



February 2024

Welcome to the February edition of Streamlines, the quarterly newsletter from Pullen Pullen Catchments Group. We begin with the very sad news that Ray Krafft passed away on the 18th December 2023. Brian Dean has written a tribute to Ray and proposes that the bench (incidentally installed by Ray!) mentioned in his tribute should bear a plaque commemorating Ray and that some part of the Reserve might be graced with the name of one of its greatest benefactors.

The December 2023 edition of ‘This Week by the Creek’ featured two of our very energetic and enterprising bushcarers and the work they are doing in Woodward Place Park. This article is reproduced on page 3. Since they are pictured tackling Madeira Vine, it seems appropriate to reprint from Streamlines February 2014 an article by one of our former Bushcare Officers, Amanda Maggs, on Madeira Vine. Following on from this is an article from Healthy Land and Water February 2024 on the biological control of Madeira Vine and its partner in crime Cat’s Claw Creeper, highlighting work being done in the Lockyer Uplands and Little Liverpool Range areas.

Lorikeet paralysis syndrome has been receiving much publicity in the press. A brief summary is provided on page 7 with other wildlife news and an *advertisement for a Secretary to replace Liz who has been the vital link in our Group for as long as I can remember.*

Finally, thanks to John Ness, we have a poem about the PPCG created using Artificial Intelligence. AI has many applications and can even be drafted into writing a poem about the PPCG written in the style of Wordsworth. Other versions written in the style of Tennyson and even Winnie the Pooh are available on command! Now if only we could get AI to remove weeds and plant trees!

All members are invited to submit articles to Streamlines via helian@pretirementresorts.com.au. The deadline for the next issue is 15th May 2024.

Happy reading!

Helen Ogle
Editor

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Pullen Pullen Catchments Group

A Landcare Group

Website

www.pullenpullencatchments.org.au

Meetings are held at 6 pm on the first Wednesday of each month at Pullenvale Environmental Education Centre, 250 Grandview Road, Pullenvale unless advised otherwise.

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Membership Options

Membership fees are:

Annual Membership – \$20 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.

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

Anstead Bushland Reserve – 1st Sunday of the month, 8.30 – 11 am (April-September), 7 – 9.30 am (October-March); 2nd and 4th Saturdays of the month when advertised, 2-4.30 pm (April-September), 3.30-6 pm (October – March)

Pullenvale Forest Park – 2nd Sunday of the month, 8.30 – 11 am (April-September), 7.30 – 9.30 am (October-March)

Woodward Place Park – 3rd Sunday of the month, 8.30 – 11 am (April-September), 7.30 – 9.30 am (October-March)

See also the Events Calendar on the website (<https://www.pullenpullencatchments.org.au/events-calendar/>)



"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"

Dedicated to a better Brisbane

Raymond Edward Krafft

22/05/1938 - 18/12/2023



As you take a walk along the main track from the Anstead Bushland Reserve picnic area, heading for the Quarry Lookout, there's a point where you may well murmur how welcome a resting place on this uphill track would be, and - ah! - here's a bench where you can pause and listen to the Bush.

Rested, you carry on up the track, noting discreet signs which draw attention to particular plants and how they have been used by indigenous people over the millennia. At the end of the track, just east of the Quarry Lookout, is an oasis-like 'garden' shaded by two thriving and contented-looking Rock Fig Trees. (In 2011, this area was a dumping ground for flood debris).

From the Lookout, you can walk down to the quarry floor, where traces of the 150 year old industrial workings can still be seen ... and so on, and so on.

In fact, there's hardly a spot that hasn't been designed, cossetted and cared for by Ray Krafft, the Bushcare Coordinator in this area from 2005 until health issues compelled his resignation (See Streamlines May 2017), and finally claimed his life in December 2023.

But you will see no signs or banners referring to Ray - a more unpretentious, self-effacing person would be hard to find, yet his contribution to the welfare of the Reserve and of the creatures therein (including humans) was immense.

Wallabies, for instance, no longer have to dodge rusted barb wire down the southern, less visited, part of the Reserve; native bees, though well able to avoid barb wire, are given royal protection - everything was privileged for Ray.

