

MOGGILL CREEK CATCHMENT GROUP

www.moggillcreek.org.au



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NEWSLETTER

AUTUMN 2013



◀ Workers (see Street Coming Together, p. 6)
Photo: Warren Hoey



▲ Water Dragon
Too much water for a water dragon: a moggill above Moggill Creek in flood.
(For newcomers: it is thought that the name Moggill came from the muggill, the Aboriginal name for the water dragon.)
Photo: J Willard



◀ Busy bee (see A Rare Sight, p. 7)
Photo: Dale Borgelt



◀ Why throw it away (See Storm Damage, p. 3)
Photo: Bryan Hacker



▲ Enoggera Creek (see What's wrong p. 2)

Editorial

What we do is so much influenced by the weather that it is almost inevitable in looking back over the previous three months that it occupies much of our thinking. Both drought and flood were near extreme. Nevertheless, as said previously, these are recurrent characteristics of our environment. Our vegetation has evolved in adaptation, and what we do now will have to meet the adaptive requirements. We do things which must be regarded as trial and error, but the erratic weather does not necessarily reveal our errors at all promptly and thus we can not expect steady progress. Do not be discouraged by some failures.

A striking feature of vegetation over the last few months is the number of species, both native and exotic, which have flowered much more heavily than we have seen before. Some flowered twice whereas normally they do so once. And some have flowered sparsely or not at all. Fairly certainly some aspect of weather has caused it. But what? Those of us who take an interest in such things take great pleasure in spending time in the bush. It is free to all to become involved.

This newsletter has become, in recent times, rather heavily loaded with telling readers what they should do and how; also giving information which would be useful background to their activities. But all this is aimed at our objective of preserving and enhancing our native vegetation. Is that being successfully done? We think so and start here, intending to continue in future issues, with reports on projects which are encouraging, one an individual's progress on his own land, the other about a group of people working together on contiguous properties.

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.

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Dedicated to a better Brisbane

What's wrong in this picture?

The picture on p1 is a postcard dated 1900. It shows upper Breakfast or lower Enoggera Creek. (The one creek changes its name somewhere along its length.) It is an idyllic scene, but...

There is an excellent forest on the far bank but it ends abruptly, leaving a wide treeless strip down to the bank. In fact, the near bank has apparently been cleared. This is not natural; there would have been trees and shrubs, necessary to provide an extensive deep root mass which holds banks from collapsing and scouring by floods. It shows that European destruction of creeks was under way over 100 years ago, and apparently admired. Many of our creeks and rivers are victims of bank clearing, the repair of such proving difficult.

Graeme Wilson

Chairman's Report

The old adage "be careful what you wish for" comes to mind in reflecting on recent weather events. A very dry period over the last few months with few signs of storms let alone monsoons had many wondering whether we were heading into a dry spell. Well, that was not to be, at least in the short term. Is this an exceptional event? I don't think I have lived long enough to know. I do know that the walking archive, John Smith from Upper Brookfield, would be able to compare it with all previous major weather events in his lifetime; and do it solely from memory!

Your committee has been busy over the Xmas/New-Year break in preparing a number of funding applications to the Brisbane City Council's Community Conservation Initiatives program. If projects are approved, funds will not be given directly to the successful applicants - the BCC will manage the project. However, I am assuming that the Council will ensure that there is effective communication between the BCC and the applicant.

The timing of the application process was unfortunate, but the opportunity to influence the allocation of BCC resources had to be taken. I know that many landholders also took the opportunity to make submissions. Decisions about which projects will be "funded" are expected around the end of February. We are still feeling the impact of not having the services of a dedicated Creek Ranger as we have been blessed with having some excellent people over the years. In the current circumstances we are very fortunate to have access to Amanda Maggs. Her previous role in supporting the Pullen Pullen Catchment Group has given Mandy an excellent understanding of the issues in the western catchments, all of which she now supports. We welcome her to her new role.

Just before Xmas we received good news that the Queensland Government would provide financial support to the Pacey Rd project through the Everyone's Environment Program. This is significant in that it directly supports the hard work of a group of private landholders in rehabilitating the natural environment on their properties.

