



MOGGILL CREEK CATCHMENT GROUP

P.O. Box 657, Kenmore, 4069

Moggill News, August 2001

Newsletter of the Moggill Creek Catchment Group

From the Chairman

Funding for 2001-2002.

It now appears certain that the MCCG will not be funded by Natural Heritage Trust for the period September 2001 to September 2002. This is most regrettable. We are doing our uttermost to obtain funding from several alternative sources, but this will not be adequate to continue to employ our Field Officer, Michael Reif, over the whole year. Our work on public land is secure, with support from Habitat Brisbane through our eight Bushcare Groups. But without NHT funding there is a limit to the support we can give private landholders. Brisbane Forest Park administration is keen to continue to support our nursery at Gold Creek, and appreciates the importance of our work on private land, particularly in providing a buffer zone on the southern borders of the Park. For private landholders we should be able to (a) offer free advice on weed control and appropriate species for planting (phone 3374 1468), (b) provide plants to those landholders who have already sent in operational plans for their revegetation projects and (c) provide limited numbers of plants to other landholders developing new projects, where these are approved by the MCCG Committee. Another option we should explore is purchasing tubestock wholesale and selling plants at cost to members (c. \$1.50 per plant). It is critically important that we maintain the impetus of the MCCG during the next year. This time next year there could be opportunities for a further round of NHT funding.

Michael Reif.

Michael has been working with the MCCG for almost three years and has made a major contribution throughout the catchment. Under his guidance the eight Bushcare Groups were set up and he has offered expert advice to more than 85 landholders, a high proportion of whom have started to revegetate their own land with local species. He has also collected seed of more than 60 local tree species native to our Catchment and grown as many as 12,000 plants for distribution. We will all miss Michael when he leaves our Catchment, and I would personally like to thank him for his enthusiastic contribution and wish him well in his future career.

A leader for Section 4.

Many thanks to Stephen White for taking responsibility for Section 4, which is the area around the Showgrounds. This area is probably the most 'visible' part of the whole catchment, and it is really important that we make an impact here. So we are hoping that all members living in the vicinity of the Showgrounds will support Stephen as he develops an action plan. His phone number is 3374 1653.



The Mirbelia St Bushcare Group admiring their new sign erected by Habitat Brisbane

New signs.

Have you seen all the smart signs which have just sprung up at our eight Bushcare sites? These are an excellent advertisement for our work on public land and should also encourage private landholders to do comparable work on their own land. Thanks to Tom McHugh for making the arrangements to have these signs put up.

Weedbuster Day.

Weedbuster Day in our catchment is scheduled for October 14, from 10-12.30.

So come along to the Brookfield Showground Roundabout and do your bit for the Catchment. This area of Moggill Creek is heavily infested with Chinese elms, castor oil and other environmental weeds and it desperately needs our help.

Bryan Hacker

The program to eliminate Fire Ants around Brookfield

Most readers will know that a colony of fire ants was found at the Brookfield Showground earlier this year. The Fire Ant (*Solenopsis invicta*) is a serious pest originally from South America. As well as potentially having a serious impact on crops, fruit and ornamentals, newborn or hatchling animals are susceptible to being stung and even killed and the ants may accumulate around small water sources in times of drought. The Fire Ant is such a serious pest that it is reported to be capable of 'removing whole layers of native fauna. Although in our area it is only known to be at the Brookfield Showground, the pest can spread rapidly and other nests could be developing further afield.

Control measures are now being brought into action, and some key points are listed below. All land within 2 km of an infection site (here, Brookfield Showground) will be treated, with four treatments each spring-summer over a 3 year period being considered necessary. Landowners will be informed when FACC officers want to conduct the treatments. Baits, comprising corn granules soaked with soybean oil and low-toxicity chemical, will be distributed from the ground in residential areas, vehicles in rural residential land and from the air in large open spaces. Any baits gathered by Fire Ants, will be taken back to the nest and there fed to the queen, destroying the colony. The metabolic growth inhibitor used will be a slow-acting stomach toxicant, hydramethylnon, and the insect growth regulator S-methoprene will also be used (already used in Brisbane for large-scale mosquito control). These toxins degrade within hours of exposure to sunlight.

