



Newsletter
**Moreton Island Protection
Committee Inc.**

PO Box 2182
Ashgrove West QLD 4060
Phone 07 3321 1463

Print Post Approved
PP414772/00002



Volume 29 No 2
April to June 2007

Moreton Management plan to take effect from 1st. July 2007

The plan includes capping of camper numbers, a zonal camp booking system, and protection zones. The plan is scheduled to commence on 1st July. For details see page 3 to 6.

Moreton Bay still in the Balance.

Over recent years MIPC members have become very aware of the inadequacy of the protection provided by Moreton Bay's Marine Park status.

Most of the Bay's Marine Park is zoned general use. Development is permitted in the General Use Zone as long as it does not significantly impact on the Bay. Thus in the general use zone a lot hangs on the definition of what is a significant effect.

As reported in our last newsletter, Government has commenced development of regional aquaculture plans. Government is committed to approve aquaculture proposals if they are consistent with the regional aquaculture plan.

It is important to provide a high level of protection to significant sections of the Bay to protect them from unhealthy developments such as aquaculture.

"Currently less than 0.5% of Moreton Bay is fully protected and within some of those areas commercial fishing is still practiced." draft briefing paper by Simon Baltais, secretary Wildlife Preservation Society, Bayside branch.

Motor boats currently have access to all parts of the bay. At our last AGM members saw footage of a dugong mother and calf separated by a very slow moving launch. The calf panicking at separation and in shallow water went under the launch to get back to mother, thus risking being cut by propellers.

In Simon Baltais's draft briefing paper he noted;

- There are no safe areas in the Bay for Dugongs as the go slow zones do not protect dugongs.
- Major dugong feeding sites require stronger protection than is already offered.
- Increased Protection Zones are required to protect shark populations.
- Stronger protection of coral communities is required. (61 species within Moreton Bay)
- Prior to 2000, an estimated 1,000 ha of sea grass meadows have been lost from Moreton Bay. Since 2,000 sea grass meadows have been relatively stable. Eel grass is an essential food for dugong and green turtles, but not one sea grass meadow is currently under full protection. Significant sea grass meadows must be given greater protection.
- Turtles require safe havens free from boat activity
- Spring tide roost sites for waders must be given protection from human disturbance.

The declaration of no take zones is the best way to maintain fish stocks. Declaration of no go zones for boats is the best way to protect dugongs and turtles from boat strikes.

Combining no take and no go zones together would make enforcement practical and provide significant environmental benefit.

Please ask the Hon Ms Minister for Environment and Multiculturalism, Hon. Lindy Nelson-Carr, MP for at least 30% No take No Go zones. PO Box 15155, City East Brisbane, QLD, 4002
EandM@ministerial.qld.gov.au

Moreton Island Protection Committee Inc.

PO Box 2182 Ashgrove West
4060

www.home.acenet.net.au/mipc

email mipc@acenet.net.au

Phone (07) 3321 1463

Executive Members

President

Alan Gennings 33716887

Vice President

Marissa Grant 3216 2377

Secretary Beth Crawter 3371

1329 **Assist secretary** Nanette

Kempel **Treasurer** Pam

Schindler

Executive Committee

Linda Back 3366 1292

Susan Bedford

Gordon Bennet 3399 6351

Patricia Cavanagh

Janette Dovers

Simon Fell-Smith

Dennis Maher 3369 1681

Statement of Aims

1. To promote the preservation of Moreton Island as a natural area to be managed for public recreation and enjoyment provided always that the recreational uses are consistent with conservation aims.

2. To foster the conservation of the vegetation, fauna and natural features of Moreton.

3. To facilitate public awareness and appreciation of Moreton Island as a natural area and encourage support for its preservation and management in accordance with these objects.

4. To co-operate with, or promote co-operation by any means with and among persons, trusts, corporations, firms, associations, institutions, governments, instrumentalities or government, municipal authorities and other bodies in the Commonwealth or its Territories or elsewhere for the purpose of carrying out any object of the organisation.

5. To oppose any development or usage of Moreton Island which is contrary to the preservation and good management of the island in accordance with these objects.

6. Generally, to take such lawful action as it considers necessary or appropriate in the interests of promoting the preservation and good management of Moreton Island in accordance with these objects.

The views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the Moreton Island Protection Committee or its members.

Contributions to this newsletter are welcome, but the editors accept no responsibility for alterations made to articles.

