

SIMO was formed in 1978 by concerned island residents and visitors. SIMO members wish to ensure that Stradbroke Island's special environment and character are retained through wise development into the future.

Autumn 2007

Newsletter

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Update on the Ibis 'dune' Evaluation Notice

In the previous SIMO Newsletter we reported that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) had reissued an amended Notice to CRL to conduct an Environmental Evaluation regarding a post-mine landform constructed across a valley at the Ibis mine.

SIMO received the Final Evaluation Notice Report from CRL in March 2007. SIMO disputes its key finding: 'there is no evidence of actual or potential serious or material environmental harm attributable to the Ibis Dune.' SIMO continues to maintain that the Ibis 'dune' landform constructed across Mungaree valley is not a natural landscape feature of North Stradbroke Island.

The valleys and parabolic dunes along the east coast of the island have been formed by prevailing south-east winds over thousands of years. Mining operations destroy these ancient landforms; and the minimal restoration measure the EPA should force CRL to make is to reconstruct the post-mine landscape to follow the natural pre-existing landform as closely as possible. CRL has not even attempted this, constructing a foreign landform at 90 degrees to the existing dunes.

CRL admits in the Report that the Ibis dune does not compare to the pre-mine landscape: 'it is not natural due to the difference in height, slope and aspect'.

CRL constantly claims that other landforms on the island are similar to the Ibis 'dune' – implying that the anomalous dune has the same potential for rehabilitation as a self-sustaining eco-system. But the claim is not correct. There is no other valley with a perpendicular dune forming an H-shaped landform. When pressed in a recent Working Group Meeting with stakeholders to point to a similar landform on the island, CRL could not locate one.

If the EPA accepts the contents of the Report, SIMO fears this would set a dangerous precedent and allow CRL to create other post-mine landforms that disregard the pre-mine landscape, on the basis of what is economically good for the company rather than what is environmentally sound for the island.

The EPA has extended the time for a decision on the Report until 2 June 2007 to coincide with the finalisation of the rehabilitation criteria. This Newsletter has already been delayed enough waiting on decision dates which keep being extended, so we will send out a newsheet to update SIMO members of these important matters.

Jennie Truman

The SIMO AGM will be held Saturday 18 August at 10am at the Hall, Point Lookout. Guest speaker Darren Burns Indigenous Ranger on what his work entails

Wildlife Encounters

10.12.2007 Last of the HUMPBACK WHALES migrating back south to feed.

January 2007 Usually see heaps of MANTA RAYS in Frenchmans Bay and



LEOPARD SHARKS in the surf at Main this time of the year. Both have been scarce.



It is still not known where these creatures go when they leave our waters.

February 2007

Thousands of SALPS (*Thalia democratica*) washed up on Frenchmans and Deadmans. These are planktonic Tunicates with a translucent oval-shaped body about 25mm long and a brown spot at one end. Swarms are common along the east coast in autumn and spring.

18.3.2007 Hundreds of sub-adult HORN-EYED GHOST CRABS (*Oxyphodops ceratophthalma*) washed up on Frenchmans. Silver Gulls were lined up along the beach feeding on them.

15.4.2007 Large school of PILCHARDS cornered in South Gorge by WHALER SHARKS – too many to count. Most sharks were over 3 metres long. They were beaching themselves on the shore as they were gorging Spanish mackerel, School mackerel, Mackerel tuna, and large Turrum were all for the action. Many lures and tackle were lost by hopeful fishermen. There were large crowds taking in the spectacle from the headlands.

Jennie Truman

Fires on Stradbroke

In mid-March Natural Resources conducted four days of hazard-reduction burns in the areas between Tramican Street and Fishermen's Road, and between Beehive Road and the Bark Hill Track. The conditions were very dry with light easterly winds (which blanketed Brisbane in smoke) and temperatures in excess of 30C degrees, which led to very hot fires consuming all the under-storey vegetation and causing fire damage up into many of the large trees, leaving the forest looking like a summer bush fire had been through, not the mosaic pattern of burnt and unburnt under-storey normally seen after a cool fire conducted in winter.

