

Streamline

Issue 37 • September 2003

Waterwatch at The Hills Sports High

Q: What do Australian native plants, green schools and Grantham Creek all have in common?

A: They are all part of the Waterwatch activities of The Hills Sports High at Seven Hills.

The school has been one of the catchment Waterwatch groups for the past 5 years monitoring water quality in Grantham Creek. Last year The Hills Sports High expanded their program with help from a 'Greener Schools and Communities Grant' from the Trust. This grant has enabled students to plant a native Australian garden under the watchful eyes of teachers Lesley Potts and Ken Siow.

The Trust funds and provides support to all the Waterwatch groups in the catchment.

For more information please contact Lee Lau, the Trust's Water Quality Officer, on llau@uprct.nsw.gov.au or telephone the Trust on 9891 4633



Students from The Hills Sports High help to green the school with assistance from a grant from the Trust.

Draft Flood Plan Nears Completion

A plan to guide efforts to reduce future flooding throughout the Upper Parramatta River Catchment is almost finished.

Called a Floodplain Risk Management Plan, it was prepared last year by the Trust and the four local councils – Baulkham Hills, Blacktown, Holroyd and Parramatta – with input from a Floodplain Risk Management Committee. The plan outlines a common catchment-wide approach to apply in all four council areas. It spells out all the things that need to be done to protect the community: such as more flood investigations and works, appropriate development controls, improved emergency response and a better informed community.

All four councils publicly exhibited the draft plan during July. Comments received are now being considered and final changes made to the plan and the associated planning instruments. Each council will consider adopting the final plan later this year. The Trust and the councils will then work together to fully implement the plan, even though many aspects of it are already in progress.

Western Sydney Water Festival

You are invited to the *Western Sydney Water Festival* on Sunday 19 October 2003 at Central Gardens Merrylands from 11.30am – 3.30pm. Come along and join in the fun with environmental games, information stalls, a fishing clinic. There will also be multicultural celebrations with Holroyd City Councils *Carnivale*, native animal shows and other rides.

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The third 2003 Regional Environment Awards ceremony took place at Lachlan's Restaurant in Old Government House at Parramatta Park on Friday 6 June 2003 as part of Western Sydney Environment Week celebrations. Thirty-eight nominations were received over the five categories: Individual Achievement, Community Organisation, School/Education, Council and On-site Stormwater Detention. The event was a great success with 110 members of the community in attendance.

Mr Bob Junor, the Trust Chairman remarked "Whilst the award nominees are working quietly in their area on local projects, seeing all the projects together at the annual awards ceremony shows the huge amount of effort by everyone to improve our local environment."

The awards are sponsored by the Trust, Baulkham Hills Shire Council, Blacktown City Council, Holroyd City Council and Parramatta City Council. All prize must be spent on future environmental projects.



Joyce and Frank Samuel – winners of the Diamond Award with the Hon. Diane Beamer MP, Minister for Western Sydney.

Winners of the 2003 Regional Environment Awards

Diamond Award for best entry overall – \$5,000: Frank Samuel for *Third Settlement Reserve*.

Overall Individual Achievement Category Winner for best entry in this category over the four council areas – \$1,000: Frank Samuel for *Third Settlement Reserve*.

Individual Achievement Winners for best entry in this category in each council area – \$250:

- In Parramatta City Council: Frank Samuel for *Third Settlement Reserve*.
- In Baulkham Hills Shire Council: Arthur Turner for *Improving creekline/floodplain along Quarry Creek*.
- In Blacktown City Council: Laurie Ralph for *Rainforest at Bert Oldfield Primary School, Seven Hills*.

Overall Community Organisation Category Winner for best entry in this category over the four council areas – \$1,000: Timbertop Bushcare Group for *Protection and conservation of remnant Cumberland Plain Bushland*.

Community Organisation Winners for best entry in this category in each council area – \$250:

- In Parramatta City Council: Mighty Duck River Restoration Collective for *Mighty Duck River Restoration Collective*.
- In Baulkham Hills Shire Council: Excelsior Park Bushland Society for *Bushcare and environmental improvement and education*.
- In Blacktown City Council: Timbertop Bushcare Group for *Protection and conservation of remnant Cumberland Plain Bushland* and the Blacktown and District Environment Group for *On-going activities of BDEG*.
- In Holroyd City Council: Greystanes Woodland Bushcare Group for *Regeneration of Cumberland Plain Woodland in Alpha Park*.

