

# Annual Report of the Moggill Creek Catchment Group 2014 to 2015

## Supporting Moggill Creek Catchment Group

I would like to thank the Management Committee and Section Leaders for their efforts throughout the year, namely Malcolm Frost, Adrian Webb, Cathie Mortimer, Dale Borgelt, Joanna Yesberg, Michael Humphreys, Graeme Wilson, Gordon Grigg, Andrew Wilson, Bryan Hacker, Letitia Norton, Damien Egan, Richard Woodhead, Judy Petroeschovsky, Kate McVicar, John Crowley, Jim Pope and our Creek Catchment Officer, Amanda Maggs, briefly Sarah Bell and more recently, Emma Maltby

There are many volunteers who support the numerous activities and projects in the Catchment I wish to thank:

A. The many volunteers at the Bushcare working bees.

B. Our able Nursery crew under the guidance of Graeme and Andrew Wilson: Helen Palmer, Debbie Allen, Tom Asher, Dawn Beck, Maria de Jong, Gabby Bell, Ian Hancock, Richard Tumman, Marjorie Welch, Adrienne Forrestal, Maxine Binning, Sally Stinton, Joyce Westenberg, Jan Grigg, Bryan Hacker, Joan Miller, Margaret Palmer, Alison Hoole, John Crowley, Bruce Siemon, Damien Egan, Margaret Basso, Dale Borgelt and Stefan Majewski.

C. The Cottage gardeners, Cathie and Adrian Mortimer and Warren Hoey.

D. Newsletter editor, Graeme Wilson; formatter, Margaret Hastie; printing, John Gower; Labelling, packaging and posting, Dale Borgelt; MCCG envelope printing, Bryan Hacker.

E. Adrian Webb, Tim Howell and Leo Lee who work so hard to keep the Creek Health Monitoring Program going along with a bunch of hardy volunteers.

F. Cath Cleary from Habitat Brisbane, the LFW team of Cody Hochen and Catherine Madden, and Louise Orr and more recently, Apanie Wood from SEQCatchments.

G. Geoff Lawrence and Adrian and Cathie Mortimer in particular for managing the development and launch of our new website.

H. Councillor Margaret de Wit and the former Member for Moggill, Dr Bruce Flegg and the current member, Dr Christian Rowan for their support.

I. Patrick McMaster and his committee consisting of Robyn Frost, Geoff Lawrence, Margaret Whyte, Jocelyn Henry and Bruce Siemon, with invaluable help from Dale Borgelt and Cathi Lawrence. Once again they ran a brilliant photography Competition in 2014. We thank Dr Joseph McDowell again for judging the entries and Andrew Wilson for vetting the photo entries for accuracy of titles and correctness of category.

J. Bruce Siemon who works so hard behind the scenes collating and presenting all manner of data on our activities. Our thanks to David Gooding for creating the Section map and the map on plant distribution from our Nursery.

K. Jim Butler and Ian Muirhead for managing the bird project. Ed Frazer also contributed significantly to this worthy project as did all the anonymous birders who submitted reports.

L. Chris Hosking for running the 2014 platypus survey ably assisted by Richard Woodhead, Gaynor Johnson, Dot Dalglish, Jesse Rowlands, Tamielle Brunt, Damien Egan, Judy Vink and the Girl Guides. I would also like to thank the 60 wonderful volunteers who got to Brookfield

promptly at 4:30 am!

M. Gordon Grigg for regularly mowing the cottage grounds.

N. Adrian Mortimer and Bevan Borgelt for regularly and selflessly assisting in all manner of tasks when needed and often unrequested.

O. Kate McVicar and Janine Nicklin for establishing our Facebook page.

P. Project leaders Malcolm Frost, Adrian Webb, Gordon Grigg, Judy Petroschevsky, Chris Hosking and Jim Butler.

## **MCCG Membership**

As at 31<sup>st</sup> October 2015 we have **535** members current for 2015.

Because the **membership year is calendar**, with all memberships due from November AGM for the following year, we also carry late payers from the previous year to make sure no one misses out on the contact and info in the Newsletters. They get the Newsletters, but they are not counted in the membership statistics unless they renew and thus become current. (People joining NEW in the later months of the year are always given the next year's newsletter.

## **Newsletter**

Every quarter our very professional newsletter team produces a high quality document for the information and education of our members. The topics are thoughtfully chosen to capture your interest as a person who values the rehabilitation of our local natural environment.

## **Talks at the Cottage**

These continued to interest and entertain as they wonderfully widened our knowledge of our catchment and its biodiversity. There were talks on:

- Using acoustic sensors to help identify birds in our area
- Tree-less waterways have life: the invisible rail community
- Cats Claw
- Gliders
- Fire Ants

KIDS' DAY AT THE COTTAGE on the last Sunday in May continues to be a wonderful success with enviro themed activities and displays to attract children with their parents and carers. In 2015 there were 400 attendees so we will be making different marquee arrangements next year. But everyone happily enjoyed all the event's offerings and activities and they are always especially delighted when everything is FREE - which we are able to do because of the enormous input from volunteer presenters and helpers, and the much appreciated funding help from the Lord Mayor's Suburban Initiative Fund via the Pullenvale Ward and Cr Margaret de Wit.



The Cottage also hosted kindred groups such as Wise Earth, Richmond Birdwing Conservation Network, UQ students for Insect and Bat projects.

AWAY FROM THE COTTAGE we had public meetings at Brookfield Hall mid-year and for November AGM July 2014: “A RARE NIGHT OUT WITH NIGHT CREATURES”  
The chance to see so many of our native species that are cryptic creatures of the night brought a record attendance of 96 to our public meeting at Brookfield Hall in July 2014 for a RARE NIGHT OUT WITH NIGHT CREATURES presented by Martin Fingland. John Stanisic, the Snail Whisperer, also brought native creatures active at night – important detritivores - snails. It was a very popular night.

