

PROJECT *Snapshots*



Open for Nominations

Over \$10,000 in prize money for future environmental projects is up for grabs in the third annual *Regional Environment Awards*. Entries close on 30 April 2004.

You may be eligible to enter if your project has:

- significantly improved the local environment;
- promoted best management practice; and
- you live or work in either Parramatta, Baulkham Hills, Blacktown or Holroyd Council areas.

The categories are: individual, community group, school and on-site stormwater detention.

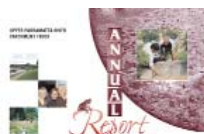
For more information and nomination forms call Mathew Ferguson at the Trust on 9891 4633 or download from the Trust's website www.uprct.nsw.gov.au. The winners will be announced at a special ceremony during Western Sydney Environment Week in June 2004.



Frank Samuel (right) was the Diamond Award winner in the 2003 Regional Environment Awards, with his wife Joyce Samuel (right) and the Hon. Diane Beamer MP, Minister for Western Sydney (centre).

Annual Report

To find out all about the achievements of the Trust during 2002-2003 download the 2002-2003 Annual Report or new Annual Report Summary from the publications section of the Trust's website at www.uprct.nsw.gov.au or call the Trust on 9891 4633 for a copy.



New Seven Hills Bridge to Protect 30 Homes

Blacktown City Council and the Trust are to pay for a new \$350,000 bridge over Grantham Creek at Michigan Road in Seven Hills. The new bridge will eliminate most flooding that could inundate up to 30 nearby homes. The bridge



was recommended by consultants who investigated the area early last year as part of a series of studies funded by the Trust to find solutions to all outstanding flood problems in the catchment. Council plans to build the new bridge later this year.

Michigan Road culverts.

Further Flood Studies Completed

Good progress is being made on the series of studies of all outstanding flood problems in the catchment. The Trust and the relevant Council are jointly supervising these. They are being fully funded by the Trust. Of the 29 areas with over-floor flooding to be investigated, 7 have been completed and a further 7 are in progress. All studies have identified which properties are at risk of flooding. Most studies have been able to identify affordable solutions.

Areas for which studies have been completed to date are Central Gardens to Irrigation Road at Merrylands West and South Wentworthville (along Finlaysons Creek); the Bogalara Road area at Toongabbie; Hartley Road in Seven Hills; the Cornell Street and Federal Road area in Blacktown (on Blacktown Creek); Michigan Road and nearby at Seven Hills (Grantham Creek); Orange Grove at Castle Hill and Watkins Road in Baulkham Hills. The Trust has asked the local councils to inform residents of the findings of each study.

Trust Hosts Overseas Experts

The Upper Parramatta River Catchment Trust is a unique organisation with many novel solutions to show. Technical delegations from overseas often visit the catchment during their time in Australia and the Trust is pleased to be able to show off its achievements. In the last quarter of last year, for example, the Trust hosted tours of catchment projects by groups from Vietnam, China and interstate delegates to a national catchment management conference held at the University of Western Sydney.

Ownership of Flood Basin Resolved

In 1996 the Trust built the Loyalty Road Flood Retarding Basin on Darling Mills Creek in Excelsior Reserve to protect the Parramatta CBD and parts of Northmead, North Rocks, North Parramatta and Rosehill from major floods.

Late last year the Mayor of Baulkham Hills Shire, Cr John Griffith, and the Trust's Chairman, Bob Junor, signed a Deed of Agreement setting out the ownership and maintenance responsibilities for the basin. Parramatta City Council, which is also a party to the Deed of Agreement, had already signed. Under the Deed the Trust effectively owns the basin wall and will continue to maintain the ancillary works in the reserve (still owned by Baulkham Hills Council) and the upstream bushland. Both councils will contribute to the costs.

Enviro Scarecrow Competition

For the very first time you can enter the Enviro Scarecrow Competition as part of the Lake Parramatta Open Day activities. All you, your school or group have to do is build a scarecrow in an environmental theme and win a great prize. All entries will be displayed and winners announced at the Open Day on Sunday 14 March 2004. For more details go to www.uprct.gov.au or call Jaki Edwards at the Trust on 9891 4633.



Published by the
Upper Parramatta River
Catchment Trust
Level 1, 10 Valentine Avenue,
Parramatta, NSW, 2150

Printed on 100%
Recycled Paper

Streamline

Issue 38 • February 2004

Lake Parramatta Open Day
Lackey Street, North Parramatta
Sunday 14 March 2004
10:30am to 3:30pm

you are **Sustainable Living**
invited to a **FREE FESTIVAL**
for all the family

There will be FREE...

- rides and entertainment
- native animal show
- guided bush walks
- environmental information
- native vegetation
- native fauna
- water conservation and protection
- alternative building technologies and materials
- alternative energy sources

Catch the free Baxters shuttle bus between Lake Parramatta and Parramatta Train Station (Argyle Street) every 30 minutes.

Enter the Enviro Scarecrow Competition

Build a scarecrow with an environmental theme and you can enter the Scarecrow Competition to win great prizes. All entries will be displayed and winners will be announced on the day. Go to www.uprct.nsw.gov.au or call 9891 4633 to enter.

Local Councils Adopt Flood Plan

On 17 November last year Parramatta City Council became the first council in the catchment to formally adopt the catchment Floodplain Risk Management Plan. The other three catchment councils are expected to do so shortly. This will be the first time in NSW that all councils in a catchment have agreed on a common Flood Plan. The Flood Plan sets out an integrated package of structural works, planning, education and emergency management measures to reduce damages and personal risks during future floods.

