



Newsletter

Sustaining the natural integrity of Fraser Island together June 2012

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Welcome to the third edition of the FINIA newsletter, keeping FINIA members up to date with the current FINIA projects. The next FINIA meeting will be held on **Monday 2 July**, starting at 10:00am, at the Woocoo Community Hall.

Please email any discussion items to: Sue.Sargent@fauna-flora.org .

Tick Alert

Bree Jashin, Vice President FIA, FINIA Representative FIA

Over the last two years with the damp/deluge conditions from La Niña, South East Queensland has seen the explosion in the prevalence of ticks and tick bites causing domestic animal deaths and potentially causing harm to humans.

On Fraser Island in particular, ticks have been an issue impeding invasive species removal, with some aware volunteers not wanting to take the risk, and personally I have been ill on a number of occasions suffering reactions after being bitten by a number of ticks and nymphs after weeding.

It's timely to bring attention to this issue, especially with all the bush related conservation activities with volunteers and QPWS within the region.

NSW agencies had previously taken some years to respond to staff reports of, often long term, illnesses relating to tick bite. It has now become a very hot OH&S issue in NSW with the Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) and leading immunologists taking these concerns very seriously. Lyme's Disease and other debilitating bacterial infections are implicated.

http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/factsheets/infectious/lyme_disease.html

There is an opportunity here for Queensland to adopt a precautionary approach and develop a protocol which follows suit to the OEH response to identifying and managing the potential health risks associated with ticks and tick bite in the field.

Tick bite, within OEH is now regarded as an incident and is to be reported through work safety protocol. Recording of the incident, its location and experienced reactions is a valuable source of information about the distribution and responses by staff to tick bites.

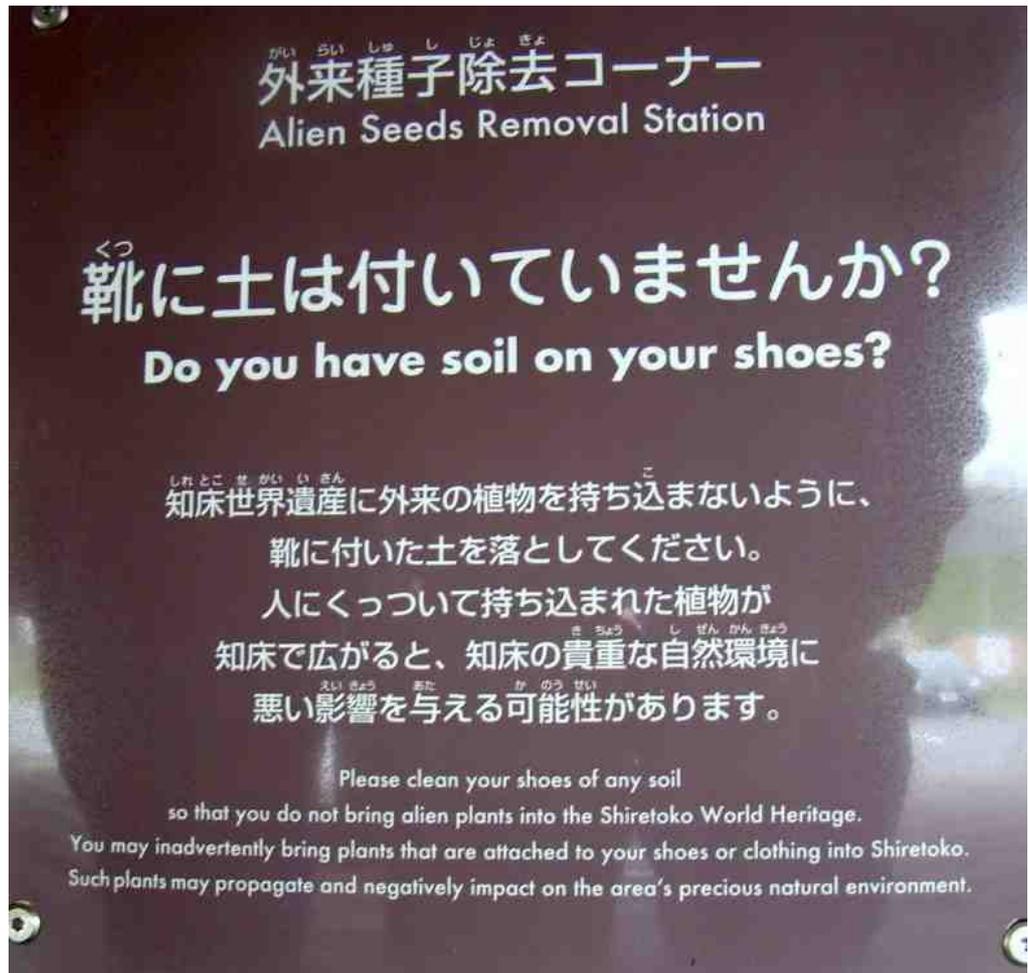
<http://medent.usyd.edu.au/fact/lyme%20disease.htm>

