

**Annual General Meeting
of the
Cubberla-Witton Catchments Network Inc
29th March 2011
Indooroopilly Library**

True to our motto to link people with an environmental interest in our catchments and to achieve healthy catchments through on-ground work and community education, the Cubberla-Witton Catchments Network has continued to strive to achieve all of the above.

The year since our last AGM has ended with substantial flood inundation of lower lying areas of our Inner West catchments. Many properties are badly affected and Brisbane River and lower creek reaches have seen considerable damage to banks, rehabilitation sites and open spaces. In comparison to other creek catchments in Brisbane ours fared relatively well, but sites like the ones at the mouth of Witton Creek are destroyed and the Richmond Birdwing Habitat all but lost, and areas like the St Lucia Esplanade/Taroola St site see delayed effects with vegetation dieing weeks after the flood. Open spaces like in Perrin Park alongside Toowong Creek were heavily contaminated by sewerage.

Many of our members participated actively in clean up efforts and are busy to bring natural areas back to their former state.

CWCN has continued to hold **bi-monthly public meetings** at Indooroopilly Library where information about current and past activities and topics of relevance to our catchments and our work are presented by (guest) speakers. Among those topics were

- the 2011 floods, their effects on our catchments area (CWCN),
- background information to those floods and their effects on creeks, rivers and Moreton Bay (Naomi Soustal/Healthy Waterways),
- an introduction to Men of the Trees, a worldwide acting organization which has provided much rehabilitation support to various areas in our catchments (Scott Maxwell/MOTT)
- an introduction to fungi including their importance to ecosystem processes (Jutta Godwin/CWCN)
- Emerging Weeds and the Weedspotters Network (Kathy Stephens/Qld Herbarium)
- Churchill Fellowship to study practices of abandoned mine rehabilitation and post-mining land use including information on quarry rehabilitation and the UK Eden Project (Churchill Fellow and CWCN member Corinne Unger),
- Water Sensitive Urban Design (Alan Hoban/Healthy Waterways)

Traditionally, we have an end of calendar year get-together celebrating our achievements. At this occasion we honoured members for their special achievements:

- Ros Laundon for her long term commitment to the now almost completed rehabilitation of Rainbow Forest
- Joan Wilkinson for her immense rehabilitation work, done almost alone and within a very short period of time, at Greenhill Reservoir
- Des Hoban for his community engagement efforts with i.e. National Tree Days
- Joan Redgrave for her many years of organizing Clean Up Australia Day

- Kon Michnowsky for establishing our library system
 - Ray Kelly for his persistent water quality monitoring effort
- Our end of year celebration also saw the youthful enthusiasm of Griffith University students with presentations on garbage floating in the oceans, on the movement *Youth and Climate Change*, and interactive theatre on sustainability titled “Jamie Oliver meets Giselle Buendchen”.

Management Committee meetings were held every month to discuss and outline our work, needs of the catchments and the organization, and to deal with finances and overall strategies. Among the biggest achievements are the initiation and work on our current Strategic Plan and the efforts gone into physical accommodation for CWCN. Both of them will be mentioned later.

Bushland and Waterway Rehabilitation in our Inner West catchments has continued with 12 active bush care groups and six sub-groups. Our Habitat Brisbane registered groups work independently and receive immense and substantial material and other support by Brisbane City Council’s Habitat Brisbane Program. CWCN provides additional support wherever required and possible.

Our friends from *Men of the Trees* have continued to support catchment health by working along Gubberley Creek/Kenmore Anglican Church site, in Taringa on various sites, and most recently in the upper reaches of Toowong Creek.

Conservation Volunteers Australia provided repeat engagement along Gubberley Creek giving a much needed boost to the area and encouragement to the local bush care group.

Our currently pending application to have a Habitat Brisbane Group established along Toowong Creek appears to have chances of being successful this time around. It will be a first and much needed step to the rehabilitation of Toowong Creek.

Corporate volunteers from Golder Associates have continued their immense engagement at Greenford Street with enormous enthusiasm and a willingness to provide their professional expertise, contribute materially and for the long term. They have expressed their commitment to support a Family Fun Day with the aim to mobilize the local population to further help the rehabilitation effort and to take ownership. Our creek ranger Michael Thorley has nurtured the contact with them, and we are grateful.