### **AGM November 2014 in Brookfield Hall**

The Guest Speaker was Frank Box founder operator of The Australian Nestbox Company. It was great hearing a speaker who shares a passionate interest in our native wildlife and has practical solutions for helping them.

### **Public Displays to highlight MCCG aims and activities**

Two are of special note. Our MCCG stand at the Brookfield Show, and the wonderful exposure we get from the Annual Photo Competition display in the Kenmore Village. We also had displays in the Kenmore Library and at the Theca forum.

Many new members have joined MCCG as a result of these PR activities, promotions and displays.

### **Annual Photography Competition**

The 2015 competition was organized by a committee ably lead by Patrick McMaster and included much stronger entries from schools. Thanks to the students and the people who encouraged them to enter. Once again, Tony Watts won the Supreme Exhibit with “Making Waves” which also won the Open class Native Wildlife section. Jim Pope won the Open class Native Plants section with “Black Bean Flower”, while Prue Cooper-White won the People in their Catchment section with “Tree Huggers”. The Lord Mayor’s Perpetual Shield for Schools was won by the Kenmore South State School with their entry “Water- Source of Life”. Kurt McCullough won the My Catchment section to grade 6 with “Wallaby with Joey”, and Stephanie Yesberg won the Grade 7-12 section with “Still Life”. The Chairman`s choice was won by David Edwards (adult) with “Razor Grinder” and Helen Yesberg won the Young Persons section with “Caterpillar Lace Shadow”. The People`s choice was won by John May with “ Rainbow`s Arrival”. Congratulations to all of the participants.



## MCCG Website

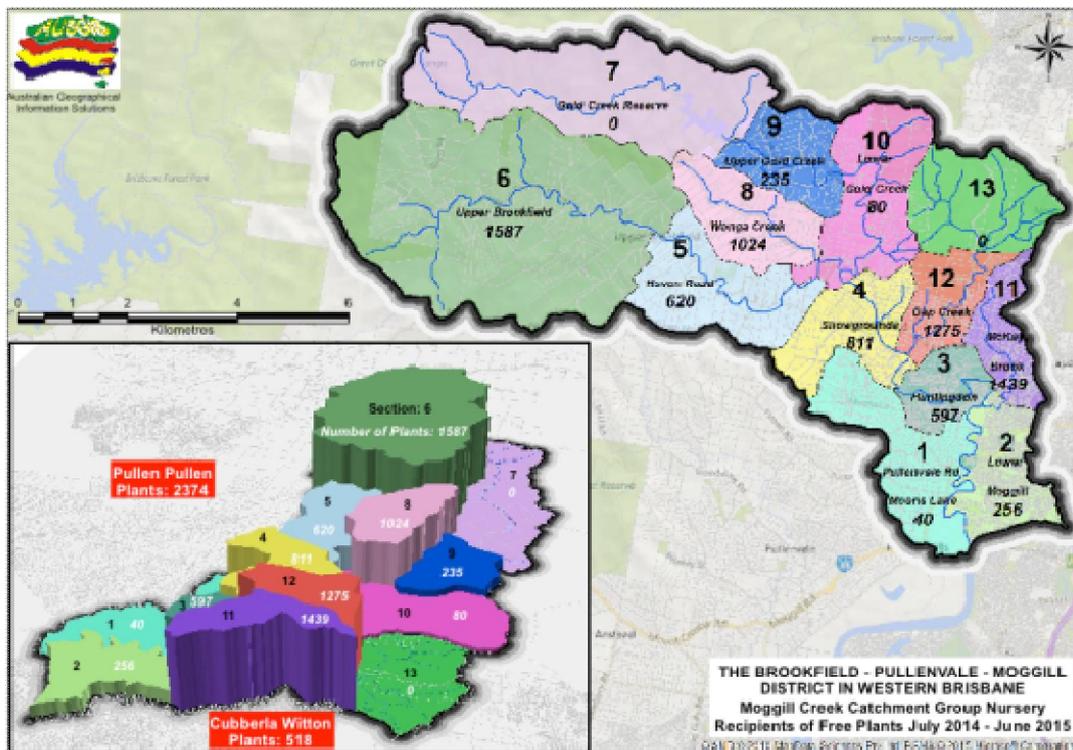
The MCCG web site has been completely revamped in recent years, with substantial input from Committee members, particularly Deb Ford and Geoff Lawrence. A grant from the Gambling Community Benefit Fund was used to pay Kingfisher Creative (Toowoomba) to do the implementation work. The site is working well and gives a professional polished on-line presence for MCCG. The site content is currently maintained by Adrian Mortimer and Geoff Lawrence, who attended a training session provided by Kingfisher Creative. The site and the new MCCG Facebook page are go-to places for up to date information about MCCG activities and for access to a wide range of reference material developed by or useful to MCCG members.

The site averages around 150 visits per day, mainly from Brisbane locations, but with a substantial number from Sydney and Melbourne. There is also a smattering of visits from international locations, but these could be largely search engines.

We are always on the lookout for ways to make our on-line information more useful, so if you have any suggestions (or find any problems with the web site) please email

[mccgsecretary@live.com.au](mailto:mccgsecretary@live.com.au)

## MCCG Nursery



Map courtesy of David Gooding

During 2014-15, the nursery distributed 13,282 plants, of which there were 176 species.

Volunteers at the nursery contributed 1,116 hours, working on the first and third Mondays of each month during the year, but this estimate does not include additional hours provided by Graeme and Andrew Wilson.

There were 105 different species of seed collected by 24 members for germination at the nursery.

