

Upper Dawson WPSQ Newsletter February 2020 – Ann Hobson, Secretary

Hard to believe – the brown is in the water, not the air!

Sadly, not everyone got the really good falls, and wonderful for those who did. Then yesterday the dust blew in again from the west to irritate the eyes and blanket out the hills – a tiny reminder of what we lived through for so many months. Here it drizzled gently last night while others had a downpour and flooding. Erratic, but a great change from hot and dry.



I'm told the Mother of Millions is multiplying mightily. Let's hope the citrus mite is doing the same. It suppresses growth and flowering, but may not kill the plant. These tiny creatures can be detected by shaking a plant over a piece of white paper and using a magnifying glass to see them. To bring thrips to a healthy plant, dig up an infected one and scoop up a bit of soil from under it to put around the base of the new plant. As a holding measure, and *not in dry grass or during fire bans*, and before it flowers, a young plant may be burned with a flame-thrower to break through the 'skin', after which it will disintegrate. Of course, it only has to drop one of its myriad of tiny leaflets to be off and going again. After flowering, it is much harder to treat, and seeds may also spread the infestation. Queensland Department Agriculture and Fisheries has further advice. Or ask Google, "How do I get rid of Mother of Millions?"

Our meeting was surprised to learn that there have not (scientofficially) been any platypus in the Dawson River until Adam and Jason squeezed the cleanest Dawson Water they could find through filters to collect the DNA samples that prove beyond all *unreasonable* doubt that they are in the Dawson. This means that we can now (scientofficially) try to protect them from various forms of harm, for instance by making our yabby traps so they can't get caught in them and drown. The Branch is considering seeking partnerships from Shire and resource companies interested in identifying with this iconic animal in order understand the full range of the species and help fund the rather expensive testing that follows when the filters are sent to the laboratory.

Our meeting was not surprised to find that the questions we asked the CTSCo team at our meeting with them last year, didn't give us much comfort, though they had assured us that, if approved, their trial wouldn't put any more than 180,000 tonnes of CO2 into the Precipice Aquifer at Glenhaven. That doesn't automatically mean that no other company will piggy back off their testing and try injecting more. If they move their testing somewhere further south where the Precipice is so deep and saline that it isn't being accessed for bore water, that won't necessarily be the last we see of Carbon Storage. Sure, any new venture will have to jump through the same regulatory hoops to get approval as CTSCo has had to do to carry out its approved trial.

Our project officer has asked to be informed when applications for environmental approvals are being made, and has made us aware that only the direct environmental impact of the projects will be of interest to us. It is not our intention to identify other environmental concerns that might put unrelated demands on land owners.

The last major ooline flowering some years ago was not followed by rain, so the hope that the flowering will predict good rain isn't entirely reliable. Hopefully this time the flowering should pay off, and it could be a good time to try to strike some seed.

Our meeting considered if the recent terrible fires nation-wide could have been prevented or managed better, and we were concerned that fear of fire might prevent fuel-reduction burns in cool weather, and so allow the build up of fuel that could be very dangerous in a season like the one we've just been through.

We are thankful for the work of our local National Parks team in developing a fire management plan that has significantly reduced the damage and extent of wildfires in and around the Isla and Expedition National Parks. We are also well aware that more staff, resources, and trained fire managers are needed for fire prevention either by controlled low impact grazing or by 'cool' fuel-reduction burns during the ever-shrinking 'safe' season for managed burning. National Parks and their neighbours need to be well staffed, supported and funded in order to be better prepared for the excessively hot, dry weather and 'dry' lightning.

The Branch is always open to enquiries and information about local wildlife.

Contact us on upperdawson@wildlife.org.au or 0427 504 560.

