

The newsletter of the Australian Rainforest Foundation

August 2007

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Welcome to the first ARF e-newsletter

By moving from a printed newsletter to an electronic version we hope we can spread our messages further with less impact on our environment. (However we do understand that there are some people who prefer a printed newsletter and if this is you or someone you know please email or call us with your postal details.)

With an e-newsletter we also plan to bring you more news, more often, as the ARF steps up its conservation programs and expands its efforts to raise investment, sponsorship and donations from corporate and private citizens.

We welcome your feedback on this and our new look website. We also encourage you to forward this e-newsletter to as many people as you can who you think would like to help us save Australia's rainforests.

Help Australia's rainforests fight climate change

Message from Roger Phillips, CEO Australian Rainforest Foundation

As the climate change debate warms up; and the world weighs up the options, benefits and pitfalls of carbon offsets, the Australian Rainforest Foundation (ARF) encourages all Australians to actively adopt ways to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in their daily lives but at the same time consider contributing to programs that benefit our natural environment for the long-term.

Australia's rainforests are as diverse as any on earth, including the Amazon basin. They are home to many of the world's oldest flowering plants and provide a 'living laboratory' for scientific research into possible medicines for disease and chronic illnesses. At the same time, Australia's old growth forests already care for us by cleaning the air we breathe, taking carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and locking it away as carbon at a rate almost 2.5 times greater than that in a plantation forest.

Scientists are arguing about the value of our rainforests, and we encourage more discussion and research; but today's arguments are about whether they are the ultimate resource for our survival or the greatest resource mankind has.

In other words, there is no argument, that these mega diverse repositories of life forms are a cornerstone in the climate change actions. Their protection and extension is critical to mankind's survival.

But still rainforests are under threat throughout the world, including here in Australia, where 25% of our rainforests are in non-protected tenure. Losing these forests, through man-made or natural threats, would release this carbon into the atmosphere, contributing further to climate change and the possible loss of plant and animal species. Protecting Australia's rainforests, is not only environmentally responsible for the long-term benefit of future generations but is something we can all do now.

The Hero₂ payroll giving program is a new and innovative ARF project which encourages employers and employees to stand side by side to make a significant long-term investment in our environment and the planet's future.

The Australian Rainforest Foundation is encouraging all Australians to take up this opportunity. To find out how you and your company can become a Hero₂ read more at www.hero2.net.au or call the ARF on (07) 4051 2000.



How does Hero₂ work?

Through a regular tax deductible payroll contribution an individual can:

- Sponsor and protect old growth rainforest for future generations
- Plant the right amount of native trees in the right place to rejuvenate our rainforests and absorb tonnes of CO₂ from the atmosphere; and
- Help fund the operating cost of a wildlife hospital for endangered animals.
- Employers can double this impact by matching contributions made by their employees.

Extract from *We are the Weather Makers – the story of global warming* by Tim Flannery [pg 165 – 167]

The rainforest-clad mountains of northeast Queensland cover 10,000 square kilometres. Despite their small size they are arguably the most important habitat in all of Australia, because they are home to plants and animals that are survivors from the cooler, moister Australia of 20 million years ago.

The impending destruction of Australia's wet tropics rainforests is a biological disaster on the horizon.

Big day for the cassowary

The Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service has officially handed over management of the Garners Beach cassowary rehabilitation facility to the Australian Rainforest Foundation (ARF).

Environment Minister Lindy Nelson-Carr said the ARF will now assume the daily running of the world-class QPWS facility for sick, injured and orphaned cassowaries.

Speaking after the on-site signing at Garners Beach near Mission Beach Ms Nelson-Carr said the agreement was the result of first-rate teamwork between the two organisations.

“This agreement with the Australian Rainforest Foundation will enable better delivery of wildlife services in the Mission Beach area, including a range of cassowary support programs such as public education to raise the birds’ local profile,” Ms Nelson-Carr said.

Ms Nelson-Carr praised the ongoing efforts of QPWS and ARF staff and many residents for their commitment and dedication in rehabilitating cassowaries affected by urbanisation and natural disasters.

After Cyclone Larry a supplementary feeding program involving 61 feeding stations was established for at-risk cassowaries while the native habitat recovered. At the program’s peak around 140 cassowaries were visiting the feeding stations in cyclone-ravaged areas.