SECTION	NUMBER
1 Pullenvale Rd Moons Lane	40
2 Lower Moggill	256
3 Huntington	597
4 Showgrounds	811
5 Haven Rd	620
6 Upper Brookfield	1587
7 Gold Creek Reserve	0
8 Wonga Creek	1024
9 Upper Gold Creek	235
10 Lower Gold Creek	80
11 McKay Brook	1439
12 Gap Creek	1275
Pullen Pullen	2734
Cubberla Witton	518
Unknown destinations	1884
Donated	55
Sold	127
TOTAL	13282

**Plants provided by the MCCG Nursery 2014-15**

### Landcare Activities

Over the period October 2014 to September 2015 Landcare Adviser, Bryan Hacker on invitation visited 21 properties, providing expert advice on revegetation, weed control and species identification. He also delivered a presentation at the BCC Seeding Success Forum promoting MCCG activities and was invited by THECA to run a workshop on grass identification, which was well attended.

### Working on Public Land



Map courtesy of David Gooding

**Section data**

Section	Working bees	Av. attendance	Volunteer hrs	Hours outside WB	Plants
2	15	6.5	273	50	970
3	10	13.7	358	96	890
4	10	4.2	91	261	322
6	18	3.9	153	38	830
Pacey Rd	9	13.4	324	3	385
8	6	4.2	70	34	290
9	8	6.4	102	15	0
11	23	6.1	379	6	306
11 KSHS	1	40	120	92	1515
12	12	5.8	155	181	1421
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>112</b>		<b>2025</b>	<b>776</b>	<b>6929</b>

**Section 1** No Section Leader

**Section 2 Lower Moggill (Judy Petroschevsky)**

See Project reports.

**Section 3 Huntington/Tuckett (Jim Pope)**

**Annual Report for Moggill Creek Catchment Group Section 3 (Huntington/Tuckett) Bushcare Group**



**Moggill Creek, between Tuckett and Blackbutt Parks**



**Swimming Pool, Creekside Park**

This year was an excellent year for our Bushcare group, despite a few setbacks associated with flood events. In 2014 we applied for a Community Conservation Assistance (CCA) grant from Brisbane City Council, which was successful and we received \$18,000 to support our activities in 2015. The money has been used to employ contractors to do some heavy duty brush cutting

and weed clearing. We also held 11 monthly working bees through the year and planted approximately 600 native trees and shrubs.

As a result of the combined efforts of our group and the contractors, we have managed to clear a substantial proportion of the weed vines from the canopy of the riparian zone along our section of Moggill Creek, which extends for about 1.6 km from Rafting Ground Road to Tuckett Street. In this area, the major offending species are glycine, Madeira vine and balloon vine, as well as Chinese elms. Fortunately there is little cat's claw. Our plantings are aimed at widening of the riparian zone to improve wildlife habitat and prevent erosion. Our major plantings this year have included sites on the north side of the creek in Creekside Park and on the south side opposite Boyd Terrace. We have also trialled some 'long stem' plantings in two low lying areas that are particularly flood prone. The trees for long stem plantings are grown to a height of around 1 metre in small containers. Holes are then dug to a depth of around 50 cm with a high pressure 'water lance', so the roots of the plant are very deep. As a consequence the plants are much less likely to be uprooted in the event of a flood.



**Lower banks in flood, Tuckett Park**



**Bridge crossing, Creekside Park**



**Moggill Creek in flood over Rafting Ground Rd**



**Bridge crossing as flood subsides**

Floods are a constant hazard for our section (see pictures), especially in January - March. For this reason we generally delay our major plantings until April/May or September/October. Unfortunately this year we were caught with a major flood in May, which affected both the major plantings mentioned above, as well as some of the plantings we had carried out in earlier years. At such times it is 'all hands on deck' to stand upright and re-stake plants that have been knocked over. In practice it is amazing that the majority of plants survive multiple floods. Small trees and shrubs may be knocked over, but when re-staked they recover quickly and benefit from a thorough watering. Intermediate sized trees are most vulnerable, especially if they are covered with weed vines that weigh them down and increase drag from the water flow. They are also more difficult to stand up and re-stake, which often requires the efforts of several people. However even they can survive and flourish provided that the root system has not been too badly damaged. I know of several trees we have planted that have been knocked over by floods and re-staked on at least 4 or 5 occasions.



**New Plantings April 2015 Creekside Park**



**Effects of flood on the Creekside Park plants, May 2015**

**July Working Bee (Photo Janine Nicklin**



**Volunteer Anni Ritters on the lower banks, Tuckett Park – note the large log lodged on a tree branch by the flood.**



## Morning Tea (Photo Janine Nicklin)



Overall, despite these setbacks, we continue to make good progress. Establishing new plantings in flood-prone areas is a significant challenge. In these areas we remove weed vines and brush-cut exotic grasses, but do not attempt to remove the roots or kill the grass with selective weedkillers, because the grass roots stabilise the ground and prevent erosion around the roots of our plantings.

I would like to thank all of our volunteers for their magnificent efforts during the year, also Mal Cadioli and his team from Brisbane Bushcare Pty Ltd (especially James Ross) and Habitat Brisbane (especially Cath Cleary) for ongoing support and assistance.

## Section 4 Showgrounds (Damien Egan)

Moggill Creek Catchment Group is a volunteer action group aiming to conserve and improve the natural environment of its catchment on both private and public land. The Showground Bush care group started in 1998 and is responsible for working on Brisbane City Council land from the culvert at Boscombe road along Rafting Ground Road to the Brookfield Road roundabout.

**Rafting Ground Road Site:** Total Hours 352 Plants 322

Starting at the Brookfield roundabout, Bryan and Jenny Hacker are continuing to do weed management on this site with new plantings totalling 103 and hours slaved 204.

### **Boscombe Road Area:**

A further 60 x10 metre area has been cleared and planted with 30 long stem plants by BCC contractors and planning is underway for another 60 long stem plants to be planted 2015/ 2016 .Our group has already added another 250 plants from MCCG with infill plantings at this site. Weed maintenance continues upstream towards the produce store and the bush tucker garden is now sadly overgrown. A work in progress?

