

## OXLEY CREEK CATCHMENT ASSOCIATION PROJECTS

Oxley Creek Catchment Association's mission is to *"protect and enhance the natural environment and resources of the catchment of Oxley Creek by partnering, educating, advocating and participating in catchment management."*

OCCA undertakes many of its projects through partnering with government, industry and other organisations. This particularly applies to on-ground restoration works where the support of the land owner and funding from a range of parties is paramount to the success of the work.

From the beginning, OCCA recognised the value and need for education of school students and teachers in the issues affecting their local creeks and natural areas. The activities that OCCA provides have been developed to align with the school curriculum and take advantage of the school's local area.

On-ground restoration of degraded habitats and priority areas is crucial to developing healthy and sustainable habitats that will encourage wildlife, reduce erosion and improve creek water quality. Community participation and ownership is also crucial in ensuring that these areas are maintained in their restored state.

Taking the four elements of OCCA's mission – partnering, educating, advocating and participating - OCCA's project work to address these elements falls into three main areas:

1. Education
2. Monitoring
3. On-ground restoration

Projects undertaken by the Oxley Creek Catchment Association help to raise awareness in the local community towards the environmental issues and cultural significance of Oxley Creek and its tributaries, and the pressures facing the catchment. These activities have increased the community's sense of ownership over their local environment and partnerships between business, government, community and education sectors within the catchment have been established.

The following is a snapshot of projects and activities which OCCA has undertaken over the last 20 years.

### EDUCATION

#### **Oxley Creek – Bremer River Twinning Project**

In 2009 OCCA won the National Riverprize awarded annually by the International River Foundation. The prize provided \$50,000 to develop a project with another catchment. In March 2014, the International River Foundation approved a Business Plan for a Twinning Project between Oxley Creek and the Bremer River. The Bremer River catchment covers about 2,032km<sup>2</sup> - nearly 8 times the area of the Oxley Creek catchment. A Memorandum of Understanding between OCCA and Ipswich City Council was signed in April 2014 and the Oxley Bremer Twinning Project was launched in July 2014 as a part of the Peaks to Points Festival.

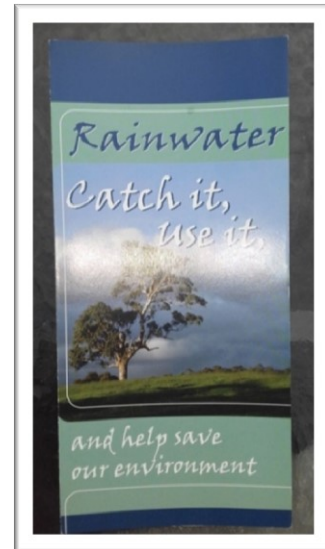
This project originally focussed on gathering information about the catchment and its stakeholders and developing partnerships with industry. However, consultation found that the primary focus should be on collaboration and communication across community groups including the Bremer Catchment Association, SEQ Catchments, Native Plants Queensland, Ipswich Creeks Catchment Group, West Moreton Landcare, Fassifern Field Naturalists and the Scenic Rim Regional Council. Ipswich City Council and the Bremer River Fund have established the Bremer River Initiative to provide an overarching network for support and communication across the Bremer Catchment. Thanks go to Sarah Choudhury who organised the launch of the project and to Hannah Collins who took over the implementation.



## Integrated Water Management

This 2003 project aimed to educate industry, the wider community, students and teachers about the need to conserve and recycle the diminishing water resources of the Oxley Creek catchment and South East Queensland. The project:

- produced an information brochure on ways to catch and use the rainwater which falls on rooves and other impervious surfaces
- produced a display poster featuring the wetlands within Brisbane and Logan City Council areas
- promoted Water Sensitive Urban Design and Ecologically Sustainable Development principles
- conducted water quality testing with schools to increase their awareness of water quality issues within the catchment.



## Display Panels

In 2005 the (then) Beaudesert Shire Council generously funded the development of catchment display panels which focused on the upper reaches of the Oxley Creek catchment and highlighted the significant values of the area and encouraged the adoption of more environmentally aware behaviours. The panel is displayed at all OCCA events.

OCCA worked with three secondary schools in the catchment - Nyanda State High School, Parklands Christian College in Browns Plains and Flagstone Community College in Flagstone – to develop a series of panels highlighting the natural assets of the Oxley Creek catchment. Students researched and wrote the content and worked with photographer, Anthony Anderton, to capture images for the panels.

The panels highlight the importance of protecting and preserving wildlife corridors in the catchment, the value of wetlands to plants, animals and people, and the key features of the lower, middle and upper Oxley Creek catchments. The panels were displayed at the Oxley Creek Water Festival, the Brisbane Festival, the Riverfestival, the opening of the Eleanor Schonell Bridge plus many other events in which OCCA has participated in libraries and community centres.





### Strategically Controlling Environmental Weeds

Weeds are one of the greatest threats to biodiversity in Australia falling second only to vegetation clearing. Brisbane City Council spends over \$2.2 million a year on weed management operations. OCCA received funding in 2002 from Brisbane City Council's Environmental Grants Program to raise awareness of the impact of weeds in particular the Broad-leaved Pepper Tree (*Schinus terebinthifolius*). This invasive species is a native of Brazil and was introduced to Australia as an ornamental shrub, however, it quickly escaped from backyards and is now a serious threat to Australian ecosystems as it rapidly colonises disturbed bushland and can form dense thickets. This project involved mapping of weed species, removal of isolated trees, planting of native trees, development of educational material, and presentations and displays on the history and toxicity of this tree and its impacts on the environment.