An example of the intensity of these fires is evident at the top of Bark Hill, which is covered in a rich vine forest. This type of forest is cool and damp and never burns well, but this fire decimated the entire vine thicket. Any koalas, which regularly use all of these areas, would have had little chance of survival.



Luck was on Natural Resource's side as the fires burnt from Monday through to Saturday, then on Sunday night light rain preceded a strong southerly front with wind gusts of over 40 knots which stopped the barges running the next day. If this front had come two days earlier, the results could have been disastrous.

I consider burning at this time of year reckless at best, environmental vandalism at worst. These burns were conducted at this time only because resources were available, and not because conditions were right. Stradbroke deserves better fire management than this.

Gary North



Horn-eyed Ghost Crab can exceed 40mm across
dark maroon on lower shell
'H' marking on lower back.

Wildlife encounters

2006/2007 Turtle nesting season

Eight nests this season: three on Flinders, one on Frenchmans, and four on Main Beach. One GREEN turtle and the rest were LOGGERHEADS. Most nests looked like they survived the big tides of January except for one on Flinders which probably flooded.

It is interesting to note that South Stradbroke Island recorded one Loggerhead nest.

Moreton Island rangers say they saw at least 40 nests on both sides of the island. They do not have anyone doing any monitoring.

Jennie Truman

Turtle tracks



Selling the sand CRL considers 'waste'

Our thanks to many SIMO members who submitted responses in March to CRL about its scheme to sell sand 'left over' from mining operations to the mainland for construction purposes.

It is of extreme concern that CRL proposes to export the island's sand. CRL's assurance that this proposal 'uses excess sand from the mining operation' is misleading and incorrect. There is no such thing as excess sand, just sand that is stacked in the wrong place rather than restored to its pre-mine location and formation. The sand cannot be considered as 'waste' because it is necessary to re-form the pre-mine dune system properly.

According to CRL, truck movements along Mallon Street into Dunwich will 'double' in Stage One. SIMO believes that these truck movements in fact could quadruple when taking into account the relocation of the truck route from Yarraman mine along the Tazi Road.'

CRL says this proposal will benefit the island economy. SIMO asks, what are the benefits to islanders in terms of health, safety, amenity, as well as economic, environmental, social, and cultural wellbeing? How will the island's ecosystems be affected by the exportation of sand? If CRL is permitted to export sand from the island, effectively the island becomes a quarry: How would the current conditions of the Environmental Authority determining sand mining operations change in relation to an extractive sand industry? Are there comparable rehabilitation conditions attached to an extractive sand industry? If so, how do they compare with the current EA's conditions? How does CRL intend to address increased noise and dust pollution for Dunwich residents, as well as impaired road safety? How is this application to export sand affected by the current Native Title land claim? Is there a limit to the amount of sand to be extracted and exported, or does CRL see this resource as unlimited? For how long would extraction of sand be undertaken? Where is the Environmental Impact Study?

As yet, SIMO has not received any response from CRL on these significant concerns. *Jackie Cooper*

Vale Alison Drake

Alison Sybil Drake had a deep-seated love and attachment for Stradbroke Island. Sadly she passed away on 27 April after a long and active life. Alison inherited her love for the island from her father, Romeo Lahey, who, with other far-sighted people, lobbied to create a National Park over the NSW/Queensland border ranges. On a clear day these mountains can be seen from Point Lookout.

During the war, Alison married Cdr Tom Drake of the United States Navy. In 1946 she left Brisbane for the USA as a war bride. Alison and Tom's son David and daughter Elinor in turn came to share their parents' love for Stradbroke, Elinor now making it her home.

The Drake family have always fought to preserve Stradbroke's special qualities and have been extremely generous in fund-raising and donations to help SIMO act to achieve these goals of preserving and managing the island's special resources. The family fought the issue of the proposed bridge from the mainland to the island, and also the destruction of significant environmental values by the sand mining industry.