**Kenmore State High School:** Total Hours 212 Plants 1515

Continued search and rescue weed maintenance and watering (Butterfly plants) of established areas for Student Stream Savers Stage 3 & 4 projects. Funding for which will run out by the end of this financial 2016

**NTD planting** (26th July) with years 9/10/11 students established 1000 plants along creek bank between McKay Brook and Moggill creek junction with 65 students participating, 25 of which were exchange students from Germany.



## Section 6 Upper Brookfield (Kate McVicar)

The highlight of the year for this section was the approval of the CCA Grant for \$6000. The grant provided for contractor support with brush cutting, spraying, hand weeding, augering in preparation for planting and overall maintenance of the site. HB provided additional support with the supply of plants and watering.

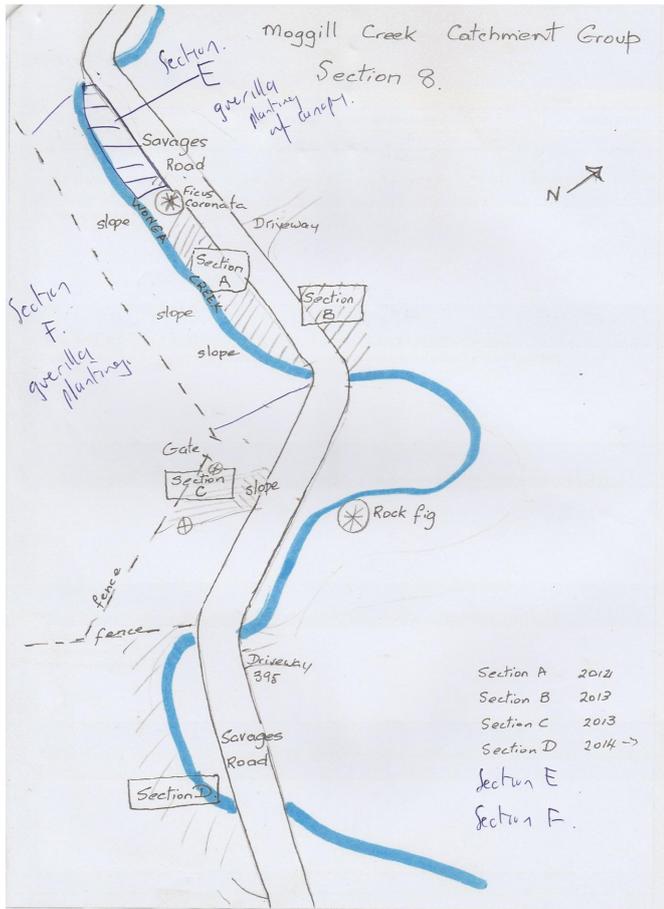
This assistance has been a massive boost to our efforts to keep this section going. The site is surrounded by large acreage properties, and many of these landowners are engaged in their own revegetation projects, which means that attendance at public working bees is low. At the moment there are only 4 of us locals working on the site.

In addition to the above, highlights include:

- The success of last year's planting with all plants not only surviving but thriving - see *before and after photos below*
- Clearing of a substantial mass of elephant grass and madeira vine, plus exotic grasses
- Participating in a trial of long stem planting of canopy trees (20 in total)
- Extension of the site by 800sq metres bringing total area to 2480 sq mtrs



## Section 8 Wonga Creek (John Crowley)



This year section 8 has been fortunate in winning the Community Grant offered by NRMA Insurance for the second year in a row. Along with infill planting and weeding of the six sections, lower and middle storey planting have been done in sectors D and F.

Mud Map of Sectors A – F



Sector D - Before



Sector D - After

In 2013-14, jute meshing, mulching and planting along the south eastern section of sector F will be continued with a similar extension in 2015-16.

The bank area between the road and the creek (sectors A and E) has been planted with a row of taller trees.

The riparian corridors are extending along Savages Road and Wonga Creek thanks to the efforts of our wonderful volunteers and those of Habitat Brisbane and the NRMA Community Grant members.

### **Section 9 Upper Gold Creek (Gordon Grigg and Des Scherman)**

We aim for 10 working bees a year and have missed a couple this year because of either rain or our unavailability. Typically we have about eight participants, and in the last couple of years we have focused less on the BCC land that adjoins Gold Creek Road and more on Cats Claw, wherever it occurs, including on private land. That shift in emphasis is allowing us to seek and treat patches that are sources of seed that will disperse widely. The Cats Claw focus is in tune with MCCG's focus on this nasty smothering weed, and our work has also had willing support from BCC through their Habitat Brisbane (on public land) and Land for Wildlife programmes. Some of that funding has left us with follow-up obligations, and we have recently agreed to do follow up work on three private properties for two years.

### **Section 11 McKay Brook (Bryan Hacker)**

The McKay Brook Bushcare Group continues to be active along 900m of the Creek, holding working bees twice each month. The trees along this entire stretch of creek are now 10-15 m tall, with a good diversity of species, several of which are propagating themselves naturally. The focus is on controlling invasive vines in areas previously planted, glycine, Madeira vine and balloon vine being of greatest concern. In spring 2015 the group planted 240 plants along a section to provide an effective margin to earlier plantings.

### **Section 12 Gap Creek (Mike Humphreys)**

The Gap Creek section has concentrated on removing the non-native grasses along the creek and greatly increasing the density of our plantings. We started planting heavily in May when we hoped that the heavy rains and flood events were finished for the year. From May through August we planted over 700 plants which we watered during the dry months. Now that the rains have returned the winter plantings no longer need to be watered and have hopefully developed sufficient roots so that they will withstand the next flood event. In consultation with Habitat Brisbane we also relocated a section of the trail away from the creek because the old informal trail that we had put in was eroding.

### **Pacey Rd. (Brian Krieger and Warren Hoey)**

The group continues to work on participants properties with assistance from the MCCG. Many of the participants are also LFW members and that also provides them with access to excellent services and support in keeping their sub catchment in a healthy state. Unlike most of the other working groups that tend to work in riparian zones, the work here involves the transition from the waterway to the ridgetop and in between, giving participants a variety of experiences and skills in rehabilitating these environments.