It is likely that some non-target insects will be adversely affected by the baiting, and possibly animals higher up the food chain. Support is being offered by DPI for groups who want to measure any effect. It is likely that any effect would be temporary, and justified considering the threat of the Fire Ant becoming established in Queensland.

A public meeting will be held in our area later this year to disseminate information and address community concerns. For further technical information, contact Blair Roots (3898 9619) or Megan Frost (3898 9641).

MCCG and Allied Environmental Groups

In the course of Moggill Creek Catchment Group (MCCG) activities, the names of other organizations, activities and programs appear. A brief explanation of them follows. Hopefully it does not omit some which should be included. It does not intend to cover all things being done outside specific MCCG programs, such as that by individuals engaged in useful environmental work without their being members of the Group, or special interest groups such as birdwatchers and frog enthusiasts whose records can be of use to us. The list is alphabetical. Some entries are referred to in association with others appearing earlier but are explained later in their alphabetical position.

Australian Trust for Conservation Volunteers (ATCV) (See Conservation Volunteers Australia)

The Brisbane Rainforest and Information Network (BRAIN) is a BCC-sponsored Habitat Brisbane group with interest in preservation and restoration of rainforest. It does not appear to have any direct activity in our catchment. It publishes a very useful BRAIN newsletter.

Brisbane Forest Park (BFP) is a conglomerate comprising National Parks, State Forest, BCC Reserves, land belonging to adjoining local authorities and some private landholdings. The several interests are coordinated by a Queensland government authority, the BFP Administration Authority. BFP was at one time seen to include Mt Coot-tha Reserve, but that is now separately administered by BCC. BFP's interest to us is threefold. It provides adjoining environmentally managed land on some of our northern and eastern boundaries. The Gold Creek Reserve portion is an important part of our catchment as Section 7. Our NHT funding has been achieved jointly with BFP.

Bushcare. This term has led to some confusion. It is used for a national program funded by NHT for community projects to protect remnants of privately owned native vegetation. It has also been used for a BCC program whereby BCC and the community work together to protect and enhance biodiversity. To avoid confusion the latter has been named Habitat Brisbane.

Conservation Volunteers Australia (CVA) (until recently known as Australian Trust for Conservation Volunteers - ATCV) provides labour for environmental projects. In our catchment, this has been mainly associated with VCA work but has also been used by some MCCG activity. In these, funding support has been provided by BCC which has in turn secured NHT funding. Greening Australia also contributes to the activity of CVA.

Cubberla / Witton Catchment Network. This name covers environmental activity in the Cubberla Creek catchment which borders ours on the east. Our main interest lies in THECA.

Greening Australia is a non-government community organization concerned with conservation and planting of native trees. It provides assistance to groups of any kind engaged in such work. Its plant nursery at The Gap is a source of suitable native plants for our work. It supported BCC and REPA in plantings at Rafting Ground Reserve. At present it is supporting the production of a CD ROM which will provide much-needed description of the grasses in our catchment.

Habitat Brisbane is a BCC program which supports community projects aimed at environmental improvement on public land, including waterways. It is a cooperative venture between the Environment and Parks and the Waterways branches. Our association with it arose from our sectional undertaking of group-based projects on public land, leading to invitations to the several

groups to become members of Habitat Brisbane. It provides us with insurance and material support.

Landcare defies brief definition. It is best described as a movement characterised by a shift of responsibility for, and control of, many areas of natural environment management for numerous authorities towards the communities involved, although retaining much of the higher level support, both technical and financial. A feature is a focus on whole catchment and regional issues rather than on individual properties. It has grown in some 15 years to include over 4000 autonomous community groups, of which we are one. As a concept, it is referred to as (small-l) landcare, while the coordination necessary for support is Landcare. In Queensland this is exercised through the Department of Natural Resources, through which we become a member. As such, we receive minor financial support and insurance cover. Note that Landcare Australia Ltd does not equate to Landcare or landcare, but is a national body that builds partnerships between landcare and the corporate sector, carries out awareness raising activities and supports groups in their own local fund raising.

