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BDTNRM Media Release

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Burdekin Dry Tropics NRM Invests in Nature Refuges across the region

Burdekin Dry Tropics NRM, the Environmental Protection Agency and landholders in the Jericho, Bowen and Townsville Shires are joining forces to link environmental needs with sustainable land management practices, making Nature Refuges an important part of their business strategy.

NatureAssist is a five-year funding initiative launched in 2006. Through a competitive tender process, landholders are eligible for funding for works such as fencing, watering points, weed control and revegetation that will improve the conservation values on their proposed or existing nature refuge. Nature refuges are protected areas under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* established through a voluntary perpetual conservation agreement between the landholder and the Queensland Government. There are currently 255 Nature Refuges across Queensland.

EPA is able to fund new NatureAssist applications, while Regional NRM Bodies and the Commonwealth can invest in NatureAssist tenders for existing or new nature refuges. Eleven Regional NRM Bodies in Queensland have support for the scheme through funding for NatureAssist tenders or support for nature refuges in general.

Burdekin Dry Tropics Natural Resource Management is committed to co-investing in three Nature Refuges covering 9136 ha.

Bimblebox. Funding fencing, weed control and establishing an additional watering point on Glen Innes Nature Refuge (Desert Uplands Bioregion, Jericho Shire). Over 95% of the 7,912 ha property is remnant vegetation (mainly silver-leaved ironbark and poplar box communities), with corridors to adjacent or nearby properties.

Mt. Pleasant. Funding to improve management of the existing (and expanded) Mount Pleasant Nature Refuge (Bogie River Hills province of the Brigalow Belt North Bioregion, Bowen Shire) linking Mt. Aberdeen National Park and Highlanders Bonnet National Park, the headwaters of the Elliot River and the riparian ecosystems of the Bogie River. The tender is to fence-off natural streams and springs, install alternative watering points for stock, and establish a monitoring program.

Bolger Bay. Funding weed control of 33 ha of Bolger Bay Nature Refuge on Magnetic Is., adjacent to the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park and the Magnetic Island National Park within the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area. On-ground works are for weed removal and weed control (lantana, snakeweed, sisal and rubber vine).

BDTNRM and EPA have a Memorandum of Understanding outlining their respective roles and responsibilities in relation to co-investment through NatureAssist. For more information contact Dr. Bronwyn Houlden, BDTNRM.