Alison was a keen potter. Her ceramics remain as a tangible reminder of her. Future generations will surely benefit from Alison's efforts to retain the magic of Stradbroke. *Ellie Durbidge*

Water snippets

'The Next Source – Stradbroke Island', a document commissioned by Redland Shire Council, written by John Wilson & Partners, Consulting Engineers – in **1984** – made the following predictions:

Population projections for Redland Shire for year 2009

Without bridge to North Stradbroke Island – 131,800 (North Stradbroke population – 11,000)

With bridge to North Stradbroke Island – 171,700 (North Stradbroke Island – 43,000)

Aside from today's population of North Stradbroke Island being around 3000, these overall predictions are fairly close, with the current Redland Shire Corporate Plan recording the Shire's population in 2004 at 127,777, and predicted growth of 1.6%

Shire average daily water consumption

1974 – 8 ML/d
1984 – 23 ML/d

In 1984 it was predicted that Redland Shire's daily consumption for 2006 would be a whopping 84.5 ML/d. Luckily this turned out to be way off the mark, with current average daily use at 35 ML/d, most of it drawn from North Stradbroke Island.

Redland Shire remains on level 2 restrictions. The State Government in May 2007 included Redlands among the drought-declared districts of South-East Queensland.

Moreton Bay Marine Park Zoning Plan Review

The natural beauty that is Moreton Bay is increasingly under pressure from competing interests. The Bay sustains a vast number of significant marine and aquatic species, provides a playground for the burgeoning population of South East Queensland, and is the resource for both commercial and recreational fishers.

In order to manage these competing interests, The Marine Parks (Moreton Bay) Zoning Plan 1997 was devised. This Plan dissected Moreton Bay into three zones (General, Conservation, Protection) which reflected the needs of the competing users of the time. A relatively small area was designated as Protection or 'green zone' to conserve the Park's most environmentally significant sites. The Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service uses this plan to monitor and police the condition and usage of the Bay.

This plan has run its course and a new plan is required that reflects the changes of the last ten years and can respond to future needs. Stage One involves public consultation and **this is your chance to inform the process!** You can do this by completing a short survey online at <http://www.epa.qld.gov.au> (and follow the links). There will also be opportunities through public consultation forums, mailouts, public displays and workshops.

It is critically important that we all take time to inform this process by having our say. Public pressure prevented the recent highly destructive fish farm proposal. We need to be vigilant and to advocate for the Bay's natural inhabitants which include:

- > dugongs – Moreton Bay is home for one of the most significant remaining herds in Queensland
- > seagrass meadows (which support both dugongs and other marine species and the commercial and recreational fishers. They also provide 105 tonnes of carbon per day (Qld Museum, 1998)
- > turtles and sharks – need safe havens to breed, to avoid trawler and net fishing by-catch mortality and propeller strikes
- > dolphins and whales
- > corals – acknowledged as biogeographically distinct to Moreton Bay

> migratory birds – Moreton Bay is acknowledged as internationally significant through its listing as a Ramsar site and this habitat needs to be preserved

Moreton Bay's rich environmentally diverse ecosystem is in danger of being 'loved to death', so please take the time to have your say on behalf of future generations of both marine species and people.

For further information, visit the EPA website or phone Gail on 3409 7158. *Gail Bell*

Water Action Group latest

The NSI Water Action Group met Infrastructure Minister Anna Bligh in February. She gave an assurance that the additional 22ML/day RSC proposes to sell to the SEQ Water Grid by 2008 would not be tapped unless it could be scientifically proved that the amount was sustainable. This would take several years to properly ascertain.

Meanwhile, agents for RSC applied to the Federal Government for permission to instal the additional 14 bores and pipeline that would be needed to supply the water grid. WAG and many SIMO and FOSI members submitted appeals to the Commonwealth to have the proposal considered a controlled action under the Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act. We are pleased to report the recent decision that the proposal requires approval before it can proceed. The project is 'likely to have significant impact on wetlands of international importance...listed threatened species and communities...[and] listed migratory species'.