Land for Wildlife (LFW) is a voluntary scheme which aims to encourage and assist private landholders to provide habitats for wildlife on their properties, even though they may be managed for other purposes. Membership is accompanied by assistance in meeting objectives, including the circulation of a good newsletter. It is sponsored by local councils although the extent of such in Queensland has led to government coordination. It is a useful adjunct to our activities and many of our members belong to both.

Mt Coot-tha Forest Park adjoins BFP and comprises the NE part of our catchment. It is managed by BCC and is our Section 13. (There does not appear to be consistent use of the name in full.)

Natural Heritage Trust (NHT). In 1997 the Commonwealth provided \$1.25 billion to establish NHT to stimulate activities in the national interest which achieve the conservation, sustainable use and repair of Australia's natural environment. It has provided the main direct funding of our activities and, in addition, of other programs assisting us.

Nature Reserve. Recently, provision has been made for nature reserves on private land, the designation attaching to the land title rather than to the owner as is the case with VCAs. This gives longer term security to restoration and maintenance activity. It is an arrangement made with the state government (EPA) and is appropriate to larger areas than are usually represented in VCAs. Only one such has to date been made in our catchment.

Nature Search is a Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service which engages the community to collect high quality information on the flora and fauna of the state, which is done by a network of volunteers. Its aims include "assistance in the conservation and protection of Queensland's biodiversity by gathering scientifically reliable data that can provide a valuable contribution to management decisions.

Pullen Pullen Catchments Group has similar objectives to ours and adjoins us on our southern boundary.

Rafting Ground Reserve is a BCC reserve which lies within our Section 1 and is managed by BCC. REPA and Greening Australia assisted in significant replanting work. It has become a well-used public park and a valuable demonstration of the effectiveness of informed revegetation.

Rural Environment Planning Association (REPA) was established by local residents in 1973 with the aim of preventing random and undesirable development at the expense of the rural environment in the Brookfield, Pullenvale and Moggill area. While its activities have not, in the

main, been overtly towards natural environment restoration it has been effective in preserving the environment to the extent that we still have something worth working on. It was involved in one conspicuous, hands-on rehabilitation project in the Rafting Ground Reserve and has continuously promulgated the idea of vegetational enhancement. Its most valuable contribution in that regard was its publication of Putting Back the Forest, which describes how to restore vegetation, tells what species should be used according to site, and gives good descriptions of many for the purpose of identification.

Save Our Waterways Now (SOWN) is a community group active in the Enoggera Creek catchment, which is that on our NE boundary. Being a relatively heavily urbanized area, the focus is on the creek itself rather than on higher land.

The Hut Environmental and Community Association (THECA). This is largely an educational centre located in Chapel Hill, within Mt Coot-tha Forest Park but in the Cubberla creek Catchment portion. The Hut serves as a venue for meetings, talks, workshops etc where participants or audiences often extend beyond the catchment. A Water Watch officer is located there. There is associated bush regeneration activity within the Habitat Brisbane program.

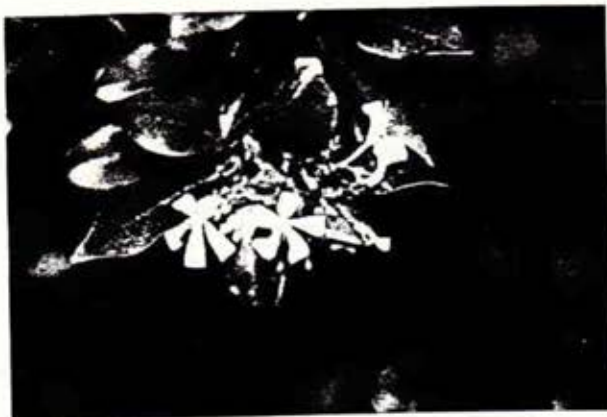
Voluntary Conservation Agreements (VCAs) are legal agreements between landholders and BCC to manage their land for the purpose of restoring, as far as possible, original vegetation; and consequently, wildlife. Restrictions are placed on development and activities within the areas which are subject to annual inspection to ensure that sufficient progress is being made. There are 14 such agreements in this catchment.