Lessons from Japan on World Heritage quarantine

John Sinclair, Fraser Island Defenders Organisation

The first thing anyone notices before they enter any building in Shiretoko World Heritage area are the quarantine measures. These measures are not limited to Shiretoko. Every National Park or Ramsar Site Visitor Centre made everyone very evil pest into the protected areas they were visiting. One has to stand on a mat to disinfect the soles of one's footwear. There are signs warning people not to carry alien seeds with them past the entry point. These very innovative ways certainly raised public awareness on the threat of invasive weeds and other pests entering the parks.

I learnt that there was a very big volunteer program in Shiretoko. Because the area surrounding the most popular visitor site within Shiretoko (Shiretoko-Goko-Five Lakes) was cleared for farming in the early 1900s before farming was abandoned by the 1970s. Volunteers work through the summer re-establishing the mixed forest that previously occurred there. Incidentally the lakes attract 3,000-4,000 visitors per day during the summer months (1,200,000 plus annually).



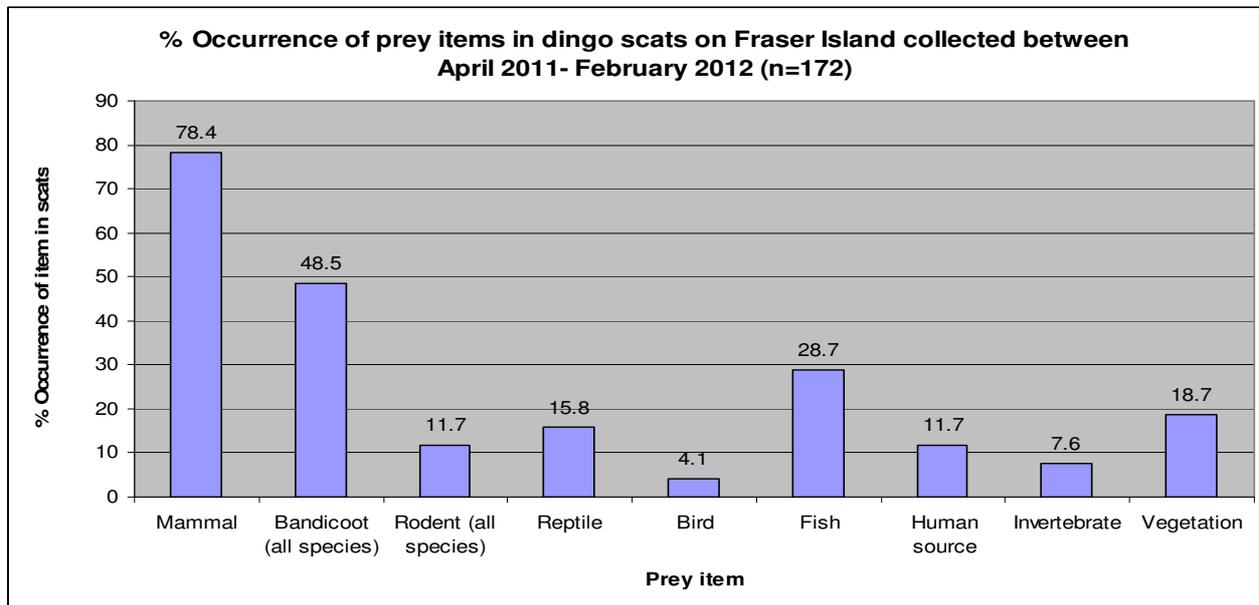
Quarantine sign (Photo by John Sinclair)

It was difficult to establish just how big a problem weeds were in Shiretoko because I didn't know what were weeds. For example, it was spring and the height of the spring wildflowers. The fields were carpets of yellow but most of those flowers were healthy Dandelions. For a week I dismissed these as weeds until I realized that they were authentic wildflowers like the wild azaleas and the cherry trees in full blossom. The fact that weeds were not discussed in any literature we saw seems to indicate that Shiretoko's focus was on avoiding a problem. I did notice though at Mt Nasudate National Park there were photos of the most wanted weeds they were fighting to eliminate stuck on the back of public toilet doors

Shiretoko has surprisingly much more in common with Fraser Island than at first I would have imagined. The more relevant mutual problem is that of visitor safety in the presence of the top predator. Managing dingoes is a walk in the park compared with the problems Shiretoko has protecting the public from the numerous and potentially lethal Hokkaido Brown Bears.