CWCN registered Moore Park for 2010’s **National Tree Day**, a joint effort between CWCN, Creek Ranger Program, Habitat Brisbane with substantial material and preparatory work, and the efforts of many Moore Park Bushcare Group volunteers under the leadership of Des Hoban. The event was one of Brisbane’s biggest NTD events and attracted large community participation.

Indooroopilly State School continued their cooperation with CWCN and Moore Park Bushcare Group with its annual Arbor Day event where 100plus Grade 5 students descend upon Moore Park and plant several hundred trees, shrubs and groundcovers combined with additional activities such as learning hands-on about soil, fungi, water quality and macro-invertebrates. This event is supported by BCC’s Habitat Brisbane and Creek Ranger Programs, the teachers of ISS as well as the school’s P&C body.

CWCN nominated Indooroopilly State School for their ten years of involvement with Moore Park for the “Young Legends” awards under the 2010 **Spotless Suburbs** competition, and ISS won this Brisbane-wide category.

In 2011 Rainbow Forest Experimental Rehabilitation Group and Moore Park Bushcare Group have both been nominated for the Rehabilitation category of the Spotless Suburbs competition because of their exemplary work. We keep our fingers crossed for them.

Clean Up Australia Day saw the biggest participation of community members in Brisbane because of the flood. That was certainly reflected in our Inner West catchments where more Clean Up sites than in the years before were registered. In the true spirit of our Network's goals to keep our waterways clean, large numbers of Network members participated on the day. Our traditional site at the corner of Moggill Rd and Marshall Lane was again registered under CWCN's name and our member Joan Redgrave with others guided the activities. Many groups/individuals closely or loosely associated with our work contributed in many different locations and have our utmost gratitude and admiration.

2010 saw our involvement with two **Junior Landcare events**. School students from Ironside State School and Indooroopilly State School were involved with tree planting, learning about sustainability and water quality issues, and wildlife. CWCN is grateful to Habitat Brisbane for material and preparatory help, for the creek ranger program with learning activities on water quality and macro-invertebrate issues, and Landcare Queensland and their sponsor Energex for their financial support of the event.

CWCN held a highly successful event **Soils are Alive!!!** on soil biology at the Parliamentary Annexe which attracted participation from across South-East Queensland. Speakers from Queensland and interstate emphasized the importance of the life below our feet with the following topics :

- Dr Peter Kopittke/University of Queensland: *Introduction to Soils*
- Dr David Eldrige/University of NSW on *Microbiotic Soil Crusts and their role in soil and ecological processes*
- Associate Professor Peter McGee/University of Sydney on *Mycorrhizal Fungi and their Function in Soil and Application to Restoration*
- Dr Geoff Monteith/Queensland Museum on *Dung Beetles and their effects on soils*
- Dr Geoff Dyne/Australian Government Land and Coasts Qld Section:
- *A hidden diversity: native earthworm species and their role in soil processes and ecosystem integrity*
- Dr Diane Allen/Qld Dept of Environment and Resource Management on *Soil Carbon and Soil Health*
- Merline Olson/Soil Foodweb International on *How to Measure Soil Biomass*
- Prof Richard Haynes/University of Queensland on *Soil Contaminants and Bioremediation*
- Dr Chengron Chen/Griffith University on *Global Changes and Soil Microbial Community (incl effects of fertilisation on microbes)*

We thank our State Member Scott Emerson for securing the Undumbi Room at the Parliamentary Annexe for us. We are grateful to Golder Associates for sponsoring the event, and we thank all speakers for so generously sharing their time and expertise.

Monitoring the water quality of our local creeks has remained an ongoing CWCN effort. It is mostly thanks to our dedicated member Ray Kelly that this functions like clockwork. Not only is he committed to visit multiple locations along our creeks every single month, but he now also feeds all survey results into the database of the Bureau of Meteorology.

We are grateful for SEQ Catchments to provide the regular calibration of our Horiba, the electronic monitoring device which a few years ago was purchased with the help of Cr Margaret de Wit and the Lord Mayor's Suburban Initiative Fund.

