



Land Lines

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Land Lines is the newsletter of the Wildlife Land Fund Limited.

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THE WILDLIFE LAND FUND

From the Chairman

WLFL continues to maintain and enhance our two properties at Witta and Reesville, thanks to continuing support from volunteers and funds from the Sunshine Coast Regional Council in accordance with our Voluntary Conservation Agreement on both holdings. We have also had to expend our own modest funds in upgrading road access to both reserves and boundary fencing at Reesville.

Our trustee responsibilities at Bukkulla Conservation Reserve continue to pose challenges, which we have difficulty in meeting, given our limited finances and the logistic problems arising from its distance from Brisbane. A feral animal program has been implemented through accredited volunteers but how to address invasive plants is a challenge. Maintenance of windmills, tanks and troughs depends upon an adequate, reliable

income from agistment fees. These fees are not guaranteed, as indicated by recent experience. In any case, directors have a responsibility to allocate funds, including these fees, to high-priority projects, which may not necessarily be on maintenance of these timeworn facilities.

For WLFL, the main challenges are currently to expand membership, cash reserves and income levels, while also attracting a new generation of active participants. As already notified, I will stand down as director and chair, when my present term ends in September, 2011. This will end my longstanding active engagement with WPSQ and WLFL. This commenced in 1985 when I began the first of seven terms as WPSQ President. At that time, with Don Henry as an active Director, WPSQ engaged in major campaigns, including the first successful 'green-



Prof John Holmes

black' alliance in Cape York Peninsula, halting the mining of the white, silica sands at Shelburne Bay.

While currently WLFL undertakes modest (if important) responsibilities, our constitution enables us to expand into new areas as opportunities arise. Among these are scope for participation in land, vegetation offset schemes and in carbon offset or trading schemes. WLFL needs to be alert to these opportunities. One strength is WLFL's role as the only Queensland-based non-profit owner of conservation lands.

John Holmes, Chairman

Bukkulla Camp August 2010

The advertised camp took place as planned. Those present included local member, activist, and volunteer Jeff Simmons; Sunshine Coast members Jill Chamberlain, Richard and Carol Green, Ross McClymont, Wid Barnes and Pat Barry.

For Grace and I this was our seventh visit to Bukkulla which may be an indication that, despite the distance from Brisbane, we find it a rewarding experience to spend some time there. It

was however long enough since the last trip to appreciate Jeff's improvements to the camping area. A feature of Bukkulla when one camps there is the stillness and silence of the nights (only emphasized by the clarity of a distant dingo howl, and the response from a different hill), and the splendour of the night skies, well away from any terrestrial light source apart from our own. But things are never as planned, the



Butterfly aggregation

skies were otherwise, and there was a significant amount of rain on two nights. This made members extremely appreciative of Jeff's efforts in facilitating this particular camp.

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Notice Board

Sincere thanks to Parsons Brinckerhoff (PB) Queensland Green Team for raising donations in excess of \$400 for WLFL. There is also a commitment for future work at Witta.

Weed control contracts have been let to Barung Contracting Services for Witta Conservation Reserve and to Brush Turkey Enterprises for Neil Holloway Reesville Conservation Reserve to the value of \$3000 respectively.

Sunshine Coast Regional Council have increased the funds that are reimbursed for works under their Voluntary Conservation Agreement scheme. WLFL appreciates this incentive. This local authority really cares for the environment.

Another campout is being organised for Bukkulla in 2011 provided there is sufficient interest. Contact Jill Chamberlain at sunshine@wildlife.org.au for more information.

Nature Refuge agreements have been signed for Witta and Reesville holdings. These are expected to be executed by the Government by January 2011.



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Working bee at Witta

John Birbeck had been growing on a large number of figs generously donated by Jack Mitchell and there was a pressing need to plant them out.

With the weather getting warmer and the potential for a wet summer The WLFL Board decided in early October to call a working bee at Witta for Sunday 7 November weather permitting. With the cooperation of Wildlife Queensland the event was advertised in the October edition of the e-bulletin. This resulted in some 12 to 14 people expressing an interest.

As 7 November approached, the weather gods came into play with in excess of 30mm of rain up to Friday lunch time. People were advised that a postponement was highly likely. Friday afternoon John Birbeck advised the sun was shining and it may be a goer after all. It was decided to make the call as late as practicable and we settled on 6.00pm Saturday evening. For once the weather gods were kind and on John's advice the

working bee was declared on.

