

WTL-HC 3: Rehabilitating Ripple Creek Wetlands

Restoring the Ripple Creek Wetlands will significantly improve the fish habitat in the lower Herbert Catchment. These wetlands provide important breeding habitat for many fish species. The restoration of this wetland will also improve water quality flowing into the GBR.

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| This strategy delivers on these Regional Themes | Biodiversity | Biosecurity | Coastal Systems | Sustainable Industries | Water |
| | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ |
| This strategy delivers on these Strategic Outcomes | Supportive, policies, plans and regulations | Collaborative, adaptive planning and action | Traditional Owner Benefits | Sustained and diverse resourcing | Community stewardship, values and action |
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| Outcome | <p>Rehabilitating Ripple Creek Wetlands will achieve multiple outcomes including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improved water quality in freshwater river systems, in-shore lagoons and reef systems, through reduced sediment, pesticide and herbicide loads. ▪ Improved adaptability and resilience of our region's waterways to impacts of climate change. ▪ Increased habitat and connectivity, benefiting a range of aquatic species, especially anadromous fish species and crocodiles. ▪ Enhanced social and community benefits through involvement in on-ground activities, resulting in strong community stewardship and ownership of projects. ▪ Reduced bank erosion and sediment loads in waterways and coastal systems. ▪ Improved fish passage to important fish breeding habitat. ▪ Increased community awareness, particularly for restoration projects in high profile locations. ▪ Increased recreational and tourism opportunities around waterways. ▪ Providing potential for Traditional Owner involvement and benefits. | | | | |
| Justification | <p>There is already good community support for the rehabilitation of this wetland. We can capitalise on this support by building on existing projects and transferring successful methodology to additional areas. A systematic approach to wetland restoration, based on agreed criteria and priorities, will provide extensive benefits to the health of our waterways. This wetland is important habitat for fish breeding and assists in alleviating flooding in the local area. The Ripple Creek Wetlands are culturally significant and may provide opportunities for Traditional Owner involvement.</p> | | | | |
| Key steps | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) In collaboration with all relevant stakeholders, including landholders, research organisations, industry, Traditional Owners and government, develop an action plan based on priority issues for each of the waterways, using the Systems Repair Prioritisation and Community Engagement Toolkit developed by Terrain. 2) Develop options and costings for addressing the sedimentation issues arising from drainage lines and for fish passage blockage as a result of flood gates. Present results back to relevant stakeholders and agree on a solution. 3) Identify opportunities for funding and implementation, including cash and other contributions and develop a delivery mechanism relevant to the area and issue, which maximises landholder and community involvement and fosters long term stewardship. 4) Implement on ground actions and monitor environmental and capacity building outcomes. | | | | |
| Feasibility considerations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ There are many supportive stakeholders willing to contribute to restoration of these waterways. ✓ Fish and fish habitat are important to many people and can be used to engage local landholders. ✗ This is a large scale, long term project which may seem overwhelming. It will require ongoing commitment and funding to ensure success – difficult for many community groups, given short term funding arrangements and volunteer succession. ✗ Riparian areas can be difficult to work in and often have poor access, steep, uneven terrain, risk of flooding and crocodiles. ✗ Addressing flood gate issues and resolving sediment problems can be very costly and, in some instances, may require canefarmers to set their crop back from the bank. ✗ There isn't a lot of support from the drainage boards or landholders to address the issues in this system. ✗ We need to be realistic – there is only so much that individuals can take on. | | | | |