Water Watch is a nation-wide initiative which addresses the health of waterways. The name came to our notice at an earlier stage when the organization gave some assistance to our field officer in setting up a water monitoring program; which is now purely an internal activity.

Graeme Wilson

Weed of the Future - Mock orange - *Murraya paniculata*

One of the things that never ceases to amaze me is the fact that humans seem unable to learn from the mistakes of the past. Most of our members will be familiar with weeds such as *Ochna serrulata* and *Lantana camara*. These plants were brought to Australia as garden plants and were used particularly for hedging. Unfortunately these plants have not remained in gardens and have spread to become serious weeds in South-east Queensland, including the Moggill Creek Catchment.



Murraya paniculata - Mock Orange. A wolf in sheep's clothing?

In recent years the hedge has returned as a fashionable item and thousands of hedge plants have been planted on both new and existing properties. One of the more popular species is mock orange (*Murraya paniculata*). This is an introduced species which displays many characteristics of previous weeds such

as *Lantana* and *Ochna*. Perhaps the most alarming is the red, fleshy fruits of this species. Red and black are two colours that are very noticeable to birds, which eat the fruit and spread the seeds. Another factor is that this species is able to grow in almost all soil types and will survive even in

dry areas such as ridges.

This plant was first noticed to be a problem by the MCCG after a natural regeneration experiment conducted in Kenmore. An area under a large Moreton Bay fig was revegetated in mid 1999. Approximately 1000m² were mulched with 600m² planted with local rainforest species. The remaining 400m² were left with a cover of mulch to see what species the birds would distribute. After 14 months all seedlings on site were counted and recorded. From a total of 197 seedlings there were 66 mock orange seedlings. This was by far the dominant species with the next two species being camphor laurel and Chinese elm, with 18 and 16 seedlings respectively. A closer inspection of the vegetation along the creek showed that mock orange was also establishing there in large numbers.

These results are quite alarming and indicate that within 20-30 years mock orange could be another weed that groups like ours have to deal with. From my own personal observations it seems that older, established plants produce the most seed. This is particularly the case for plants that are more than 10 years old. Fortunately there are locally native plants that can be used for hedges. One that is currently in use is the scrub cherry, *Syzygium australe* but another one that would be suitable is the creek lily-pilly, *Acmena smithii*. If you have recently planted a mock orange hedge and dislike weeds such as Lantana I urge you to replace them with locally native species that will not create a weed problem in the future.

Michael Reif

Photography Competition 2001

There is still time to enter this year's MCCG photography competition organized again by Judy Gower. Because of the support of local sponsors and donors, prizes are worth over \$1000. The idea behind the competition is to use the camera lens to look more closely at our local environment. Judy has done a great job in getting support for the competition from sponsors and donors and each year the entries are showing greater scope and sophistication. Members are encouraged to spread the word about this competition and urge participation. Entries close September 30.

Entries are in three sections: Amateur Adult; Young Photographer; and Professional. There are two categories: Environmental Issues; and Native Flora and Fauna.

Entry forms are available from Kodak Express at Kenmore Shopping Village, or from Judy Gower (Phone 3878 4790).

The judge is catchment resident, Dr Joseph McDowell, Senior Lecturer in Photography at Griffith University.

According to Judy, this year's Spring competition should provide some perfect weather for taking photos. For young photographers, school holidays should provide opportunities for shoots.

Sponsors include: Brisbane West.com.au; Moggill Constructions; Alan Rogers, Chemist - Kenmore; The Local Bulletin; Brookfield Produce; Kodak Express; Darryl Mappin Nursery; Kenmore Veterinary Surgery; The Print Shoppe; Pizza Capers; Kenmore Acupuncture Clinic.

