



May 2015

Welcome to the May issue of Streamlines. Once again the topics covered are very varied. Firstly, a local land owner and PPCG Member describes the particular problems of their block of land and what they have done to maintain and improve it. Would other land owners be prepared to share their stories - their problems, their failures, their successes - with us? PPCG has recently been approached by a new land owner looking for just such information. Maybe you can help him and save him from making the same mistakes you did by sharing your experience.

Getting members to working bees is always a problem. Good communication helps. Free plants and great morning teas have been used as inducements. Now it is time to try an incentive. We could use a negative incentive by emphasising the need for more people to share the load – especially as members age and become less physically able. However, we plan to trial a positive incentive for the rest of the year – see page 3.

With fire ants in the news again recently, I have compiled some information on them from the Brisbane City Council, Queensland Government and Department of Agriculture and Fisheries websites and a Brisbane Times item by senior reporter Tony Moore. This is supplemented by comments provided by a member who attended the public meeting on Fire Ants at Brookfield on May 6.

Have you ever noticed those funny triangular symbols on plastic items and wondered what they mean? To help decipher this code, I've summarised a post from former State MP Bruce Flegg's website explaining what they mean. Their implications for recycling will be discussed in the August issue of Streamlines.

Helen Ogle
Editor

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Pullen Pullen Catchments Group

Meetings

Meetings are held at 7pm on the first Wednesday of each month at Pullenvale Environmental Education Centre, 250 Grandview Road, Pullenvale.

Working Bees



Pullenvale Forest Park – 2nd Sunday of the month, 8.30 – 11 am

Anstead Bushland Reserve – 4th Sunday of the month, 8.30 - 11 am.

Tools, gloves, etc are provided at Working Bees. Just wear sturdy boots, tough clothes and bring water and a hat!

Committee Members 2015

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"The PPCG acknowledges the support of the Brisbane City Council for costs associated with the website, the printing of Streamlines and with running the working bee mornings in Anstead Bushland Reserve and Pullenvale Forest Park."

Membership Options:

Membership fees are:

- *Annual Membership – \$10 per person payable on March 1 each year*
- *Life Membership – \$100 per person*

We are delighted to accept donations.

- Send a cheque payable to PPCG to PO Box 1390, Kenmore, 4069 or*
- Transfer the funds electronically to BSB 064 152, Account No.10107038 Ref: your name.*

NEWS

Our biggest news for this issue is that our new website is up and running. Check it out. Huge thank you to Nola Dean for bringing the idea of updating the website to fruition. And see page 7 for further comments about the website. Brian Dean also explains why we are so pedantic about having an 's' on the end of 'Catchments' in our name.

Now to activities in the areas where work is being carried out. Lynn Brown reports that **Pullenvale Forest Park** has a diverse ecosystem that is well-worth preserving. Our focus this year is on stabilizing the creek banks to prevent erosion and trying to control the Cat's Claw, Madeira and Balloon vines, Ochna and Lantana to name a few of the weeds. The April working bee saw a horde of volunteers, 12 in all, descend on the riverbank below the boardwalk, to plant over 150 assorted trees, shrubs and grasses. Their task was made easier by the preparation and planning of Simon Fox and the Brisbane City Council workers who had pre-dug the holes! As always, the morning tea was a great reward for effort.' **Working bees will be held on June 14, July 12 and August 9.** While Lynn and Hugh Brown are on their safari sabbatical, Jeff Amess will coordinate PFP activities. It is likely that the May 1 overflow of Pullen Pullen Creek has removed some of the plantings, especially those done by members who did not follow Simon's specific planting instructions.



The area along the creek at Pullenvale Forest Park before 2015 working bees commenced

At **Anstead Bushland Reserve**, 10-12 volunteers have planted a range of plants in the Fig Garden at the Lookout and in the area to the south. On both occasions, planting has been followed by substantial rain so the plants are doing well.