This is my first 3 months in the role as chair of the MCCG and I am looking forward to building on our achievements. I want to thank the Malcolm Frost, the previous Chair of the MCCG, and Deb Ford, our former Secretary for their diligent efforts in guiding and supporting the work of the group. Voluntary work is just that, but it also requires a strong sense of the value of giving to the community. Persistence also helps, or so I am told. With a willing committee I am looking forward to a very good 2013.

Warren Hoey

Silver-leafed ironbark

I know one shouldn't have favourites, but the silver-leafed ironbark (*Eucalyptus melanophloia*) is such a strikingly handsome tree that it is my favourite local eucalypt. It is one of the less-common eucalypts in our district; one quite large specimen may be seen at the junction of Boscombe Road, and Brookfield Road, below the Anglican church. The photograph on p.5 was taken at Toogoolawah, showing what a fine tree silver-leafed ironbark can be when grown in the open.

This species can achieve a height of 20m. The bark is black, deeply furrowed and the leaves, as the name suggests, are an attractive silvery blue, the colour particularly noticeable in young growth (see p.5). Unlike all other eucalypts in our district, leaves on mature trees are opposite, lacking petioles (leaf stalks). It flowers mainly in summer, the flowers quite similar to those of other eucalypts.

Silver-leafed ironbark occurs naturally from north-east NSW to North Queensland, favouring slightly better soils, although in our district growing on infertile soils in mixed-eucalypt woodland.

Bryan Hacker

Storm damage

Hopefully you, our reader, have not suffered too much damage from the recent heavy rain and strong winds. Most of us on acreage, though, will have had branches blown down and sometimes trees uprooted.

Soon after the storm piles of branches started to appear along the roadside, awaiting pick-up by the Council (see photo, p1). For those on smaller properties, this is a very necessary service, but is it necessary on larger properties? It is ironic that re-vegetators spend a considerable amount of money on mulch and fertilizer, yet throw away organic matter, and the nutrients it contains, following storm damage. Larger branches may be cut and laid along the contour to reduce erosion, while smaller branches may be broken up and scattered as a coarse mulch in revegetation areas; there to break down, reduce soil moisture loss and provide habitat value.

Bryan Hacker

Rehabilitation of sick, injured and orphaned animals

(The following was sent to me by Cameron Wregg, Ranger with the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection, in response to a request for advice of the requirement that a permit is required to look after and rehabilitate protected native animals. Accompanying it was most useful information on rescue and rehabilitation, which should be carried by persons who do care for such disadvantaged animals. It is far too long to include here and has been placed on our website, from which it can be downloaded and printed. For those who do not have the facilities to do so, we have printed copies at The Cottage.) Editor

Much of Queensland's native wildlife is protected under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992*. This legislation provides for a licensing system to help protect native wildlife from over exploitation and to ensure wild populations of plants and animals are protected. Anyone who intends to take, use or keep native plants and animals should be familiar with Queensland's wildlife laws and regulations.

The *Nature Conservation Act 1992* provides a mechanism for the rehabilitation of sick, injured or orphaned protected animals so that these animals can be returned to the wild.

Volunteer wildlife carers perform a valuable community service by rescuing and rehabilitating thousands of protected animals each year. The regulation allows for the rescue of sick, injured or orphaned native animals in emergency circumstances by unlicensed persons. A person who is not licensed should give the animal to the holder of a rehabilitation permit immediately. However, where this is not practical, arrangements must be made within 72 hours for the animal to be given to a licensed carer. Please consider the animal's welfare at all times as delays in getting the animal to a carer are likely to cause its condition to deteriorate.

To report sick, injured or orphaned animals, call the RSPCA Qld
(<http://www.ehp.qld.gov.au/contactus/index.html#1300animal>)

Bush Regeneration at 88 Gap Creek Road

An area of about 2.6 hectares centred on 88 Gap Creek Road has been under regeneration since 2003 by the Rowlands family. The area is "floored" by a hybrid soil-alluvial fan, resulting from a Pleistocene uptilt along the fault zone that affords today's Gap Creek Road access. This tilting re-aligned the Gap Creek channel and protected the soil/ fan deposit from modern creek erosion. The soil profile is a thick (over 3m) series of accreted and stacked creek silts, sands, and gravels. These are intercalated with muddy, humic, layers that represent bank- overtopping slack-water fines drape, associated with flood events. The soil (or fossil creek fan) is at the base of the local landscape and benefits from run-off from the surrounding high ground. The soil profile is well-drained courtesy of its clastic creek constituents. Gap Creek which fringes two thirds of the project area has its profile evened out by andesite dykes which intrude the underlying Fernvale Schists.