Broad-leaved Pepper Trees were treated and removed on Mayfly Creek and native species planted in their place. An interactive display at the Oxley Creek Water Festival helped to increase awareness of environmental weeds. A Weed Buster Day at Kendall Street demonstrated weed control methods. Following a number of media releases and open days, OCCA received over 50 enquiries from the community on control methods and technical advice regarding control of Broad-leaved Pepper Trees.

### Literature Review of glider studies

In 2006 a Logan City Council Environmental Grant enabled OCCA to employ a researcher, Dorothy Lim, to compile a literature review of glider studies (i.e. ecology, reproduction, habitats) previously undertaken in South East Queensland. However, consultancy companies and/or local Councils keep the great majority of written records, especially fauna and flora surveys, and useful information was often difficult to obtain. Despite this, Dorothy compiled a comprehensive report of glider research in South East Queensland detailing the distribution, habitat and diet of the Sugar, Feather-tailed, Squirrel, Greater, and Yellow-bellied Gliders as well as threats to their survival and recommendations for management of natural areas and parklands.

### **“Discovering Gliders” – An Interactive Display**

Gliders are nocturnal and very elusive creatures, requiring large tracks of intact native vegetation to survive. In 2004 OCCA received a Brisbane City Council Environment Grant to develop a “*Discovering Gliders*” display. The display has five panels featuring the five glider species found in South East Queensland and their food and habitat needs. The exhibits of Squirrel Glider, Sugar Glider, Greater Glider, Yellow-bellied Glider and Feathertail Glider, are on permanent loan from the Queensland Museum. In 2004 two posters were developed to support the display – “*Gliders in your Garden*” and “*Gliders of the Oxley Creek catchment*”.

To help conserve gliders in the Larapinta area of the catchment, Readymix Holdings funded the installation of 20 artificial hollows specifically designed for gliders. The homes were installed in an area of dry sclerophyll forest regrowth at Readymix’s Larapinta site in an area identified as suitable for gliders.

### **Shoop the Sugar Glider**

In 2008 Australia Post Landcare funding allowed OCCA to have a sugar glider body suit made, which, when filled by a perspiring volunteer, becomes Shoop the Sugar Glider – our mascot. Shoop made its public debut at the Peaks to Points Festival and travels to schools and community festivals to educate community about conservation and the need to look after our local wildlife.

### **Birds in Backyards**

There has been a noticeable decline in the smaller bird species such as wrens and finches within Brisbane suburbs due to habitat fragmentation, predation from introduced animals, weed infestations, pesticide use, and competition from more aggressive native birds such as the Currawong and Noisy Miner.

To draw attention to this issue and help create safe habitats in the urban environment, OCCA initiated the Birds in Backyards project in 2002, supported by Boral Australia Limited. Over 2000 plants, mainly those that provide habitat enhancement for wrens, silvereyes and finches, were given to the public and schools along with information on weed removal, and garden design and structure.

Boral Concrete Plant in Cooper Plains and Coopers Plains State School are both close to Stable Swamp Creek, an important tributary of Oxley Creek. Following flora and fauna surveys of the surrounding area, appropriate plants were selected and distributed to the school and Boral.

A ‘*Birds in Backyards*’ event at Francis Lookout, Corinda, in June 2002 provided another opportunity to increase awareness of the issue. OCCA also published a “*Birds in Backyards*” brochure providing information on bird-friendly plants, and how to improve garden habitat to provide food, water and shelter for small birds.

In 2005 sponsorship from Boral and Landcare Australia enabled OCCA and the students from Coopers Plains State School to continue to restore two small patches of remnant *Eucalyptus* and *Melaleuca* vegetation. The students, teachers and parents planted 500 native plants, chosen to grow quickly and provide food, shelter and habitat for small birds in an area which was once bare and eroded. In addition, two artificial nesting boxes suitable for birds such as parrots, lorikeets and rosellas were installed in the larger trees in the school grounds.





The project continued with the launch in 2007 of the '*Little Birds in our Backyard*' brochure to raise awareness of the importance of using native plants to attract little birds such as Thornbills, Silvereyes, and Eastern Yellow Robins, as well as information on how to remove common garden weeds.

### **Oxley Creek Theatre Project - Oxley Songs**

This project, "*Molly's Dream*" was a song writing, performance and recording venture focussing on raising students' awareness of the issues affecting Oxley Creek and ways to manage these impacts. The project funded by the Gaming Community Benefit Fund (GCBF), Arts Queensland and Arts Council of Australia.

OCCA provided background information on the catchment and its issues including invasive weeds, Fire Ants, threatened species, and water pollution from urban activities such as land development, sand mining, stormwater run-off, and sewage overflows.

Katrina Devery (Director) Meg Kanowski (Dramatist/Writer) and Mark Shortis (Musician) worked with students and teachers from Inala West and Corinda State Schools to develop the themes, artwork, stories and music.



