



Streamlines

Newsletter of the Pullen Pullen Catchments Group Inc.

August 2020

We continue to sail on uncharted waters facing a future that is not at all clear but will, hopefully, be better than the past. Somehow uncertainty seems to have become 'normal' and many of us seem to be 'getting on with life'.

Fred Thomson, a long term PPCG member and regular volunteer at Anstead Bushland Reserve died peacefully on June 1 following a cancer diagnosis several years ago. PPCG acknowledges the contribution Fred made to the work of the PPCG and his enthusiasm and expresses its condolences to his family. Brian Dean has written a brief tribute which appears on page 3.

Be warned! Fire Ants have reared their ugly heads again. Our Creek Catchment Officer, Andrew Wills, has recently emailed details of a revised Fire Ant Biosecurity Zone Map. The full text of Andrew's email appears on page 4. The ants were described in the May 2015 issue of Streamlines. An extract from a recent Queensland Government Department of Agriculture and Fisheries publication describing the current fire ant situation appeared in the May 2020 Streamlines. Make sure to check your own property for the presence of these dangerous pests!

Following issues raised at PPCG's Workshop last October, Graham Stirling presents the case for revegetating cleared and/or degraded areas in our creek catchments. Tying in with Graham's article, Colin and Noela Kratzing describe what they have done to revegetate their Anstead property in the 20 years they have lived there.

Residents revegetating their properties are reminded that plants are available free of charge to PPCG members from the Moggill Creek Catchment Group's Nursery. For more information, please contact Brian Hacker (jbhacker@powerup.com.au, 3374 1468).

Finally, Brian Dean describes a surprise visitor that ker-r-rashes rather than bumps in the night!

All members are welcome to submit articles to Streamlines via helian@pretirementresorts.com.au. Articles by members on what they have done to restore habitat on their own land are always popular. If you would like to share your story – either written by yourself or in conjunction with me – I would love to hear from you at the above email address. The deadline for the next issue is 15 November 2020.

Helen Ogle
Editor

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Pullen Pullen Catchments Group

A Landcare Group

Meetings

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

Website

www.pullenpullencatchments.org.au

Working Bees

Anstead Bushland Reserve – 1st Sunday of the month, 8.30 - 11 am.
Pullenvale Forest Park – 2nd 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 2020

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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.

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



Dedicated to a better Brisbane

“The PPCG acknowledges the support of the Lord Mayor’s Community Sustainability and Environmental Grants Programs for a grant to help with administrative, bushcare and educational costs”

NEWS

A Farewell

At working bees, meetings, on the street or in casual conversation, if you mentioned the name 'Fred Thomson' like as not faces would light up and people would make those little bodily movements that signal readiness to hear – or recount – a Fred anecdote. And indeed his talent for injecting a sizeable spark of vitality into any encounter with friends, colleagues and (probably) even perfect strangers made him well-known and welcome in the company of people of diverse background and varied walks of life. Fred's enquiring mind and talent for initiating and communicating ideas was boundless, and, combined with the warmth of his personality and generosity of spirit made him admired and respected within and beyond our landcare group.

Earlier this year, after a long illness, Fred died, leaving us the poorer for his loss but the richer for having known him, the irrepressible, unforgettable Fred Thomson.

Committee News PPCG owes much to our Secretary Liz Dominguez who kept issues that needed to be dealt with circulating during the months when we were unable to meet and then offered her home for our socially distanced July meeting. There was no meeting in August.

Anstead Bushland Reserve (ABR) The position of Bushcare Coordinator is currently filled only temporarily. It has been re-advertised and more than 10 expressions of interest have been received. Nearly all appear to be from student volunteer groups. A few have been contacted but no decision has been made. A fence near the Essendon Road entrance was vandalised but promptly and sturdily repaired by Council. An unfortunate aspect of the increased usage of ABR is an increased incidence in rubbish. Andrew advised that the best way to deal with this is to contact the BCC Call Centre on 3403 8888. Margaret and Lynn volunteered to be involved in the development of an 'Ecological Report for Anstead Bushlands and Surrounds' by Dr Justin Watson.

Pullenvale Forest Park Lynn reports that 'Our working bees have resumed, and we are pleased that our loyal volunteers have returned! We are clearing a large area of *Callisia repens* (creeping inch weed) around native trees and shrubs, which will allow the council to spray the area. *Callisia* is a smothering ground cover from the Americas and stops any native regrowth. We will replant the area with trees, shrubs and grasses, as good understory is essential for the smaller birds and mammals. We planted about 100 Richmond Birdwing Butterfly vines and are happy to report that at least half of them have survived the extreme weather.'