Printed by Rex Leo ph. 3878 5248

Editors Alan Gennings, Linda Back

Printed 21st June 2007

NPA Annual Camp affiliated SE Qld Groups: Mar – 1 Apr 07

This years meeting was hosted by the Fraser Island Defenders Organisation at Elanda Point on Lake Cootharaba. Campsites were on grass space within tropic forest, with kangaroos grazing around caravans, cabins, tents.

MIPC created history with eight members present; the greatest number ever. The MIPC report was jointly presented by Nanette, Trish and Dennis.

Absorbing walks included a 17 km walk to Harry's hut. Photos of Mill Point showing sawmill and community in many acres of clear land 130 years ago. Nature has now completely reclaimed the area. Relics of the cottage and pipeline were still visible.

On Friday night, Dr Michael Gloster, with slide show, spoke about history of preservation in Cooloola area. Saturday evening, Dr Brown spoke of Ghosts of Cooloola-early characters long gone.

Minjerribah Moorgumpin Elders were unable to attend and sent their report. Some of their activities in the last year included;—

- Many talks were given to local and international students.
- Working with the UQ Marine Biology Research Station on study of sea water and sea creatures.
- Dedication and commemoration day in March 07 re "Sovereign" loss in South Passage 1847. Breastplate replicas on display in Elders office.
- A rare ceremonial axe taken from Stradbroke in 1861 was returned by Coffs Harbour elders on 24/2/07
- Meetings with Govt Dept and Redland Shire Council to ensure programs of benefit to "indigenous" community of Stradbroke.

NPA reported that they have had significant staff changes with efficient operation maintained. NPA membership is 970, with 12 affiliated group members. Committees covering strategic reference, Promotions, Website, Protected Estate operate. Meetings were held with Environment and Multicultural Minister, EPA, QPWS, S.E. district Parks and affiliates.

In 2008 Centenary Celebrations will be held commemorating the first national park in Qld, Witches Falls 1908. Many activities are being considered in which MIPC could play a part. See you next year at Mt Tamborine.

Dennis Maher



Glenine, Marissa, Dennis, Patricia, Judith, Gabby, Nannette, and Jackie.
MIPC representatives at NPA meeting (& 2 kangaroos at the back)

Moreton Island National Park, Cape Moreton Conservation Park and Moreton Island Recreation Area Management Plan.

Comment by Alan Gennings

The Plan was released on Friday 31 March.

Camper numbers restricted

A zonal booking system places a cap on camping numbers in each zone (see map page 4). Camper numbers will be restricted by;

- The number of camping permits to be issued per month (varying from a maximum 620 to 1,240 per month) and
- A maximum number of persons able to camp each night (720 to 1,440) have been set.

Peak number months are April (Easter), September, December and January. Minimum numbers are in June, July, and August.

There is no limit to the number of vehicle permits that can be issued. The increasing number of visitors accommodated in townships and Tangalooma remains a source of uncapped vehicle numbers traversing the Park, and are not counted in any of the statistics currently collected by government.

Management Zones

For the first time the Moreton Island National Park and The Recreation area have been divided into management zones. The special protection zone provides the highest level of protection from visitor impact.

Special protection zones. Vehicle access will be managed to prevent undue disturbance to the values. Access tracks and other facilities will not be provided and pedestrian access will not be encouraged. Facilities, interpretive signage, and vehicle and walking tracks will be limited to the boundaries of this zone and will be used for management of the intended values only. This in effect maintains inland areas of the special protection zone as untracked wilderness.

Conservation zones. The second tier of protection, where low-impact walking trails may be present, but no other visitor facilities and infrastructure will be provided.

Except for the conservation zone to east of the Telegraph track and south of the Bulwer Road, this plan has included all the areas recommended by MIPC for inclusion in the Special Protection Zones. However as long as no new track development occurs in this area then management of this area will in effect be the same as a Special Protection zone.

The values of Moreton Island

Six pages of the plan detail the value of Moreton Island. Topics include Freshwater ecosystems, Plants, Animals, Marine environment, cultural heritage, recreational, scientific and educational and social and economic values.

Plants The plan notes 5 species are listed under the schedules of the Nature Conservation (Wildlife) Regulation 2006. Four defined as rare and one vulnerable. A further 7 species are at their southern or northern limit. Three species, Cone sticks (*Pterophle canescens*), *Hibbertia fasciculata* and *Satinay (Syncarpia hillii)* are disjunct occurrences.