"*Molly's Dream*" was completed in December 2003 with production of a CD of original songs, a video "The Fire Ant Hunters" inspired by the students' performance, and public performances at each of the schools. The songs addressed themes of:

- Fire ants – 'Fire Ant Hunter'
- Water pollution – 'Mr Pollutey' 'Dirty Water' 'Muckin' round by the Creek'
- Aboriginal history – 'Benarrawa'
- Invasive weeds – 'Cats Claw Creeper'
- Development – 'Mr Pollutey, Mr Sandman, Mr Moneybags'
- A vision for the future – 'Molly's Dream'

### **Naming the Creeks**

OCCA initiated this project to recognise and draw attention to the smaller tributaries to Oxley Creek and its main tributaries – Blunder Creek, Stable Swamp Creek, Moolabin Creek, Sheep Station Gully, and Rocky Water Holes. In 2006 two waterways were officially recognised - Little Doris Creek a tributary of Oxley Creek, and Hanley's Creek, a tributary of Blunder Creek.

In September 2011 three previously un-named waterways were gazetted as Boss, Farley and Ordnance Creeks. Farley and Ordnance Creeks flow into Boss Creek, which in turn, joins Hanleys Creek just south of Bowhill Road, then Hanleys Creek joins Blunder Creek, a major tributary of Oxley Creek, just north of Bowhill Road. Boss Creek remembers the family that built many of the houses in Inala from the early 1950's and pioneered a new method of concrete pouring in situ. Farley Creek pays tribute to perhaps the first European settler in the district, Henry Farley, who selected 6000 acres in 1872 in what is now Inala. Ordnance recalls the days of World War II when the United States of America had an ammunitions base at Forest Lake.

### Creek Crossing Public Art

The Creek Crossings Public Art Project aimed to highlight the ecological significance of the waterways of the Oxley Creek catchment. A sculpture, symbolising a Mayfly, a pollution sensitive macro-invertebrate, was developed and installed as part of the 2002 Oxley Creek Water Festival. On the Festival Day on 2 June, the artist, Chris Trotter, made the Mayfly sculpture by chipping away the concrete exterior to reveal the sculpture made of recycled metal pieces sourced from scrap metal recyclers. The finished sculpture was officially unveiled on 12 June 2002 by the Hon. Matt Foley MP, at the roundabout of Oxley and Oxley Station Roads, as a 'welcome' point to the suburb of Oxley.



### Connect to Crewes Creek



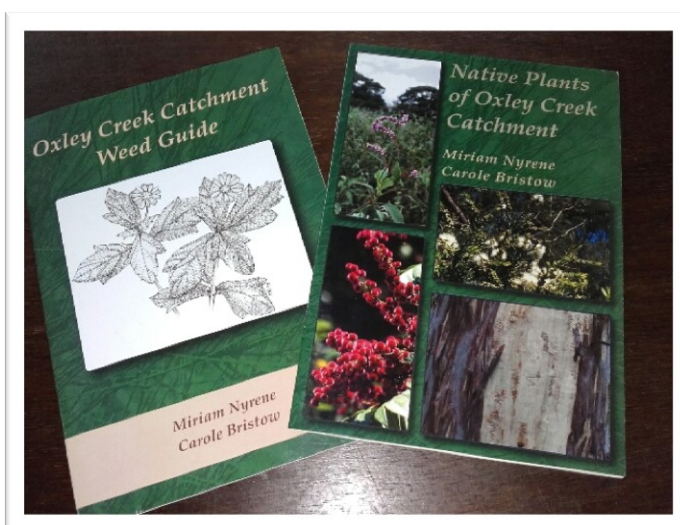
A Logan City Council Envirogrant supported OCCA's *Connect to Crewes Creek* Project. A community walk along the creek was held as part of the 2014 Peaks to Points festival. Botanists Carole Bristow and Ted Fensom led 20 local residents along a 1km stretch of the creek, observing the local plant communities, fauna tracks and bank erosion. The event was followed by a morning tea and a sharing of stories. OCCA also hosted a weed identification workshop at Greenbank State School aimed at empowering local residents to tackle weeds on their properties. Agronomist Trevor Armstrong was on hand to identify weeds and advise on treatment options whilst a Geckoes wildlife show entertained the children.

### Flora and Weed Booklets

In 2013 with funding from the Gambling Community Benefit Fund OCCA developed educational material addressing the flora and weeds of the catchment. Miriam Nyrene (then Partnerships Manager) and Carole Bristow (long-standing OCCA member, Coordinator of Habitat Brisbane Cliveden Avenue Recreation Reserve Group and flora expert) collaborated to produce two booklets:

- Oxley Creek Catchment Weed Guide
- Native Plants of Oxley Creek Catchment

Both guides provide information and photographs to aid plant identification and the Weed Guide also provides information on how to deal with infestations.



## Celebrations

Over the years OCCA has organised many events to celebrate national and global celebration days and to raise awareness of the benefits of looking after the environment, planting trees and removing rubbish. The following provide a snapshot of some of those activities.

### ***World Environment Day***

To celebrate World Environment Day 2006, a tree planting was held at Greenbank State School to expand the shade cover around the school's oval.

OCCA has regularly participated in the annual Logan Eco-Action Festival (LEAF) which celebrates World Environment Day.

In 2013 OCCA members and volunteers, local community members, Councillor Steve Griffiths, Sims Metal Management and a team from Healthy Waterways, took part in a community planting on a reach of Stable Swamp Creek between Granard Wetlands and Kookaburra Park. About 80 trees were planted, a ute load of rubbish was removed and volunteers helped remove weeds.

