



# Queensland News

*Rainforest Live*

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LINKING CLASSROOMS AROUND THE WORLD TO RESEARCH SITES AROUND THE WORLD

## Small Steps Have Positive Effects...



**Christian Frazar**  
Colby College  
November 29, 1997  
Conservation

At The Center for Rainforest Studies we are actively

involved in solving environmental problems. A large part of this problem solving centers around what steps need to be taken to prevent further land degradation. The Atherton tablelands have experienced much destruction due to logging and cattle raising. One method of preventing further land abuse is conservation.

Conservation is based on conserving biodiversity and establishing sustainable use of the land. Much of the Tablelands has been declared a World Heritage Area. This prevents destruction of land, stops much of the logging, and halts the increase of cattle fields.

A form of land conservation that The School for Field Studies has been involved with is reforestation. Reforesting along rivers and creeks can be an effective way to prevent many different kinds of problems. For example, many farmers lose large amounts of soil during the rainy season because it washes into the creek and settles there.



Trees along creek banks hold soil in place and prevent erosion.

Reforestation along creeks can have other benefits, such as better water quality. Reforestation efforts at one creek has connected two national parks. By connecting the two parks we have created a corridor—a passage way for animals from one forested area to another. This passage way allows different species of animals to mix and increases biodiversity.

When forests or land are under conservation management, use of it

### QUOTABLE QUOTE

*“Go as far as you can see; then you will be able to see further.”*

**Willard Bascom**

*The Crest of the Wave (1988)*

is regulated to prevent overuse, or abuse of it. People who set regulations attempt to manage the land for sustainable use. Sustainable use is when we use a natural resource at a rate where we will not use all of it before other generations get to use it. For example, the timber industry is restricted to logging only in certain areas. This prevents them from taking all of the timber and leaving none for the future. Rainforest preservation is a somewhat controversial issue because jobs are lost when logging is stopped in an area. It can also be controversial when it involves reforestation on private land. Many people don't like outsiders coming in and telling them how to manage their land.

Conservation efforts are important when considering future land uses. It is unfair for us to use all of the natural resources, destroy the land and cause the extinction of animal species. By conserving soil, forests and land we can allow future populations to enjoy the natural wonders we have.

## EXTRA! EXTRA!

**11/27** Directed Research Day. Thanksgiving dinner—food, friends, fun and festivities.

**11/28** Directed Research Day. Warwork and sports in the afternoon.

**11/29** Another Directed Research Day! The group studying skinks found a five foot black snake in one of their plots.

**11/30** Student day off! Hiking trip to Mt. Bartle Frere. In total, it took us about nine hours round trip to reach the highest point in Queensland (1662 meters). The students loved it, although there are some with sore muscles!

**12/01** Directed Research Day. This is the last week of field research. While working at the Mt. Bartle Frere area, the cassowary group found seven cassowary scats.



## Student Journals



**Marah Studer**  
Smith College  
November 29, 1997  
Simple Living

Three months ago, I was accustomed to hot showers on demand, pizza delivery service, and Thursday night television. It wasn't a very challenging lifestyle, but I was comfortable with it. Although I thought I had it good, there was always something more to buy or to own. Now, here at Warrawee, all that has changed.

I no longer expect to have hot showers—heated water doesn't last very long with 32 students. Pizza is more than a luxury when we have it at the Center and it is always homemade. Besides a rented video on special occasions, television is something I no longer depend on for my entertainment. It has since been replaced with relaxing card games with great friends, good books, and crazy rainforest dance parties.

Back at home the sidewalks are flooded with light from the street lamps. In the rainforest, on dark nights, we walk to our cabins with only our "torches" and the help of the lightning bugs. Sometimes if your lucky, the moon alone is bright enough to guide you. I can't remember the

last time, back in the United States, when the moon and the stars were my only source of light, without city lights shining in the distance.

