

CREEKCARE

The OCCA CreekCare team was formed in 2003 under the leadership of Robert Scott, and initially comprised Rob and Phil Kyle, who together helped restore some Habitat Brisbane bushcare sites and undertook some vegetation management contract work. A year later the CreekCare team was officially launched, consisting of Brian McDonald, Phil Kyle and Rob Scott. Their efforts were initially centred on the Oxley Creek Common with assistance provided to bushcare groups such as Strickland Terrace Parklands at Sherwood and Gaddes Park at Sunnybank when time and resources permitted.

But soon the call for their help was such that the team started working every Thursday morning at one of nine different bush care sites in the Oxley Creek Catchment - Les Atkinson Park and Gaddes Park at Sunnybank, Benarrawa Park, Nosworthy Park, Pennywort Creek Reserve, and Cliveden Reserve at Corinda, Russ Hall Park at Salisbury, Oxley Creek Common at Rocklea, and Strickland Terrace Reserve at Sherwood. All the sites (except for the Oxley Common) are Habitat Brisbane sponsored Bush care sites and site Coordinators nominate what jobs they want doing at each visit. These tasks generally include weed control, mulching, planting and, more recently, removing flood debris.

By 2005 the team had grown to eight dedicated members, so it was a great shock when, in February 2005 these hardworking volunteers went to collect their tools to start work only to find that overnight, thieves had broken into the storage shed at the DPI Research Farm at Rocklea and stolen all their tools, equipment and a lockable trailer donated by George Deen. The team lost a posthole borer, brushcutter, sidewinder for stem injections of the larger trees, shovels, mattocks, mulch forks, trowels, and lots of small tools. Without tools and a trailer to transport the tools, the team were unable to continue their work assisting Habitat Brisbane Bushcare groups in the Oxley Creek catchment.

The team had obtained the costly equipment through grant applications and donations over many months and the members had spent hours branding all the tools with the name, "OCCA" to allow the tools to be shared with other organisations to supplement their equipment when needed.

The tools and trailer were never recovered. However, OCCA was able to replace most of the equipment due to the kindness of Bunnings Rocklea, which donated 4 mattocks, 20 hand trowels and 10 hoes, and of Brisbane City Council, which replaced the brush-cutter and other hand tools

In 2006 the CreekCare team had grown and comprised Phil Kyle, Brian McDonald, Don Marsh, Michael Brady, Ted Shoesmith, George Fisher and Mike Lawler.

In 2008 CreekCare assisted with a large restoration project at Nosworthy Park to rectify erosion caused by storm water, and helped restore areas of the riparian zone that OCCA's Biodiversity Services and Habitat Brisbane had cleared of weeds.

Originally CreekCare was an all-male group; but this changed in 2009 when Marie Hollingworth joined the team. She was soon joined by Dorothy Watson and Sammy DeWit, and more recently by Julie Biddulph, Mary Lou Simpson, Carly Murphy, Zoe Burkis and Teresa Lynch.

In 2010 several CreekCare volunteers including Noel Standfast, Cam McPhee, Harold Davis, Richard Thompson, Trevor Scott and Marie Hollingworth started working at the OCCA Community Nursery.

In 2010 Edward Greenaway and Mike Scanlan joined the team. Edward was undertaking an Engineering degree and his youth and strength were an enormous help when the group was clearing heavy creeper infestations.

2011 was a busy year: most of the bushcare sites that the CreekCare team worked on were severely affected by the floods in early January. It took some months before the areas were cleared of debris and the team was able to return to the sites, set about rescuing what plants they could, and start the regeneration work again. In 2011 the CreekCare team dedicated approximately 500 hours to revegetation activities in the Oxley Creek catchment.

In 2011 both Nosworthy Park and Benarrawa Park Bushcare Groups successfully obtained grants from the Lord Mayor's Suburban Initiative Fund, which enabled a shed to be erected in the grounds of the Corinda Bowls Club in 2012 to be used for storing the CreekCare equipment.



The CreekCare team in action at Russ Hall Park in 2012 (left to right) Trevor Armstrong, George McNeill, Richard Thomson, Edward Greenaway, Harold Davis, Brian McDonald and Trevor Scott

2012 was also a busy year that started well, with good summer and winter rainfall encouraging the team to keep up with post-flood rehabilitation. However, the rain stopped in July. While the dry spell slowed the growth of weeds it also made for tough conditions for the plants, and CreekCare activities were tailored to suit the conditions. The team again dedicated approximately 500 hours to revegetation activities in the catchment.

By 2013 the CreekCare team had grown to eleven volunteers. 2013 also started well, with good summer and early winter rain, but rapidly deteriorated to a very dry late winter, spring and early summer, producing poor conditions for strong plant growth; a great deal of effort was required of the CreekCare team to keep the revegetation thriving. This year the CreekCare team dedicated 600 hours to revegetation activities.