Eight hearty souls, including one that did wonders for the average age profile, fronted on Sunday morning. A number of potential workers had made alternative plans based on earlier advice. Still besides the usual volunteers there was one new comer and a great worker at that. About 28 figs were planted at selected locations scattered throughout the block. Attention then focussed on clearing groundsel and some of the other weeds while Ross trimmed the track enhancing accessibility down to the extremities of the block. As noon approached a decision was taken to pull out feeling comfortable at what had been achieved.

It was only February this year when John Holmes and I met with Legh Davis and his friends to review progress with



the block so kindly donated to WLFL by Legh. The growth that has occurred since then is truly astounding, the areas cleared of lantana are standing up well with little to no regeneration and while groundsel still represents a challenge it is remarkable what progress has been achieved. The above average rainfall this year is reflected in what is occurring here.



Volunteers of all ages came to help at Witta.

MEMBERSHIP! A troubling trend

Years and Financial members

Year	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Members	90	93	94	90	87	84	86	68

Membership is exhibiting a troubling trend. Your Board is aware of this and is endeavouring to turn it around. Currently financial membership is at 68. This has dropped from 86 in 2009 due in part to the passing of a number of supporters, people moving interstate and a range of other understandable reasons. In addition there are a number past supporters who have not elected to renew this year. The Board is aiming to have 75 financial members as at 30 June 2011, 87 in June 2012 and 100 in June 2013. We need your support and assistance in addressing this trend. Please help!

Defined goal for future membership

Year	2011	2012	2013
Membership	75	87	100

It can be seen that the Board has not set an outrageous target but a steady growth that with assistance can be achieved. Come on we can do it.

Feral Animal Control—Bukkulla

On learning of extensive pig damage one member approached WFLF offering to travel to Bukkulla and address the pig problem. He and his colleague were both appropriately qualified for the task at hand, had the necessary skill and also appropriate insurance to protect all parties. Approval was received from DERM and neighbours were advised. As usual Jeff Simmons provided the necessary local assistance but did not participate in the control activity.

Several benefits flowed from the exercise apart from removing some feral pigs and rabbits. Thanks to an extensive report provided by Norm, extracts of which have been provided, WFLF has a far better understanding of the feral animal situation at Bukkulla. In addition WFLF has demonstrated in a practical way to our neighbours our care for the country.

Our thanks goes to Norm and Paul for their effort and time so generously given.

Extracted from Norm Bains Report

“On Friday Paul and I walked from camp to the old 'turkey's nest' earth tank west of the top windmill, but found no pigs or foxes. The stream valleys south of the top windmill were hotspots where there were many signs of recent pig



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activity. It was also apparent that most of the pigs had very recently departed, and the evidence of their prints indicated an exodus towards the north.

...we believed that some stragglers might be found within the Bukkulla property, and this proved to be the case on Sunday when I happened upon a lone young boar near the top windmill and dispatched it humanely. A couple of hours later I saw three half-grown pigs ambling in line about 1100 metres south of the top windmill, and took out the front one but the other two scampered, and as I was unable to be certain of a clean kill they escaped. Then I saw a large pig about a hundred metres ahead, possibly the mother of the three smaller ones, just as she disappeared into thick lantana fringing the creek. I refrained from following her in there for reasons of safety. I stalked that general area again on Monday and Tuesday mornings. Recent tracks suggested that they also had departed towards the north.

Those were the only pigs either of us saw during our entire stay. I walked over much of the lower terrain, and quite a lot of the hilly stuff, between the camp, the top windmill and the western boundary gate during the period between Friday and Tuesday. Paul spent many hours whistling for foxes, but none came to the whistle. We tentatively concluded that foxes are either not present or very sparse on Bukkulla. There were however signs, consisting of scat and prints, of a few dingoes or wild dogs (but likely to be dingoes because of the smallish size of the prints). Paul heard howling during Monday night, so dingoes were present that night within about a kilometre of the



Wild pig at Bukkulla

camp. We would not have harmed the dingoes if we had happened upon them..... There were a very few rabbits. We saw three near the top windmill, and in the absence of pigs Paul and I shot one rabbit each.

The pigs prefer the creek lines, because of the wetter ground (especially for wallows), casual water in the beds of the creeks, and the shade and protection afforded by the many areas of dense lantana occurring in the small floodplains and banks of the creeks. There may also be better feed for them in the floodplain soils (tubers, roots, grubs, the eggs and young of ground-nesting birds, etc) but the pigs also forage far and wide into the hill slopes, even the high, steep parts of the hills. Evidence of this wide foraging is readily found all through the hilly terrain. However as the country dries out following cessation of relatively abundant rainfall the pigs firstly retreat to the creeks, and then apparently migrate northward out of the



Damage from pigs wallowing

Bukkulla property and into the wetter terrain of the upper Aitken Creek (Glen Prairie property). A great deal of pig-caused damage to creek banks, hill slopes and wet areas was observed during our stay. Most of this damage was small in scale, but some dug-up areas were several metres in extent and constitute a significant erosion hazard, especially where they occur in banks of creeks.

