

Mooloolah River [Waterwatch and] Landcare Strategic Plan 2020-2024

Where We Come From

What was to become Mooloolah River Landcare (MRL) began over twenty years ago in 1997 when over concerns of the declining water quality of the river, with the support of the Mooloolah community, a small team of local environmentalists established Mooloolah River Waterwatch. It was at the urging of Mooloolah River Waterwatch that Mooloolah River and its catchment became recognized in government departments as a river in its own right.

In 2002 our name was changed to Mooloolah River Waterwatch and Landcare Inc and currently it is referred to as Mooloolah River Landcare (MRL). Over the course of its history, MRL, its members and volunteers have played an important role in raising awareness and protecting the water resources of the Mooloolah River catchment. At the heart of MRL is its enthusiastic volunteers who bring their time, efforts, and commitment to fulfilling our purpose and carrying out our activities. MRL is currently working in partnership with the Sunshine Coast Council, Holcim, Landcare and other organizations to maintain and enhance Mooloolah River and catchment as a healthy waterway. Since 2004 MRL has been very fortunate to have the support of Holcim which provides our shed, land, water and electricity. Located on Steve Irwin Way, the MRL facility includes our office, native plant nursery, which was opened in 2005, and the more recent Sunshine Coast Biocontrol Facility which is currently working on headwater infestations of Madeira Vine and Cat's Claw creeper and taking the lead in citizen science biocontrol activities in the catchment.

Where We Are Going

Over the last few years MRL committee, staff, members and volunteers engaged in conversations about the organization's role, history, and future direction and began a strategic planning process. During a series of sessions, input was provided into the MRL's mission, vision and core values. A proposed mission, vision, and core values were drafted and approved in 2018. This Strategic Plan builds on these efforts and proposes continuing current and initiating new programs, activities, and partnerships.

The Strategic Plan Looks to the future and reflects MRL's continuing commitment to be a vibrant community based, volunteer driven organization staffed by a core of experts, sharing and fostering our:

Mission: The Mooloolah River Waterwatch & Landcare Inc. is an active community group dedicated to the health, protection and enhancement of the rivers and natural eco-systems of the Sunshine Coast.

Vision: We envision a future of clean and plentiful water for people and nature where citizens and government are effective and courageous champions for the Mooloolah River, a healthy catchment and the Sunshine Coast Biosphere.

Core Values:

Advocacy and respect for the natural environment: We passionately advocate for the health of the River and the lands around it. We consider the environmental consequences of our actions and strive at all times to make as small an environmental footprint as possible and encourage others to do the same.

Inclusiveness: We work with a collaborative and inclusive spirit to embrace those who work with us, encourage engagement and volunteerism, foster discussion and give all members and partners the opportunity to become stewards.

Integrity: We are committed to ensuring that all we do is in keeping with our values and in keeping with high ethical standards.

MRL Goals: 2020-2024

Advocacy and Implementation: Set our agenda and priorities, advance key current activities (plant nursery and biocontrol/invasive species) and design and implement new activities informed by science that will contribute to our mission and vision and encourage champions for the Mooloolah river and its catchment.

Engagement and Relationships: Increase MRL membership and volunteers, engage a diverse and inclusive group of partners and establish relationships to advance our programs and actions.

Science: Collect and use scientific information to gauge the health of the river and its catchment, direct programmatic priorities, and advance protection and restoration efforts. Engage with schools and students to promote and support citizen science actions to encourage interest in science, especially the importance of healthy waterways now and in the future.

Communications: Raise awareness of the vital role that the Mooloolah River and its catchment plays in our lives, advance our program goals, and build alliances and support for the protection and restoration of the Mooloolah River and its environs.

Fund raising and Organizational Foundation: Develop strong relationships and systems to proactively secure and manage resources to enable MRL to accomplish its mission and programs.

Implementation

This Strategic Plan, developed after internal and external review with the MRL Committee and members, will be implemented through a process linking our strategy and activities with close oversight and conforming to rigorous financial practices. We have an effective process in place to ensure that we seek out the funding that is necessary to achieve our objectives and only undertake activities for which we have the necessary financial resources. This process will increase MRL's ability to deliver high quality programs through monitoring and aligning programs and staffing to attain our mission.

Advocacy and Implementation

Set our Mooloolah River and its catchment agenda and projects with a range of activities and implementation and funding partners.

Implement actions to strategically protect the Lowland Sub-Tropical

- Develop annual plan to target priority actions and potential implementation and funding partners.