## **MCCG Projects**

### **1. Restoration of the riparian zone along Lower Moggill Creek (Malcolm Frost)**

An agreement was signed between Moggill Creek Catchment Group (MCCG) and SEQC for MCCG to act as Project Manager to undertake restoration work about Rowena Park, which is part of Rafting Ground Reserve. The agreement was for a four year program with SEQC undertaking to fund MCCG a total of \$90,000.

This is the first time MCCG has carried out any restoration work in the lower Moggill Creek Catchment, which is so close to the Brisbane River that the creek is tidal and somewhat saline. A work agreement was signed between MCCG and Brisbane Bushcare Pty Ltd to undertake clearing weeds and planting natives. A scope of work over the four years was agreed. The creek banks about Rowena Park were divided into four zones with the intention of working sequentially on the four zones over the four years but returning to each zone for maintenance.



Andrew Wilson was commissioned in October to undertake a botanical survey of the area which has been completed.



*Preparing the creek bank for planting.*

The drought ended in December and as consequence it was decided to begin planting along Zone A. Some hand weeding and site preparation were conducted and then altogether 770 tube stock plants and 24 canopy trees were planted mainly along the upper bank. Immediately after the planting there were two very hot days which caused about 5% of plants to die, but then came good rain.

The work program has been hindered by two flash floods which caused the creek to come up to the level of the park's grass to damage some of the new plantings. Severe erosion of the bank along Zone B caused over 1m of bank to be eroded and as a consequence no planting will now be undertaken along this bank.

***A flash flood caused the creek to rise over 6m to the height of the park's grass. When the water receded the plants were found to have survived.***





***Severe erosion along part of Zone B.***

Council have requested a change of scope and now the planting of Zone A is to be extended over 10m onto the park's grass. As a consequence the amount of restoration along Zone D which is now infested with Chinese elms will be limited.



***Preparing for further planting to increase the area of native plants***

Altogether about \$32,000 was spent up to June 2015.

## 2. Bird Project (Jim Butler and Ian Muirhead)



**Eastern Yellow Robin at the nest (Ed Frazer)**

### **Introduction:**

The aims of the project are:

1. Record and monitor the birds in the catchment
2. Identify changes over time – and relate these to seasonal, vegetational, climate changes
3. Work with other organisations to provide a sound scientific base
4. Reach out to the community

### **Report on Aim 1:**

We have monitored the birds within the Catchment by the BirdLife Australia methodology and the international eBird site. We have participated in the Brisbane City Council Surveys of Land for Wildlife properties and compiled the data from sites within the Catchment.

Several new birds were added to the Moggill Creek Catchment Bird List (available on the Website). The Historical Bird List, derived from data starting in 1900 until the present, contains 206 bird species as being recorded in the Catchment. The Current Bird List, which is a list of birds that are likely to be observed in the Catchment in a five year climate cycles, contains 200 bird species. The latest bird recorded in the Catchment, is the Australasian Pipit. This has never before been recorded, but was photographed by Ed Frazer at Brookfield in September 2015.

Both the Historical and the Current Bird Lists for the Catchment will be updated each year on the Catchment Website. The major international “eBird” Site in the USA will be analysed carefully each year to monitor the reports published by birders within the Catchment. Global warming is known to be moving the distributions of certain bird species and is expected to impact the Catchment.

### **Report on Aim 2**

The project has as yet not generated enough data for this aim to be progressed. Towards the end of the five year life of the Project, this aim will become the main focus.

### **Report on Aim 3**

We have continued our close working relationship with the staff at QUT and UQ; Birds Queensland and BirdLife Southern Queensland.

### **Report on Aim 4**

Reaching out to the community is an important aim of the project. One of us continues to write monthly articles on birds for THE LOCAL BULLETIN. The photos of the birds are supplied by Ed Frazer from Brookfield. We are very grateful to Ed for his important contribution to the Project. The articles have generated a steady stream of feedback. Contacts from readers have led to help with injured birds, explanations of bird behaviours that readers have puzzled about; and identification of birds people have observed. Jim has met and gone birding with some of the readers who have contacted him.

Jim has continued giving bird presentations at various clubs and schools in the district.

### **Conclusion:**

Due to several interruptions, not as much has been achieved in the fourth year of the project. The future for the project includes: more community outreach; using standard BirdLife Australia survey methods to collect the data. Our warm thanks to everyone who has helped us on this fabulous journey to help the birds in our Catchment.

### **3. Creek Health Monitoring Program (Adrian Webb)**

The creek health monitoring program commenced in early 2011 and since then has involved twice yearly monitoring at 12 sites across the catchment of creek bed and bank physical conditions, water quality measurements, and fish and macro invertebrate diversity and abundance.

The program has continued through the willing input of about 30 volunteers, quite a number of whom are under graduates or graduates with an interest in environmental management. We have been able to give some of them opportunities for training in water quality measurement and monitoring, fish identification, macro-invertebrate identification and aquatic weed identification. Like most things, we learn by practice. We are into our second year of monthly water quality measurement to give us a better understanding of the variability in water quality seasonally. The BCC and SEQC are continuing to support us through training and through the use of water quality monitoring equipment.

