

MARY RIVER KEEPERS

Issue 1 March 2011

I have decided to put together an informal newsletter to keep our members up to date with things that are happening around the Mary.

- The **Paradise Dam judgement was handed down on Friday 4th March**. The case was dismissed and WBBCC are considering their legal options for appeal. Preliminary readings of the judgements make it clear that there were significant factual errors made. Also unfortunately, the recent flooding wasn't good for our friends trying to survive in Paradise Dam. Roger Curry (Wide Bay Burnett Conservation Council) recently witnessed many turtles and lungfish being smashed to death while being washed over the overflowing dam spillway.
- As everyone knows the old No Dam Centre at Kandanga has become the new and revamped **Save the Mary Museum and River Education Centre**. The Centre still attracts visitors and locals and we need more members and volunteers to help run the Centre. Unfortunately due to flooding concerns the Centre has been closed over the last couple of months but will reopen soon. The STMRCG is working on some innovations to minimise risk of potential flood damage. The phone number remains the same, 5488 4800.
- The STMRCG had its **Annual General Meeting** on 16th Dec 2010. Glenda Pickersgill was returned as President, David Kreutz as Secretary, David Sims as Vice-President and Lyndall Ensbey as Treasurer. The Presidents Report and the proposed calendar of events for 2011 are attached.
- The STMRCG continues with its regular **Committee Meetings** every 3rd Thursday of the month at 7pm at the Save the Mary Museum and River Education Centre. All members are welcome and minutes are available at the Centre if you are interested.
- The draft plan for the **Gympie Regional Council (GRC) Economic Development Strategy and Implementation Plan** has been received and adopted at Council's General meeting on Feb 23rd with a motion moved by Cr Watt and seconded by Cr Petersen *that an addendum be developed by the end of March, based on submissions received by council from residents from the Mary Valley*. The format of this addendum is currently being developed, and will be circulated to stakeholders in the Mary Valley next week. A copy of the draft strategy documents are available - just reply and I will send them to you.
- David Gibson is inquiring about the status of the **proposed new bridge across the Mary River** upstream of Traveston Crossing. The federal government did not call this in as a controlled action under the EPBC Act even though there are likely impacts to endangered species from increased instability of river banks and the design proposed would change the speed of the river in that reach. We are still questioning the economic justification for locating another bridge so close to the existing Traveston Crossing Bridge and particularly now with flood damage to road infrastructure throughout the state, it would seem to be poor use of funds.
- Unfortunately the **recent flooding** resulted in some of the trees that we planted on the banks of the Mary being damaged or washed away. There is always a risk in wet years of this happening and not all were lost. We will continue with tree plantings to help regenerate the banks of the Mary into the future.

- There will be a **Frog Night at Kandanga** on the 11th March. The workshop and survey is being conducted by Eva Ford from MRCCC and promises to be a wonderful night for anyone interested in our little slippery friends. The workshop starts at 5.30pm at the Centre and the survey will go late into the night. BYO some night-time nibblies, water bottles, mossie repellent and wear suitable clothes including covered shoes.
- There have been a large number of the **endangered grey-headed flying foxes** roosting near the Mary at Hynes Estate Rd at Kandanga. Each month the colony is surveyed and the number estimated from the fly-out at dusk. This colony is important for spreading native seed for restoration of riparian rainforest along our streams.
- There has been an application made for a permit for **mine exploration for manganese in the upper Mary Catchment** from Imbil to Conondale. This is the ad on the net and paper (Sunshine Coast Daily)
http://www.dme.qld.gov.au/zone_files/Native_Title_PDF/epm_18741_sunshine_coast.pdf
- With the threat of **coal seam gas coming to the Fraser Coast**, the Greater Mary Association will be screening the film "Gaslands" at the Brolga Theatre, Maryborough on 15th March to inform the public of the environmental risks to the river. Flyer attached.
- Lindsay Titmarsh's exhibition "**Mangroves and Mud**" is on display at the Gympie Gallery until 2nd April. Mangroves are much more intriguing than many of us realised and the photos taken at Tandora shows us the area of wetlands near the mouth of the Mary River and the Susan River.
- The Save the Mary campaign has again been internationally recognised in the **new film "A river runs through us"**, an outcome from the Rivers for Life meeting in Mexico last October. We plan to have a screening soon to continue the focus on why rivers are important to protect. This is very timely given that the Queensland Water Commission is still proposing for more extraction from the Mary River for SEQ water supply.
- The **Mary River Festival** this year is planned for the 12th November at Kandanga Sports Grounds. For those who missed the festival last year – it was a wonderful event to celebrate, and should not be missed in 2011. Helpers are needed – just let us know if you would like to be involved with the organising.
- In recent months there have been an unusually **high number of turtles** found crossing roads in the Mary Valley and neighbouring regions. To reduce injury or death, if you see a turtle and can safely stop, please pick it up and place it off the road on the side it was heading (if possible). Large turtles are best grasped by the shell behind the neck and above the tail and be careful it doesn't bite or scratch you.

Welcome your feedback or suggestions.

Cheers until next time

Carolyn Robins (Membership Co-ordinator) and Glenda Pickersgill (President)

Save the Mary River Coordinating Group

PRESIDENT'S REPORT - Dec 2010

A huge thank-you to all those who continue to be involved with protecting the Mary River! Our mighty river that has had the most extraordinary flows this year and is healthy and bubbling with aquatic life. One year on from Minister Peter Garrett's final NO DAM decision for Traveston Crossing, we still are waiting on the State Government's plans on land use and land sales in the Mary Valley.