In 2014 the core members of the CreekCare team led by Noel Standfast were Trevor Armstrong, Harold Davis, Edward Greenaway, Marie Hollingworth, Lois Greensill, Brian McDonald, Cam McPhee, Trevor Scott, Richard Thomson, and Dorothy Watson.

Good progress was made at all nine sites in 2014 despite the dry conditions. As the dry spell worsened, the team concentrated on watering the newer plants, litter removal, and weed control rather than planting. A few sites were fortunate to obtain grant funding which enabled a very successful community planting at Benarrawa Park, facilitated by OCCA's Biodiversity Services, re-vegetating a section of Oxley Creek at the Common, and stabilising and planting a landslip at Nosworthy Park. Some CreekCare members also helped dismantle the OCCA nursery at Nyanda State High School and store it until a new home was found. Over the Anzac Day

weekend some of the CreekCare team joined with some Benarrawa Bushcare volunteers to spend a weekend helping out at Myall Park Botanic Gardens in Glenmorgan – the first of what is hoped will be an annual event.



In 2014 OCCA reviewed its branding and CreekCare got a new logo. Also, thanks to OCCA and funding from Coca Cola Amatil, we received new work shirts sporting the revamped logo so that we now look like a very professional group of CreekCarers indeed!

2015 was another productive year for CreekCare despite many of the sites being severely affected by the super storm in November 2014. It was sad to see a lot of mature gum trees bite the dust. Despite pleas to Brisbane City Council, a 100-year-old Ironbark at Benarrawa Park was removed as it was considered a public risk.

The BCC Habitat Brisbane program continues to be an invaluable support to our Bushcare groups, and a few of our sites have benefited from grant funding to undertake major re-plantings and erosion control projects.

Following the rewarding visit to Myall Park Botanic gardens in 2014, CreekCare repeated the event in 2015 for their open day in August, and had a very productive few days amidst the splendour of the spring colours.



CreekCare members in 2014 in action at Benarrawa Park (left to right): Marie Hollingworth, Trevor Armstrong, Richard Thomson, Dorothy Watson, Trevor Scott, Harold Davies, Edward Greenaway, Noel Standfast.

In August 2015 a new sub group of CreekCare, 'the Tuesday Common Carers' led by Mary Lou Simpson, was formed. This group works every Tuesday morning to rehabilitate a section of the Oxley Creek Common next to the Red Shed.

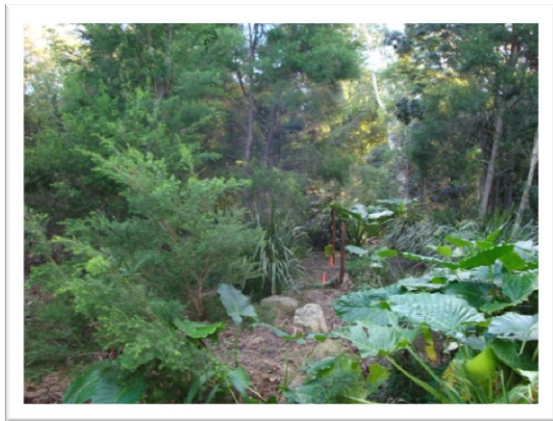
2016 began with CreekCare again providing highly valued assistance at the rostered Bushcare sites. Having the large CreekCare group of workers come every 9 weeks to their site has enabled many of the coordinators to

continue, and to tackle projects that would otherwise be impossible with dwindling volunteer numbers in the Bushcare groups.



All members of CreekCare are volunteers, and while most are active retirees we encourage participation from students and young people wishing to gain work experience in bush rehabilitation and plant propagation.

CreekCare currently has eleven regular volunteers and occasional help from students and interested members of the public. Without exception, all our Bushcare Coordinators appreciate the efforts of our hard working and dedicated volunteers.



Benarrawa Park creek bank January 2012 and June 2016

However, in April 2016 we sadly lost one of our stalwart members when Dr Cam McPhee passed away suddenly following a surfing accident. Cam was a regular volunteer with the CreekCare team and with Nosworthy Park and Boreen Point Bushcare groups, and although you wouldn't know it from his modest demeanour, he was a world renowned geneticist and pioneering animal scientist. Most importantly Cam was a good bloke and we all appreciated his knowledge, enthusiasm and sense of humour. He will be greatly missed.

So – if you are interested in helping to restore some local areas of the Oxley Creek catchment, consider joining the CreekCare team on Thursday mornings or the Tuesday Common Carers at the Oxley Creek Common on Tuesday mornings – you'd be more than welcome.

Noel Standfast

CreekCare Coordinator