CVA Nature Wise, Scat Collection

Alana Kippers, QPWS



Preliminary results of the first batch of scats analysed

The scat collection study is continuing after the first batch of scats (172) have been independently analysed.

The Conservation Volunteers, Nature Wise program commenced their second program on Fraser Island on May 15. The program had four participants, with Jono Bateman as the program leader. NRM QPWS rangers John, Gordon and Linda assisted the group in the collection of the scats and provided vital information on Fraser Island dingoes and the scat study.

Over 30 scats were collected over the three mornings of collecting. Including the scats collected by the CVA, another 60 scats have recently been sent away for analysis.



Jane, a CVA volunteer, collecting dingo scats on Fraser Island's Eastern Beach (Photo by Jono Bateman)

For more information about the CVA, Nature Wise program please visit:

www.conservationvolunteers.com.au .

From the Eurong nursery

Bree Jashin, Vice President FIA, FINIA Representative FIA & Alana Kippers, QPWS

Although growth has slowed over the colder months, plant stock is high at the Eurong nursery. There are approximately 340 plants ready for planting, 1580 plants in the shade house and 40 trays of seed in the hot house. The Fraser Island community is really starting to come on board with plant requests starting to come through from all over the Island.



The Happy Valley community is showing itself as it has taken very well to the concept of local Fraser Island plants for their gardens.

After years in the making and as plant stock is gradually becoming available, there has been gathering momentum and plenty of action!

Over the past couple of years exotics have gradually been removed from a number of properties and preparation is underway for planting Fraser Island species.

New trellis at a Happy Valley property (photo by Bree Jashin)

The most recent has been, finally, after having removed the exotic plants some time ago, the awaiting trellis was constructed last week and on Friday the Fraser Island Creepers (*Tecomanthe hillii*), after having been hardened at the Eurong nursery, were planted. Perfect timing with the rain to settle them in.

Some months ago, 8 coconuts were removed from another property, in favour of Piccabeen palms (*Archontophoenix Cunninghamiana*), which are now just becoming available and will be planted on their next trip to Fraser Island in July.



The start of tree felling at the Happy Valley Retreat, with the removal of old pine trees that were rotting (Photo by Bree Jashin).

Many more exotic plants from another property were removed and further removal has been booked in with an arborist.

A number of other properties have also removed exotics and there is plenty of discussion and site visits about which plants are becoming available that would suit which position.

All very positive and enjoyable and the qualified arborist is getting plenty of work!

Growing partnerships

Alana Kippers, QPWS

On Friday 8 June, USC delivered a fire workshop at the Eurong ranger base to QPWS staff. It was then followed by a public presentation. The fire workshop covered a range of topics including an introduction on the Fraser Island Fire Management plan, fire management for biodiversity conservation, fire mapping using remote sensing and implications of Fraser Island fire history. Yoko Shimizu and Laura Simmons presented to the QPWS staff on their research projects. Discussion sessions were also part of the agenda. USC research projects on the topic of water, fire and flowers were presented by Dr Alison Shapcott, Dr Neil Tindale. Residents from Happy Valley, Yidney and Eurong Second Valley attended the public lecture.



Fire on Fraser Island (Photo by QPWS)

Feedback from the evening was that it was, “well received by the residents and that they are hungry for more”.

This positive feedback and growing partnerships between Fraser Island stakeholders will hopefully lead to future workshops.

Clean up Fraser Island weekend

Alana Kippers, QPWS



Land Rover Owners Club Brisbane and Sunshine Coast Land Rover Owners Club and QPWS rangers, after a morning of weeding, Yidney Rocks (Photo by Jenna Tapply)

Over the Queen’s birthday long weekend 2012 the annual Cleanup Fraser Island took place. Twenty 4wd clubs, with over 400 participants attended the event. Of these clubs 18 were tasked with picking up rubbish and two of the clubs undertook weeding at Happy Valley and Yidney Rocks. The clean up clubs managed to remove approximately three bulk bins of rubbish from Fraser Island’s Eastern Beach and inland roads. The weeding clubs focussed their efforts on Easter cassia and lantana. Under the supervision of QPWS rangers the volunteers pulled out other weeds that were seen. The volunteers braved the rain and wind to make the weekend a success.