### ***National Tree Day***

In 2001 OCCA coordinated the planting of 150 native trees at Spring Mountain Wetland.

In 2004 OCCA celebrated National Tree Day as part of the Oxley Creek Water Festival with tree plantings at Coopers Plains State School and Greenbank State School.

In 2006 OCCA again partnered with Coopers Plains State School and worked with students and volunteers to extend the native garden. To celebrate the school's 75th anniversary, a Wollemi Pine was planted in the school's front garden.

In 2009 OCCA coordinated a planting event for participants of the Construction Training Centre's *Get Set for Work* program along the banks of Rocky Water Holes at Salisbury.

In 2013, OCCA along with Origin Energy and BetterEarth volunteers weeded a site at the Oxley Creek Common before they dug, planted, staked and watered almost 200 native plants.





### ***World Rivers Day***

In 2011 OCCA hosted a community day at the Oxley Creek Common in conjunction with by Energex, Landcare Qld, Rocklea Rotary, and Wolston and Centenary Catchments. Over 200 people planted 400 native plants, enjoyed an early morning canoe paddle down Oxley Creek, a bird spotting walk led by Professor Hugh Possingham, a screening of the OCCA film "A Flood Story", and a barbecue lunch provided by Rocklea Rotary.

### ***Clean up Australia Days***

In 2002 OCCA supported a clean up of Stable Swamp Creek hosted by Friends of Stable Swamp Creek. In 2003 Stable Swamp Creek was again the focus of Clean Up Australia Day. 14 volunteers collected 18 bags of rubbish, industrial waste, and one lounge suite.

In February 2007 OCCA collaborated with Brisbane Markets Ltd for a Business Clean Up with its wholesale and retail tenants and collected almost a tonne of litter.

In 2012 OCCA hosted a canoeing clean up event along Oxley Creek at the Oxley Common. Canoes were launched from the Pamphlet Bridge pontoon at the mouth of the Brisbane River before the paddlers headed upstream picking up creek side rubbish along the way. More than 30kg of waste was collected including fuel bottles, crates, buckets, polystyrene, fishing line, a punching bag and general rubbish.



Also in 2012, OCCA helped Wolston and Centenary Catchments to clean up an area of Bullockhead Creek in Sumner Park. More than 4m<sup>2</sup> of waste including building and vehicle parts, tyres, chipboard, electrical cable, insulation, and old kitchens, was collected as were three yellow bags of recyclables.

In 2013 OCCA held Community Clean Up events at Cliveden Avenue Reserve and the Oxley Creek Common, and a Business Clean Up Day at Dunn Rd, Rocklea.



In 2014 OCCA member Julie Lawson organised a Clean Up Australia Day event at Ison Park at Greenbank which attracted over 50 volunteers. A Geckoes wildlife display and a visit from the Rural Fire Services mini fire engine entertained the children whilst the adults collected 8 tonnes of tyres, mattresses, general rubbish and recyclables from the Crewes Creek catchment.



In 2015 OCCA worked with local businesses to clean up a section of Dunn Rd at Rocklea. In February 2016 OCCA returned to Dunn Road where staff from Sims Metal Management and ALS joined OCCA staff and volunteers in a Business Clean Up Day event.

### **Riverclean**

In May 2001, community volunteers took to Oxley Creek to remove rubbish from the Canoe Trail. Along with rubbish removal, volunteers helped plant trees, monitor water quality and remove weeds.

In 2002, as part of the Oxley Creek Water Festival, OCCA hosted the Energex Riverclean Event on Stable Swamp Creek at Kookaburra Park. Rubbish was removed from the creek bed and banks and 1000 lomandras were planted to help stabilise the creek banks.

In 2003 OCCA hosted a Port of Brisbane Riverclean on Rocky Water Holes at the Peter Scott Skate Park and Recreation Reserve. Volunteers were joined by Channel Nine's John Schluter to remove Paragrass and plant 500 native trees and shrubs then enjoy Triple M's sausage sizzle and live entertainment.

In 2004 Riverclean was again hosted by the Port of Brisbane at the Oxley Creek Common where volunteers helped to dig holes, plant new plants and spread mulch.

### **MONITORING**

#### **Healthy Waterways Report Card Results for Oxley Creek**

Since 2000, Healthy Waterways has monitored the waterways and catchments of South-East Queensland twice a year. A rating system, ranging from A (excellent) to F (fail), is used to indicate whether waterway health is improving or declining. OCCA has contributed to this information and database by monitoring additional sites along Oxley Creek and its main tributaries of Blunder, Stable Swamp, and Moolabin Creeks, Sheep Station Gully, and Rocky Water Holes.

For each of the years 2004 to 2007, the estuarine section of Oxley Creek scored an "F" rating. The freshwater section similarly scored an "F" except for 2005 when water quality improved to a "D minus" rating. In 2008 Oxley Creek achieved a D rating, an improvement on previous years. However, from 2009 to 2011 Oxley Creek again scored an "F" in both freshwater and estuarine creek sections. In 2012, the water quality in Oxley Creek improved to a "D minus". In 2013, the freshwater section of Oxley Creek scored a "D minus" but the estuarine section declined to score an "F". In 2014, the water quality ratings were reversed with the estuarine section of Oxley Creek improving to score a "D minus" and the freshwater section scoring an "F". These changes were attributed to the low rainfall in the catchment over the previous 12 months and a lack of riverbank vegetation.