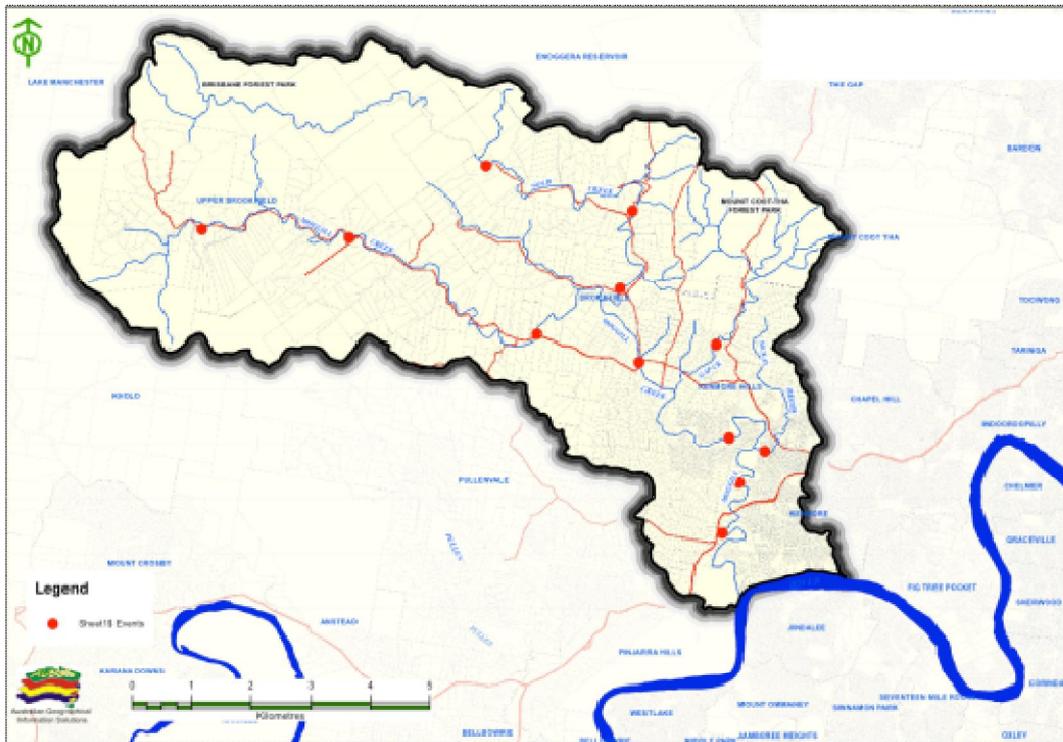
Although the previous year seemed quite dry, the last two monitoring events (May and November) have been 2-3 weeks after significant rainfall. Despite this Mackay Brook and the lowest Gold creek site had lower dissolved oxygen levels. Gold Creek also had high levels of Senegal tea.

The abundance of macro-invertebrates in November seemed lower than expected. This may be related to the drier spells over the last year.

The soluble salt gradients (eg. 250 to 600 micro Siemens) from the upper catchment to the lower catchment have persisted as expected. The site near Rafting Ground Reserve generally is higher than the others on Moggill creek. Since this site is affected by tides, that is not surprising. The Mackay Brook site often has very poor quality; this is probably due to waste water disposals from the urban area which includes the Kenmore Village and other businesses. Macro-invertebrate abundance and diversity at this site have been very poor over the last year. Dissolved oxygen is commonly in the low range.

Apart from that, water quality generally has been within the acceptable levels for freshwater streams in SEQ.

The most disappointing aspect of stream condition has been the establishment of serious aquatic weeds such as Senegal tea in the lower reaches of Gold Creek, and in the last 2 years significant infestations have developed at the Tuckett Park site on Moggill Creek and smaller infestations near the showgrounds. Sagittaria and purple taro have increased at each of these sites as well. Purple Taro has become very heavily established at the Jones Rd crossing into the Forest park, and has resulted in substantial sedimentation upstream of the crossing culvert.



CHMP Monitoring Sites

#### 4. Cat's Claw Creeper/ Invasive Vines Strategy (Adrian Webb, Gordon Grigg, Bryan Hacker, Warren Hoey)

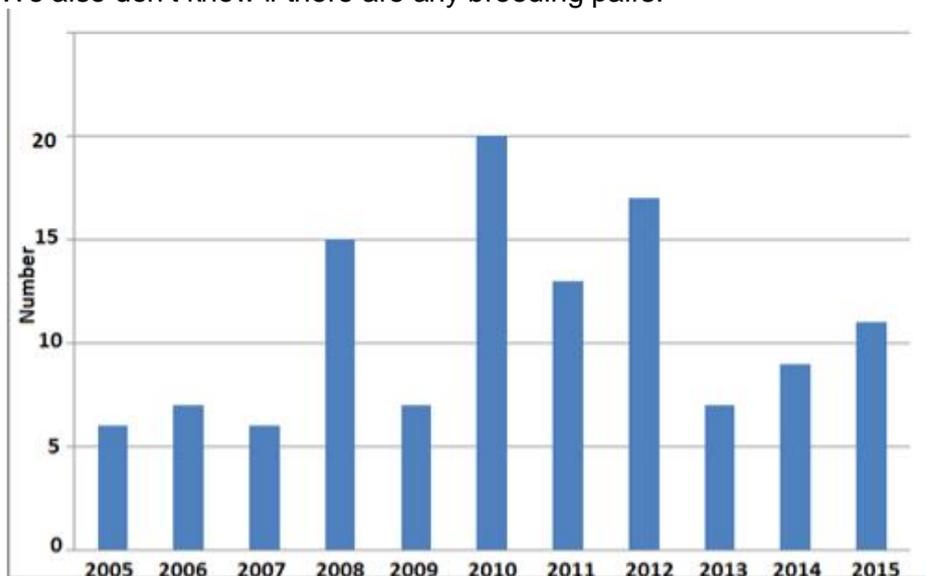
We have continued to work closely with BCC and SEQC in implementing a collaborative strategy with property owners to manage the cats claw and other transformer vines in the remnant forests of upper parts of Moggill Creek, Gold Creek and Wonga creek (Savages Rd) sub-catchments, and the more degraded remnant forests in the mid to lower parts of Gap creek and Moggill creek. A principal focus has been to protect not only valuable native fauna habitat in the private land but also the very substantial conservation areas that abut the D'Aguiar Range National Park. MCCG has been supported mainly through Government funds administered by SEQC. Recently, SEQ Water has been actively managing a large Cats Claw infestation in the Gold Creek Water Reserve above the dam wall. Pleasingly, SEQC have made further funds available to continue this critical work in 2015/16.