L-R: Clive Cook (Director Northern Region EPA), Lindy Nelson-Carr (Queensland Environment Minister) and Roger Phillips (ARF CEO) cut a very special cake to commemorate the hand-over of the Garners Beach cassowary rehabilitation facility.

A local tour that helps save the earth

Visitors from all over the world take trips daily from Cairns to our World Heritage Wet Tropics rainforests. But in April a tour-bus full of locals paid their fare and headed north to get down and dirty in the Daintree all in the name of Earth Day.

The group travelled with local tour company Wilderness Challenge, brought together by the Australian Rainforest Foundation (ARF) and the Tour Specialists all with one objective in mind – to give something back to the environment.

“Everyday at work I promote the Wet Tropics as one of the most wonderful places in the world. I want to be responsible for making sure that it stays that way. This tour lets me do something about that,” Melanie Blight of the Tour Specialists said.

“The day wasn’t about making me feel good, although it was very special and a lot of fun, it was about helping the earth, and we all know it desperately needs it. Our rainforests can help in the fight against climate change and the least we can do is help rejuvenate the rainforests by planting these trees.”

The Earth Day tour included was led by a Wilderness Challenge guide, and included a briefing by ARF Conservation Officer Jolyon Ritchie on the eco-system of the rainforest and its’ regeneration process, a bbq lunch, afternoon tea and a refreshing swim – but the latter was only after 100 native trees had been planted on a prime rainforest block owned and protected by the ARF.

Wilderness Challenge and the ARF are now working together on regular tours to the Daintree from Cairns and Port Douglas, which include tree planting on an ARF rainforest block. For more information go to www.wilderness-challenge.com.au or call 07 4035 4488.



Melanie Blight from the Tour Specialists gets into the swing of planting ‘the right tree in the right place’ after guidance from ARF Conservation Officer, Jolyon Ritchie (back left).

Daintree Coast residents enjoy ARF hospitality

More than 40 Cow Bay and Cape Tribulation residents and landowners accepted the invitation by the Australian Rainforest Foundation (ARF) to join them for a welcome BBQ at the new ARF Conservation Centre (formerly Daintree Drifters Bed and Breakfast), on Cape Tribulation Rd.

Jolyon Ritchie has been living on the site since January this year, his position recruited as the direct result of requests from local residents at a community meeting in Cow Bay last year.

Jolyon will act as an on-ground ARF representative in the area and will liaise with the community on issues of conservation and managing the delivery of the ARF's Rainforest Stewardship Program.



Taiga Hewett, Amos Lily and other Cow Bay residents enjoy the ARF BBQ.

Bringing down Siam – the King of Weeds

By Steve Garrad

Green Corps workers recently teamed up with the Australian Rainforest Foundation (ARF) as the month of May called landholders to arms in the fight against the prickly and intrusive Siam weed.

The team was targeting 59 hectares of diverse rainforest just east of El Arish that the ARF has recently acquired to provide a refuge for the endangered cassowary. This block has both endangered wetlands and rainforest with high conservation values.

The ARF is already working with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to secure a Nature Refuge status on the land title but there is a lot of work to do to get the land up to a good conservation standard. We are fortunate and grateful to have the support and help of the Green Corp workers to help bring the land back to its pristine state.

Green Corps worker, Clinton Byrne, said that there is nothing as bad as Siam Weed for its toughness and rapid growth.

“Once it gets on a property, there is major work ahead and continual vigilance well into the future for that land,” Clinton said.

Landowners on adjoining properties to the ARF block were also able to take advantage of the Green Corps willing workers and their weed spraying with lantana and wild bramble targeted on top of the Siam weed.

Further spraying days have been held with others planned and community members interested in volunteering a half day on the block should contact ARF Community Conservation Officer Steven Garrad on 0448 512 004.

Boar Busting News with Paul Smith

As a new wave of feral pigs moves into the Mission Beach area, residents are acting quickly to remove them before they get too comfortable.

“The damage to gardens and infrastructure on our property is annoying to say the least,” Jeff Ford of Mission Circle said.

“To repair the damage and then have the same culprits come back and do the same thing night after night is frustrating and disheartening for us all. As soon as we see the damage done by the pigs we call Boar Busters.

“The work that the ARF and Boar Busters are doing to rid the area of these feral pigs is just fantastic and is saving us a lot of money and heartache.”

Since the program began in August 2006, 500 feral pigs have been removed out of the Mission Beach and surrounding hinterland area under the ARF Trapping Program.