Animals Moreton provides habitat for 14 species listed under the schedules of the Nature Conservation (Wildlife) Regulations 2006. Three frogs are listed as vulnerable, Five Birds listed as rare, 1 vulnerable and 1 endangered, One fish listed as vulnerable and reptiles 1 vulnerable, 1 endangered and 1 rare.

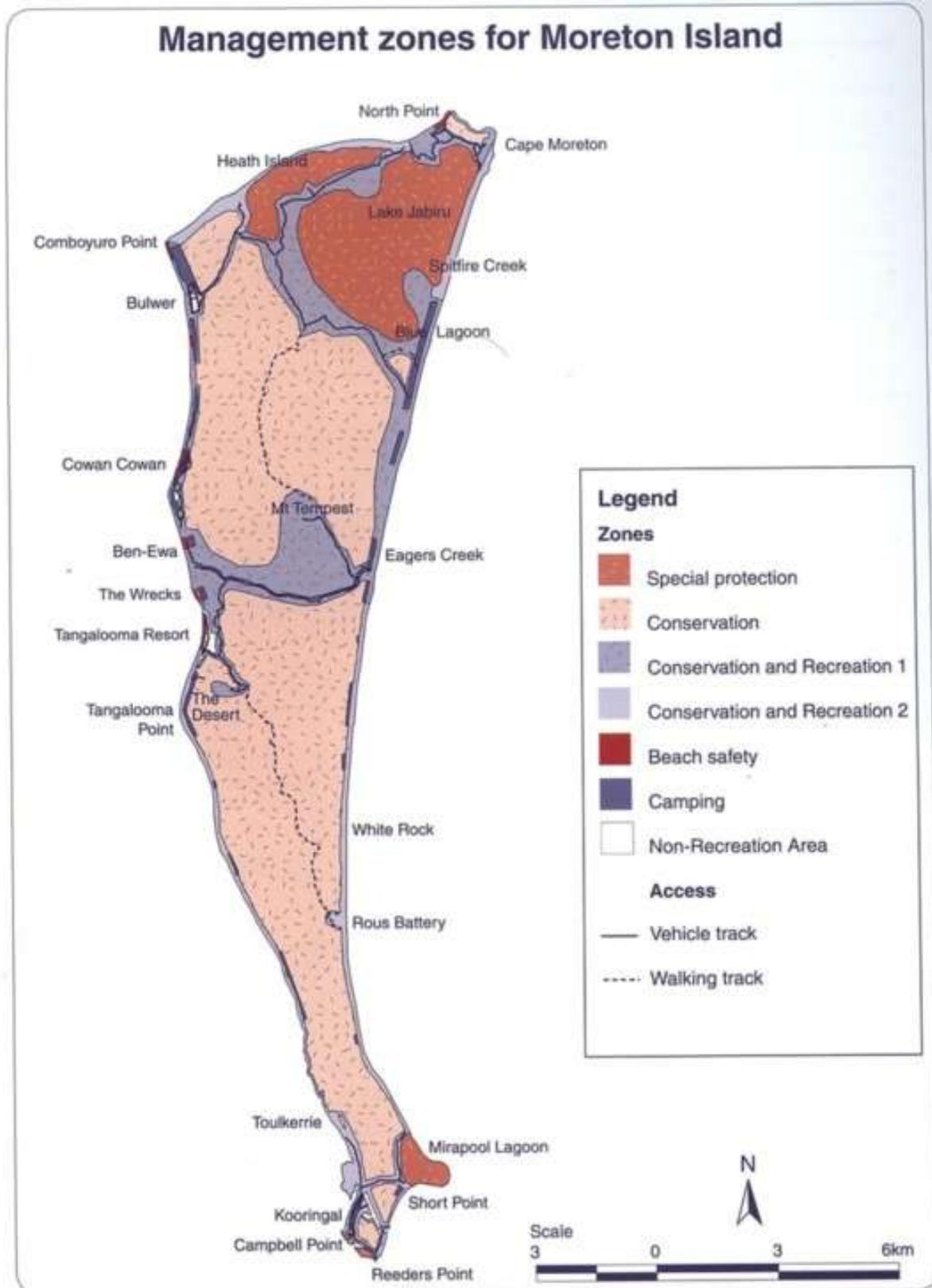
Management Strategies

Cane Toads The plan states “there is a definite need to minimize the potential for cane toad infestation for the future”. To achieve this, the plan states;

- Increase public awareness of the problem of the introduction
- Ensure all landscape and building materials are brought to the island for use by QPWS are treated in a way that minimizes the risk of cane toads
- Encourage other stakeholders to implement techniques to minimize the risk of cane toad introductions in landscape and building materials.
- Investigate reports of cane toads on the island as soon as practicable and destroy such animals located.

