some of the localities in our Queensland national parks. I know that I have! Think of the overall appeals of iconic Lamington, the magnetism of Mt Barney (especially if a bushwalker), the gorges and side canyons of Carnarvon, the magic island scenery of the Whitsundays, losing yourself in the wildflowers of Girraween or Cooloola, or the World Heritage tropical rainforests of North Queensland.

Many years ago I read an article in ***National Parks***, the magazine of The National Parks Conservation Association in USA. The early Celtic peoples had a name for those places in nature where they felt closer to the presence of their gods/mother nature. They called them "the thin places" where the walls separating them from their gods were thinnest, and they could feel a strong emotional involvement. It helps if you have an iconic place or building involved. Some of the "thinnest" places for me around the world include –

- An early morning panorama of Everest and associated peaks from Everest View Hotel above Lukla at 4,000m, enhanced by a brilliant blue sky after 3 days of cloud and snow.
- Iguassu Falls National Park on the Brasil/Argentina border, as you're immersed within its hundreds of thundering waterfalls and fabulous lookouts.
- Sitting at peace on a rocky slope in Arches National Park in Utah, drinking in the view of nearby glorious Delicate Arch with its backdrop of the sun setting behind the distant snowy mountains.
- Visiting the soaring magnificence of Reims Cathedral in France when its great organ came to life with some of the most wonderful organ music I've ever heard – that's 40 years ago but I can still see and feel it!

And my top pick for Australia is a place that few if any of you would have visited - the top of Mt Bellenden Ker in Wooroonooran National Park between Gordonvale and Babinda. It's a strenuous climb up steep rough trails, starting not far above sea level and ending almost a mile high in the sky. The lower slopes are tall, dense lowland rainforest, often cyclone damaged with lots of nasties like stinging tree, lawyer vine and leeches. This grades with altitude into upland rainforest (different species, shorter, and less underbrush), and then into cloud forest above 1,500m, with different species, a low dense canopy due to frequent cloud and high winds, but relatively open underneath.

So what's so wonderful about it? It's beautiful open forest, easy to walk through; golden bowerbirds and their bowers could be seen for the last 400m or so of altitude; stage makers (tooth billed bowerbirds) could be heard and their large cleared *stages* decorated with fresh green leaves located; and it was the only place I've ever had tree kangaroos drop down beside me and look before bounding away. But topping everything were the unusual tea trees (*Leptospermum wooroonooran*) which were common on the tops of the range here. They form much of the canopy in some parts, produce an abundance of white flowers in early summer which contrast with the greens of the other trees, and are readily seen from the Bruce Highway almost a mile below.

To top off all the wonders below, these tea trees produce a network of very strong branches and are easily climbed. Choose your tree carefully and it's possible to emerge above the smooth canopy from the hips up. You're monarch of all you survey in all directions, from the distant coral reefs offshore to the canefields below and the Atherton Tablelands to the west.

What a great and memorable feeling – it's a very thin place indeed!

RANGER OF THE MONTH

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

Chris Mitchell
Diamantina National Park

Brittney Butler is a Park Ranger at Chillagoe-Mungana Caves National Park in north Queensland. She is a young Aboriginal woman with cultural connections to the Yirrganydji people from the Cairns area. Brittney grew up around Chillagoe, camping, fishing and taking advantage of all that the country had to offer. She always had a career as a Park Ranger in the back of her mind, so after studying and working as a beauty therapist for about three years, made the decision to become a Ranger. It took time, but eventually happened!

How long have you worked in national parks?

I started work in Chillagoe-Mungana Caves National Park in April 2015 when I was 19 years old. Moving back to Chillagoe was a pretty big deal for me, because I knew there wouldn't be many young people my age out here. I have settled in well though.

Which parks have you worked in?

Being based at Chillagoe involves working at nearby parks and camping out. The parks I've worked in so far are Staaten River and Errk Oykangand (Mitchell-Alice Rivers) near Kowanyama. I also spent a month working for the Lake Eacham base, and a week down in Rockhampton for a cave guiding school, which was

QPWS ranger Brittney Butler (above).

PHOTOS: BRITTNEY BUTLER & QLD GOVERNMENT

an awesome opportunity. I was able to walk away with some really useful information to share with my work mates once I got home.

What is your most memorable moment?

My most memorable moment so far is crawling into caves with an ornithologist named Mike—a crazy bird person! We were looking for white-rumped swiftlets for a survey. It was definitely a cool experience, being surrounded by hundreds of swiftlets in complete darkness. These little birds are special because they use a kind of echo-location to find their way in the dark, similar to bats. We also witnessed the birds nesting on their single egg. They are very unique birds, with unique nests! They are worth reading more about to understand just how special they are.

Can you describe your favourite national parks experience?

There are hundreds of caves in the Chillagoe area so it's quite exciting to walk into a 'new' cave that you haven't seen before. But I have to say that our ranger-guided cave tours are the best experience in Chillagoe, and my favourite! The three cave tours that we (Rangers) guide in Donna, Trezkinn and Royal Arch caves, are all spectacular. I highly recommend them!

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

I really enjoy working in a team environment, with colleagues from all age groups and diverse backgrounds. We have ex-tradies on staff, so I appreciate learning what I can from them. We are always doing something different; never stuck doing the same thing for any length of time.

What is your top tip for visitors to parks for bushwalking?