Some field review and advice for the project was given by Graeme Wilson of the MCCG several years into the project. However the prime strategic and tactical advice, at project start-up, came from Ms Jen Ford, Principal Restoration Ecologist (and a Rowlands family member) with Ecosure, who kicked the project off with two on site workshops. These workshops stressed the scrape-paint method for ochra "kill", and the importance of non-clear-felling of woody weeds before the growth and establishment of the newly-planted native flora. Ms Ford also stressed the target to set for the project was to achieve as big a floral species diversity as possible, and to aim for a multi-story plant population. Graeme Wilson strongly agreed with these aims when informally reviewing the project last year. We have, therefore, tried to plant as many native species as we could..

Regeneration has involved the removal of lantana from about 500 sq.m. of the property including along the creek bank and the sequenced clearing of exotic woody weeds such as camphor laurel; chinese elm; privet, and thickets of ochra. This sequenced clearing produced in excess of 150 cu.m. of mulch which was used during regeneration planting to provide protection and water economy for young plants.

A large proportion of the trees, shrubs and mat rushes planted have come from the MCCG and include a batch of Birdwing Butterfly vines which are now consolidating their presence in our project area. Two have started to "crown" the tree they were planted under and we are hoping for good tree-top expansion of these vines.

Over 6000 trees shrubs and rushes have been planted with an estimated failure rate of 6%. Most of our planting failures have come from the flood events since 2011, and are confined to our creek- bank plantings. Planting has been done in root ball sized holes which are relatively deep.

A large section of the ground cover is various species of "volunteer" native grass. Many more understory shrubs are planned for this area as tree cover matures.

The geomorphic/geological profiles developed for our project area might be useful in applying our experiences in revegetation to similar landscapes in the Moggill Creek Catchment. However a flat, deep soil at the base of the local landscape may be an unusual feature in the MCCG area.

We have had fun doing this regeneration work and welcome any MCCG members dropping in for an inspection, or to give us advice or comment. The project is still very much a work in progress.

Nigel Rowlands



◀ Graeme Wilson (see Senior Citizen, p. 8)



▲ Antechinus (see Keeping a record, p. 7)
Photo: Bryan Hacker



▲ Guava (see Guava p. 7)
Photo: Bryan Hacker



◀ Silver-leaved Iron bark (see p. 3)
▼ Photo: Bryan Hacker



A street coming together to restore our community environment The Pacey Road Roving Working Bee, Upper Brookfield

One of the issues facing the restoration of catchment areas in Brisbane is that about 70% of land is privately owned. MCCG and Brisbane City Council Land for Wildlife program have recognised that engaging private landholders is the best way to achieve a really effective clean-up of invasive weeds and ultimately a rehabilitation of remnant vegetation. But of course co-ordinating landholders so that they work together can be a challenge so what do you do? You lead by example and hope that more will join in.

Thus, Pacey Road resident Linda Langley, and Emma Maltby, the then Brisbane City Council Creek Ranger for Moggill Creek Catchment, with the support of Malcolm Frost then Chairman of MCCG, called a Pacey Road residents' meeting at the Upper Brookfield Hall in 2010. It was a freezing cold night in June but about five landholders came to the meeting to discuss what was then a proposed project.

At the meeting, whilst the discussion was about seeking funding, one of the outcomes was the agreement that a roving working bee should be put together for the Pacey Road Sub-Catchment to demonstrate commitment by the people of the street to rehabilitate their portion of the creek and as a group run a project - and make a success of it. And so was born the **Pacey Road Roving Working Bee, Upper Brookfield!**

Creek Rangers and Land for Wildlife officers played an important role in getting the group started by organising the roster, helping to develop letterbox drops and keeping the enthusiasm strong over the first few events. Since mid 2012, the residents have been organising and running the working bees themselves.

One local resident and now Pacey Road Working Bee co-ordinator with Linda Langley, Brian Krieger said: "I was a bit nervous when I went to the first one as I had only been in the neighbourhood for about 12 months. Apart from talking with my Creek Ranger about the plan for my property through the BCC Land for Wildlife Program, I really knew nothing. It was really great, everyone was excited to get started, we did introductions, a basic risk assessment to cover the work area, the landholder described the plan in general and off we went. A few hours later found everyone on the balcony drinking tea and eating biscuits. Remarkable!"