Anstead has attracted a Green Army grant. There are no details yet of what work they will undertake. It was suggested that they construct a safe path down to the Quarry but it is understood that they are limited in what they can do. **Working bees for the next quarter will be on June 28, July 26 and August 23.**

A third area receiving attention in our catchment at the moment is the **Airlie Road Park** at Pullenvale. The park slopes down towards Pullen Pullen Creek and is also drained by two ephemeral creeks. The riparian zones around these creeks are heavily infested with weeds, especially lantana. John Ness reports that 'the first phase of clearing these weeds was carried out by contractors under a SEQ Catchments Grant. The second phase was done on May 1 with the flash flood due to heavy rain on that day! Planting will start, possibly in June, but tree guards have yet to be made. Sarah Bell, our Creek Catchment Officer, has been most helpful in stopping goats from wrecking the trees planted with Dahl Trust money. We are now waiting to see how she will weave similar magic with the deer!'

Before we leave volunteers, working bees, etc, President John Ness has suggested an **incentive scheme** to encourage more members to enjoy the fun and community spirit of working bees. He proposes that each time a volunteer works for an hour or more, his/her name will be entered into a draw. At the Annual General Meeting, three names will be drawn and the winners awarded substantial prizes. So the more working bees you attend, the more chances of winning a prize!

Our **Wildlife** Officer, Irene Darlington, reports that the recent storms have resulted in many young animals being blown from their nests or from trees and that local vets are being provided with information on how to care for injured wildlife brought to their surgeries. Still on wildlife, readers may remember mention in the August 2014 edition of Streamlines of Michael O'Keeffe's Suburban Curlew Survey. In his summary of the 2014-5 breeding season, Michael comments that the breeding season started early – in mid-August and finished late – early March for some pairs. A large proportion of the pairs in Brisbane area laid three clutches this season. Birds in some parts of Brisbane were badly affected by violent summer storms that dumped golf-ball sized hail on eggs and chicks. Some of the pairs he had under observation lost eggs and chicks but within days had laid new clutches.

Members who joined botanist Daniel Rekdahl for a **walk** through Pullenvale Forest Park last year (see Streamlines November 2014 and February 2015 for a report) will be delighted to learn that two more walks are planned before the end of the year. They will be on Sundays and of about 3 hours duration. In December, a spotlighting walk with a naturalist is being planned. More details later.



Members regenerating bushland on their acreage blocks will already be aware that the Moggill Creek Catchment Group maintains a nursery from which they may **purchase native plants**. Paul Ryan, the Nursery Manager from the Paten Park Native Nursery at The Gap, has sent us information about the services the nursery offers. It may provide members with an alternative source of wanted plants.

Paul writes 'Paten Park Native Nursery (formerly the Greening Australia Nursery) is a community nursery specialising in the native wild plants of south east Queensland. Our army of committed volunteers collect all our own seed which we process and store on site. We maintain a diverse range of 300 or more locally native species which may vary at different times of the year. Please consult our web site, email or phone us for species availability.

We are able to offer:

- A wide variety of local provenance species for sale in tubes and many in advanced sizes
- Seed for sale for those wishing to grow their own plants and as an added service are able to provide advice on horticultural practices for those of you wishing to undertake this rewarding and challenging pursuit
- A grow to order service with your seed or ours at only minimal additional cost
- A range of potting mixes, fertilisers, bank stabilisation materials and tree guards to assist with your regeneration projects.

Prices:

- 50 ml tubes
 - 1 - 39 \$2.50
 - 40 - 99 \$2.00
 - 100 - 299 \$1.75
 - 300 - (by negotiation depending on species)
- Large tubes \$4.00
- 75mm pots \$4.00
- 140mm pots \$8.00
- Advanced plants (as marked)

The nursery is located at 57 Paten Road The Gap (www.thegapnativenursery.org.au). Paul may be contacted by phone on 3300 6304 or email on patenparknn@gmail.com.

COMING EVENTS

Local resident, PPCG member and botanical artist, Marcelle Stirling, is organising a display of her paintings of Eucalypts in the Randall Studio at the Mt Coot-tha Botanic Gardens on August 28-30 between 9.30 am and 4.30 pm each day.