Brisbane City Council has re-instated the Animal Ethics Permit, and after a long wait we have finally been able to **survey our fish populations** for the very first time since the drought broke and the flood occurred. The first snapshots carried out not only indicate that the Purple-spotted gudgeon still exists in Cubberla Creek, but also that we have more native species in our creeks than we have had for many years including the seemingly abundant Striped Gudgeon as well as Firetail and Rainbow Gudgeons. It also indicated that exotic fish species still dominate with Tilapia, Swordtails, Gambusia in large numbers.

Interpretive Signage has been developed for the St Lucia Esplanade site. With the inundation by the 2011 flood we need to assess the feasibility of some of these signs/locations before the actual production starts. These signs are intended to be the first of many to be designed for areas across our catchments, all intended to provide a learning experience about particular locations or important environmental themes.

CWCN has again participated in the joint production of the **2011 calendar** "Brisbane's Wild West" featuring nature in the western suburbs. The cooperation with THECA, REPA and Moggill Creek Catchment Group has been working well for several years now, and the calendar has developed a little fan club.

CWCN and CWCN members have contributed with **submissions or via direct liaison and participation** to range of regional and local topics and issues, among them

- Queensland Biodiversity Strategy
- Brisbane City Council Recreation Strategy
- St Lucia Golf Links Masterplan
- Indooroopilly Neighbourhood Plan

CWCN has also been active in opposing and mobilizing opposition to **Development Applications** such as the one in Fig Tree Pocket (Thiessfield St/Ramada Place) where residential buildings are intended to be erected in a waterway corridor, entirely under water during the recent flood, and where the developer has already started to dump filling material before Council approval has been issued.

Brisbane City Council's **Creek Ranger Program** has involved several of our local schools in activities learning about catchment and environmental health. Indooroopilly State School has participated in the citywide *GOA Billboard Competition*, and Kenmore South State School took part of the *Catchment Kids* competition. Michael Thorley, Creek Ranger for Inner West, also regularly conducted activities like catchment walks, water quality monitoring, rehabilitation support with schools such as Fig Tree Pocket State School, Indooroopilly State High School, Brisbane Boys College, St Peter's Lutheran College, and The Glenleighden School.

Our previously mentioned **CWCN involvement with educational institutions** goes further. We are cooperating with Griffith **University** as one of their Industry Partners and have two students allocated to us helping us with oral histories and business planning. We work with University of Queensland's School of Education and their 'Service Learning' combining their students' volunteering with theory and curriculum. Also CWCN has arranged to sponsor a prize for a project where UQ students combine science with media presentation.

Strategic Planning for the future of our Inner West's catchments and for the workings of CWCN took prominent place this past year. Meetings focusing on Land/Bushcare and Biodiversity, on Water Care and Pollution, on Community Events and Education, and on Strengthening CWCN and developing a Corporate Strategy have taken place gathering

information. Individual members and the Management Committee have provided input into this process. A substantial document was put together and went out to public consultation. It is now a matter of implementing goals and strategies to achieve them according to priorities and capacity.

Our own **Catchments Centre** has not only been on our wish list for several years. It is now reality and the project is finally moving along nicely. It is an absolute necessity for our organisation to work efficiently and move forward. We look forward to overcoming lack of space requirements which have hindered many of our efforts, and to growing our activities, to developing working groups, to enabling an accessible and effective administration as well as providing a place of constant educational activities.

A house, purchased under Council's flood buy-back scheme will be moved from The Gap to Hepworth Street/Chapel Hill. We have the construction plans to visualize our future abode. We are currently at the Development Application Stage.

We are more than grateful to Brisbane City Council, the Lord Mayor, our previous local Councillor and now Federal Member Jane Prentice and our new Councillor for the Walter Taylor Ward Julian Simmonds for their immense support in this matter. We are also grateful to BCC LAS West for administering the project and helping us to make it all happen. Our hope is that we will have moved into our catchments centre by the end of 2011.

The uplifting news about the house finish off another active year for the Cubberla-Witton Catchments Network and certainly promise more and improved activities for the benefit of our catchments.

29th March 2011

Jutta Godwin
President