In 2015, Healthy Waterways changed the approach to reporting to encompass social and economic benefits and actions. Individual creeks are no longer reported and Oxley Creek is now part of the Lower Brisbane River which scored "C minus" and 3.5 stars. The report recognised the high recreational benefits of this area but noted that it is under pressure from very high urban pollutant loads.

#### **Oxley Creek Waterwatch Program**

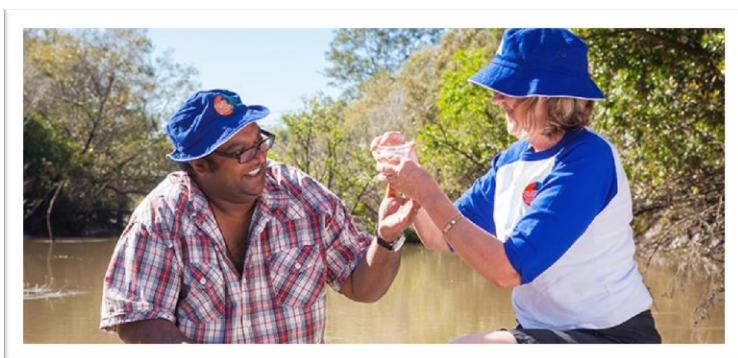
The Oxley Creek Environment Group established a program of monitoring the quality of the water in the lower Oxley Creek to raise awareness of the need to manage water resources and complement existing monitoring and planning processes. The Oxley Creek Waterwatch Program encouraged local people to learn about their local waterways. The Program determined a technique for community monitoring of aquatic macro invertebrates and fish, developed publications including *"Know Your Creek – Oxley Creek"*, *"Oxley Creek Log Book"*, and *"Kids, Companies and Creeks"*, helped to deliver educational programs and activities in schools

within the catchment, encouraged community participation in water quality monitoring and evaluation, and provided water quality data for the national Waterwatch database.

In 2001 OCCA conducted four creek forum workshops for teachers and community and five fish survey days. In 2004 Corinda and Greenbank State Schools joined the Waterwatch Program which was expanded to also include riparian assessments and macroinvertebrate activities. Waterwatch is now part of OCCA's Schools Education Program.

### **Water Quality Monitoring**

In 2007, OCCA initiated a program to monitor the health of waterways in the catchment to EHMP standards. Monitoring is undertaken in accordance with the SEQ Catchments Community Monitoring Program and includes fish, macroinvertebrates, nutrients, physio-chemical parameters and ecosystem status at sites across the catchment.



In 2010 the program was reviewed and a comprehensive monitoring guide developed to support the program.

A lack of volunteers resulted in a break in the program. However, in 2013 volunteer Bernadette Nicotra led a relaunch of the program. Activities focused on seven sites throughout the northern catchment that complement on-ground restoration sites and will over time, help assess the impact

of restoration works on creek health. Four monitoring runs were conducted in 2013 and again in 2014.

In 2015 SEQ Catchments Community Water Monitoring Program lost its funding. However, OCCA received funding from the Queensland Government's Everyone's Environment Grants Program to support monitoring of Stable Swamp Creek and also sample for an extended suite of metals and organics at ten sites in a highly industrialised section the Creek.

In 2016 monthly monitoring has taken place in February, March, April, May and June. This program is made possible due to the hard work and expertise of our volunteers.

### **MangroveWatch**

With funding from the Queensland Government's Everyone's Environment Program, in 2013 OCCA initiated a MangroveWatch monitoring program for the lower reaches of Oxley Creek. MangroveWatch is a global program designed and coordinated by James Cook University, Townsville and provides a tool to assess and monitor local shoreline habitats.



Partnering with Healthy Waterways, the Pamphlett Sea Scouts and Wildlife Queensland, an initial monitoring run was held with volunteers Michael Smit, Marie Kanikarla and Christine Reith conducting a video assessment of the mangroves from the mouth of

Oxley Creek to the Oxley Sewage Treatment Plant. The information was then analysed at James Cook University and provides an important visual baseline from which to assess future change. A MangroveWatch survey is currently undertaken annually.

### **Platypus Watch**

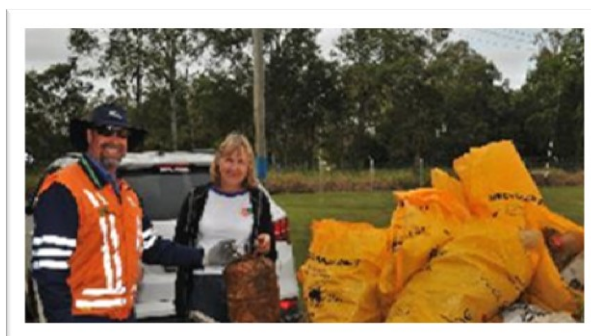
Twenty enthusiasts undertook OCCA's first Platypus Survey in Stable Swamp, Blunder and Oxley Creeks and Rocky Water Holes in May 2007. Glenn Costello from Wildlife Preservation Society of Queensland outlined the life cycle, habits, movements and swimming styles of platypus. Unfortunately, despite best efforts, there were no confirmed sightings. A further platypus survey was undertaken as part of the Peaks to Points Festival 2014 but again, there were no confirmed sightings. Another survey will be conducted in 2016.

