



# Newsletter

Issue 11 June 2015

## Open Water Project — Weed Harvester officially launched by Minister Bess Price

The weed harvester was officially launched by Minister Bess Price on 20 April 2015. About 30 people attended including Kezia Purick, Member for Goyder, Gerry Wood, Member for Nelson, Professor Clare Martin from Charles Darwin University and some sponsors. Wulna Traditional Owners, Joan Kenyon with her granddaughter Terizma Kenyon 'welcomed guests to their country.' A very nice touch was Minister Price inviting Terizma Kenyon to assist her cutting the ribbon for the launch.



The harvester was purchased to be an important tool in a managed disturbance regime to prevent the dam becoming completely covered with aquatic vegetation, as recommended in a study by Charles Darwin University in 2010. It's excellent clearing *Eliocharis* but challenged in areas where weed mat weighs over 100kg per square metre.



With assistance from other equipment for difficult areas, the harvester has cleared 6,000 to 7,000 square metres of an estimated 300,000 square metres vegetation along the causeway and lookouts. The Woodland to Water Lily boardwalk, to be re-opened later this year, now has clear water beside it. Although small in total, the area of opened water has made a huge visual difference and the number of birds on the dam has increased. We understand there were more migratory birds in early days of the dam. We're trying to obtain early birding data for the dam and monthly bird counts have commenced to monitor birdlife, thanks to Lyn and Brian Reid.

Open water once more: Waterlily lookout 20 April 2015







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A considerable amount of work has been undertaken to improve OH&S for the harvester to operate in the Fogg Dam environment.

The dam Open Water Project has strong community support and we've been overwhelmed by the generous local business assistance to rescue the dam, viz:

**Bendigo Bank, Coolalinga Branch & Districts** gave Friends of Fogg Dam Inc. (FOFD) a grant of \$5,000 for purchase of the harvester with Parks & Wildlife Commission. **Shorelands** transported the harvester to the dam with prime movers and cranes on two occasions at no cost. **Enzed** donated a hydraulic motor and serviced all hydraulic engines. **Norsign** produced all the sponsor logos at no cost. **Outback Batteries** donated a solar panel to charge the battery. **Top End Windscreens & Tinting** contributed a front shield to protect the driver. **NT Acrylics & Plastics** provided nylon blocks free of charge for the front cutters. **In and Outboard Marine** donated a new seat. **ITS Communications** donated a communication system. **Dudley Designs** made a video of the Open Water Project free of charge. **Woolworths** at **Coolalinga** provided two entertainment platters and drinks for the launch. Fantastic support to save Fogg Dam. These businesses deserve our custom.

**New sponsor: Active Tree Services** has kindly donated a chain saw to Friends of Fogg Dam for general work at Fogg Dam. *A great help and much appreciated.*

30 June 2013



These three views looking south from the same photo point on the eastern observation deck of the Fogg Dam wall show the reduction of weed mat achieved since weed harvester operations began late in July 2014.

See the weed harvester in action on:  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=geyQyzFwmi8](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=geyQyzFwmi8)

10 September 2014



29 March 2015



The Charles Darwin University's guiding reference for the Fogg Dam open water project is: Leppitt, Alice C.M. & Franklin, Donald C.: Possible ecosystem engineering to regulate depth by a clonal sedge encroaching on a tropical freshwater wetland. *Wetlands Ecology and Management* 2012 20(4), pp341-352.





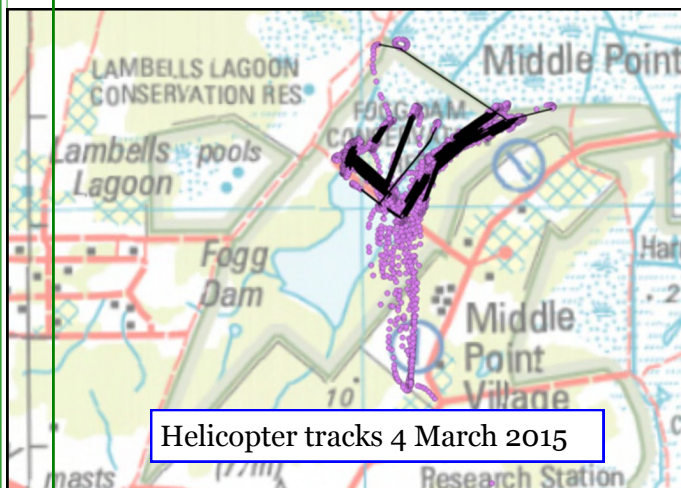
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## OLIVE HYMENACHNE CONTROL

In December 2014 FOFD completed a \$4,000 project funded by Territory Natural Resource Management (TNRM) to use "frog friendly" glyphosate to reduce the extent of Olive Hymenachne, a weed a national significance, within Fogg Dam Conservation Reserve. FOFD then sought and was delighted to be granted a further \$10,000 from TNRM to continue this and other weed management work until the end of June this year.