Overall School/Education Category Winner for best entry in this category over the four council areas – \$1,000: Tara Junior School for *educating for environmentally responsible citizenship*.

School/Education Winners for best entry in this category in each council area – \$250:

- In Parramatta City Council: Granville East Public School for *Biodiversity in our school playground*.
- In Baulkham Hills Shire Council: Tara Junior School for *Educating for environmentally responsible citizenship*.
- In Blacktown City Council: Parklea Public School for *Outdoor Nature Classroom*.
- In Holroyd City Council: Girraween Public School for *Greening Girraween – understorey regeneration*.

Highly Commended Certificates were awarded to:

- Jasper Road Public School for *School and Community environmental education*.
- Lorien Novalis School for *Sewerage and effluent treatment and recycling*.
- Crestwood High School for *The Crestwood Wetland*.



Cr Barbara Gapps, Bob Junor, Hon. Diane Beamer MP, Minister for Western Sydney, members of Timbertop Bushcare Group and Cr Kathie Collins.

Council Category Winner for best entry in this category over the four council areas – \$1,000: Baulkham Hills Shire Council for *Sustainable Natural Asset Assessment Project*.

On-site Stormwater Detention Commended Award: Mr Steve Arraj of Haddad Khaicy Mance Arraj Partners for the *townhouse development at 319 Blaxcell Street, Granville*.

Mr Frank Samuel, Winner of the Diamond Award

It's impressive enough when you hear of Frank Samuel's amazing 27-year commitment to the regeneration of the Third Settlement Reserve in Old Toongabbie, but when you find out that he is actually 97 – it is simply astounding.

The ex-farmer has been replanting and regenerating bushland along Toongabbie Creek since he and his wife Joyce moved into their home in Old Toongabbie. Frank has removed weeds and replanted the reserve with native plants, turning a once weed chocked mess into a thriving native habitat.

Bob Junor Chairman of the Trust commented, "Mr Samuel should be very proud of his achievement."

Frank Samuel said "Being a farmer I did not want to see all the weeds in the reserve. So 28 years ago I got permission from Parramatta Council to remove them, and I have been doing it since."

This is why Frank was chosen as the winner of the Diamond Award in the 2003 Regional Environment Awards.

Tara Junior, Winner of Schools/Education Category

Tara Girls Junior School of North Parramatta won the School/Education Category over the four council areas of Baulkham Hills, Blacktown, Holroyd and Parramatta. Their education program spans from Kindergarten to Year 6 and covered an impressive range of topics from growing seedlings, testing water quality, Environmental Problems Solutions Fair, Clean Up days and water saving commercials to name but a few of their environmental programs.

Tara Junior, lead by Vicki Bredin, the Kindergarten to Year Six Science Specialist, has developed a whole of school approach to environmental education. Ms Bredin said, "Environmental education is our passion. We love sharing it with our students in any way possible."

Stephanie Otharas, a student at Tara Junior School, explained, "I liked the gardening and tree planting because it means we can help the environment."

Joy Hill, Principal of Tara Junior said, "I really enjoyed seeing all the students get involved. It really provides a great community focus and brings the school together."

Timbertop Bushcare Winner of the Community Organisation Category

The Prospect-based Timbertop Bushcare Group won the Community Organisation Category in the 2003 Regional Environment Awards. The Timbertop Bushcare Group has been undertaking on-going bushcare activities in Timbertop Reserve and the adjacent Norman Street Bushland in Prospect. The group has



The Hon. Diane Beamer MP, Cr Larry Bolitho, students and teacher Vicki Bredin from Tara Girls Junior School.

also been instrumental in making the local community aware of the importance of protecting the threatened Cumberland Plain Woodland and preserving its valuable biodiversity.

Robert Carr, Secretary of the Timbertop Bushcare Group, said: "The Timbertop Bushcare Group came out of an idea to stop development destroying what little connection to nature we has in our urban environment."

Baulkham Hills Shire Council, winner of the Council Category

Baulkham Hills Shire Council won the Council Category for their project titled *Sustainable Natural Asset Assessment*. The project will provide base information for the long-term sustainable management of the Shire's native vegetation. The program has involved satellite mapping and remote analysis to identify the distribution of bushland in the Shire; extensive air photo and vegetation surveys to identify type, distribution and condition of the vegetation communities; modelling ecological attributes to identify priorities for management, rehabilitation and proection of the Shire's bushland.