His working bees were always well attended. In large part owing to his unassuming, equable manner and his none-the-less discernible compassion, efficiency and professionalism.

The Wild and at times Weedy West

Nestled among the rolling green, sometimes brown hills of Pullenvale, dry rainforest patches persist. And where dry rainforest persists, weeds will quickly come running. Woodward Place Park, unfortunately, hasn't been spared this fate. But thanks to a crafty bunch of bushcarers, led by the bushcare leader, Esther, and notorious Madeira vine tamer, Lynn, this infestation is being suppressed. Judging from the diversity of fauna that call the park home, Woodward Place Park is a treasure worth caring for. We take our hats off to the Woodward Place Park Bushcare Group for braving the tick infested scrub and doing amazing work. Think globally, act locally!



Esther, the Woodward Place Park Bushcare Group leader, tackling a large Madeira Vine infestation



Lynn demonstrating her well-honed Madeira vine taming techniques

Madeira Vine – Action Needed Now!

Amanda Maggs

Madeira vine poses the most significant threat to tropical and subtropical regions of Qld and NSW with sightings of the vine in Pullen Pullen Catchment on the rise. NOW is the time to deal with isolated plants and sparse populations, while it is relatively easy to tackle and we can reduce significant future impacts. Madeira vine grows prolifically at rates of up to 1 m per week in high light environments. It can climb 40 m into the canopy, smothering and collapsing mature trees and interrupting ecological processes. When unsupported, it forms thick mats of groundcover that overwhelm low-lying vegetation and inhibit natural regeneration.

What to look for

The best time to look for and control Madeira vine is NOW. Infestations of Madeira vine are most readily identified during flowering season (late summer through autumn) with the white “lamb’s tail” flowers highly visible. Other distinctive features of Madeira vine are its fleshy, waxy green, heart-shaped leaves which are usually 4–5 cm in length, the aerial tubers which are small, light brown or green and ‘warty’ in appearance, and the ‘potato-like’ subterranean tubers.



Madeira Vine leaves and flowers

How it spreads

Madeira vine most commonly spreads via asexual tubers formed on the roots and stems. Aerial tubers are produced prolifically throughout the year. Madeira vine is also capable of shooting from sections of severed vine. Dispersal occurs primarily via humans: cultivation for ornamental purposes, disposal in green waste, or spread by machinery during road construction. Vegetative material and tubers from Madeira vine should not be disposed of with green waste as this is a key method of spread.

What to do about it

Successful control of Madeira vine requires exhaustion of the tuber bank. Weed strategically, protecting the better quality native vegetation first. Work from the edge of the infestation toward the core and, where practical, prioritise the control of higher ground or upper catchment sites. Ideally tubers and vines should be composted on-site under thick builders black plastic for 6 months or more to reduce the risk of further spread. Alternatively, double bag the plants and tubers in non-biodegradable plastic bags and dispose of them in landfill waste. A number of websites provide information on methods of control including the use of herbicides.

Most effective treatment approach

Seedlings, ground runners and regrowth	Foliar spray of herbicide
Small to medium sized vines that have begun to attach/climb host	Pull juvenile vines away from host, curl them at the base of the tree and spray with herbicide. If vines can't be removed from host – scrape and paint with concentrated herbicide.
Mature vines growing into canopy	Scrape and paint with concentrated herbicide. Or cut vine at base and place both ends of vine immediately into a jar or ice-cream bucket of diluted herbicide overnight.
Commitment to regular, long-term follow up is essential. Recommend: Follow-up at least three times a year.	

Chewing those invasive weeds away! Biocontrol beetle release to support SEQ native vegetation

Did you know that **little beetles with big appetites could be the key to combating problematic invasive weeds**? A nature-based solution to tackle one of the stickiest problems for land managers in SEQ.

Beetles, biological warriors

Cat's Claw Creeper Jewel Beetles and Madeira Vine Beetles are being used as biological control agents to gradually weaken target weeds, reducing seed production and creating space for native vegetation to thrive.