Since that first Roving Working Bee, the group has gone from strength to strength with 12 property owners now participating regularly and we average about 10 people at each working bee. Every month now for nearly 18 months we meet up and weed then plant the catchment area at a resident's property (See photo p1).

Brian commented: "You can see the difference in the street. Every day on my drive home, I see the different pieces of work we have done and think, I did a bit of that and it looks great!"

In 2013 the MCCG, with the support of Pacey Road residents, received a grant to conduct further weed removal work. The Upper Brookfield State School has also joined residents in the MCCG quest to restore the creek to a place of natural beauty. The MCCG, Habitat Brisbane and the Brisbane City Council Land for Wildlife Program are very enthusiastic about the initiative at Pacey Road. They hope that other neighbouring land owners will begin their own co-operative groups to care for their bush.

To find out more contact Warren Hoey, MCCG Chairman E:hoeywj@gmail.com

Vine Weed Control Workshop at Smith's Scrub

On Saturday 6th April, the MCCG will be hosting a vine weed control workshop as part of a project funded by a Community Action Grant under the Australian Government's Caring For Our Country banner. The event will be held on site at Upper Brookfield.

Smith's Scrub is a Nature Refuge and contains endangered gallery forest. The owners, Edie and John Smith have devoted considerable effort over many years towards protecting and enhancing the ecological values of the site. They are Land for Wildlife members and are participating in the Brisbane City Council's two million trees program

This project is focussed initially on the mechanical removal on vine weeds along the western boundary of Smith's Scrub, followed by chemical treatment where necessary. The encroaching vines, mainly madiera and glycine, are a severe threat to the health of the rainforest canopy along that margin. If allowed to grow unchecked, they will destroy existing vegetation and reduce the recruitment of new seedlings.

First stage mechanical treatment has been completed with follow up work to commence soon. The workshop will run for approximately 3 hours and is targeted at local landholders who are interested in controlling their vine weeds. The intent is to make this event as practical as possible with a walk around the site following the talks. Speakers will include Andrew Wilson and Kym Johnson. Further details will be posted by email and flyers closer to the date. Put it in your diary!

Warren Hoey

Guava – a widespread weed in our catchment

The guava, *Psidium guajava*, would have been introduced as a fruit tree from its home in tropical America, and, indeed, the fruit are delicious. But here it has become a significant weed and efforts should be made to control it, although it is not listed by the Council as an environmental weed. It is particularly abundant on cleared slopes in the Upper Brookfield area. Guava is a shrub or small tree growing to a height of about 7m. It is in the family Myrtaceae, as is our feature native plant in this issue, *Eucalyptus melanophloia*. Flowers have 4 or 5 white petals c. 2cm long and numerous stamens (see photo on p5). Leaves are opposite, with petioles (leaf stalks) 4-8 mm long; they are sparsely hairy above, and 7-12 cm long and 4-7 cm wide. The fruit is up to 5 cm long and attractive to birds which distribute the seed.

The question arises is guava, being in the myrtle family, attacked by myrtle rust, a disease which was first reported in Australia in April 2010? According to several websites, myrtle rust belongs to a group of fungi known as the 'guava rust complex'. Myrtle rust can affect many Australian native species including *Eucalyptus*. It was described only recently, and given the name *Uredo rangellii*. It appears that the guava rust complex (*Puccinia psidii*?) attacks guava in Brazil. It would be of interest to know whether or not the guava that grows locally is affected by the rust.

Bryan Hacker

A rare sight inside or out

"What are those pieces of leaves scattered on the floor?" Margaret Willsford asked herself when yet another scattering appeared. She called me when she discovered the leaf construction you can see in photo p?

I was absolutely delighted to be able to photograph this Leaf-Cutter Bee nest (photo p1) - something I had never seen before, although I have many native plants that bear the telltale cut-out evidence of countless leaf-cutter bee visits. The female cuts distinctive ovals and circles from soft leaves to make the cells of her nest. Each cell with overlapping leaf walls holds pollen and nectar provision for the egg she leaves before capping it with a circular piece of leaf and stacking on subsequent cells. Usually the nest is started within a crevice and the leaf construction is lining. Perhaps this one started in a curtain fold but was dislodged.