Airlie Road Park Mowing and weeding has continued. Further plant replacement will be dependent on more rain. The small amounts of rain in July have not been enough to make any significant change in soil moisture.

Moggill State School Nursery Project The Nursery is not operating due to COVID restrictions. However, about 50 plants, mainly sourced from MCCG nursery in 2019, repotted and grown to about 1m high, were given to Moggill Primary School for planting on International Tree Day on July 31. The school groundsman had prepared all the planting sites for the schoolchildren to use so no further help was required from the PPCG.

Wildlife Member's excitement at reports of koalas in Anstead Bushland Reserve was tempered by our Wildlife Officer's report that the koalas are not healthy and are suffering from chlamydia and/or cystitis.

PPCG Website Nola reported that Tony Koh has made progress with the Membership module and it is now in testing mode but the eNews component is still to be completed. Tony expected to start on the Birds and Plants by mid-August. We have only a few bird photos still to find but there are

many Plant photos not yet found. Nola will put out a request for any images available from members either by eNews or in Streamlines when the section is live again. In the meantime, she will also look for other sources of photos and hopes for more success than she had initially. Copyright-free would be best or a blanket permission as we got from SOWN.

This Week by the Creek is a monthly e-news from Brisbane City Council's Creek Catchment Officers. It contains up-to-date information on training opportunities, upcoming events, grants available as well as news items.

A recent issue included advance notice of the next **Citizen Science in Brisbane** forum on Tuesday 29 September 2020 at which two specific local projects involving citizens will be described. The first is **Brisbane's Big Butterfly Count**. Jutta Godwin of Cubberla-Witton Catchment Network will talk on behalf of the Brisbane Catchment Network about this Brisbane wide project. Butterflies are a much loved insect that captivate experts and the average nature lover alike, and they are excellent indicators of ecosystem health. The second project is **Tracking Roadkill**. Alex Vanek of Bulimba Creek Catchment Coordinating Committee will talk about this app that tracks wildlife road deaths in order to identify hot-spots and inform solutions for creating safe wildlife movement through our city. More details on how to register will follow closer to the date. *Please note that this event will be online!*

Beetles of Brisbane – a photo-guide to common species. Edenink Editing and the Entomological Society of Queensland have recently produced a 16-panel glossy fold-out brochure that includes around 100 beetle images and covers 29 families. It's a handy reference for anyone interested in identifying beetles and is available via an order form under Publications on the Entomological Society of Queensland's website www.esq.org.au.

Fire Ant Biosecurity Zones

Hi All,

Apologies for the delayed update on this one, I assumed it had been relayed directly via Biosecurity Queensland, but this does not necessarily appear to be the case. Please see attached Fire Ant biosecurity zone map which has been revised recently to include all or part of your catchment within Biosecurity Zone 2.

([Fire_ant_biosecurity_zone_map_27_May_2020_1588894523.pdf](#))

Current advice on the implications for our activities can be found here [biosecurity-zones](#) . I would encourage you to familiarise yourself with [identifying](#) fire ants and be vigilant as you may encounter them in your sites or within your property as the weather warms in the coming months. Early detection and [reporting](#) are vital to managing this pest. At a personal level please exercise great caution if you encounter suspected fire ants. By nature they are more active and aggressive in the warmer months

If you have any concerns regarding the above issue please do let me know, whilst all suspected sightings need to be reported to Biosecurity as soon as possible. I am ready to assist you wherever possible to navigate the process and manage the implications.

Warm Regards

Andrew Wills

A/Creek Catchment Officer - Community Conservation Partnerships, Asset Services Branch
Brisbane Infrastructure Division|

BRISBANE CITY COUNCIL

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Improving the Environment in Brisbane's Western Suburbs

Graham Stirling

More than 70% of Brisbane's original woody vegetation has been cleared and much of the remaining bushland is in the western suburbs. Consequently, its residents have the best of two worlds: ready access to a thriving city and the joys of living in a peaceful natural environment. Nevertheless, continuing residential development, increasing traffic flows and inappropriate land management practices are having detrimental effects on that environment. This article summarises the situation from an ecological perspective and explains what individual landholders can do to prevent further degradation of the landscape.

The original environment

When the first European settlers reached Brookfield, Pullenvale and Moggill in the 1840's they found a diverse and productive landscape. Many different trees dominated the skyline (Table 1) and they were covered with elkhorns, staghorns and vines. Numerous shrubs, grasses and other plants formed an understory. This diverse habitat supported a wide range of native animals: kangaroos, wallabies, koalas, quolls and gliders, more than 250 species of birds, various snakes and lizards, numerous frog species and more than 100 different butterflies.