A more proactive plan would specify resources to be allocated to maintaining the natural quarantine values provided by an Island National Park. . Moreton is the only coastal area in S. E. Qld free of cane toads. A toad free Moreton is dependant on visitors, residents and contractors vigilance in checking their luggage and freight for toads. The ever increasing freight being taken to the Island increases the risk of toad introduction. The current drought having reduced cane toad numbers in Brisbane has probably decreased the risk of toad introduction. This will not always be so. If legislation is needed to enable checking freight and setting quarantine protocols then surely it is time to write that legislation. Note; fire ants and other non-native animal introductions are treated in the same way.

Campfires “Designate *campgrounds where camp fires will be permitted and ban camp fires in other locations.*”



From Moreton Island National Park, Cape Moreton Conservation Park and Moreton Island Recreations Area Management Plan. April 2007. Page 22.

Management Plan cont.

The management plan at 35 pages is a somewhat smaller document than the 58 page draft management plan. Some of the 23 page reduction can be attributed to the smaller print size.

Background information contained in Draft Plan's Appendixes has been left out of the Plan.

In Appendix 1 of the draft plan the main 10 plant communities and their key species were listed and mapped. The Management plan lists only communities of concern, and then without listing their significant species. **There are no vegetation maps** to provide insight into whether the communities of concern are adequately protected in the management zones.

Appendix 2 of the draft plan contained a summary of the draft Moreton Island fire management strategy ~ five pages of material identifying 6 plant communities, their fire regime requirements, and their distribution. In the management plan reference to fire regimes has become a motherhood statement devoid of information;

“Develop and implement a fire management strategy that takes into account”

An opportunity to place information about fire regimes in the public domain has been missed.

Appendix 3 of the draft plan, a 9 page summary of the pest plant management strategy for Moreton Island in the draft plan is not included in the Management Plan. The draft plan summary contained a tabulated list of weeds, control methods and prioritized their threat to native plant communities. This list was an excellent resource for residents to check to ensure their domestic plants were not a threat to native plant communities. Information in appendix 3 has also been dropped.

The value of the plan as a resource is much diminished due to the absence of the Appendixes that were included in the draft plan.

When is a National Park a National Park?

On page 5 of The Plan the cardinal principal of National Park management is stated;

“The principles for management of a national park are to provide, to the greatest possible extent, for the permanent preservation of the area's natural condition and the protection of the area's cultural values”

This cardinal principle of National Parks management is apparently not enough to provide appropriate protection for areas of special conservation significance in Moreton's National Park. To manage these areas Special Protection Zones are established with their management defined on page 23 as,

“Areas within this zone will be managed

primarily to protect natural or cultural resources.”

Are the National Park areas outside the Special Protection Zone not to be primarily managed to protect natural or cultural resources ?