## 5. Platypus Survey (Chris Hosking)

Some key points from this year's survey:

- Platypus are persisting in lower Moggill Creek, despite its urban environment
- Number of platypus sightings was low in upper Moggill Creek
- Platypus have returned to two sites in upper Gold Creek where they haven't been observed for several years
- This is a snapshot survey on one morning. We know there are platypus in some sites where they weren't observed this time
- We don't know if a couple of sightings in close proximity were the same animal or two individuals. We also don't know if there are any breeding pairs.



## 6. Lower Moggill and Upper Gold Creek Bushcare Restoration Projects

A project to protect a 200 square metre section of lower Moggill Creek from erosion, and a second project to remove invasive weeds from the rehabilitated corridor along Upper Gold Creek Road were funded through the Brisbane City Council's Community Grants Program in the second half of 2014.

These projects were ably led by two of our Section Leaders, Judy Petroshevsky and Gordon Grigg. Both projects were made possible by the excellent cooperation and guidance of Habitat Brisbane.

## 7. Lower Moggill Project. (Judy Petroshevsky)

This project focused on the preparation of a 200 square metre section of erodible creek bank and then rehabilitating the area with appropriate native grasses, shrubs and trees. This was intended to lessen the strength of flood waters that flow through this area thus reducing the risk of considerable damage to creek banks and vegetation.



The area was prepared by brushcutting and spraying and subsequently covered with weed matting or a thick layer of mulch plus a web style matting to see which type of matting preparation was best suited to this area.

The area has since had a strong flow of water over it following recent heavy rains. The weed matting tended to be lifted by the water but was put back into place by our workers. The mulched area with webbed matting survived the flood flow without too much movement of the mulch and matting. Most of the plants survived and were aided by the stakes placed behind them, which served to give them some protection of flood debris. We have also observed that the weed matting is very much more effective in limiting weed growth than the mulch and web matting.

When completed, this area will serve to enhance the local park, called "Fortrose Green," and serve to raise awareness of our group's activities in the catchment.

### **8. Upper Gold Creek Bushcare Project (Gordon Grigg)**

The grant was used to employ contractors to undertake weed control along a 3 kilometre stretch of Gold Creek Rd, Brookfield. This has been the focus of our Habitat Brisbane/MCCG group since 1997 with the result that the vegetation on this section of the road, through bushland and rural properties, is in strikingly better condition than along many other roads in the Moggill Creek catchment.



Since 2013, however, with our group's and MCCG's focus shifting more towards control of Cat's Claw, the group has diverted much of its attention in that direction, working on private properties in particular because that is where the major infestations are, from which seeds infest both public and other private land.

This meant that, with limited manpower, the road section was getting less attention, and an infestation of Palm Grass, probably introduced as a result of BCC's mowing programme, was causing us considerable concern. This and the rest of the section became the focus of work supported by the grant and undertaken on the group's behalf by contractors.

The benefits to the community are that the upper stretch of Gold Creek Road is less under threat from introduced weeds, particularly the quick spreading and difficult to control Palm Grass. An additional benefit is that our MCCG group was able to devote a lot more time to controlling Cat's Claw, as part of the ongoing MCCG blitz on this nasty smothering weed.

## Reflecting and Looking Ahead



**Remnant Vegetation Moggill Creek Catchment.**

In my last report I included an aerial photo of the wilderness beyond the Gold Creek Reservoir with a strong message about the need for governments and the community to be vigilant and active in eradicating threats to these ecosystems that are the upstream part of our catchment. Since then we have been working with SEQWater with a view to establishing an MoU to ensure that we can work together more effectively. It's been a slow process and I will keep members posted on the outcome.

For this report, Adrian Webb supplied me with this large scale map of the remnant vegetation in our catchment. It again highlights our catchment's proximity to "the nearest thing we will see to a wilderness in this catchment." (2013-2014 Chairman's Report). Unsurprisingly, in the more heavily populated areas there is almost none at this scale of measurement. Quite a lot of the regenerated forests in Upper Brookfield are actually dominated by acacias/wattles that have led the recovery since the early forestry and agricultural activities. It is not uncommon to see large areas of acacia dominated woodland that has been growing for decades that will take many decades more before they include the full suite of species that were there prior to European occupation. It can take however, only a few moments to change the natural mix through poor management.

Hence our two major thrusts are (1) Revegetation and management of the lowlands; and (2) A focus on exotic weed invasions in the remnant ecosystems (vines and Chinese celtis etc). We do our best to hold ourselves and others to account for maintaining this focus.

In relation to point 1, an obvious thing strikes me as I look at the results of the work begun by the founders of this group some 18 years ago and that is that it has made a very positive difference to our natural environment in a relatively short period of time (or a long period depending on your expectations). Plantings (preceded by weeding) of indigenous species over that period and managed selectively, now dominate significant stretches of riparian zones to the point where the plantings themselves generate sufficient seed load to become almost self sustaining. I say "almost" advisedly as given our long history of introducing exotic plants to please our eye, we have permitted their escape into an environment largely devoid of their predators and other constraints on their growth. They will always remain a significant threat. I'll say more about that topic in the next section of this report.

We know from experience that in an unfettered contest, our slower growing indigenous plant species will be the losers.

To tackle Point 2 effectively, we really need the force to be with us. What do I mean by that? I mean having a committed partnership between the community and those agencies with a mandated interest in dealing with the likes of Cat's Claw and other threatening weeds. Agencies at all levels of government are a critical part of this mix.