In the rainforest there is never silence but the noises you hear do not include sirens, car engines, or drilling from road maintenance. Instead those sounds are replaced with the call of the cicadas (or other such insects), the chorus of tropical birds, and the rhythmic downfall of raindrops.

Overall, life seems less complex here. The time I have spent in the rainforest has taught me the difference between "want" and "need." I have learned to appreciate good company (which includes snakes and plenty of toads) and a healthy Earth. I get by with much less now and am happier for it, thankful even. I do look forward to being in the United States with my family, but when I leave Warrawee "living a simpler life" is one lesson I plan to take home.



**Andrew Blake**  
Bates College  
November 29, 1997  
Didjeridu

Recently, I have become very interested in Aboriginal culture, especially the didjeridu. Gus, a man who works here at the Center, carves didjeridus as a hobby. I recently bought one and have had a lot of fun playing it. It is a lot harder than it seems.

In order to play the didjeridu, you need to learn how to vibrate your lips correctly. Michael, one of Gus's cousins, explained it this way: "Do you remember when you were a kid and you played with toy trucks," he said, "and you

made the sound of the truck driving around? That's the type of noise you make." So, I tried it, and at first very strange sounds came out of the didjeridu, but as I practiced, I got better at it and could actually produce the correct sound. After you learn the way to make the sound, you can experiment with different noises by moving your tongue and lips in different places. You can also use your voice to make sounds. The Aborigines make sounds which mimic kangaroos, kookaburras, dingoes, and other animals. The more you play, the easier it is to learn how to make these sounds.

After you learn all of this, the hardest part of playing a didjeridu begins—learning a method called "circular breathing." This type of breathing allows Aborigines to play this instrument for long periods of time without stopping. The way you do this is by storing air in your cheeks and pushing that air out while breathing in through your nose. It is very difficult to learn, but after some practice I have sort of gotten the hang of it.

The thing that got me interested in the didjeridu was a trip to Gus's house in the outback. While visiting we saw some places which were very important to Aborigines. We visited a waterfall which used to be ceremonial grounds. Seeing places which have great meaning and learning about them from an Aboriginal is a great experience. Getting a didjeridu handmade by Gus and knowing his background is very special to me. If you ever see a didjeridu you should have a go at trying to play it. It is a lot of fun!



# Q&A

## Q. Have you ever run into any dangerous creatures or been in frightening situations in the rainforest. If so, what were they?

*Coral & Miranda, USA*

A. Living in the rainforest, there are many possible dangerous situations that can occur. I have been very lucky here and have not gotten seriously hurt. It is very easy to get lost in the rainforest if you are not careful, because it is so



dense and hard to walk through. So it is safest to stick to a path when walking to our cabins or to the showers. About a month ago I had a scary encounter when I was walking back to my cabin at night with Ecy and Robin. We only had my tiny flashlight to give us light—but then it died! We were halfway to our cabin in the pitch black. So we held onto each other and tried to walk where we thought the path was. Every couple of steps I would walk into a tree. We could hear creatures rustling all around us. Finally we found our way back to our cabin after much tripping and fumbling. Now I always make sure that the batteries in my flashlight work before I leave the Center at night.



Here at Warrawee we see animals such as snakes that can possibly cause us harm—but so far no one has gotten hurt. A few days ago, I almost stepped on a huge python who was curled up sleeping on the side of the road. Many students here have also run into stinging trees, and gotten leeches, or ticks. Recently, more of us have gotten scrub itch which is when tiny mites lay eggs under the skin. This can be very itchy and uncomfortable, but putting tea tree oil on it helps a lot! Surprisingly, no one here has gotten hurt out in the rainforest. Most of our injuries have occurred in the kitchen or by simply slipping on the steep access road.