While the majority of Marcelle's paintings will not be for sale, there will be a range of handcrafts made by members of the Moggill Branch of the Queensland Country Women's Association on sale. This will be a great opportunity to view some beautiful artwork, stock up on quality hand-made items and, perhaps, win one of Marcelle's paintings in the raffle!

Proceeds will go towards the QCWA Public Rural Crisis Fund which is used to support people suffering hardship, especially as the result of natural disasters. Rather than donating 'things', QCWA prefers to provide grocery vouchers or pay bills so that money remains in the community supporting local businesses and providing employment for local people.



The **Reef, Range and Red Dust Conference** will be held in Caloundra from Monday August 31 to September 2. It will focus on the way we are all connected in caring for our lands and waters and how this interconnectivity impacts on each and every one of us. The program includes keynote speakers such as Dr Stefan Hajkowitz, Leader of CSIRO Futures, Mara Bun, a company director passionate about resilience, sustainability and the digital commons and Dr Beverley Clarke, a social scientist interested in how people influence environmental management. Contact info@reefrangereddust.org for more information.

Attempting to halt the advance of erosion along the riverbank

Ged Dale

The strip of land behind our property along the Brisbane River is very eroded and when we purchased the property thirteen years ago we decided we would try to do something about it.

Dredging of the river is almost certainly the major cause of the erosion. It has occurred since white settlement. Dredging was originally started to make the river navigable and then became a source of sand and materials for the building industry. Dredging was only ceased by law in 1997. Major flooding as well as cattle grazing close to the riverbank has contributed to erosion.

The soil has a top layer of sandy loam of about 30cm and then it is nearly pure clay. There is no rock base and thus the soil is easily washed away.

The riverbank was infested with weeds dominated by high panic grass, prickly pear, Chinese elms and climbing asparagus fern among others.

The bank is very steep and undermined because of the erosion and it is nearly impossible to get down to the river. A few years ago late one evening, our dog fell down the bank when she went too close to the edge. We could not rescue her until the following day with a ladder and ropes.

As it is now so steep, it is too difficult to get down and therefore we could only clear and plant on the top of the bank. Three beautiful huge eucalypts stood close to the river further down the bank so we decided to plant mainly eucalypts. They have been fast growing and doing well. Thirty trees are established there now and some have reached a height of around 10 to 15 metres. We have also planted a couple of figs and kauri pines.

We love the thought that these trees will serve a double purpose: erosion stabilisation as well as providing habitat for birds, insects and other wildlife.

We have to mow regularly to prevent the grass from smothering the young trees. The asparagus vine remains a major problem and we try to cut and paint it with glyphosate but it is very vigorous and an ongoing challenge. The huge Chinese elms remain as they are impossible to remove and their roots are stabilising the bank and saving the precious soil. Where possible we remove their branches to let in light for the young trees.

We have just recently heard of tying fig saplings in the Chinese elm forks so that one day they may strangle the tree, a solution we are definitely going to try and are hopeful of its success.

We have been working on about half the area but want to extend clearing and planting to our whole back boundary. It is challenging but well worth the effort. It is exciting to see a young tree towering up and making its presence noted for the future.



The area already cleared and planted



The area still to be cleared and planted



Fire Ants

Helen Ogle

Fire Ants (Red Imported Fire Ants to give them their full title) are very aggressive ants that may cause severe bites to humans and other animals, but the major concern is the damage they may do to plants and crops in particular. They feed on seeds and can kill plants by tunnelling through their roots and stems. They also protect some species of pests that produce honeydew that reduces the quality of vegetables and helps spread diseases. In addition, their mounds may block irrigation equipment and damage farm equipment. In the United States, where fire ants are out of control, they affect 50 different types of crops and cause \$7 billion of damage a year. Corn and sunflower crops have been most severely affected. Corn yields in Mississippi have been reduced by 65% and sunflower yields by 40-50% in Texas.