I would like to acknowledge the growing partnership between the MCCG and SEQ Catchments. On top of our excellent partnerships with the BCC's LFW, Habitat Brisbane and Community Conservation Partnerships program, this is great news. Over the last few years, SEQC have funded small projects concerned with controlling Cat's Claw. In doing this they have been flexible enough to allow these efforts to neatly dovetail with the work on LFW properties. The Council's CCA program is central to this and we support its continued operation.

This partnership has clear benefits to this community but one not easily attained unless there is a cooperative approach from all concerned. In 2014/15, the MCCG continued to devote considerable effort to ridding the catchment of Cat's Claw. Funding obtained through South East Qld Catchments allowed us to work on two serious CCC infestations in Upper Brookfield. Pleasingly this work is continuing into the next financial year with a new round of funding. (AW)

We know to our alarm that many people do not know what Cat's Claw looks like. Our recent postings of Cat's Claw on our Facebook page will help to remedy this.

These partnerships are also critical in being able to share information. As a catchment group apart from our willing hands and brains, we do not possess significant technical resources. In all of our work, being able to map issues in sufficient detail against the backdrop of the landscape, geology, soils, ecosystems etc is vital if we are to monitor changes to the environment. All of the agencies we deal with construct maps for their own purposes. Obtaining access to the ones that are important to us is often difficult for reasons of privacy. Nevertheless, we keep trying. And we are often assisted by people in these agencies who are willing to help us find solutions. We know we can add value to the maps by including a higher level of detail based on our better knowledge of the catchment and the result is a better permanent record of the catchment and its changes. Our work on Cat's Claw includes mapping its occurrence and severity and based on a range of factors, estimate where it is likely to spread. This is critical knowledge if we are to head off the advance of this awful weed.

The CHMP project managed by the tireless Adrian Webb is another example where mapping is important. The project has been operating twice a year since 2011 building up a background picture of the health of our creeks. There is considerable noise in the system so this work takes time before we can relate what we are measuring to the way the land is used. We are very proud that this has been entirely funded by the MCCG and supported by a group of volunteers who believe in the long term value of the work.

It's worth taking a close look at the various reports provided by Section and Project Leaders. They contain a wealth of detail about our work. Don't be deceived by the brevity of some of them, for they all do significant and valuable work. All of the details about contacts and the working bee schedule are posted on our website and the Facebook page. We welcome your interest and participation. After all, you benefit from the efforts of these workers. I also note in the reports, the lack of mention of the social benefits of these productive gatherings. Jim Pope's photos are instructive in this regard. I know from direct experience that an important part of the success of the Pacey Rd group is being able to enjoy themselves at each event where the host literally runs the BBQ after the work is done.

As you may know, a number of the groups work under the auspices of Habitat Brisbane. The partnership works well. This allows volunteers to work on public lands and provides them with insurance cover, some material support and the opportunity to obtain grants from BCC. As the majority of the catchment is in private hands, we are under increasing pressure to implement cooperative models that allow works to be done on these lands, complementing the works done

elsewhere. The Pacey Rd group, now running in its 4<sup>th</sup> year, is an excellent example and we can learn a lot from them on how to establish and maintain such a group. The MCCG is very willing to sponsor such groups and provide whatever support we can muster.

I applaud the efforts of Linda Cusack and Phil Bird, assisted by Adrian Webb and Bryan Hacker in establishing a new group in Upper Brookfield

CHMP This is one of our most significant projects managed by the tireless Adrian Webb.

The Rowena Park project managed by Malcolm Frost and funded through SEQ Catchments, is located in a challenging environment. The area is part of the Rafting Ground Reserve and as such enjoys considerable human traffic. This area is managed by Parks Brisbane and our rehabilitation work must fit in with their plans. The site is at the lower end of this catchment, it is tidal, and is subject to severe flooding, threatening both the riparian plantings and bank stability. There are significant infestations of both Chinese Celtis and Cat's Claw Creeper however the ability to deal with these issues effectively is more constrained in a park environment than would be the case in other areas of the catchment. Malcolm is working towards establishing a Bushcare group with a view to long term maintenance of the site.

Added to the complex mixture on this site is the presence of indigenous birds such as crakes and rails whose habitat requirements [in our creek zones](#) are very specific, so replacement of weeds with native species must be done sensitively [and in stages](#).

Roger Jaensch, a professional ornithologist has been observing these birds in many local creeks, and the Brisbane River over the past 15 years. He has found that [particular sites in our creek zones](#), including Moggill Creek, presently support a distinctive suite of native bird species including four species of crakes and small rails. These birds favour continuous, dense low cover and may be scarce or absent where [creekside cover is too narrow and where trees dominate](#). Crakes and rails are the subject of a special Conservation Action Statement, [with guidelines for habitat management](#), produced by Brisbane City Council.

Roger funds his own survey work stating "the main issues impacting or threatening rail habitat in waterways are becoming clearer. At very least, anyone planning vegetation, hydrological or other works in the above-mentioned areas can check WildNet for precise locations of Lewin's Rails recorded so far." The MCCG is keen to cooperate with Roger in his work, [consistent with its aim to enhance biodiversity assets in Moggill Creek](#).

My comments in previous reports about the Creek Catchment Officer role still stand...I don't think BCC have it right. The officers themselves are outstanding in my view and try to do their very best for us. There are, however too few for the job and their interaction with catchment groups is therefore more constrained than we would like it to be.

I want to finish on a very positive note and it involves 'giving'. Several months ago we received a letter from the art students at St James College in Fortitude Valley. They were planning an exhibition and had decided to donate the proceeds to causes they believed in. They examined the websites of a number of environmental organizations, and we were one of a small group chosen to gauge our interest in receiving a donation. We were the only environmental group to respond so Cathie Mortimer and I visited the school and met the students who were very clear about why they decided to do this. They said they liked that we actually **did** the work for the environment. Say no more!

We recently received their donation and it will be put towards a project. And the students will now receive our quarterly Newsletter and feedback on the result of their generous donation. Thank You, St James College!