Eucalypts	Grey gum (<i>Eucalyptus propinqua</i>), Queensland blue gum (<i>E. tereticornis</i>), Spotted gum (<i>Corymbia maculata</i>), Silver-leaved ironbark (<i>E. melanophloia</i>), Tallowwood (<i>E. microcorys</i>)
Other large trees	Hoop pine (<i>Araucaria cunninghamii</i>), Red ash (<i>Alphitonia excelsa</i>), Black wattle (<i>Acacia leiocalyx</i>), Broadleaf apple (<i>Angophora subvelutina</i>), Crow's ash (<i>Flindersia australis</i>), Silky oak (<i>Grevillea robusta</i>), Brush box (<i>Lophostemon confertus</i>), Creek lilly pilly (<i>Syzygium australe</i>)
Small trees and shrubs	Brisbane golden wattle (<i>Acacia fimbriata</i>), Brush ironbark (<i>Bridelia exaltata</i>), White bottlebrush (<i>Callistemon salignus</i>), River oak (<i>Casuarina cunninghamiana</i>), Native hibiscus (<i>Hibiscus heterophyllus</i>), Foambark (<i>Jagera pseudorhus</i>), White cedar (<i>Melia azedarach</i> var. <i>australasica</i>), Hollywood (<i>Pittosporum rhombifolium</i>)

Table 1. The dominant vegetation in Brisbane's western suburbs prior to European settlement

Logging, farming and acreage

The destruction of the landscape commenced as soon as settlers arrived. Timber getters initially focused on the Red cedar (*Toona australis*) and White beech (*Gmelina leichhardtii*) that grew along the creeks. They then began to remove the dominant trees (Hoop pine and Eucalypts). The logs were hauled by bullock teams to the Moggill Creek 'rafting ground', where they were chained to rafts and floated downriver to Brisbane sawmills.

After the area was logged, most of it was cleared for farming. Dairying was an important local industry, sheep and cattle grazed the steeper slopes and crops such as potatoes, maize, sugarcane and pineapples were grown. The area remained rural until the 1970s, when most of the land was subdivided into acreage allotments and large residential blocks. The population then began to increase and about 20,000 people now live in the Moggill Creek and Pullen Pullen Creek catchments.

The ecological consequences of land clearing

Over the past 200 years, the rapidly rising human population, the continual expansion of urban areas, the conversion of land to agriculture and the introduction of plants and animals from elsewhere have had a profound impact on Australia's natural environment. Put simply, our ecosystems have been pushed out of balance by habitat fragmentation, the loss of native vegetation and land use change. Thus, our unique flora and fauna are no longer able to cope. Australia has more mammal extinctions than other regions of the world. Biodiversity has declined markedly and many native plants, mammals, birds and reptiles now have a limited distribution. The western suburbs of Brisbane are not unique. Koalas, eastern-grey kangaroo, three wallaby species, the brush-tailed phascogale and the spotted-tailed quoll occur in the region but how often are they seen?

The need for revegetation

The key to restoring a fully functional ecosystem is to re-establish the vegetation that was originally present. This has occurred to some extent in Brisbane's western suburbs, as some cleared land has returned to woodland and several council-managed forest reserves harbour a diverse range of native species. However, there are many reasons why other areas should also be revegetated.

Restoring native vegetation on an area of land

- **reduces soil erosion.** During tropical storms, tree canopies reduce the erosive impact of heavy rainfall while the root system stabilises the soil and holds it in place. Thus, fewer sediments and pollutants flow into our waterways, reducing their effects on fish and other marine and freshwater species.
- **reduces flooding.** The presence of trees reduces the impact of flood events. When land is cleared, the soil becomes more compacted and levels of organic matter decline. Thus, the soil has less capacity to allow water to infiltrate and to hold water, and this worsens flooding.
- **increases biodiversity.** Trees, shrubs and the understory provide a food source that not only sustains herbivores but also a huge community of organisms that live above- and below-ground. The only way to maintain this community is to ensure that a diverse range of plants are always present.
- **reduces atmospheric CO₂ levels.** During photosynthesis, plants remove CO₂ from the atmosphere and store the carbon in their tissues. As CO₂ is an important greenhouse gas, plants, particularly trees, play a major role in combating global warming. For example, Australia's natural eucalypt forests are an important carbon sink, as they usually contain more than 100 tonnes of carbon/ha. A further 30-70 tonnes of carbon/ha is stored in the soil below the trees.

Revegetation of Brisbane's western suburbs

When residential land is being developed, governments and councils have a responsibility to ensure that vegetated corridors are retained. Such corridors allow our wildlife to move safely from one area to the next. However, most of the land in Brisbane's western suburbs is privately owned and so landholders are responsible for maintaining it in good condition. Thus, everyone needs to consider what could be done on their property to improve the local environment.