Fire Ants are 2-6 mm long with a variety of sizes in each nest. Their head and body are coppery brown and the abdomen darker. Their mounds are not always easy to identify. They may be up to 40 cm high but may be flat and look like a patch of disturbed soil. They may or may not have obvious entry/exit holes. They are usually found in open areas such as lawns and pastures, along roadsides, in unused pastures, where soil has been disturbed and in piles of organic matter. They often occur next to objects on the ground such as logs, bricks, pavers, timber, footpaths and driveways or near water sources such as taps, sprinklers and pools of water.



Fire ant

In nature, fire ants spread when a mated female queen flies up to 2 km from her original nest, finds a new nesting site, sheds her wings and starts a new colony.

Humans distribute fire ants when moving infested soil, nursery stock, materials, containers, machinery, etc.

Fire ants occur naturally on the floodplains of the Paraguay River in northern South America. They reached the southern United States in the 1930s, probably in soil used as ballast in ships.



Fire ant mounds

They have been introduced into Australia at three different locations: Yarwun in Central Queensland, the Port of Brisbane and the south-western suburbs of Brisbane. How they were introduced is not known but it was possibly on shipping containers up to 20 years ago. They were first detected in Brisbane in February 2001.

The Yarwun and Port of Brisbane infestations have been successfully eradicated but spread from the initial Brisbane infestation has led to small outlying infestations around the Greater Brisbane area, Ipswich, Logan and Redlands. Isolated infestations have also been found in the Scenic Rim, the Gold Coast and Lockyer Valley. Since the Lockyer Valley provides 40% of southeast Queensland's vegetables, infestations in this area are of major importance. Neighbouring Toowoomba and Moreton councils are on a watching brief.

In an attempt to stop the spread of fire ants, the Queensland Government initiated an eradication program which includes movement control regulations in certain parts of Queensland. In our area, Moggill is in the High Risk Restricted Area where movement of restricted items (infested soil, nursery stock, materials, containers, machinery, etc) off a property requires an Approved Risk Management Plan or an Inspector's Approval. Anstead and Bellbowrie are in the Low Risk Restricted Area within which movement of restricted items is permitted. However, to move restricted items into the Unrestricted Area requires an Approved Risk Management Plan or an Inspector's Approval.

Fire ants pose such a serious social, economic and environmental threat that they have been declared a notifiable pest under the Plant Protection Act 1989 so sightings or even suspected sightings must be reported to Biosecurity Queensland on 13 25 23 or by completing the online fire ant notification form on the Queensland Government website.

Postscript: Member Richard Ponsonby attended the Brookfield meeting and reported that fire ants have been found in our area. He commented that the nests have no apparent entry or exit holes because the ants use side channels to enter or leave their nests. If a nest is threatened, the ants remove the queen to a safe place and once a queen has been fertilised, she can go on producing eggs indefinitely. They are able to survive fire and flood. Helicopter surveys using heat-imaging technology have identified isolated outbreaks that have been treated successfully. They can be baited with an odourless spray.

Shouldn't there be an 's' in that?

Brian Dean

As many of you will be aware, the PPCG Website is now Live. Yes, it's out there on the Web, and is, as they say, but a click away.

Activities past, present and future are listed and described, and, wherever possible, a pictorial record accompanies the text. This is particularly important in the "Plants & Wildlife" section, where we attempt to show some of the huge variety of flora & fauna found in our area. If you've seen a funny sort of bird with a blue head and yellow wings then lists of birds aren't going to be much help in identifying it – but a good picture will, and the site has some stunning photos to sift through.

There are some excellent wild life/bird photographers in the region who have generously supplied material for our website, and we are hoping that eventually we'll have pictorial records of everything that lives in the catchment area. So, carbon-based bipeds, if you have images of life in the Far West of Brisbane, perhaps you could send them to the Website coordinator Nola Dean, noladean@bigpond.net.au for possible inclusion in our "catalogue" of Pullen Pullen Catchments.