*Mary Spaulding*

## Q. How does deforestation affect animal habitats in the rainforest?

*Kristen and Trisha, USA*

A. Deforestation destroys the habitats of animals in the rainforests. When rainforest is cleared, small patches are left standing because they are too difficult to clear. These small areas, called fragments, are often the areas where all of the animals from the surrounding cleared areas are forced to go. This causes an over population problem which then leads to a decrease in the animal population because there is not enough room or food for all of the rainforest animals in a small patch. Also, having too many animals in a small area can lead to the destruction or decline of that area. For example, there is a near-

by fragment called the Tolga Scrub. There are too many bats in the fragment due to reforestation.

Because there are so many bats, many of the large trees at the Tolga are dying, leading to a very different type of forest than what was there previously.

Another problem with fragmentation is that it isolates populations from each other. When a population is isolated, animals may be forced to breed with other animals which they are distantly related too. This is called an inbreeding depression and can have negative effects on the population. Also, in many cases, if there is a fragment with available habitat, animals may not be able to get to it



because they cannot travel through the areas between fragments. A good example of this is the cassowary. There are many areas on the Tablelands where cassowaries could live, but they can't get to them because of all the fields. Even if a cassowary could get to the fragment, there is a good chance that it would not have enough food.

Many rainforest plants bear fruit seasonally and animals need an area with plants that provide fruit at all times of the year. The cassowary, for example, requires a large territory with enough trees to provide it with food throughout the year. This limits which fragments cassowaries can live in and in turn decreases their populations.

*Sarah Picard*



**Sarah Picard**  
*December 1, 1997*  
**Directed Research**

*Over the last week we have not been in classes. We have been working on our Directed Research (DR) projects. I am working with Festus, one of our professors, on the soil DR project. There are six of us in our group and we are comparing reforested areas on Clemanson Creek to determine what the best site preparation and maintenance methods are. Everyday we go to a different site to measure the trees, count the weeds, and take a soil profile. To take a soil profile we dig a really big hole, about three feet deep, and then describe the different layers of soil. Its a lot of fun. Sometimes whoever is describing the soil ends up on their belly with almost all of their body in the hole. Sometimes we put Festus in the hole, too.*

*It is a lot of fun to talk to the people who own the land we work on. Many of them think we are a little strange for digging a big hole and then filling it right back in. They are all very proud of their plantings and like to show us their favorite trees. One man said they (the trees) were like his children. Most of the time DR is fun because we are expected to get very dirty!*



1. What do you need to learn in order to play the didjeridu? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What is a corridor? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What is one lesson Marah Studer has learned from her time spent in the rainforest? \_\_\_\_\_
4. If you were living in the rainforest, what types of lessons about life would you like to learn? \_\_\_\_\_

### Glossary

**conservation:** the act of saving something from harm

**didjeridu:** a unique, trumpet-like instrument found among the Aborigines of northern Australia, traditionally made from a termite-hollowed eucalyptus branch

**reforestation:** renewing a forest by seeding and/or planting

### Home Connection: Community Conservation!

Reducing, Reusing, and Recycling are great ways to conserve. How do these work? Keeping things and reusing them eliminates the need for more landfills, saves energy, and helps conserve our world's natural resources. Does your community have a recycling program? If not, think about how you can reuse or recycle many of the items you throw away everyday. How can you get your neighborhood or community involved in recycling? Many materials, such as glass, newspapers, motor oil and aluminum, are already being recycled in communities worldwide. Many items can be put to other uses instead of being thrown away, for example a car tire used as a backyard swing or milk jug turned into a planter!

## Site's Log

### 12/2/97

**TIME:** 6:30 p.m. AEST  
(Australian Eastern Standard Time)  
**AIR TEMP:** 25° C  
**RAINFALL:** 0 mm  
**WX:** Hot and sticky!

**KEY:**

°C=degrees Celsius  
mm=millimeter

1. In order to play the didjeridu, you need to vibrate your lips and practice circular breathing.
2. A corridor is a passage way for animals between fragmented forests.
3. She has learned the difference between "wants" and "needs," and she has learned to live a simpler life.
4. Answers will vary.

### Answers to Quiz



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### Send us your questions!

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