Assisting land managers

This program supports land managers by prioritising capacity building and incentives to preserve native vegetation.

Native vegetation conservation

We are tackling challenges from invasive vines like Cat's Claw Creeper and Madeira Vine. These vines jeopardise native vegetation, risking biodiversity and habitat loss.

Beetles to the rescue!

Our project team is currently out on the front line deploying biological control agents, in the form of beetles, on project sites in the Lockyer Uplands and Little Liverpool Range.

They are targeting problematic invasive species Cat's Claw Creeper (*Dolichandra unguis-cati*) and Madeira Vine (*Anredera cordifolia*) which, under the right conditions, grow inexhaustibly, smothering trees, shrubs, and other understorey species within their reach.

Enter the Cat's Claw Creeper Jewel Beetle (*Hedwigiella jureceki*) and the Madeira vine Beetle (*Plectonycha correntina*).

These hungry little critters are part of an integrated solution to undermine the weed's strength over time. This novel solution is music to the ears of land managers who have been struggling with these difficult invasive weeds for a long time.

Invasive weeds threatening native vegetation

Categorised as transformer species, the impacts of Madeira Vine and Cat's Claw Creeper infestations on native vegetation is so severe that they can lead to irreversible transformation and disruption to ecosystems. Both are commonly found in disturbed areas where they have been introduced as garden plants, then escaping to invade vulnerable riparian vegetation and semi-evergreen vine thicket. The loss of native vegetation increases landscape vulnerability to natural disasters and climate change, and reduces biodiversity and available habitat for native insects, birds, and animals.

Using the beetles is part of a multi-control approach. While some infestations can be brought under control with a careful mix of physical and chemical control techniques, the very nature of the smothering weed can make it difficult to access the infested sites or too labour intensive or expensive to tackle with physical control measures, and the introduction of biological control can be very beneficial.

Where conventional control methods can be expensive, difficult, and very labour intensive, costs associated with biological control raising and release remain relatively low.



Releasing beetles



Damage caused by Madeira vine Beetles

Since the start of December 2023, there have been 8,500 Cats Claw Creeper Jewel Beetles and 3,300 Madeira Vine Beetles released across the Lockyer Uplands and Little Liverpool Range. This was needed when recent wet weather in the third La Nina events led to the rampant growth of vine weeds in some areas.

The beetle actively targets the weeds, gradually undermining the plant's strength over time. Whilst the beetles used to control these obnoxious weeds will never completely eliminate an infestation on their own, they still offer a helping hand in managing the weed's rate of spread and provide an opportunity for native vegetation to rebound and ultimately surpass the weed in competition.

The main benefits of using these beetles include:

- Slow growth of target weed through the beetle's defoliation of the plant throughout their life stages.
- Defoliation of target weed further reduces impact on native vegetation by reducing weed plant weight and allowing light to pass through blanketed infestations.
- Beetle populations are mobile and disperse during warmer seasons.
- No threat to native vegetation.

Healthy Land & Water purchases beetles from the Gympie & District Landcare Group. By backing these community groups, we guarantee the upkeep and efficiency of the rearing facilities. This support

enables the groups to sustain their growth and consistently deploy agents to combat infestations beyond our project area. The increased release of beetles enhances our prospects of impeding the proliferation of harmful weeds that pose a threat to our creek banks.

Acknowledgments This project is funded by the Queensland Government's Natural Resources Recovery Program (NRRP) and delivered in collaboration with Lockyer Uplands Catchments Inc. Little Liverpool Range Initiative, Lockyer Valley Regional Council, Ipswich City Council and Noosa & District Landcare Group. This program prioritises capacity building activities and targeted incentives to help improve and preserve important native vegetation, enhance the state of natural assets, and reinforce landscape resilience.