## **NATURAL AREA RESTORATION**

### **From Drains to Healthy Waterways**

Stable Swamp Creek suffers from flooding, erosion and general neglect. In 2003 organisations including OCCA, Brothers St Brendans' Rugby League Club, Brisbane City Council and the Rocklea and Moorooka Communities partnered to rehabilitate and stabilise the creek in Kookaburra Park Rocklea. Initial work focussed on spraying out exotic grasses and weeds on the site whilst retaining native species. Silt fencing and jute matting were installed to reduce bank erosion and sediment runoff into the creek.

This work was continued in 2013 through community planting days in partnership with Healthy Waterways on Energex land adjacent to Kookaburra Park where participants worked in a remnant forest of *Melaleuca* and *Eucalypt* species, removing weeds and planting beneath the canopy with species chosen to reflect the natural character of the site, Staff from the Energex EsiTrain site supported this event by taking away the trailer load of rubbish collected and providing cold drinks. Further planting occurred in October with another community event, this time around a wetland behind McAleese Transport depot. OCCA Biodiversity Services continued to work along the creek from Kookaburra Park to Granard Wetlands, removing invasive weeds and planting endemic native species.



### **Cliveden Avenue Wetland Restoration**

Cliveden Avenue Recreation Reserve is often flooded and residents were concerned that any restoration should minimise the flooding risk. A Cliveden Wetlands Restoration Plan was drafted in January 1999 and in 2000 funding was obtained from the Natural Heritage Trust and Brisbane City Council. Work undertaken on site included a frog survey by the Queensland Frog Society, Broad-leaved Pepper Tree control trials, removal of water hyacinth, and planting of on the ridge behind the wetland (red ash, cheese tree, black wattle), and on the level area (*Melaleuca bracteata*, *Casuarina* spp., *Eucalyptus tereticornis*, various wattles).

In April 2000, new fencing was put up around the wetland to protect new plantings from the horses, around 300 trees were planted, and several trailer loads of water hyacinth were removed from the wetland. The Habitat Brisbane Group led by Carole Bristow continues restoration at the site.

### **Pallara Willawong Community Bushland Rehabilitation Project**

In 2004 nearly 50 property owners in the Pallara-Willawong area joined forces with OCCA to obtain an Australian Government Envirofund grant. The project involved workshops and field days on how to



successfully integrate nature conservation on their properties, plan and undertake small scale on-ground rehabilitation works, collect seeds and propagate native plants, and control weeds. Flora surveys provided participants with a list of plants native to the local area. This project was successfully completed at the beginning of 2006 with the rehabilitation of several areas.

Their work resulted in the removal of Lantana, Small/Large leaved privet, Asparagus vine, Broad leaved pepper tree, Tobacco bush, Umbrella tree, Groundsel, Blackberry, Mother of Millions, Slash Pine, and Singapore Daisy, and the rehabilitation of 1.6 hectares of freshwater wetland and about 4 hectares of dry sclerophyll forest to further enhance the biodiversity and connectivity of the wildlife corridor along this section of Oxley Creek.

### **Greening Greenbank**

The upper reaches of Oxley Creek lie within the Greenbank and Spring Mountain areas. The area is largely natural, with heavily forested hills and grazing land although there is increasing residential development. The Spring Mountain Wetland is home to a number of water birds, frogs, dragonflies, Eastern water dragons and native fish. The enhancement of this wetland through revegetation and regeneration will help improve the long-term health of this ecosystem and Oxley Creek.

In March 2001 a Landcare Project was held attracting local industry, community groups and residents to the Spring Mountain Wetland Reserve. Participants enjoyed a free sausage sizzle, a guided tour of the surrounding bushland, and information on the importance of this environment, and helped plant new trees in the parkland.

Further plantings and walks at Spring Mountain Wetland were also held in March and June 2003 and as events during the Peaks to Points Festivals.

### **Restoration of Rocky Water Holes**

The Construction Training Centre (CTC) in Salisbury received recognition at the 2010 Healthy Waterways Awards a finalist in the Industry Award Category acknowledging industries which are contributing to the improvement of waterway management and health, for their efforts to rehabilitate Rocky Water Holes.

In 2009 a partnership with Conservation Volunteers Australia and CTC resulted in the restoration of a large area of riparian habitat along Rocky Water Holes in CTC's grounds. Lantana was cleared Broad-leaved Pepper and Chinese Elm trees were treated, grasses and Caster Oil plants dug out, and over 1000 native plants planted. OCCA provided participants with training in bushcare skills and guidance in caring for the plants. CTC employed an officer to help with maintaining the riparian area. CTC staff members also completed fire ant training and water quality training to enable them to monitor the health of the creek.

### **What's your Nature? – Oxley Golf Complex**

In 2014, OCCA partnered with SEQ Catchments and Brisbane Boys' College on a four-year vegetation and habitat restoration project at Oxley Golf Complex to deliver an overall improvement in habitat connectivity, and visual amenity of the area. The project is being funded by the Federal Government's Caring for Country Program and is part of the *What's Your Nature?* Partnership. It will rehabilitate a 2km stretch of the western bank of Oxley Creek and its tributaries of Mayfly and Pennywort Creeks. The area includes a specimen of the threatened Angle-Stemmed Myrtle (*Gossia gonoclada*) but is infested with weeds. Community partnerships and corporate volunteering days, as well as the help of Conservation Volunteers Australia have removed Cats claw creeper, Chinese Elm and Broad-leaved Pepper Trees and planted over 500 native plants.