This grant provided for 8 hours of helicopter spraying with support from the weed harvester, airboat, wheeled equipment and by hand. In March, Top End Helicopters sprayed areas of the floodplain, see black lines on the map below. We've used the airboat to spray the eastern and western edges of the dam and Toyotas and knapsacks to spray along the bush walks. Impact of the work is being assessed using GIS, Landsat, Google Earth and photographic images.



Helicopter tracks 4 March 2015

Olive hymenachne at the Monsoon Forest lookout is difficult to access



## EARTH HOUR AT FOGG DAM, Saturday 28 March 2015

The world wide grass roots movement Earth Hour, bringing attention to global warming by switching off lights for an hour, was addressed by about 20 people participating in a nocturnal visit to Fogg Dam guided by Michael Barritt, Community Engagement Officer with Parks & Wildlife and assisted by David McLachlan, Fogg Dam Ranger. Some of the wildlife discovered during the evening included: native snail; Dahl's aquatic frog; Green tree frog; Roth's tree frog; a sleeping 'Tiger' butterfly; lots of Nankeen night herons; 5 sets of crocodile eyes (fresh & salt water); fish; male and female Gilbert's dragons; a Bush Stone curlew and a Planigale that was rescued by Dave McLachlan. It had crawled inside an empty drink bottle lying with the neck upwards and too slippery for the poor Planigale to get out. The evening concluded with refreshments at Pandanus Lookout.



Male Gilberts dragon



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## RANGER DAVID McLACHLAN - A STIHL LEGEND

When Park rangers accidentally knocked a Stihl Chainsaw into crocodile inhabited waters in Fogg Dam Conservation Reserve two years ago, it was thought to be lost forever. No, the rusted saw was found earlier this year. Given a clean, new fuel and a new spark plug by Ranger David McLachlan, amazingly it started and is fully operational again. David was nominated in a competition to become a 'Stihl Legend' and intended to donate the \$2,000 prize of Stihl equipment to Friends of Fogg Dam.

David's entry was the most 'liked' of the 170 Facebook entries, but not the winner, who was selected by a random draw from all entrants. Nevertheless, to us David is a legend.

Despite not gaining from the competition, Friends of Fogg Dam became a winner with donations of Stihl's largest model chainsaws from Charles Darwin University and Active Tree Services.



***Thanks to both CDU and Active Tree Services for their generosity.***

## GREEN ARMY

FOFD is participating with McMinn's Lagoon, Mitchell Creek and Casuarina Coastal Reserve Landcare groups in a 2 year Green Army Project. A team of workers with a supervisor managed by Australian Conservation Volunteers is working at Fogg Dam about 1 day a week. This Federal Government initiative provides training and skills in conservation for people aged between 17 and 21 years. Green Army teams of up to 9 people each work for six months. They undertake training in First Aid, Work Health & Safety, and skills towards Certificate 1 or 11 qualifications while gaining supervised field experience in Landcare.

So far the team has been weeding and tidying debris along the bush walks.

## More members for greater access to corporate funding

If Friends of Fogg Dam Inc. can become a Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR), donations of \$2.00 or more will be tax deductible and more corporate funding opportunities will open. As an environmental organisation, to qualify as a DGR, FOFD needs to have and retain 50 financial members, ie about 20 more than now. If you're not already a member, please consider joining: Family \$20 a year, single \$15, pensioner/students \$10.

Thank you to those who have already paid their 2015-16 membership. Its helping.

**Check out the FOFD website for updates:** [www.foggdamfriends.org](http://www.foggdamfriends.org)

Please 'like' our Facebook page, view our Google+ site and add reports and photos.

**Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Fogg-Dam-Friends/208051039270626>

**Google+:** <https://plus.google.com/u/ocommunities/103253209179664999529>