SIMO 20 years ago

It was easy to find out what SIMO was doing in 1987, because Ellie Durbidge has archived the SIMO correspondence in the Dunwich Museum. The issues back then were the bridge proposal shelved; storm-water being directed onto the beaches; the new Town Plan; starting a Museum; more National Parks; keeping the public access beside Anchorage Village open; dumping of oil by mining company; Norm's seat; proposed pumping from Eighteen Mile Swamp by Redland Shire Council; sand-mining operations – the new Green Paper on the Mining Act 1968-86 and Mining Regulations 1979; and an environmental park for Southern Moreton Bay.

All these are significant but two are mentioned here.

SIMO's National Parks proposal, discussed at a deputation to National Parks Minister, Geoff Muntz, in March 1987 had 'now been cleared by the Department of Mines', and Minister Muntz was 'looking forward to proceeding with the proposal as soon as possible'. SIMO wrote in reply, 29.4.1987: 'We thank you for your letter bearing the heartening news that you have initiated a move to promote a park proposal over the Welsby lagoons-Flinders swamp area, North Stradbroke Is.' But it was not to be. Perhaps we'll try again after the Native Title Claim has been resolved.

SIMO had success, though, in February 1987, in gaining permission from RSC to store 'potential museum items' in the Annex (now Library) at the Point Lookout Hall. This was the beginning of the Dunwich Museum, which will celebrate its 20th Anniversary this year, on 1 June at the Museum.

Of the current Committee members, five were on the SIMO Committee 20 years ago. *Fran Quinn*

Proposed development of a car park and bus turnaround at Cylinder Beach and foreshore, approved by RSC

The proposal to build a bus turnaround and car park on Cylinder Beach became known to the island community in late 2002 when the RSC announced an all-day community consultation workshop that over 140 locals attended. The overwhelming view of the community was to reduce car parking on the beach, discourage large tour coaches, make the area pedestrian-friendly and extend/restore the wetlands and provide passive recreational amenities.

In 2003 a Cylinder Beach master plan was displayed for comment. Contrary to community views, the master plan was based on a large bus turnaround and car parking extending to the end of the beach, following a design produced *prior* to the community consultation process. Having ignored the clear expression of the community's views, RSC refused to enter into further consultation or debate.

The obvious bad faith of RSC was met by disbelief. A rally was organised by Quandamooka Traditional Owners, Stradbroke Island Management Organisation, Friends Of Stradbroke Island and Point Lookout Boardriders on 4 January 2004 to protest against turning Cylinder into a concrete disaster area. Over 400 people rallied, despite a tropical downpour. A petition to save the beach, with more than 1000 signatures, was handed to the RSC (receipted); there has been no further response to it.

The current situation is that this development plan has been scaled down by RSC. However, the issue of allowing parking on the beach remains contentious with the community which continues to attend public meetings with Division 1 Councillor Craig Ogilvie. The preferred community option remains unchanged: no development.



On 27 February 2004 the Point Lookout Foreshore (Place ID 602261) – of which Cylinder Beach is part – was entered into the Heritage Register under the Queensland Heritage Act 1992. The application for this entry was made in January 2001. This is the 1884 Reserve 1781. The entry deems it a place of cultural significance having satisfied four of the criteria specified in the Act. And thus, no action, development or impact on the natural environment can take place unless approved by the Heritage Council.

To this end the RSC entered into an INFORMATION PERIOD with the Heritage Council (May 2006 to May 2007) with regard to the development of the car park on Cylinder Beach. However, the RSC did not respond to this request in the allotted time.

In 2003 SIMO and FOSI trialed a small shuttle bus service to take residents and visitors around the Point Lookout township during the annual influx over Christmas and Easter holidays. Eventually, the RSC came on board to fund this extremely successful program, with Cr Ogilvie's wish that it continue.

Do we detect a contradiction in this sensible rationale, where a car park on Cylinder Beach is overshadowed by a popular shuttle bus service which drops off passengers above the beach, affording them the real pleasure of strolling down to the surf? *Susan Martin* 5