Quarantine essential for Fraser Island

John Sinclair, Fraser Island Defenders Organisation

The number of weeds on Fraser Island has grown. The number of weed species has more than trebled in the 20 years since World Heritage inscription. The 1991 World Heritage nomination listed only 51 introduced plant species for Fraser Island. QPWS's latest weed list identifies 179 species of weeds.

The QPWS list doesn't include many alien plants growing in domestic gardens on the island. Many of these have already become invasive weeds such as the Coral Creeper in Eurong. More have the potential to become weeds. The QPWS list identifies 106 species as "*Localized*" and, alarmingly 45 as "*Widespread*". 10% of the plants on the list are now believed to have been eradicated. The others are described as "*Status unknown*".

The list didn't include *Praxellis* which is a new weed on the island that most likely found its way on to the island as a vehicle stowaway. Fraser's roads and walking tracks are becoming corridors along which weeds are spreading. FINIA is currently fighting a losing battle in the War on Weeds if any gains made against existing weeds are lost through new weed species finding their way to the island.

The war against weeds is being fought on two fronts. One front is controlling and attempting to eliminate the weeds that are there. The second front is to persuade landholders not to take any new plants on to the island but to obtain all their plant stock from the Eurong nursery. We also need to be more active on the third front to stop any more weed species being innocently taken to the island as hitchhikers from the mainland in mud under vehicles.

It is for this reason FIDO has intensified its advocacy to ensure that their vehicles have been properly washed down prior to going to Fraser Island. It only requires a regulation to allow authorized inspectors to make random inspections (similar to random breath testing) and for on-the-spot fines to be issued for any vehicles found not been properly cleaned prior to arriving on the island. This would be the incentive to all vehicle owners to prepare their vehicles. It wouldn't matter then if they were washed down days or even weeks prior to going to the island or if there were cleaned in Brisbane or Bundaberg as long as they pass the clean test in inspections on the island.

FIDO will be proposing that the new Management Plan, now being drafted, allow for random vehicle inspections as vehicles arrive on the island and on-the-spot-fines for vehicles carrying mud under the body.

All Australians demand that their government maintains tight quarantine controls to prevent the introduction on new pests and diseases and they would expect that similar controls should be instituted to prevent alien introductions to such a special natural place as Fraser Island.

Dates for the Diary

What: Naidoc Week 2012 Flag Raising Ceremony – flag raising ceremony followed by afternoon tea
Where: FCRC, Travistock St, Hervey Bay
When: Monday 2 July 2012, 2pm
Cost: Free
Contact/booking: Ele Jenkins, 1300 794 929, ele.jenkins@frasercoast.qld.gov.au

What: Naidoc Week 2012 Flag Raising Ceremony – flag raising ceremony followed by morning tea
Where: Town Hall Green, Kent St, Maryborough
When: Thursday 5 July 2012, 9.30am
Cost: Free
Contact/booking: Vicki Wilson, 4190 5806, vicki.wilson@frasercoast.qld.gov.au

What: Naidoc Week Concert
Where: The Foyer, Brolga Theatre, Walker St, Maryborough
When: Thursday 5 July 2012, 6pm-9pm
Cost: Free
Contact/booking: Leon Nehow, 4125 9366, leon.nehow@datsuma.qld.gov.au

What: Naidoc Week Family Fun Day
Where: Queens Park, Maryborough
When: Friday 6 July 2012, 10am-2pm
Cost: Free
Contact/booking: Kerry-Ann Corowa, kerry-ann@rdawidebayburnett.org.au

What: Creating Waves Lecture Series – keynote speakers presenting papers that relate to research and education on Humpback Whales, Oceania, sustainability and the environment
Where: University of Southern Queensland, Old Maryborough Rd, Pinalba
When: Friday 3 August and Wednesday 22 August 2012, 5.30pm-7.30pm
Cost: Free
Contact/booking: 1300 794 929, events@frasercoast.qld.gov.au

Visit www.herveybaywhalefestival.com.au for more information and a full program of events on the Hervey Bay Whale Festival.

Funding Opportunities

What: Volunteer Grants 2012
When: 1/06/2012 – 25/07/2012
Contact: 1800 183 374, Email: vg2012@fahcsia.gov.au
More Information: <http://www.fahcsia.gov.au>

What: Everyone's Environment Grants
When: Opening 1 July 2012
More Information: <http://www.ehp.qld.gov.au>

What: Conservation Project Grants
When: August 2012
More Information: <http://www.ehp.qld.gov.au>