And yes, there *is* an 's' in that, because there's more than one creek and more than one catchment. You will all have crossed Farm Creek which dives under Moggill Road near the entrance to Woodcrest and CSIRO. It got its name from – well, what do you think? – and there's a little story about a visiting German naturalist who was being shown around CSIRO on his first and only visit to this part of the world. The scientist who was accompanying him took him to see tiny Farm Creek which flows past the carpark, explaining that it was just possible that the iconic Aussie platypus might have a home in it, although no one had ever seen one. "Most interesting" replied the visitor, "und what, please, is this odd little animal just by my foot?" It was – you've guessed it – the furry little monotreme itself, turning up for its first and only sighting.

If you've seen an "odd little creature" and better still, got a picture of it, think about sending it to PPCG's website coordinator (otherwise no one will believe you!).

Other creeks? Well, there's Pullen Creek, which flows into Pullen Pullen Creek (as you'd expect), and there are countless other creeks, mostly unnamed, and typically seasonal, each with its own catchment, most rising in the d'Aguilar Range foothills, and each with its special plants and odd little animals. And who knows what dwells in the murky depths of the biggest one of all, the Brisbane River which is our southern frontier?

In PPCG's area there are a number of sites we've been directly involved in over the fifteen or so years since our first planting. Pullenvale Forest Park and Anstead Bushland Reserve each has its own Bushcare group and in the past we've weeded, planted and cared for the Moggill Wetlands, Lather Road Reserve and the John Wilson Reserve (formerly Glenhurst Road Park). These are all public parks, for the enjoyment of all, but they are only a fraction of the "Pullen Pullen Catchments", and there's an awful lot of life in PPCG's territory. Help us keep a record of all the odd little plants & creatures that live alongside us carbon-based bipeds.

The website is: www.pullenpullencatchments.org.au

Yes, there's definitely an 's' in that.










Plastic Identification Codes

Recycling plastic packaging is one way we can help maintain the quality of our environment. However, knowing which plastics are suitable for recycling can be confusing because of the overwhelming number of types of plastics used. To help us decide, a Plastics Identification Code is stamped on the final product to indicate what type of resin was used in its manufacture.

The majority of plastic packaging is made with one of six resins, assigned a number from 1 to 6. The Code consists of the appropriate number inside a triangle of chasing arrows. The arrows indicate that the product is recyclable – although maybe NOT in our BCC yellow-top bins (see the next issue of Streamlines)!

The coding system also includes a seventh code, identified as "other". This code indicates that the product is made with a combination of resins other than the six listed. The use of biodegradable plastics is increasing and they are also coded as a number 7. Specific detail can be obtained from the Bioplastics Industry Association.

Plastic Identification Code	Name of Plastic	Description	Some uses for virgin plastic	Some uses for plastic made from recycled-waste plastic
 PETE	Polyethylene terephthalate (PET)	Clear, tough plastic, may be used as a fibre	Soft drink and water bottles	Soft drink bottles, detergent bottles, clear film for packaging, carpet fibres, fleecy jackets
 HDPE	High density polyethylene (HDPE)	Very common plastic, usually white or coloured	Milk and cream bottles, bottles for shampoo and cleaners	Compost bins, detergent bottles, crates, mobile rubbish bins, agricultural pipes, pallets, kerbside recycling crates
 V	Unplasticised polyvinyl chloride (UPVC)	Hard, rigid plastic, may be clear	Clear cordial and juice bottles, blister packaging	Detergent bottles, tiles, plumbing pipe fittings
 LDPE	Low density polyethylene (LDPE)	Soft, flexible plastic	Ice-cream containers lids, garbage bins	Film for builders, industry, packaging and plant nurseries, bags
 PP	Polypropylene (PP)	Hard but flexible plastic - many uses	Ice-cream containers, hinged lunch boxes	Compost bins, kerbside recycling crates, worm factories
 PS	Polystyrene (PS)	Rigid, brittle plastic. May be clear, glassy	Yoghurt tubs, margarine containers	Clothes pegs, coat hangers, office accessories, spools, rulers, video/CD boxes
 OTHER	Other	Includes all other plastics, including acrylic, nylon and biodegradable		

Next issue will contain further information about which plastics can be recycled – specifically in the yellow-lidded bins that we all have – and which can't and why.