

PROJECT *Snapshots*

Getting Smart with Stopping Spills

The Trust and the local councils in the catchment are working to stop chemical spills occurring and polluting the local creeks.

In May, council and Trust staff attended a Spill Response Training day. A specialist from the NSW Fire Brigade's Hazardous Materials Unit led the training session, outlining the methods to clean up spills and the procedures to ensure efficient cleanup of the chemicals.

The Trust is organising a special mock spill event for later in the year.

Waterwatch at the Watershed

Six senior Waterwatch groups in the catchment have voluntarily participated in the Quality Assurance 2002 organized by Sydney Water Streamwatch. All six groups have produced results within acceptable range produced by NATA laboratories.

For further information, please contact Lee Lau at the Trust on 9891 4633.

Monitoring to Locate Lake Parramatta's Weed Culprit!

Last summer most of the surface of Lake Parramatta at North Parramatta was covered by the noxious aquatic weed *Salvinia*. *Salvinia* spreads very rapidly when the water is warm and contains high concentrations of nutrients, particularly phosphorus, which comes from fertilisers, detergents, dog droppings and other sources.

The Trust has offered to pay a contractor to remove the *Salvinia* and to share with Parramatta City Council the cost of keeping it under control. However the longer-term solution is to reduce the amount of phosphorus in the Lake's water - the main culprit!

To do so we need to know where most of the phosphorus comes from - from the Carlingford and North Rocks area that drains into the Lake or from the sediment deposited on the floor of the Lake over the past 165 years. Over the next year the Trust's consultants will measure the amount of phosphorus (and other pollutants) carried into the Lake during rainy periods and

changes in the amount of phosphorus in the Lake itself. CSIRO scientists will then help work out where most of phosphorus is coming from. Once this is known, we can decide on the best way to reduce the amount of phosphorus in the Lake - and *Salvinia*!

Lake Parramatta Open Day a success

On Sunday 10 March 2002 over 5,000 joined Trust's Minister Hon John Aquilina MP, Minister for Land and Water Conservation, in the fun at the fourth Lake Parramatta Open Day. A native wildlife show with goannas and snakes entertained the crowds. Staff from Parramatta City Council, Baulkham Hills Shire Council and the Trust has displays and talked about what they are each doing to help clean up Lake Parramatta.

New Survey and Plan to Fix Local Creeks

Litter, pollution, bank erosion, weeds, silting, flooding... there are so many problems along our catchment creeks that local councils often don't know where to start. Fortunately help is at hand thanks to two exciting initiatives of Parramatta City Council that the Trust is pleased to assist financially and technically.

Following detailed field investigations and consultations, consultants have prepared Council's first Restoration and Maintenance Master Plan, for Toongabbie Creek from the McCoy Park Basin (Toongabbie) to Northmead Gully. The plan lists recommended works and maintenance in priority order, after balancing competing objectives. In coming years Council intends to prepare similar plans for other creeks in its area.

In addition, the Trust is supporting the work of Parramatta City Council project officer, Ms Carrie Jeffers, who is inspecting all streams in the Parramatta local government area and the Upper Parramatta River catchment to assess the health of each section of each creek. The stream health assessment considers vegetation, weed infestation, fish and water bugs, bank erosion and the potential for

rehabilitation. When completed, Carrie's assessment will enable Parramatta Council, and the Trust and other councils, to direct their efforts to where they will help most.

Flood Studies to Fill Gaps in Flood Effort

Three important studies are underway to complete gaps in our current efforts to protect the catchment community from major floods.

1. Work by consultants is well advanced on a catchment Floodplain Management Study, being guided by a Floodplain Management Committee with community, council and agency representatives. The outcome will be an agreed Floodplain Management Plan, containing consistent planning and development controls, information and measures to raise community awareness of flood risks that all four local councils can adopt.
2. Detailed computer models of flood behaviour have been developed by the Trust for most catchment streams. These models are used to compute 100-year flood levels and design flood mitigation works. A consultant is helping the Trust develop a detailed flood model for the last creek - Brickfield Creek - which drains parts of Oatlands, North Parramatta East Parramatta and Parramatta.
3. Whilst most major flood threats have now been fixed or reduced, half of the 63 flood problem areas identified soon after the Trust began are yet to be addressed. The Trust and the four local councils have therefore started a program of investigations of these outstanding flood problem areas to determine, for each, if there is a feasible solution. A panel of five consulting engineer firms will work on the investigations over the next year or so, which are being fully funded by the Trust. When all investigations are completed, the overall cost and time to protect all catchment properties from major floods will be known.