Victoria Critchely of Baulkham Hills Shire Council accepting the Council Award from Bob Junor, Chairman of the Trust

PROJECT *Snapshots*

Community Business Awards

This year the Trust sponsored the Environment category in the Cumberland Newspaper Groups Community Business Awards with the aim of rewarding small businesses in the local community that are undertaking great environmental initiatives.

Congratulations to Crestwood High School, the winner of the Hills Shire Times Environment category, and the Body Shop at Westfields Parramatta, the winner of the Parramatta Advertiser Environmental category award. Nominations for the Blacktown Advocate are currently open and close on 8 October.

Greener Schools and Green Corridors Community Assistance Grants

Last year the Trust initiated a new grant program to help schools and community groups to enhance the green corridors in the catchment. The first round of funding assisted 12 schools and community groups with combined projects over \$65,000 in value. Projects include bushland regeneration, track building for access to bushland, landscaping with locally endemic plants, and creek rehabilitation.

The Trust is calling in grant applications for the current financial year from schools and community groups in the catchment. The projects should be consistent with the Trust's Green Corridors Vegetation Management Strategy that is available on the web at www.uprct.nsw.gov.au under 'Publications'.

For an application form and further information, please contact Peter Morison at the Trust on 9891 4633.



Native landscaping at Girraween Public School, a recipient of a Greener Schools 2002/03 grant

New Waterwatch newsletter

August 2003 saw a new addition to Trust publications with the creation of the new, quarterly *Waterwatch Newsletter*. The newsletter, which all Waterwatch groups within the catchment will receive, will keep our Waterwatchers up to date with the latest info. For more information, or to receive a copy, email Mathew Ferguson at the Trust on mferguson@uprct.nsw.gov.au or call on 9891 4633. A copy will also be available for viewing on the Trust's website at www.uprct.nsw.gov.au.

Trust to Continue

Following an independent review of the Trust late last year by Mr Bob Wilson, the Minister for Natural Resources, the Hon. Craig Knowles MP, has advised that the Trust is to continue for four years. A further review will then be held.

Bob Wilson found that the Trust is performing well in most of its responsibilities, but recommended some modifications in its strategic planning. He suggested placing a greater focus on river health. The Trust is considering these recommendations as it finalises its corporate plan for the coming four years.

Ludwigia- the menace of Darling Mills Creek

Ludwigia (*Ludwigia peruviana*) is a serious weed and has spread rapidly throughout Darling Mills Creek. Preferring stationary or slow moving water and drying mud or creek banks in coastal areas, Ludwigia is able to grow densely in watercourses, obstructing flows and reducing habitat value.

The Trust has funded the eradication and control of Ludwigia in Darling Mills Creek. Baulkham Hills Shire Council and Hawkesbury County Council are working hard to control the weed and have found a large amount growing in privately owned land. The Hawkesbury County Council, the local noxious

weeds agency, is working with the landholders to control the weed before it spreads further downstream.

If you find Ludwigia on your property, please notify your local council as soon as possible. Controlling the weed involves the following steps:

First carefully remove any seed heads and bag them securely in plastic bags to avoid further seed spread.

Care should be taken not to inadvertently spread seed attached to clothing.

Seedlings can be hand-pulled, but larger plants will re-shoot unless the majority of the many long embedded roots are removed. Also, discarded plants left lying on soil may take root.

If the infestation is significant, please consult the Noxious Weeds Control Officer at your council for appropriate control methods.

Always follow up the control of Ludwigia by rechecking the plant for any regrowth and the area for any new seedlings.

For further information regarding Ludwigia in Darling Mills Creek, contact Baulkham Hills Shire Council on 9843 0555 or Hawkesbury County Council on 4577 5573. For general information on weeds in the catchment, contact Peter Morison at the Trust on 9891 4633.



Growing to 3 metres high, Ludwigia has alternate lanceolate finely haired leaves and produces large bright yellow flowers in late summer. In winter the leaves die back leaving bare branches. Each plant produces up to 100,000 very fine, light brown seeds which can be carried long distances by wind and water.

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