### **Granard Wetlands Restoration**

Granard Wetlands is a 5.5 ha area boarded by the Ipswich Motorway, Granard Road, Marshall Road and Rocklea Bunnings. It has been the site of much action since the launch in August 2008 of a project to clean up



and restore this neglected area of Stable Swamp Creek. OCCA, Bunnings, EDI Downer, and Coca Cola Amatil and Cr Steve Griffiths initially provided financial and in-kind support to restore the ecological and hydraulic functioning of Granard Wetlands on Stable Swamp Creek over 3 - 5 years. With the help of Rocklea State School students, over 300 native plants were planted to start the project.



In 2009 Bunnings sponsored the removal of large areas of leucaena. A number of Corporate Volunteering days were held and Rocklea State School students undertook more plantings. In 2010, efforts refocused on weed control, stabilising the southern bank of Stable Swamp Creek and cleaning up illegal dumping and vandalism on the road frontage. The southern bank was mulched and the mulch held down with jute netting. The steeply sloping banks were then planted with 1000 rushes, lilies, sedges and grasses to secure the soil. The jute netting proved a wise investment as the October downpour covered the banks with over a metre of water but the plants and the mulch survived.

In August, Granard Wetlands became one of the sites for Brisbane City Council's Two Million Trees Program with 3600 trees planted and weeds removed from one hectare of the site.

In September over 130 students and volunteers from the Tzu Chi Buddhist Foundation collected litter, re-mulched some of the older plantings, pulled out piles of weeds and planted 250 new trees. In October Coca-Cola Amatil revisited Granard Wetlands to see the progress of their tree planting in 2009, and removed weeds, collected litter and planted the southern bank of the creek with another 200 trees and groundcovers.

In December 2010, students from Moorooka State School and Rocklea State School, assisted by Bunnings staff, planted almost 500 new trees in the 'high ground' at the southern section of the site as part of the Brisbane City Council Two Million Trees Program which will aid the restoration of an additional one hectare of the site.

In 2011 Granard Wetlands was flooded along with much of the Brisbane floodplain. The waters remained very



high across the site for several days, and about 1800 plants died which allowed weed species to take hold as OCCA was unable to access the site until BCC completed soil testing to ensure there was no risk to volunteers from biological hazards in the deposited mud. On the upside, the floodwaters carried many native reed seeds across to the southern bank and colonised an area that was tricky to rehabilitate due to ponding water, erosion and frequent minor flooding.

In June 2011 Brisbane City Council provided funding to replace the plants lost to the flood, and additional plants to enhance and stabilise the site. Working bees were held with project partners, including a World Environment Day planting with Downer EDI staff in June and a working bee with Coca-Cola employees for their Sustainable September campaign. These activities resulted in planting of 3750 native plants with another 3000 plants planted as part of the BCC *Two Million Trees* project. A new sign was installed to inform people of the project and to recognise valuable supporters. Vandalism and dumping activities all but ceased which seems to indicate that the area may now be seen as being of value to the local community.

In 2013 a Brisbane City Council Environment and Sustainability Grant funded the treatment of woody weeds at the site. A second grant to support stakeholder engagement at the site was launched with an early morning bird walk with Rod Brown of Birds Queensland helping to identify 35 bird species, followed by a BBQ breakfast provided by Bunnings Rocklea.

In 2014 a photography workshop was held at Granard Wetlands in December under the guidance of Chris Jensen, OCCA Biodiversity Services Manager, where 20 people learnt about the nuances of nature photography.

In November 2015 OCCA launched a four-year partnership with Energex and Brisbane City Council to eradicate weeds, plant 25000 grasses, shrubs and trees and maintain Granard Wetlands over the next four years. The CreekWatch Works program was established to encourage local businesses and industry to join OCCA at monthly working bees and help continue to restore the area.

#### **Blunder Creek Corridor Protection and Enhancement**

With the assistance of a grant related to the Western Corridor Recycled Water Pipeline Project, OCCA partnered with Forest Lake State School to educate students about the importance of clean water. Year 4 classes ventured to Forest Lake where they carried out water quality testing, and dip-netting for macroinvertebrates. They also learnt about the importance of wildlife corridors as well as planting 100 native plants in the wildlife corridor that is intrinsic to this tributary of Blunder Creek. The funding also allowed some areas of infestation by Elephant Grass and Lantana to be treated. OCCA also talked to the students about gliders and erected four rear entry nest boxes in large trees on the edge of the school grounds which were known glider food trees or where glider scratchings had been found.

#### **ARCHERFIELD WETLANDS**

Funding for this project through the Federal Government's "Caring for Country" 2010-2012 program allowed removal of large quantities of Lantana and Cat's Claw Creeper and rehabilitation of 4.5km of creek bank from Beatty Road to Ipswich Road. Partners within this creek section are Transpacific Waste, Warapar Ltd, Archerfield Airport and Brisbane City Council.

Since then OCCA has undertaken several community bird walks, World Wetlands Day tree planting events and a seedball making workshop with residents at Aveo Durack.

#### **Spring Mountain Wetland Restoration**

This area has been identified as an emerging peri-urban area under the regional plan and as such is susceptible to increasing residential development and associated environmental impacts. OCCA began work in this area in 1998 as part of the Olympic LandCare project. Since then OCCA has worked with the Spring Mountain community through regular tree planting days, wetland and birdlife walks and water quality monitoring. Thousands of plants have been planted and significant areas fenced off for natural regeneration to ensure this wetland reserve area remains a strategic link in the Flinders-Greenbank-Karawatha wildlife corridor.