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2002 Environment Awards a success

On Friday 7 June 2002 the Upper Parramatta River Catchment Trust staged their annual awards ceremony during Western Sydney Environment Week to recognize the environmental excellence of individuals, businesses, schools, community groups and local councils in the catchment.

This year the Trust received a large number of highly competitive nominations, which posed a challenge for the independent panel of specialist judges in reaching a decision on the best projects. The large number of award submissions was matched with the impressive number of people attending the ceremony to celebrate the environmental achievements of many in the local community. Fourteen winners were announced in the local government areas of Baulkham Hills, Blacktown, Holroyd and Parramatta and each were awarded prizes of \$250.

Overall category winners were given \$1000 towards their environmental projects. For the individual category, Frances Davis of Dundas Valley was recognized for her 15-year commitment to bushland preservation in the local area. Blacktown and District Environment Group were awarded for their dedication to lobbying for local

environmental issues and actively encouraging community action. Jaigar's Automotive in Guildford was considered the best business nominated for the awards due the Jaime Garcia's commendable efforts to prevent pollution from his mechanical workshop. Jasper Road Public School was awarded for the second year in a row for its innovative and far-reaching 'Arbor' program, where trees are germinated and nurtured at the school throughout the year and planted in association with Baulkham Hills Shire Council all over the district.

Parramatta City Council received the most prestigious prize, the Diamond Award, complemented by \$5,000 for their new Development Control Plan 2001 that focuses on ecologically sustainable development, requiring all developers to consider energy efficiency, water quality, waste management and biodiversity in their design and ongoing site management.

George Whitehouse, Chairman of the Trust, said "The award nominees are working quietly in their local area on local projects. But when you see all the projects together at the annual awards ceremony it shows the huge amount of effort by everyone to improve our local environment."

Parramatta City Plan the jewel in the crown at 2002 Environment Awards

Parramatta City Council's efforts to improve the environmental impacts of new developments in its area have been recognised. Council has won the prestigious \$5,000 Diamond Award in the Upper Parramatta River Catchment Trust's 2002 Environment Awards for its innovative *Development Control Plan 2002*.

The new Plan focuses on ecologically sustainable development. It requires all new developments to be designed to improve energy efficiency, reduce water pollution, minimise waste and protect native plants and animals - both during construction and maintenance.

Council will use the \$5,000 prize to undertake further environmental initiatives.

The Trust received many excellent nominations for this year's awards, making it a real challenge for the independent judging panel to select the best projects. Reflecting the keen competition, over 150 people attended the award presentation ceremony at Old Government House in Parramatta Park earlier this month.

George Whitehouse, Chairman of the Trust, remarked "This award acknowledges the great efforts of Parramatta City Council to improve the quality of development and in the long-term, the quality of life in



Pictured Lord Mayor, Cr John Haines of Parramatta City Council, (3rd from left) accepting the Diamond Award certificate from Chairman of the Trust, Mr. George Whitehouse (2nd from left). Also present are Cr Chris Worthington (at right), Cr Chiang Lim (2nd from right) and staff members Les Green (at left) and James Carey (3rd from right).

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the City of Parramatta. My congratulations to the Councillors and staff for an exceptional planning instrument."

The winners of the 2002 Environment Awards

Diamond Award (\$5,000): Recognises the most outstanding contribution to the environment, environmental education and adopting best environment practice

- Parramatta City Council for the 'Parramatta Development Control Plan 2001'

Outstanding Individual Achievement:

Recognises individual achievement for persons involved in conservation projects.