Camping and vehicle permits can be purchased by credit card anytime

- By phone 13 13 04 (available 24 hours) or
- online www.epa.qld.gov.au

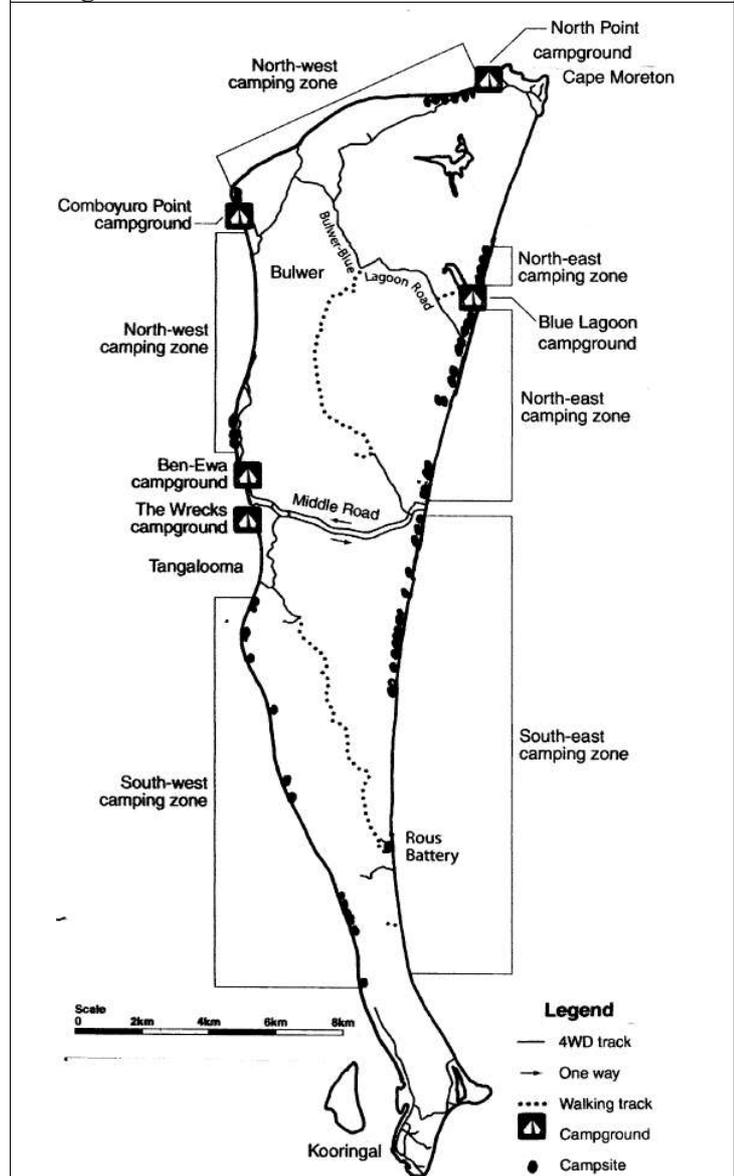
After payment a permit number is issued which you place on a blank EPA tent tag or blank vehicle sticker obtainable at no cost from barge ticket office.

If space is available you can change your camping zone or extend your stay by ringing 13 13 04 anytime.

Camping Permits can only be obtained in person at some EPA offices (office hours only).

Camping Permits can no longer be purchased on Moreton or from the barges.

Vehicle permits can still be purchased from barges.



Camping Zones

Adapted from EPA website map,
Actual campsite locations have not been verified.

Comments on the Management Plan,

by Linda Back.

When I joined MIPC, ten years ago in 1997, the issue of the need for a Management Plan for Moreton was a major concern of the organisation and had been for some time. So it was with considerable relief that I heard that the Draft Management Plan which had been released in January 2004 for public opinion after an exhaustive development process, had finally been approved, with some amendments, and released by the Queensland Government through its Minister for the Environment, Lindy Nelson-Carr. The Moreton Island Management Plan will take effect from 1 July 2007, and its not a moment too soon, as visitation levels to the island have greatly increased over the past few years and the need for a sustainable management strategy for camping and vehicle use is essential.

Two aspects of the plan have particularly interested me; that of the use of quads/trikes and trail bikes in the National Park, Conservation Park and Recreation Areas, and that of the provision of Special Protection Zones where vehicle access is prohibited or restricted for environmental protection or public safety reasons.

In the Draft plan the recommendation was to discontinue the provision of vehicle service permits to quads, trikes and trail bikes to prohibit their use within the National Park, Conservation Park and Recreation Areas. This has been amended in the approved Plan to continue to grant permission for the use of quads, trikes and trail bikes to island landholders and residents only, and with more restrictive conditions, mainly in the permanent cancellation of exemption in the case of infringement of conditions of use. I am pleased that trail bikes are now not permitted to be brought over and used by visitors as, apart from their contribution to noise pollution, it was evident that they were also being habitually taken off the designated tracks and ridden in the National Park over sensitive areas such as the Little and Big Sandhills.

The continuation of permits for residents and landholders to use quads or trikes is in response to a strong lobby from that group, which argues that this mode of transport is more convenient, fuel cost effective, and creates less physical impact on tracks and beaches compared to 4WD vehicles. The ongoing problem of their recreational misuse by a minority, which is having significant detrimental impact on the environment, has been acknowledged by the 'one strike and you're out' infringement penalty which replaces the previous six month ban. Hopefully this will have the desired effect in encouraging responsible behaviour, and the visible highway of tracks over the Big Sandhills can

gradually be obliterated by wind and rain.