And now dogs

In recent months Cairns City Council and the ARF have been alerted to the increasing number of wild dogs to the area south of Cairns. ARF through Boar Busters has recruited Nathan Ravenscroft, a wild dog trapping specialist to assess the situation and prepare a plan of action to reduce their numbers safely and humanely. A reduction in wild dog numbers will help improve the survival rate of young cassowaries and our other native animals in the area.

Chick sightings

It's heartening to see that two new cassowary chicks are making their home in the south Mission Beach area and with any luck having fewer pigs around means more 'feral pig free habitat' available for these guys to roam around in, on their daily forage for food.

If you're having a problem with feral pigs in the Mission Beach area call Paul at Boar Busters on 07 4068 8732.

www.boarbusters.com.au



Paul Smith, Boar Busters, checks one of his pig-traps.

Wishing Lestar well

Earlier this year the ARF said goodbye to long-standing Director Lestar Manning, retiring from his position after 8 years due to the pressure of business activities. Lestar runs a specialist planning and environment law practice in Maroochydore and Cairns but still found the time to guide the Foundation through its legal proceedings in the early days. Lestar drafted one of the first conservation covenants to be applied under what was in 2001, relatively new law for Queensland. The covenants were applied to land titles on blocks of rainforest resold by the Foundation in the Garners Beach cassowary corridor and have been a template for covenanting works since then.

The ARF welcomes new Board member Angus Love CEO, Direct Sales Division, Direct Group, Sydney.

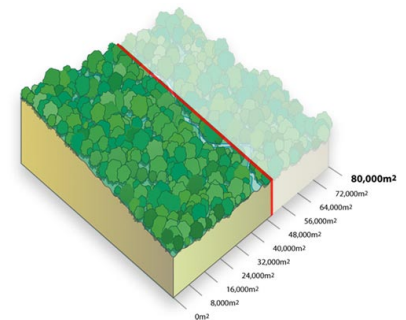


Former ARF Chair, George Mansford (pictured centre) with ARF CEO Roger Phillips (right) present retiring Board member Lestar Manning (left) with a framed reproduction of the land title and conservation covenant that he developed for the first block of ARF land.

Adopt a square update

The gift of a Tree for Life continues to grow, with over 290 trees sold through the ARF Interpretive Centre and Gift Shop since its opening in October 2006. And the great news on the adoption of Lot 154, Cape Tribulation Road, is that through generous donations from individuals we are well over the half way mark on the 80,000m² with \$49,091 in adoptions to the end of July.

You can adopt a square of rainforest by going to: <http://www.arf.net.au/adoptasquare/adoptasquare.htm>



Local artist: Henri Hunsinger

Born in Paris, France, in 1938, Henri Hunsinger began his artistic career while travelling in the 1960s. He studied design in Canada and has since exhibited in countries worldwide, including South America, the USA and Canada. Henri first visited Australia in 1985, spending 18 months travelling across the country and living for a short time in Darwin. He returned in 1989 and established himself in Kuranda, far north Queensland, where he continues to live and work.



Henri draws inspiration for his work from his tropical surroundings to offer a range of high-quality, Australian-made reproductions including standard and large prints and greeting cards. Henri also paints more figurative works under the name of Téval.

Visit the ARF Interpretive Centre and Gift Shop at 51 Esplanade, Cairns to view a selection of Henri's gift cards, prints and original works. And keep dropping by the ARF website as we build our selection of merchandise and gifts available to purchase on line.



ARF administration assistant Sarah Habrow, shows ARF Patron, Lynne Cosgrove around the new stock in the ARF Cairns Interpretive Centre and gift shop.

In Brief - Next Issue

US Charity takes on ARF

USA charity consolidator Global Giving has taken on the ARF as a client enabling US citizens to make tax deductible donations to ARF projects in Australia.

Landowners helped with weeds

The ARF is soon to launch a training and financial support program for landowners in the Tully to Cape Tribulation sector of the cassowary corridor, to tackle weeds on private land in or near the World Heritage Area. Information packs will be available in soon.

Cassowary habitat purchased

The foundation has purchased 60 hectares of rainforest in El Arish, Queensland as part of its cassowary conservation program. The land will be protected by a conservation covenant and resold as a conservation lifestyle block to return funds to the ARFs revolving land fund.

Bringing the rainforest back to the city

Discussions are continuing with the National Trust NSW on a proposed joint venture to rehabilitate remnant rainforest near Sydney.