

Case Study – Small’s Creek Landcare Group ‘The River Walk’

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BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Small’s Creek Landcare group is recognised for the landholders ‘River Walk’ down the Jackie Smalls Creek and the Nogo River systems in attempt to control the spread of noxious weeds.

Small’s Creek Landcare group is situated in the Burnett Catchment, located in the western area of Eidsvold Shire. The 15 landholders involved in Small’s Landcare Group have developed a very successful ‘hands on approach’ to coordinate their efforts and sharing of resources to control noxious weeds within their catchment.

The landholders have been a working together since 1996 as a landholder action group, only recently formed as a Landcare group and formally endorsed by the Department of Natural Resources in 1999.

Small’s Creek Objectives include:

1. Initially to control the spread of Mother of Millions and Parthenium from the river and creek banks, roadsides and access tracks into properties.
2. Encourage community to use wash down facilities to stop the spread of noxious weeds to neighbouring properties.
3. Encourage and support landholders to eradicate noxious weed outbreaks within individual property
4. Monitor waterways and properties for other invasive weeds spreading into the Catchment and Shire areas.

PROCESS USED FOR DEVELOPING PARTNERSHIPS

- Identified all properties or neighbouring properties within the Jackie Smalls Creek and Nogo River
- Initial meeting with neighbouring landholders within the Jackie Smalls Creek and Nogo River
- Landholders undertaken river walk to assess the area effected by noxious weeds
- Landholders negotiated with Eidsvold Shire Council on the level of support and assistance available to control noxious weeds.
- Local Government offered inkind support of spraying equipment, Weeds officer technical assistance and labour.
- Landholders initiated on-ground action by walking the catchments and spraying all Mother of Millions and Parthenium from the priority areas (river and creek banks, access tracks, roadsides etc).
- Landholders developed a roster system to ensure all landholders equally participated in project i.e. labour, chemical costs etc.

- Landholders initiated the development of a Landcare group to seek addition support and technical assistance from government agencies.
- Small’s Landcare group submitted funding applications to seek financial assistance to offer incentives and subsidise chemical costs incurred by landholders.
- Landholders meet once every 6 weeks to walk the river for follow up spraying and monitoring of outbreaks.



BARRIERS

- Small’s Creek Landcare Group is located in the Eidsvold Shire area of the inland Burnett, very remote and isolated from other major centres
- Landholders have been faced with major dry periods and harsh conditions over the past 10 years. Therefore a major decline in income and profit from the land.
- Limited funding and resources for landholders or incentives or subsidies to encourage greater efforts towards weed management on freehold and leasehold land.
- Lack of expertises in project management, marketing, communication and administration
- Lack of communication and feedback from research institutes on new chemicals, grazing practices, and farm management practices to encourage landholders to trial new practices.

WHAT WERE THE OUTPUTS / OUTCOMES

The Small's Creek Landcare have a strong emphasis towards ON-GROUND ACTION.

- The most significant outcome of this project is 60 'River Walks' undertaken by the landholders of Jackie Small's Creek and the Nogo River. The length of the Jackie Small's Ck is 76km and the Nogo River 32km. Therefore the landholders have walked a total of 6,480 kilometres over 5 years.
- Total voluntary hours of 4050 hours over 5 years, total inkind contribution of \$60,750 from landholders
- Local Government provides inkind assistance and labour to every 'River Walk' undertaken by the Small's Creek Landcare group. Including spraying equipment, bulldozer to build access tracks to the creeks and river, and a technical Weeds officer.
- All landholders involved are volunteers that live within the Smalls Creek and Nogo River Catchment areas.
- Small's Creek Landcare group was successful in receiving a \$690 grant from Dow AgriScience to contribute to the cost of purchasing chemical to spray Mother of Millions and Parthenium.
- Small's Creek Landcare group has also been successful in receiving a \$1000 grant from BP Australia.
- Small's Creek Landcare group has hosted several weed identification and control field days. Coordinated researches and technical staff bus trips throughout the Eidsvold and Mundubbera Shires looking at African Love grass and Parthenium trials.
- Greater awareness from the wider community has inspired the group to provide displays at local show days, cattle sales, hardware stores and local schools to encourage community members to monitor noxious weed outbreaks within the catchments.
- Eidsvold State School has participated in Weed Buster Week by integrating classroom-based activities and programs to look at local issues effecting production systems in the Burnett Catchment.
- Year 10 Art students from Kingston High School - Brisbane painted Small's Creek Landcare group banner, which they have since used at public field days.
- Project update published monthly in the Councils newsletter, which is delivered to each landholder in the Eidsvold Shire.

IMPLEMENTATION OF BURNETT CATCHMENT STRATEGY

Small's Creek Landcare group is targeting priority weeds and actions identified within the Eidsvold Shire Pest Management Plans and the Burnett Catchment Strategy. Control and management of noxious and environmental weeds within the Catchment will improve the long term

sustainability of production systems and protect areas of significant importance within the Burnett Catchment.

WHY DID IT WORK?

- Landholder ownership of the project - local project focusing on local issues
- Equal input from all landholders who have ownership of property in the Jackie Smalls Creek and Nogo River Catchment areas
- Greater emphasis on ON-GROUND activities
- Coordinated approach between landholders and Local Government
- Well planned, strategic approach for controlling noxious weeds – starting at the head of the waterway and working down the catchment
- Continuous walks and follow up spraying has controlled the spread of noxious weeds down the waterways
- Project well publicised through local government newsletters and Small's Creek Landcare attendance form for landholders to register their level of involvement for each river walk.

OTHER PARTICIPANTS VIEW OF THEIR PARTNERSHIP

The strong partnership developed between Eidsvold Shire Council and the participating landholders of Small's Creek Landcare group has contributed to the success of this project. The strategic approach undertaken by the group will control the spread of noxious weeds such as Mother of Millions and Parthenium within the catchment areas. Therefore improving the economic viability and long-term sustainability of grazing systems in the Burnett.

DOING IT DIFFERENTLY

- To take a more integrated approach towards involving the wider community, industry and schools in River Walks.
- Greater publicity and recognition of the landholders that have provided outstanding commitment to the project and gone beyond the normal expectation to ensure that catchment is managed and protected for future generations.

CONTACTS

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