It gets quite hot around Chillagoe, with a mix of humidity and dry heat, so it's very important to keep up your intake of water. We usually tell visitors that the best time for bushwalking is late in the afternoon, as our walking tracks lead to some great viewpoints for watching sunsets and wildlife, which become active in the cool of the late afternoon.

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

WHAT'S ON

For more details and activities, visit our website:
www.npaq.org.au/events

NPAQ activities

More details npaq.org.au/events

Brookwater - Bird Watching

Date: Sunday, 22 July 2018

Meet: 7.30am, 58 Scoparia Drive, Brookwater.

Cost: $5 per person

Leader: Lesley Joyce 07 38187646, 0423109788, blwrgl@gmail.com

Directions: From Brisbane on Ipswich Motorway take Exit 32. At Silky Oak Drive, Brookwater, turn left into Scoparia Drive. At the *turnaround point* the carpark is to the left. Detailed directions at www.npaq.org.au/events

Bring: Hat, binoculars, sunscreen, insect repellent, morning tea, lunch optional and a chair.

Mt Ngungun & Trachyte Circuit

Date: Saturday, 28 July 2018

Meet: 8.30am, Mt Ngungun Carpark on Fullertons Road, Glasshouse Mountains NP

Cost: $5 per person

Leader: Frank Freeman 07 3824 3954, 0427 655 514, frank_fr@bigpond.net.au

Directions: Travel north from Brisbane along the Bruce Highway, turning left into Steve Irwin Way. Turn left from Steve Irwin Way into the township of Glasshouse then follow the signs to Mt Ngungun and the carpark at the start of the walk. Directions to the beginning of the Trachyte Circuit will be given by the leader after Mt Ngungun. Carpooling is recommended.

Bring: Two litres of water, light jacket, rain gear (just in case), torch, insect repellent, morning tea, lunch, afternoon tea.

Mookin-Bah Reserve - Bird Watching

Date: Saturday, 19 August 2018

Meet: 7.30am Chelsea Road

Cost: $5 per person

Leader: Geraldine Buchanan 3349 1109

Bring: binoculars, hat, sunscreen, insect repellent, water.

From Rickertt Road turn north into Chelsea Road. This is a dead end section of Chelsea Road. The "signposted" entrance to the Mokin-Bah Reserve is on the left between private acreage properties approximately half way along this stretch of road. Parking is on the grassed verge. There are no toilet or picnic facilities at this Reserve.

NPAQ events

NPAQ AGM

The next NPAQ member's meeting:

Date: Wednesday, 19 Sept, 2018

Time: 6:30pm start

Venue: Mount Coot-tha Botanic Gardens Auditorium

The National Parks Association of Queensland Inc. will host its Annual General Meeting at Mt Coot-tha Botanic Gardens Auditorium on Wednesday 19 September 2018, at 6:30pm.

NPAQ President Graeme Bartrim, warmly invites all members to attend the AGM. A report of the past financial year's activities will be presented, and the Council elected for the coming year. Following the AGM will be a Special Members Meeting to consider and vote on proposed amendments to the Association's Rules. Please contact the office via telephone or email to register to receive a copy of the proposed amendments.

Annual Awards Presentation & Dinner

Enjoy the NPAQ Annual Awards Dinner, directly following the AGM. Romeo Lahey Awards will be presented to members who have reached the magical mark of 50 years of NPAQ membership.

Date: Wednesday 19 September

Venue: Mt Coot-tha Botanic Gardens Auditorium.

Cost: $35 per person .

RSVP and pay by 5 September to admin@npaq.org.au, or call 07 367 0878. Payment can be made by credit card, cheque or direct bank transfer.

Member's afternoon tea

Date: Tuesday 24 July 2018
Time: 2pm
Venue: NPAQ Office, 10/36 Finchley St, Milton
Please join us for an afternoon catch up with a cuppa and some light refreshments as honourary life member John Bristow presents his trip to Lake Eyre.

Vale

Pam Egar

NPAQ was only recently made aware of the passing of life member Pam Elgar, in November last year. Pam and her late husband Ron joined NPAQ in 1975.

The library at Living Choice Kawana Island has been named The Pam Elgar Library in honour of their long time librarian. Our sincere condolences to Pam's family and friends.

Norm Traves 1923-2018

Former NPAQ President and Councillor Norm Traves, passed away on Sunday 3rd June 2018. He lived a very interesting life, which he documented in a book called "Of Many Things, A varied and rewarding life", which can be viewed in the NPAQ Library.

An engineering student during WWII, he served in a RAAF construction squadron towards the end of the war. Afterwards he was a civil engineer working on major construction projects around Brisbane, and in North Qld and Cape York area.

He had a life-long love of the bush and was instrumental in getting Undara Lava tubes protected as a National Park. Norm enjoyed many adventures with NPAQ friends since he joined in the 1940's and will be greatly missed.

Our sincere condolences to his family and friends.

NATIONAL PARKS NEED YOU

The end of the financial year is a great time to support NPAQ. As a registered charity, donations to NPAQ are tax deductible and help us continue our work.
Find out more: npaq.org.au/donate

PHOTO: OSCAR WEEKS

WWW.NPAQ.ORG.AU

OFFICE ADDRESS Unit 10/36 Finchley Street, Milton QLD
POSTAL ADDRESS PO Box 1040, Milton QLD 4064
PHONE 07 3367 0878 **EMAIL** admin@npaq.org.au
www.facebook.com/NPAQld
@nationalparksassocqld

WWW.NPAQ.ORG.AU