



Newsletter

Issue 9 August 2014

**The good news - Fogg Dam has a Weed Harvester!
It's a great story of community support.**



Weed Harvester launching at Fogg Dam



OPENING WATER AT FOGG DAM

Long term Territorians and Friends of Fogg Dam members express disappointment at the small amount of open water in the dam as floating sedges of growth increasingly cover the dam. A study by Charles Darwin University (CDU) in 2010¹ concluded that, if the area of open water continues to decline at the same average rate as it has between 1993 and 2005, there may be no open water in the dam by 2021. Complete closure could occur sooner if more recent rates persist. It recommends that, *“Conservation and restoration of open water areas at Fogg Dam will require active management in the form of an on-going disturbance regime that will reduce vegetation biomass and change its structure.”*

The Weed Harvester will play an important part of this ongoing disturbance regime. It's a second hand machine, capable of removing and transporting approximately 200 cubic metres of vegetation per day without requiring land based equipment. Parks staff at Fogg Dam estimate approximately 300,000 square metres of floating vegetation mat needs to be harvested from the dam. The vegetation removed will be stockpiled on three islands in the dam and burned at appropriate times.

After several weeks of trial, the harvester has been taken to the Fogg Dam Ranger station to upgrade some of its operating systems.

¹ Alice CM Leppitt, Donald C Franklin (2012) Possible ecosystem engineering to regulate depth by a clonal sedge encroaching on a tropical freshwater wetland. *Wetlands Ecology & Management*, Vol.20; 4; 341-352. doi: 10.1007/s11273-012-9257-3



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The weed harvester with a trailer for transport was previously owned by Palmerston Council and used to keep lagoons in the area clear. It was replaced by a smaller, more transportable Truxor machine. The weed harvester with trailer was sold by auction on the internet to a Victorian business – but they were only interested in the trailer and wanted to sell the 6 ton harvester locally.

See the weed harvester in action at:

- www.youtube.com/watch?v=geyQyzFwmi8

MAJOR SPONSORS

With approval from the **Adelaide River Parks Joint Management Committee** the weed harvester was purchased by **Parks & Wildlife with Friends of Fog Dam (FOFD)** and a grant from **Coolalinga Bendigo Bank**. As the machine was second hand and hadn't been in use for a year it needed to be checked out and modifications made to make it suitable to remain in the water long term. Without a trailer, alternative transportation had to be organised. **Shorelands Group** generously donated transportation and launched the machine into the dam. The 2010 **Charles Darwin University (CDU)** study of aquatic vegetation in Fog Dam is a valuable reference for developing a management plan for the dam. **Norsign** kindly donated production of sponsor logos to be attached to the harvester.



**PARKS AND
WILDLIFE
COMMISSION NT**



**ADELAIDE
RIVER PARKS
Joint Management
Committee**



SHORELANDS





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MORE COMMUNITY SPONSORS

A number of other sponsors have contributed to the Weed Harvester project.

- Shade & Play provided shadecloth to give sun protection for operators.
- In & Outboard Marine provided a seat for the operator.
- Top End Windscreens provided a front screen to protect operators from flying debris.
- ITS Communications installed a UHF radio programmed to Parks frequencies.
- Outback Batteries provided a solar panel to maintain the battery and bilge pumps.
- NTAP supplied synthetic nylon blocks for effective action of the front cutters of the harvester.
- Complete Vision photographed the weed harvester with drone technology.
- Dudley Design prepared the video of the photography including acknowledgement of sponsors.

A huge thank you to all sponsors. Please show your appreciation by supporting them.

EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING

The story gets better. Parks have negotiated with the Department of Corrections for low security prisoners to operate the weed harvester to give them experience and skills for potential employment in the future. To further enhance this, CDU is providing study units in various qualifications at Certificate 3 level. A win, win situation!



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BURNING PROGRAM

The CDU study states that, “Conservation and restoration of open water areas at Fogg Dam will require active management in the form of an on-going disturbance regime that will reduce vegetation biomass and change its structure.”² Options suggested for disturbance include flushing, deepening, grazing, mechanical harvesting and burning.

In line with the above and to protect assets including the Woodlands boardwalk, **Parks with the local fire brigade plan to burn vegetation on Fogg Dam early in September.** As this area has not burned for 10 years or more it will be a large fire - but it is to benefit the dam and is part of the overall management plan.



² Op.cit. p 349.



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NATIONAL LANDCARE PEOPLE'S CHOICE AWARD

Please vote for FOFD at www.landcareonline.com.au

on the top right is a rotating sign - click on the blue '2014 National Landcare People's Choice Award.' FOFD are in category 9 'Qantas Landcare Innovative Community Group Award.

Entries close on 17 September.

You can check our achievements at:

www.foggdamfriends.org

QANTAS INNOVATIVE COMMUNITY GROUP AWARD

In November last year FOFD won the Qantas Innovative Community Group Award for the NT. In September a national award will be given to one of the State or Territory winners.

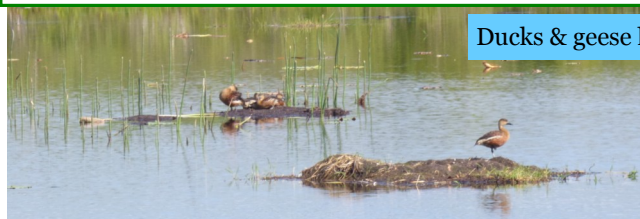


Harvested weed stockpiled within the dam

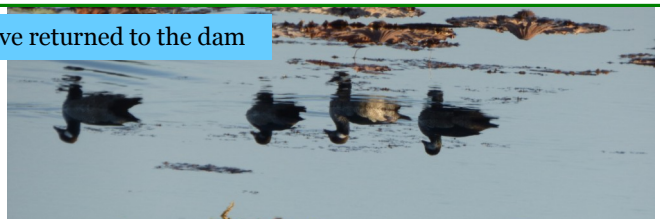


AGM

The date for our Annual General Meeting is Sunday 5 October. We want to continue working for improvements at Fog Dam but to do so we need a new treasurer because our wonderful treasurer, Leisa Baldwin has moved to Queensland. For more information please email info@foggdamfriends.org. New committee members are also welcome.



Ducks & geese have returned to the dam



Have you visited our new website? www.foggdamfriends.org

Please LIKE our Fog Dam Friends Facebook page, add reports and photos.

Find our Google+ page at:

<https://plus.google.com/u/0/communities/103253209179664999529>