Donors include: Margaret de Witt, Councillor for Pullenvale Ward, Cafe Bliss, Bank of Queensland, Kenmore Village Management; Mark McCarthy Automotive; Kodak Australia; Kenmore Village Deli; Hon. David Watson, MP, Member for Moggill; Kenmore Village Fruit Bowl; Poolmart - Kenmore; The Gunn Family.

Dingoes and Wild Dogs

Dave Kington's talk at our half-yearly public meeting at the Brookfield Hall has aroused wider

community interest. His talk was on the wildlife management role of dingoes in the Brisbane Forest Park and some more recent problems of wild dogs and dingoes on the residential fringes of the Park.

Based on his long experience of dingoes and wildlife management, Dave Kington's plea was for understanding and responsibility in dealing with the Park's top predator. In the Park environment, dingoes effectively control populations of both wildlife and feral animals such as pigs, cats and foxes. Moreover, in that environment, their own population has remained static. The problems are emerging with the easy food sources that are attracting dingoes out of the park. That's where some responsibility is needed.

As discussion following Dave Kington's talk revealed, a growing local catchment problem is that of "rabble packs" of feral dogs, roaming domestic dogs, hybrids and dingoes. These packs do not have the same social behavior as dingoes and are more dangerous. Reports of attacks on domestic dogs and other animals and even the stalking of people by these dog packs have caused alarm.

Bryan Hacker was one of a small group called together by the State Member for Moggill, David Watson, to discuss the problem. The pamphlet enclosed with this newsletter was an outcome of their discussions.

Reviewing MCCG

Adrian Webb, MCCG's Map Officer, tabled for discussion at the 20 July meeting a paper reviewing the Group's work until now and considering its future directions. Three years seemed a good time to consider achievements to date and take a realistic look at the Group's establishing goals in the light of those achievements. Those goals have involved improving the catchment's environmental quality by controlling weeds, restoring natural vegetation and waterways, monitoring water quality, and generally maintaining the rural nature and visual appeal of the area.

Visits to the catchment sites show much is being achieved. All those cleared and mulched areas with their small forests of stakes marking new plantings of local species are a tribute to the regular working bees and a practical demonstration to others of what needs to be done. Plantings made three years ago, when the group first started, include trees already 4-5 m tall. The new plantings also draw attention to the remaining tangles of weeds along the watercourses and show them up for the destructive invaders they are. At the same time it can be a little dispiriting to see the likely sources of the same weeds happily nurtured as prize plants full of seeds and blossoms in nearby yards and properties.

Adrian has found that the aerial mapping and Geographic Information System techniques provide a useful catchment perspective. An aerial mapping view of the catchment that allows closer focuses on selected areas (and even rooftops) can help residents identify their properties and locations in relation to catchment geography. It can also help in identifying habitat corridors or weed problems and in locating the work of the catchment groups as part of the catchment geography. He will contact the DPI regarding a poster-sized aerial map of the catchment and a number of detailed maps of particular sections to use in explaining and reviewing our work in the Moggill catchment.

Down on the ground, it's habitat corridors, exotic weeds, fire management, revegetation and water quality. For all those, communication is important if the work already done by the groups on public land and the work on private properties is to be understood, appreciated and imitated.

The ending of funding for our field officer, Michael Reif, means that the Group's objectives will need reconsideration. Michael's valuable work in these establishment years needs a detailed report in itself.

Members who wish to share their views on catchment management or report major problems or personal successes in aspects of landcare within a catchment perspective should contact Adrian so that these views can be shared among members. Write to Adrian Webb, 65 Savages Road Brookfield 4069 or email adrian@webbnet.com.au.

**Sunday October 14 is:
WeedBuster Day!!**

Place: Brookfield Roundabout

Time: 10-12.30

All Welcome - bring your friends!

Tools provided.

Bring drinking water, hat, sunscreen, stout shoes

(For further information, phone Robyn Frost 3374 0649, or Bryan Hacker 3374 1468)