

2014 water quality IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Rocky Dam Creek

Management Area Progress Report

Summary of progress

Rocky Dam Creek flows north entering the Coral Sea in High Ecological Value marine waters and the Dugong Protection Area of Llewellyn Bay. The Rocky Dam Creek catchment is largely dominated by agriculture; 60% supporting grazing and 24% under cane production.

In 2007, the receiving waters of Llewellyn Bay were rated as being at a very high risk of exposure to the impacts of nutrients and pesticides. At this same time the freshwater and estuarine condition of Rocky Dam Creek was rated as being relatively moderate condition compared to other catchments in the Mackay Whitsunday region. Between 2007 and 2013 there have been considerable efforts by graziers and cane farmers to improve management practice on-farm, for water quality benefits. These efforts have established an excellent base for future ecosystem health improvements in the Rocky Dam Creek catchment management area.



"The adoption of improved farming practices for better water quality has been an important contributor to our farm's high sugar per hectare productivity."

Rocky Dam Creek farmer,
Rob Slugget

Ecosystem implementation highlights

- Riparian management has been improved along more than 15 km of Rocky Dam Creek by graziers who have installed riparian fencing and off-stream watering points
- A critical barrier to fish migration has been removed with the construction of a rock ramp fishway
- Feral pig control undertaken across 40,000 ha of the catchment area in a 5 year program

Agriculture implementation highlights

- Cane and horticulture producers have improved management of soil, nutrients and herbicides on more than 44% of the intensive cropping land in the catchment with Reef Rescue support
- Graziers have improved pasture management on more than 637 ha with Reef Rescue support

Future priorities

Management practices to reduce nitrogen loads will continue to be addressed. Management practices that reduce atrazine, hexazinone and diuron loads are also priority.

All system repair actions that support an improvement in fish communities are the highest priority. Future management efforts need to focus on active management and restoration of instream habitat and riparian vegetation. Efforts also need to ensure coastal wetlands and the estuarine areas are managed to improve the estuarine ecological health ratings. This will require partnership with grazing land management activities that occur adjacent to remnant wetlands.



The construction of the Tedlands Wetland rock-ramp fishway removed a critical barrier to fish migration in the Rocky Dam Creek catchment management area, assisting in the restoration of flow and passage to Llewellyn Bay.