The best way to minimise degradation of our soils, air and water is to plant trees and shrubs on a massive scale. Where possible, native species should be planted on residential lots and acreage land must be revegetated



Examples of acreage land where tree planting would provide multiple benefits

Anstead Regeneration

Colin and Noela Kratzing

Our property as we received it 20 years ago was a somewhat neglected 20th century house incongruously sitting between cleared degraded second rate grazing land and neglected weed infested bushland.

Our reasons to revegetate are many but could be summed up as enhancing the privilege of living here and fitting in with the history of the area, which can be considered in three phases:-

- European settlement dating back to the mid 19th century
- Indigenous history – artefacts we uncover working this land remind us that habitation and culture far precedes our memories and
- Geological history bringing together ancient lakes and swamps, coal and fossil areas, igneous intrusion and alluvial soils all within metres of each other. Eons of tradition.

Over the years we have:-

- established a 'garden area' closest to the house with a diversity of annuals, perennials, shrubs, garden beds (ornamental and vegetable) and trees (both fruit and ornamental)
- established a 'park area' beyond the garden with areas of grass and multilevel planting in mulched areas with swales to retain runoff where possible. This area included horse paddocks for many years but now the trees are taking over!
- cleared much of the weedy undergrowth in the remaining 'bushland area' to encourage natural vegetation regrowth while planting a series of native plants, being mindful of local species especially the ones that have been removed since white settlement (particularly Red cedar and Hoop pine, but many others as well)

Particular emphasis has been given to multilevel planting and maintaining habitat from the ground (and down into the subsoil) to the canopy. Water retention with swales, mulching and maintaining small depressions in waterways are also important. Fire prevention has received more emphasis of late and such things as clearing areas and breaks of undergrowth by whipper-snipping, keeping mulch from sensitive areas and reducing composting heap size are important. Planting natives is important but not exclusive. Exotic species are mostly kept near the house. Seed spread is reduced by raking, pruning and preventing waterway contamination.

Revegetation is always a work in progress. Challenges we face are continuous and include:-

- Water (or lack of it) while plantings become established has been discouraging during the dry years – there is a limit to the number of plants one can nurture at a time.
- Animal damage can suddenly remove new plants – there is only so much protection you can provide with protective shelters and there is nothing as disappointing as seeing a well-established tree stripped and broken by passing deer.
- Reseeding of weed species is a continuous problem. We have an ongoing problem with the adjoining bushland where mother of millions, lantana, coral berries, asparagus fern and many others show no respect for our fence line.
- Nature itself is capricious – at times we are sure we have put just the right plants in just the right place and provided just the right care only to see them suffer or die.

The fight is still well worth the rewards which are numerous! Living in this part of the world must make us some of the luckiest people on the planet! With the added benefit of a complex Flora and Fauna and the satisfaction of a peaceful, semi-rural lifestyle within minutes of a very liveable city, could we ask for more?



Before and after images of parts of our property

Things that go Bump in the Night

Brian Dean



That's possums (need I say?), and a small family of the common brushtailed variety had been regularly visiting our verandah for food scraps prior to bungeeing onto the carport roof just for the hell of the ensuing racket. Then there came a bigger bump – clearly something rather larger than the usual, and shortly revealed itself; it was nearly double the size of the brushtails, with darker, almost black fur, and a face that to me, on first acquaintance, looked more like a Tasmanian devil. Photographs like the one here showed that it had a reddish patch across its back, maybe the result of injury or simply different coloured fur –

a bit like a Friesian cow – but its tail, which appeared to be partly prehensile, long and naked at the tip, seemed to definitively exclude it from the brushtail clan. The closest resemblance we could find in 'Wildlife of Greater Brisbane' was a Mountain Brushtail Possum, so we sent off our pictures to the Queensland Museum, who shortly responded, confirming that it was indeed a Short-eared Mountain Possum, *Trichosurus caninus*, "one of the less encountered possums in south-east Queensland", and is sometimes referred to as the 'Bobuck'. There are apparently some isolated populations in areas such as Long Pocket, Oxley, Archerfield, North Tamborine, Samford and – 'Moggill Road'. Their proximity to this last site is undoubtedly the reason why they are now 'less encountered'.

So, our big fella is a bobuck and worth knowing just for its delightful name, though it ker-r-rashes rather than bumps in the night, and leaves what looks like half its bodyweight in scats on or around the landing strip. Still, if dining at our place keeps him/her off the streets, well and good. Happy landings, Bo.