### **Strengthening riparian corridors around Greenwood Lakes**

This project was supported in 2007 – 9 by a Logan City Council EnviroGrant. It focused on community education and restoration and tree planting on private land and council areas to strengthen the Oxley Creek riparian corridor and habitat connectivity in the region of Greenwood Lakes. Initial work took place at Wat Thai Buddharam and then extended along Paradise Street. Weeds such as Lantana and Green Panic were removed, and native species including Callistemon, Lophostemon, Acacia, Hovea and Lomandra were planted. A number of community events were held including planting days, a Nest Box Building Day where participants made nest boxes to take home to attract gliders, micro-bats and birds into their own gardens, and a bird talk and spotlighting event around Greenwood Lakes.

### **Biodiversity Enhancement and Protection for Pennywort and Mayfly Waterways**

In 2008 funding from the Western Corridor Recycled Water Pipeline supported a community education and restoration project along Oxley, Pennywort and Mayfly Creeks in Corinda. OCCA hosted a National Schools Tree Day where students from Sherwood and Corinda State Schools and Corinda State High School planted over 300 plants. From May to September



volunteers helped to restore areas in the Cliveden Avenue Reserve, Pennywort Creek, the Corinda Golf Course and the Oxley Creek Waste Water Treatment Plant.

At Cliveden Avenue Reserve, members of the local Bushcare Group and OCCA's CreekCare team treated weeds including Cat's Claw Creeper and Broad-leaved Pepper Trees. At Pennywort Creek Broad-leaved Pepper trees, Chinese Elm and Coral Berry were removed, and at the Corinda Golf Course at the mouth of Pennywort Creek infestations of Cat's Claw Creeper, Asparagus fern and Broad-leaved Pepper Tree were treated.

### **Blunder Creek Corridor Protection and Enhancement**

In 2008-9, OCCA received a Western Corridor Recycled Water Community grant to help protect and enhance the Blunder Creek corridor from the Greenbank Military Training Area to Archerfield Wetlands. The project aimed to remove weeds and plant native species, increase community awareness of water quality issues, habitat values and gliders through educational activities with local schools, and increase the profile of Blunder Creek to industries through industry engagement at Brisbane South Industrial Park (BSIP).

OCCA worked with B&R Enclosures OCCA worked with B&R Enclosures at Brisbane South Industrial Park and Forest Lake State School students. B&R Enclosures undertook a Business Clean Up event along Blunder Creek at the Industrial Park in February 2009. OCCA staff and volunteers removed truckloads of weeds from the riparian zone along 5km of Blunder Creek and its tributaries in Forest Lake and OCCA's Biodiversity Services treated infestations of Elephant Grass, Molasses Grass, Lantana and Singapore Daisy in the riparian zone of Blunder Creek on Blunder Road. In 2009 Forest Lake State School students conducted water quality testing and dip-netting for macro-invertebrates in Forest Lake and then planted 200 trees and learnt about wildlife corridors on a tributary of Blunder Creek. They also helped install four nest boxes in trees at Forest Lake State School where glider scratches had been found or which were recognised as glider food trees.

### **Sand mining restoration at Paradise Road**

OCCA's Biodiversity Services was commissioned to control weeds along the waterways as part of rehabilitation of the sand mining voids at the Holcim site on Paradise Road. Holcim also installed thirty artificial hollows. An

inspection conducted in June 2006 found that seven boxes contained glider colonies, with 2 to 5 gliders present in each box. Five additional boxes contained fresh eucalyptus leaves indicating recent glider use and three boxes contained dry leaves indicating previous glider use.

### **Wetland workshops**

In 2007, funding from the Exchange Incentive Fund allowed OCCA to conduct a field day at Pennywort Creek providing practical tips on ecological restoration in an urban catchment. The Field Day addressed site assessment and staging of restoration work, identification of common native plants and weeds and practical ways to treat environmental weeds. In addition, a workshop at Spring Mountain Recreation Reserve discussed the functioning of wetlands, impacts of residential developments, how to restore a wetland, and manage wetland weeds.

### **20 Million Trees**

In 2016 OCCA partnered with the Department of Public Works and Housing, Friends of Oxley Creek Common, researchers at the University of Queensland, Corinda State High School and the Green Army to plant 27 000 native shrubs and trees over four years on 6 hectares of the Oxley Creek Common, as part of the Federal Government's 20 Million Trees project. The Oxley Creek Common is a unique 120 hectare open space on the lower, highly urbanised reach of the Oxley Creek and is key to maintaining a riparian corridor that includes specimens of the endangered *Gossia gonoclada* and provides a valuable bird habitat. Over 200 bird species have been recorded, including Latham's Snipe, an endangered migratory bird. This project will assist the rehabilitation of the riparian zone along Oxley Creek to help improve habitat connectivity and water quality.



These short notes provide a snapshot of the many and varied projects and ongoing activities – large and small – that OCCA has undertaken over the last 20 years. These would not have been possible without the cooperation and partnership of Federal, State and local governments, businesses, education institutions and community organisations that provided funding and/or volunteers to make the projects happen. OCCA looks forward to continuing these relationships into the future.