As regards the Special Protection Zones, the strategy to limit undue disturbance to shorebirds at Mirrapool Lagoon and the ocean beach area at the Southern end of the Island, is to allow vehicle access only below half tide with a speed limit of 30km/hr. This strategy is to be monitored by the Qld Waders Study Group over a 12 month trial period commencing in July. Members of the QWSG have been gathering baseline data of shorebird numbers over the past year to provide comparative figures. It states in the Plan that if this trial is not successful in reducing disturbance to shorebirds, a seasonal beach closure between, and including, September and April will be introduced subject to the ongoing use of the area as a major high tide shorebird roost. I think it would have been preferable, and in fact more in line with the international respect for this area as an identified significant shorebird habitat, to have enforced the seasonal beach closure initially, rather than allow ongoing vehicle disturbance which inevitably occurs with increased visitor numbers to the island as a whole.

However I applaud the implementation of the Beach Safety Zones, particularly the closure, at all times, to public vehicle traffic on the beaches adjacent to the North Point and Comboyuro Point campgrounds. I believe this will significantly enhance the environmental, scenic and public safety values of these areas which were suffering badly from vehicle overuse. The initial annoyance to regulars, I'm sure, will be soon forgotten, and the peace and natural beauty of these unique places enjoyed by many in years to come. Again, the effectiveness of these restrictions will be monitored and reviewed after 12 months, but I would be very surprised (disappointed?) if they were found to be ineffective.

Linda



Petra watches carpet snake devouring a fruit bat at North Point during Jul 8th 2006 whale watch.

Report on Volunteers at Cape Moreton Information Centre activities

MIPC Cape Volunteers staff the Information centre one weekend a month to provide a personal presence on behalf of EPA at the Information Centre. When time and numbers permit, volunteers also undertake additional voluntary work removing weeds and rubbish from the North Point camp area and other tasks as requested by Rangers. The volunteer's efforts are greatly appreciated

Linda Back

March 16-18 – Linda Back, Annie Cridland, Scott Rimington and Philip Squire.

Long time MIPC members, but new recruits to the Qld Parks & Wildlife volunteer program, Annie and Scott joined me and Philip on our first weekend for the year manning the Information Centre. It was a fairly quiet weekend for visitors after the Christmas and New Year season, with only about fifty people coming through the Centre, giving us a chance to give the place a good clean and organise the office. Ranger Chris Dawe, the current Interpretive Officer, asked if we could do some raking and bagging of Mossman River Grass seeds (prickles) at the North Point campground, which we did in the cooler early morning hours on Sunday. They have been trying to eradicate this pest using various methods of burning and poisoning along with hand pulling (mainly carried out by MIPC members over past years), and I was pleased to note that the infested areas are definitely diminishing. Philip and Scott also spent a couple of hours removing prickly pear plants from North Point.

Linda Bach

April 13 – 15 – Leonie Hegvold, Diane Pahl, Helen Sutherland and Merv Tyler.

On Saturday, Di opened the information centre and Merv, Leonie and I worked at the nursery. Leonie and I secured shade cloth over three tables and helped Merv with tree seedlings. We then sorted out the automatic sprinkler system and pulled weeds. We took turns at the counter over lunch, and then later, Leonie and I checked over the areas previously cleared of prickly pear. We gleaned about half a bag of the weed. There was rain overnight and it appeared that the tank was full when it started raining heavily again in the early morning. The rain initially cancelled planned activities but when it cleared we made a late start for a walk. Leonie stayed back and collected 5 bags of prickly pear, before opening the Centre. We all gave the Centre a good cleaning, dusting out the enclosed cupboard and washing the metal pedestal stands. Over the two days, the centre had a lot of visitors and a few large tours of backpackers and other adults. It was heartening to see two lots of residents from Koorringal make the trip up to see the northern end of their island home.

Helen Sutherland

May 12-13 – Janet Dovers, Sarah LaJeune, Denis Maher, Shona McKeon and Jim Wright.