- Overall Winner (\$1,000) and Parramatta City Council Winner (\$250): Ms. Frances Davis, Rapanea Community Forest Park Committee
- Blacktown City Council Winner (\$250):
- Holroyd City Council Winner (\$250):
- Baulkham Hills Shire Council Winner (\$250): Mr. Ben Bruce of Muirfield High School, and Mr. Otto Plotsch of Grange Road Reserve Bushcare Group Grange



Ms Frances Davis was the founding member of the Rapanea Community Forest Park Committee and has been committed to bushland preservation for over 15 years.

Frances' involvement

began in 1987 when an excavator started damaging bushland in her neighbourhood. Through her efforts, the damage was stopped and a park committee, led by Frances, was formed in May 1988 to find an alternative to mechanical clearing. Their solution - 'Bush Regeneration' - was virtually unheard of at that time. Since then, Frances has voluntarily regenerated bush in the Rapanea Forest and encouraged others to help look after the vulnerable local bushland for future generations.

Schools and Education: Recognises integration of environmental programs into the school curriculum and other education programs that may include adult education. Also recognises programs that better manage school resources.

- Overall Winner (\$1,000) & Baulkham Hills Shire Council Winner (\$250): Jasper Road Public School for Regeneration for 'Environmental Education and Practices of Jasper Road Public School'

- Parramatta City Council Winner (\$250): Delany College, for 'Environmental Education'
- Blacktown City Council Winner (\$250): Bert Oldfield Public School for 'Bert Oldfield Public School Environmental Project'
- Holroyd City Council Winner (\$250): Girraween High School for 'Environmental Activities of Girraween High School'

For the second year in a row Jasper Road Public School has been recognised for its innovative 'Arbors' environmental program, and for its long-term commitment to greening the Baulkham Hills environment and encouraging other schools to get involved.



In 1991 the school established a native vegetation nursery with support from Greening Australia and Winston Hills Rotary Club. Since then, the whole school has helped germinate, pot, plant and nurtured more than 50,000 trees, under the leadership of a 200-strong group of student volunteers, known as the 'Arbors', and guidance from teacher extraordinaire, Mr Juris Miezi.

The Arbors also carry out water quality testing, waste reduction and other environmental activities. This work continues throughout the year, including the school holidays. Even the parents are involved in looking after the school's plant nursery!

Community Organisation: Recognises outstanding achievement by community groups that are involved in environmental activities. These groups may include bushcare, environmental groups and community organisations.

- Overall Winner (\$1,000) & Blacktown City Council Winner (\$250): Blacktown and District Environment Group, 'Ongoing Activities of the Blacktown & District Environment Group'
- Parramatta City Council Winner (\$250): Mighty Duck River Restoration Committee, 'Mighty



Duck River Restoration Collective'

- Holroyd City Council Winner (\$250): Friends of Prospect Creek, 'Prospect Creek'
- Baulkham Hills Shire Council Winner (\$250): Glenorie Public School, 'Creek Monitoring Leading to Crofton Weed Elimination through Community Involvement'

Blacktown and District Environment Group won the Community Group category prize of \$1,000 in the Upper Parramatta River Catchment Trust's 2002 Environment Awards for its dedication to lobbying on local environmental issues and actively encouraging community action.

The Group's core aim is to act locally to protect the local environment of Blacktown and District by promoting positive community environmental behaviour. The Group also acts as watchdog by highlighting activities that may harm or destroy the natural beauty and environment of this area.

Councils: Recognises council projects promoting excellence in environmental management.

- Overall Winner (\$1,000): Parramatta City Council for the 'Parramatta Development Control Plan 2001'

Business: Recognises innovation in environmental compliance by business and/or overall commitment to improving the environment.

- Overall Winner (\$1,000) & Holroyd City Council Winner (\$250): Mr. Jaime Garcia of 'Jaigar's Automotive'
- Parramatta City Council Winner (\$250): 'Sydney Heavy Vehicle Repairs Pty Ltd Business' and 'Coca-Cola Amatil' for Toongabbie Creek Rehabilitation Project

Jaigar's Automotive of Guildford won the Business category prize for keeping its workshop clean and reusing and recycling waste materials.