There are plenty of cane toads on the property, not necessarily close to water as they rehydrate from the copious dew water held by the grass during the night and early morning. I saw cane toads in the hill slopes at night (when I walked up the hill to make a phone call), far from any water source other than that provided by dew.

The camp site is reasonably well equipped, the shower and toilet being particularly welcome. It's all Jeff's work. I agree with him that a carport-type of shelter would be very nice for visitors but I readily accept that the financial limitations are going to have the final say on whether such a shelter, and a water tank to go with it, can be provided.

After our Tuesday morning walk during which we saw no feral animals, Paul and I decided to pack up and depart. .”



Annual General Meeting

The 2010 AGM was held at Camp Constable, Mt Glorious on 18 September 2010. It was attended by a broad spread of members and 18 proxies were registered.

Members were informed that WLFL operated at a trading loss (\$830.74). However had the land tax paid in January 2010 to Office of State Revenue been refunded prior to June 30 instead of in August no loss would have been recorded. After considerable lobbying the Witta and Reesville holdings are exempt from land tax considerations.

The 2009-2010 proved to be a challenging year with donations on the decline, no income from agistment of stock, cash reserves depleted to relatively low levels meeting essential fencing and access earth works as well as ongoing strategic weed management. However WLFL is viable and is in a position to pay its debts as and when they become due and payable. An unqualified

audit report was tabled and Gem Cowlshaw was reappointed as auditor. Another matter of concern is the decline in membership down to 68.

Your Board was re-elected unopposed. John Holmes, Chair indicated that this would be his last year of service and he would not be seeking re-election next year. John has served since WLFL was established and had previously given Wildlife Preservation Society of Queensland many years of service in senior executive positions on Council.

Discussions during general business focussed on issues associated with Bukkulla Conservation Park that WLFL manages for the Queensland Government. Issues included invasive plant and feral animal issues, potential maintenance costs with tanks and troughs, problems with windmills, the proposed shelter, means of funding apparent management needs and matters dealing with the administration of the holding. Some of the issues were addressed there and then and commitment was given to raise other matters with DERM.

While no date or place was set for AGM 2011, it is most likely to be again held in conjunction with the WPSQ Southern Branch Get Together to be hosted by the Gold Coast & Hinterland Branch in September 2011.



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Bukkulla Camp August 2010

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Not only had he brought in a considerable quantity of town water but had also pitched a very large tarpaulin which provided welcome shelter –and promoted talk of the desirability of The Shed. We did, of course sit around the campfire after dinner each night. This low-key sociability was raised a notch one day by Jeff organizing a sunset drinks occasion for us to celebrate the recent award to Jill of the Order of Australia Medal.

Compared with some visits, we did not walk far and the condition of the east-west track discouraged a 4WD sortie, but there was much of interest. As before one is impressed by the different vegetation communities and the value of the area for protecting dry rain forest types. Being on the ground there induced reflection on the best way forward in our involvement. The area has high inherent value, but with likely small visitation, and very limited inputs of volunteer effort and resources. The management challenges are large. The grasses have been subject to little cattle grazing for the last two years, with all that implies. Hopefully rainfall will promote litter decomposition (and buildup of biodiversity) instead of possible wildfire. An outbreak of Noogoora Burr looks alarming in the

vicinity of the southern windmill, but may not be invasive because of the good dense ground cover and natural biocontrol agents. Rubber vine, seen as a major problem at the time of establishing Bukkulla, is still being heavily attacked by the introduced rust. A definite good news, or good luck, story. On the other hand lantana which had been scarcely obvious previously, may be increasing.

One aspect of the natural history is worth noting. It is known that the Common Crow butterfly may form, as *Wildlife of Greater Brisbane* says, “large quiescent aggregations in sheltered places during winter”. However Bukkulla is the only place where I, at least, have actually seen this and on at least two visits. It is a remarkable sight. In a well-sheltered section of a dry creek bed one melaleuca looks different from the rest, darker, and shimmering oddly. On closer approach one sees thousands of the butterflies, most resting on the tree and surrounding shrubs up to a few metres from the ground. There is much restless movement but few are airborne – unless one gets too close. Quite a wildlife experience. Another reason to visit Bukkulla! And we believe that Jill is organizing another camp for August 2011.

Camp participants enjoyed a walk



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