Meanwhile the 50 year SEQ Water Strategy has been finalized and although water usage across SEQ councils still remains under 150 L/p/day, we see a high target of 200-230 L/p/day being used and the statement "options to make use of strategic reserve in the Mary Basin will be investigated, including an upgrade of Borumba Dam and water harvesting."

There is still a threat of more inter-basin transfer out of the Mary catchment (the Northern Pipeline Interconnector (NPI) stage 1 takes from Lake Baroon and NPI stage 2 (planned to be completed by end of 2011) would take from Lake McDonald and the Mary River at Coles Crossing).

The draft Mary Basin Resource Operations Plan (ROP) has been released for comment, based on the flawed Water Resource Plan and still showing us that there is no consideration by the state government of the need for fresh water flows to the sea, or to reduce over allocation during the dry months of the year. Once the ROP is finalized, water trading will commence which potentially can take water extraction higher than we have ever experienced before.

Other issues of concern to our group are the proposed Traveston Crossing Dam is still to be removed from state legislation, including the Water Act where it is listed as a drought measure. We are still awaiting the judge's decision on the Paradise Dam court case. Also as a dark cloud on the horizon as a threat to the Mary River and it's Estuary, is the announcement of coal and coal seam gas exploration downstream of Gympie.

The Save the Mary River Coordinating Group continues to be active in putting in submissions to issues that potentially threatened the Mary River. Issues this year have included the 50 year SEQ water strategy, Mary basin draft ROP, proposed new bridge upstream of Traveston Crossing, Orica's explosive's proposal at Moy Pkt Quarry and the draft strategic cropping framework.

Representatives from the Save the Mary River Coordinating Group participated in the Mary Valley Renewal Team and through community meetings, this team produced the Mary Valley Community and Economic Action Plan. Through this process, a vision was defined and a number of strategic areas identified that the communities of the Mary Valley prioritized and action projects were developed. This has been submitted to and given recognition by local and state government.

The Save the Mary River Coordinating Group has been active on a number of environmental projects that are part of the Mary Valley Community and Economic plan, which can be downloaded from the www.maryvalleyrenewal.org website and includes an update from the forum held in Oct 2010. A huge effort has been put in to set up the Save the Mary Museum and River Education Centre near the Kandanga Railway for locals, visitors and school excursions. Special thanks to all our volunteers involved in making that happen and who continue to greet our visitors. This is a wonderful tribute to all those who fought so hard to overturn the decision to dam the Mary River at Traveston Crossing and a help to attract visitors to our Mary Valley.

Successful events held during the year were the opening of the Museum and River Education centre, the Kandanga Horse Ride, the anniversary floatilla, 3 tree planting days for the Shade for Mary – Stream Bank Blitz project and the Mary River Fun Day at Les and Heather Hall's property at Kybong. We were

successful in bringing the annual Mary River Festival out to Kandanga and worked with the Cooloola Arts Council to make this event a wonderful opportunity to meet up with people from throughout the Mary River catchment and celebrate our victory for the river.

We have been fortunate to secure some recycled timber from the Goomong Bridge and plan to progress with Friends of Kandanga, a creek walk in Kandanga with platypus and turtle viewing platforms. A grant submission has been put in to Nestle's environmental program fund with Marc Bright from Bushskills for Country – Eco Media to hopefully further that proposal.

We are seeing a number of other great environmental initiatives progressing in the Mary Valley. On a federal level, progress is being made on the regional species recovery plan for threatened aquatic species with a recovery team formed and Mary River Catchment Coordinating Committee is involve for technical advice and to contact landholders. **A draft plan is scheduled for May 2011.**

On an international level, Steve Burgess and myself shared learning's from the Save the Mary campaign at the Rivers for Life meeting in Mexico which was attended by 300 delegates from 52 countries. I also attended the international River Symposium in Perth and presented 2 papers, the Art of Protest (co-authored with Zela Bissett) and Mary Estuary Flows (co-authored with Tanzi Smith). Both these events are now up on the web with our contributions of papers and audio tapes.

Our websites are still being maintained and provide a detailed archive of information that other campaigns are accessing for ideas and inspiration.

I encourage everyone to renew membership and invite new members in the new year as there is much work still to do to make sure that another dam is not announced again, to ensure the Mary River runs healthy, runs free and is protected for future generations to enjoy.

Glenda Pickersgill, President Save the Mary River Coordinating Group 0411443589



Proposed Calendar of Events for 2011

Jan 14 th	Flying Fox flyout
Jan 20 th	Jan committee meeting
Feb 17 th	Feb committee meeting
Feb 22 nd	"Mangroves and Mud" Exhibition at Gympie (ends 2 April)
Mar 11 th	Frog Night
Mar 15 th	Film night at Maryborough 'Gaslands'
Mar 17 th	Mar committee meeting
Apr 21 st	Apr committee meeting
Apr 30 th	Apr Anniversary paddle and tree planting at Traveston Crossing
May 19 th	May committee meeting
May 28 th	Walk along Kandanga Creek to the Mary River.
June 16 th	June committee meeting
July 21 st	July committee meeting
Aug 18 th	Aug committee meeting
Sep 4 th	Tree planting at Platypus Platform at Kandanga
Sep 15 th	Sep committee meeting
Oct 8 th	Kandanga 1000 horse ride
Oct 20 th	Oct committee meeting
Oct 22 nd	Mary River Fun Day
Nov 11 th	Celebratory swim at Traveston Crossing and dinner at Kandanga Pub
Nov 12 th	Mary River Festival
Nov 17 th	Nov committee meeting
Dec 15 th	2011 AGM and Christmas windup

Any other suggestions/queries please contact the Save the Mary Museum and River Education Centre on 5488 4800 or Glenda Pickersgill on 011 443 589