It was very special to see the results of one busy bee's labour. I continue to wonder at all the intricacies of nature and the biodiversity in our catchment.

Dale Borgelt

Keeping a record of local wildlife

How fortunate we are, living in this beautiful part of Brisbane. Just for fun, we keep a record of wildlife sightings. We live in a forested area along Gap Creek Road, with increasing traffic and just 20 minutes from the heart of Brisbane. The table that follows shows 'significant' sightings over 2012. Being retired, we do not arise as early as some, and we were away for 78 days. Nevertheless, in the remaining 288 days, we had what we call 'significant' sightings on 174 days, well over 50%

Sighting	Days
3 red-necked wallabies	1
2 red-necked wallabies	11
1 red-necked wallaby	32
Red-necked wallaby with joey	7
Brush-tailed possum	28
Lace monitor (common form)	8
Lace monitor (Bell's form)	3
Deer	2
Wonga pigeons	1
Blue-tongue lizard	1
Carpet python	1
Yellow-footed antechinus in pantry	1

Many readers will have had many more observations than these and many will have differing observations depending on their local environment. We attribute the large number of red-necked wallaby sightings to the dry season and their appreciating our couple of areas of lawn. The lace monitors have perhaps got to be wary of cane toads, but appreciate a young cockatoo now and again. We used to see swamp wallabies sometimes but not in 2012 – perhaps the dry year? And we didn't hear a powerful owl the whole year whereas we did in previous years. We were delighted to see wonga pigeons again – we used to see them frequently but they disappeared during the drought years. The antechinus (see photo on page 5) had a beneficial effect on our cockroach population for a few weeks but, alas, antechinus are very short-lived.

The carpet python was spotted just before Christmas where our brush-tail possum used to hang out. We haven't seen the possum since. I wonder why.....?

Bryan Hacker

Senior Citizen Australia Day Award for Graeme Wilson

Few people contribute to our Catchment Group as much as does Graeme Wilson. As well as editing (and writing a substantial portion of) our newsletter, for many years he has managed the nursery, processing incoming seed and collating extensive data on incoming seed, outgoing plants and volunteer contributions. Back in 1959, at the time of Queensland's Centenary as a State, he made a major contribution to our area as one of about six persons (and secretary of the group) who successfully undertook initial stages of a rescue of the derelict Rafting Ground at the mouth of Moggill Creek as an historic park, for the enjoyment of all. As a Committee member from early days of the Catchment Group he has kept us all on track with his wide understanding of environmental issues. Until comparatively recently he managed a bushcare group in his local area.

Graeme's contribution to our Catchment Group, to biodiversity and to the environment, together with his earlier achievements as an educator and agricultural scientist, were recognized at a function at Brisbane's Conference Centre on the evening of 24 January. After receiving his award of Australia Day Senior Citizen of the Year for 2013 from the Lord Mayor, Graham Quirk (see photo on page 5), Graeme spoke to the assembled group of recipients, Councillors and others about the importance of the natural environment and the benefits it provides. He further thanked all those who assist with Catchment Group activities.

Very few people who have reached the age of 95 years would continue to make the contributions that Graeme makes – he is an inspiration to us all.

Bryan Hacker & Deb Ford

IMPORTANT DATES AT THE COTTAGE

Third Thursday Talks at the Cottage 10am - noon

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|----------|--|
| March 21 | <i>For Love of Lichen</i> a presentation by Jutta Goodwin |
| April 18 | <i>Seeing the forest for the trees:</i> biodiversity and climate change in Queensland's subtropical rainforests by Dr Melinda Laidlaw, Senior Ecologist, Qld Herbarium |
| May 16 | <i>Beetlemania</i> presentation by Dr Geoff Monteith |
- E-mail daleborgelt@gmail.com or ring 3374 1035 for further info or to book your place at a talk

KIDS' DAY AT THE COTTAGE

- | | |
|--------|---|
| May 26 | Sunday 10am- 1pm
This popular event will again include great attractions and free activities for children. Just to mention a few: Geckoes Wildlife Show; displays and info on Beetles, Birds, Butterflies and Snails; Art and Craft activities; potting a seedling. It is also a good opportunity for adults to check out our ever expanding library of books relevant to the environment and our catchment. |
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For info or offers of help contact Dale 3374 1035 or daleborgelt@gmail.com