Jaime Garcia and his staff at Jaigar's have gone beyond what the regulations require to ensure that the company's operations cause little or no environmental harm. The used oil filters are recycled, sump oil is recycled, old radiators are reused and recycled and old batteries are cleaned up and sent to battery recyclers. An oil/water separator treats all oily wastewater to an



acceptable standard before it is disposed to the sewer.

With the workshop located in old premises, it is real challenge for Jaime Garcia and his staff to maintain a clean environment. But Jaime has risen to the challenge, accepting a voluntary audit from Holroyd City Council. This found the firm's practices to be outstanding.

OSD Excellence Award: The OSD Excellence Award recognises organizations and individuals using good design and/or construction practice for On-site Stormwater Detention (OSD). The Award aims to highlight the importance of good construction in achieving an effective OSD system that is tailored to suit the development site and can be readily maintained.

- OSD Winner: Dincel & Associates
- OSD Commended: Haddad Khaicy Partners Consulting Engineers
- OSD Nomination: Appleyard Forrest Consulting Engineers
- OSD Nomination: Cattarin & Co Pty Ltd
- OSD Nomination: Malcolm Smith Pty Ltd
- OSD Nomination: Webcon Pty Ltd

NOTE: All prize money is to be spent on future environmental projects.

Focus on Green Corridors: Blacktown Creek

Blacktown Creek extends from the Great Western Highway at Prospect, through the Seven Hills Industrial Estate, and joins with Toongabbie Creek at the McCoy Park Flood Detention Basin in Toongabbie.

A large remnant of Cumberland Plain Woodland is located on the eastern side of Blacktown Creek immediately downstream of the Great Western Highway at Prospect. This bushland was in private ownership until Blacktown City Council purchased approximately half of the bushland in the late 1990's.

The Trust has been working with Blacktown City Council to regenerate the remnant vegetation and re-vegetate with local plants along the Creek corridor for the last 2 years. Stage 1 of the Blacktown Creek Strategy was completed in December 2001. This project incorporated the revegetation and regeneration of Blacktown Creek between Myrtle St and the Great Western Highway in Prospect.

A community tree-planting day held in summer was well attended, so much so that the Council had to expand the tree-planting beyond the areas assigned on the day!

At the start of the project pernicious weeds such as African Olive, Privet and Asparagus Fern were spread extensively throughout the bushland.



The Trust is leading efforts to promote Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) in Sydney, working closely with the Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils, the Sydney Coastal Councils Group, Sydney Water and local councils.

The Trust is using a NSW Stormwater Trust grant, obtained through Baulkham Hills Shire Council, to employ two project officers for a year. They will run a program to train staff from local councils so that they can encourage WSUD in their own areas. Design and planning tools will also be developed for use throughout Sydney.

As well, the Trust is working with Landcom, Sydney Water and local councils on another program to build a series of WSUD demonstration projects in western Sydney, with Stormwater Trust grant funding. On behalf of the participating organisations the Trust has just appointed a consultant to manage the projects on a day-to-day basis.

So what is this WSUD?

WSUD is a new approach to building design and development. It uses measures like rainwater tanks, infiltration swales, on-site stormwater detention and water saving appliances to make urban water usage more like that under natural conditions. By reducing the amount of mains water used and the amount of stormwater that runs off our properties, WSUD will help:

- save money on water bills,
- delay having to build more large dams,
- reduce creek bank erosion,
- reduce pollution swept into our creeks,
- stop flooding getting worse.

The NSW Government is encouraging WSUD by changing planning rules so that rainwater tanks of up to 10 cubic metres can now be installed without getting approval from the local council.

These have now been eradicated.

The bushland remnant is now in excellent condition, and formal pathways are being installed to provide greater access to the creek.

Already the community is using the creek reserve for recreation and further tree-planting days are planned.

Blacktown City Council and the Trust are continually working to improve Blacktown Creek with more regeneration and revegetation of the bushland all the way along the creekline currently underway.

For further information, contact Peter Morison, Environmental Programs Officer at the Trust on 9891 4633.