Weather variability endured at Info Centre on May 11th evening. Cape Moreton hit for 12 hours by strong storm -piercing rain, screaming gales, preventing sleep for some hours. Morning brought a calmer day. The Cape Information Centre was manned from 9.00am – 4.30pm on Saturday, and 9.00am – 2.30pm on Sunday. Four volunteers spent nearly two hours removing prickly pear from the vicinity of the Cape houses. Everyone contributed to a total of 11 hours folding and filling 500 folders with pamphlets. Weeds removed/poisoned at and around North Point camp site included; Pink Periwinkle, Mossman River Grass, umbrella trees, yucca plants, asparagus fern and lantana. Also a 100 odd bottles and cans were retrieved from the undergrowth.

Dennis Maher and Janet Dovers

(Editors note – *the maximum wind gust of 80 kms ESE for Friday 11th May was recorded at 6.56pm*)

Thanks to the commitment of Merv Tyler, the nursery at North Point is now growing out Island sourced stock, ready to plant out in Spring. These plants will provide screening between campsites, and eventually shade.

Linda Back.

MIPC Camp 16-18th Mar 07

Whilst still enjoying the warm weather, the continuing effects of drought were distinct ~water level in Lagoon so low. Strip between water and flora so wide that Michael walked all the way around as if strolling on the beach. Gordon told us that earlier in week he watched S.W. winds so strong; flattening the waves approaching the beach. Ailsa during treks, found Spitfire Creek relatively easier to inspect upstream as surrounding growth less dense than other times. Dennis checked Boulder Bay. Numerous boulders exposed due to nature's effects. High fierce waves swept in around the Cape, subdued as they swing to the Bay. Wave energy still forces water parallel to beach, hitting rocky promontory creating surges along the promontory back to ocean with sand grains suspended in it. Diane B. and Marissa, between plucking Mossman grass popping up along sidetracks, regained composure through painting. Diane's landscapes highlighted by unique suns and moons, Marissa's experimental figureheads in broad stroke style.

Dennis Maher

What's on!!! Ph 3321 1463

July 6-8 Whale watch camp North Point

Aug AGM 18th or 19th August

Sept 21-23 MIPC camp at Blue Lagoon

Oct 6-7 WPSQ camp at Blue Lagoon

July 6-8 Whale watch at North Point

You all know of recent threats made to OUR Humpbacks. Any whale refugees in Moreton Bay will be processed (by paper work) by Marine Rangers. Sent offshore to St Helena Island fed at high tide by Tangalooma, when passage is safe, depending on the time of year, will be escorted by MICat and Combie Trader between twin hulls to North Queensland or Tasmania. Ocean whale chasers entering Moreton Bay will be harpooned from Yellow Patch. We remind you that in the MIPC newsletter Vol 27 Apr-June 2005 we said presciently "hurry to MIPC whale watch to see humpback whales before they are killed".

Great site and facilities. BYO everything.

Cost; Parks camp fee \$9, MICat fare \$45 & share cost of the taxi ~ usually around \$40.

MIPC AGM

To enable members who do not benefit from the Exhibition holiday to attend, the executive has decided to hold the AGM on the week-end following; Either Sat 18th or Sun 19th August on the mainland.

Blue Lagoon Sept 21st to 23rd MIPC

Camp kitchen and marquee tents with stretchers provided. BYO food. Volunteering optional

Departs 6.30pm Friday **Returns** Sun 6pm

MICat terminal Howard Smith Dr, LITTON

Optional tours Sandhill \$10, Cape Moreton \$5

Cost \$85 **Bookings Ph 3321 1463**

Blue Lagoon 5th to 7th October ~WPSQ

Wildlife Preservation Society, Queensland, weekend at Blue Lagoon. Camp kitchen and marquee tents with stretchers provided. BYO food. BBQ is included Saturday evening. Includes tour to Cape Moreton, and Little Sandhills, (Sand tobogganing)

Departs 8.30 am Friday, 6.30 pm Friday.

Returns Sun 6 pm

MICat terminal Howard Smith Dr, LYTTON

Cost \$125

Bookings 0428 783781

Plastic plant pots wanted.

Five inch pots are needed to grow out seedlings from Moreton destined for the North Point camp ground. **Only pots with a 5"/140 mm diameter across the top of the pot can be used.** Merv will sterilize them before they are used. Phone MIPC to arrange collection.

Australia Day cleanup 4th March



MIPC's Australia Day cleanup was supported by Tangalooma resort which provided Ferry to Moreton and 4WD bus transport for the Day.