Wildlife Notes – Lorikeet Paralysis Syndrome

Lorikeet paralysis syndrome is a seasonal disease that affects primarily rainbow lorikeets in northern New South Wales and southern Queensland. The disease causes the birds to become paralysed and unable to fly. Birds with the disease have no evidence of physical trauma. The severity of disease is varied and can be categorised based on clinical signs. Mild signs include hindlimb weakness and ataxia (loss of coordination of voluntary muscle movements), while more severe cases have flaccid paralysis of all limbs and the neck, with voice changes and an inability to stand, blink and swallow. The highest number of cases occur between December and February. The cause of the disease is unknown, but a plant toxin is considered most likely. A virus that spreads quickly in close contact is also suspected to cause the disease. With appropriate care, most birds can be successfully treated and released.

For more information, see Wildlife Health Australia's Fact Sheet from May 2023 on Lorikeet Paralysis Syndrome. See also Streamlines May 2020.

Postscript: At our last committee meeting, our Wildlife Officer, Irene, reported that carers are seeing unusual numbers of sick **Fig Birds**. The cause of their sickness is not known. She also commented that a number of stages in the progression of the sickness have been identified so carers now know whether they are likely to be able to nurse a bird back to health or whether it should be euthanased.

The other big issue at the moment, is the number of possums with badly burnt feet from walking on roofs and wires still hot from the heat of the day.



Position Vacant – Secretary

PPCG's long term secretary wants desperately to retire but will be able to assist an incoming secretary in the short term. The main roles for the secretary are to:

1. Attend monthly PPCG meetings, take minutes and circulate minutes to committee members
2. Organise paperwork/on line material for monthly meetings and AGM
3. Circulate notices of working bees, events, general points of interest etc to PPCG members
4. Occasionally attend Brisbane Conservation Network meetings when PPCG delegate is unavailable
5. Act as contact point for liaison between committee and members of the public
6. Assist with completing the annual return, surveys and membership details.

Monthly meetings are held from Feb to Nov on the first Wednesday of each month at the Pullenvale Environmental Education Centre on Grandview Rd typically from 6-7.30pm. The AGM is normally held on Sunday in early December.

The position requires computer literacy and the laptop and other facilities are provided by PPCG or occasionally the Brisbane City Council or the local elected members of all three levels of government.

The Web of Life

The complexity and inter-relatedness of just a very small part of the Web of Life is beautifully illustrated by an article in the Summer 2024 issue of Australian Geographic's magazine, Bushtracks. The article describes research by Australian National University's Associate Professor Michael Braby and Honours student Ethan Beaver in Queensland's Carnarvon Gorge. They were seeking an ant which they hoped would lead them to species of a rare group of butterflies. The butterflies have an intimate relationship with the ants.

They found the ants AND the Sapphire Azure Butterflies. The butterflies are a spectacular large species, 40-45 mm from wing tip to wing tip and iridescent blue in colour. 'Over millions of years they have cracked the ant communication code, mimicking the ants' complex chemical signals, to trick them into thinking they are their own kind. When the butterflies are caterpillars, the ants protect them from predators like wasps and flies. In return, they reward the ants with sugar solution.'



Sapphire Azure Butterfly

The ants inhabit old-growth trees infected with mistletoe plants in a hemiparasitic relationship in which mistletoe plants draw water and nutrients from the trees but carry out their own photosynthesis. The mistletoe plants in turn rely on the mistletoe bird to transfer their seeds from tree to tree! And so on it goes!

Associate Professor Braby pointed out that the discovery of the butterfly 'illuminates nature's fragile interconnectedness and the urgent need to continue to protect these precious webs of life – for the butterfly, the ant, the mistletoes, the old growth forests and all the other species that rely on them.'

PPCG AI POEM

*In the heart of Queensland's land, lies a catchment group so grand
Pullen Pullen is its name and its mission, quite the same
To care for the land and the river, to preserve and make it forever
For generations yet to come, to enjoy its beauty every one
With hands that work, hearts that care, volunteers gather everywhere
To plant, to weed, to clean and mend, to restore what time did bend.
From bird surveys to education, we spread our knowledge with dedication
To schools and communities alike, our message clear, our passion bright
Pullen Pullen catchments group, a shining example in every loop
Of what we can achieve, when we unite, to care for our land with all our might.*

AI (by permission).