Rainforest, a Critically Endangered Ecosystem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand biocontrol facility (production and sales) to address headwater infestation of Madeira Vine and Cat's claw and other to be identified invasive species to expand treatment to more areas. • Promote planting of indigenous plant species and expand nursery production and sales.
Priority restoration projects and management activities have funding and are being implemented.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify priority restoration projects and activities for Mooloolah River catchment and environs. • Advocate for priority projects and secure funding, taking the lead and advance implementation of project through either direct project management or assistance with 2nd party with advocacy, monitoring and/or education.
Advocate for the health of the Mooloolah River, its catchment and surrounding environs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use social media and direct communication for advocacy. • Use strategic partnerships and MRL experience to create compelling arguments for protection and restoration. • Participate in the consultation process for major developments projects. • Develop outreach and education strategies and actions to reach the public.

Engagement and Relationships

Increase MRL membership and volunteers, engage a diverse and inclusive group of partners and establish relationships to advance our programs and actions.

Deepen relationships to support and advance our mission.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage key groups (including local government and the Sunshine Coast Council) as allies for MRL. • Increase our number of implementing and funding partners by at least 50 % over the next five years. • Develop opportunities to establish and share our passion, leadership and experience in dialogue with our key (or potentially key) partners: Holcim, SEQ Healthy Land and Water, Landcare groups. • Identify and implement strategy/actions to retain volunteers. • Improve conversion of new members to volunteers and vice versa. • Review existing partnerships periodically and adjust focus and resources (engagement) accordingly.
Reach new priority audiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify new priority audiences for

organization-wide.	<p>engagement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to create new volunteer opportunities that support organizational goals and increase community involvement in MRL work. • Offer[no-cost] on-line courses in bio-control, seed collections, etc.
Engage schools and encourage participation with MRL.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare an outreach strategy/approach (see also above) for schools in the Mooloolah catchment and environs and activities in citizen science. • Visit schools and consider opportunities, such as Junior Landcare, for citizen science activities.
Establish community centre offering environment learning opportunities and events.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successfully obtain funding for the centre through pro-active identifying potential funding partnerships. • Develop series of learning opportunities through outreach and consultation with MRL members, volunteers, community organizations, partners and local government to identify key areas of interest that align with MRL's mission and strategic plan.

<p>Science</p> <p>Collect and use scientific information to gauge the health of the river and catchment, direct programmatic priorities, and advance protection and restoration efforts.</p>	
Collect natural and social science information representative of the river and catchment that allows for quantifying the rate of change of target indicators.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collect and gather scientific information from multiple sources including MRL water monitoring and other external sources. • Evaluate each monitoring program annually to improve the quality of the scientific data and volunteer experience.
Analyze and interpret scientific information to guide MRL programs and projects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpret scientific information to identify priority areas for MRL and collaborators to restore and protect.
Communicate results to priority audiences tailored to their varying levels of knowledge, understanding, and influence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce a data summary report, presentation, Facebook posting or blog, or other appropriate outreach product for every volunteer-based monitoring event or program. • Present data and analysis through meetings with appropriate local governments, water utilities, agencies upon detecting significant degradation or improvement in water quality indicators, including work with appropriate MRL committee members and volunteers.

Communications	
Raise awareness of Mooloolah River and its catchment and advance our program goals.	
Increase MRL brand recognition throughout the catchment and with key partners and government bodies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare a communication/marketing strategy to meet MRL and its programs goals (how MRL communicates its brand and work to members, cooperative partners and stakeholders). • Increase brand awareness through events to promote the organization and its mission, e.g. organizing and obtaining funding for high profile events (with partners) and consistent updating and use of outreach tools such as website, emails, videos, etc. • MRL representatives attend community meetings (e.g. Mooloolah breakfasts, Lion dinners, etc.) • Improve front signage and promotional materials.
Increase MRL's members by 10% annually and deepen the level of engagement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish memberships for businesses and organizations. • Target key community leaders for membership.
Enhance communication with cooperative partners and project stakeholders that results in greater participation and support.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate MRL's activities and results in accessible and meaningful way to an array of audiences using a variety of communication techniques.

Fund raising and Organizational Foundation	
Develop strong relationships and systems to secure and manage resources that accomplish our mission.	
Foster an open, collaborative, and supportive culture for staff, committee, volunteers and members.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular planning (updates, progress tracking) allow staff, committee, and volunteers to see how their work fits into the MRL vision, strategic plan and activities and feel that they contribute in ways that are effective, measured and valued. • Foster communication among committee, staff and volunteers through interactive meetings and outings. • Encourage productive and regular feedback.
Create a Fundraising Plan each year.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create quantifiable goals, strategies to achieve goals, tactics to support strategies, persons(s) responsible, and time frames. • Establish metrics and benchmarks to evaluate progress (e.g. grant calendar and monitoring success). • Outline roles and responsibilities for staff,

	board, and volunteers. Increase participation in volunteer leadership for fundraising.
Secure funds from a diversity of sources that support both restricted (e.g. equipment) and unrestricted work and ensure a dependable revenue stream.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a secure base of diversified funds from grants, sales, fee for service work, and private sector (sponsorship, block grants). • Increase unrestricted funds to support MRL's response to new or emerging threats with innovative and effective solutions.