The Flood Plan took two years to develop. A draft Plan was exhibited last July and comments received were incorporated into the final Plan. Once all councils adopt the Flood Plan the Trust will work with them to implement its key measures as quickly as resources allow.



Charles Street Wharf in flood.

This Issue

- Local Councils Adopt Flood Plan
- Waterwatch Yearly Review
- Climate Change Think Tank
- New Technique to Help Fix Lake Parramatta
- Community Survey Results Available
- Project Snapshots

Waterwatch Yearly Review

Congratulations all Waterwatchers for making 2003 the best year ever.

The Waterwatch program in the Upper Parramatta River Catchment kept expanding to 18 Senior Waterwatch groups, 11 Junior Waterwatch and 4 Community Waterwatch groups monitoring more than 40 sites across the catchment. In 2003 an amazing 1,700 people participated in the program.

2003 Waterwatch Awards and Harbour Cruise

Each year the Trust holds the Annual Catchment Awards on board a ferry cruising around Sydney Harbour to thank all Waterwatchers for their outstanding contributions in monitoring creek health during the year.

Last December more than 150 people including representatives from 18 of the schools, Pam Smith a Trustee, the Trust's Executive Officer and representatives from the four councils attended the Trust's Annual Waterwatch Awards and Harbour Cruise.

The 2003 Awards went to:

The Platypus Award and \$150 from the Trust: for the most outstanding secondary school in the catchment: James Ruse Agricultural High School Waterwatch Team

The highlight of the year was when this Team participated in this Catchment Creek Day at Castle Hill with Baulkham Hills Shire Council and the Trust. The Day involved educating 150 primary school students from 3 local primary schools all about why and how we need to protect our local creeks. The Waterwatch Team helped to run six activity stations.



Jack Li and Pragith from James Ruse Agricultural High School accepting the Platypus Award from Dr Stephen Lees from the Trust.

The Water Dragon Award and \$150 from the Trust: for the most outstanding primary school group in the catchment: Burnside Public School Waterwatch Team

The school's great achievement was on National Tree Day when students and teachers planted and mulched 1,000 native plants on the bank of a nearby creek with help from Baulkham Hills Shire Council. The local fire brigade also lent a hand to water the native plants in.



Students from Burnside Public School accepting the Water Dragon Award from Dr Stephen Lees of the Trust.

The Alan Cupit Memorial Educator Award: for excellence in environmental education through the Waterwatch program: Mrs Margaret Smith

Mrs Smith was a laboratory assistant at Girraween High school who assisted in running the school's Waterwatch programs for more than 12 years. Girraween High School was the first school in the catchment to implement the Waterwatch program into Year 9 Science curriculum. Mrs Smith retired during 2003 and plans to continue her involvement



Margaret Smith and Pam Smith (Trustee).

with Waterwatch by starting a local Waterwatch and Bushcare group in the Pendle Hill area.

Excellence Awards: for excellence in each council area. Each council donated \$100 for each winner.

- Excellence Award in Baulkham Hills Shire Council to Crestwood High School Waterwatch Team, for turning the school wetland into an outdoor classroom.



Students from Crestwood High School accepting the Excellence Award from Sue Martin of Baulkham Hills Shire Council.

- Excellence Award in Blacktown City Council to The Hills Sports High School Waterwatch Team, for revegetation of Grantham Reserve.



Students from The Hills Sports High School accepting the Excellence Award.



Students from Greystanes High School accepting the Excellence Award from Bernadette Mackinnon from Holroyd City Council.

- Excellence Award in Holroyd City Council to Greystanes High School Waterwatch Team, for participating in Western Sydney Water Festival at Central Gardens as part of Water Week activities in October.
- Excellence Award in Parramatta City Council to Catherine McAuley High School Waterwatch Team, for revegetation of native vegetation around the school wetland.



Students from Catherine McAuley High School accepting the Excellence Award.

Climate Change Think Tank



Dr Deborah Abbs

The Trust has set up a Think Tank to assess the impacts of Climate Change on urban stormwater, water usage and the health of our urban creeks. Climate Change is heating of the Earth's atmosphere due to the increasing concentration of man-made gases.

Dr Deborah Abbs, a Climate Change expert from the CSIRO, addressed the Trust's board last November on how the severity of floods and droughts in the Sydney region will change in the future. Whilst there are different predictions, the current consensus is that droughts will become longer and more severe, less water will flow into our dams, average rainfall will be less but storm rainfalls will be more intense.

Following Dr Abbs' talk the Trust decided to set up the Think Tank. A number of leading university researchers and senior Government agency officers have agreed to join the group, which will hold its first meeting in early 2004.



Lake Parramatta.

New Technique to Help Fix Lake Parramatta

The Trust's water quality testing program has shown that the main thing preventing us from swimming in Lake Parramatta is high faecal bacteria loads. Faecal bacteria is an indicator of human sewage pollution from sewer overflow and leaks and/or animal droppings. Until now the tests available have not been able to distinguish between these two sources.

To help solve this riddle, the Trust has just engaged water experts from the University of New South Wales. They will use a new state-of-the-art faecal sterol fingerprinting technique that can distinguish between faecal contamination from humans and the major animal groups. Faecal sterols are chemical compounds produced in the gut of animals and humans. Humans and animals produce different sterol profiles from which scientists can determine the sources of faecal contamination.

The Trust will know by the end of 2004 the sources and magnitude of the faecal bacteria problem. From there, in partnership with the councils and State agencies, we can develop strategies to reduce bacterial loads, and hopefully make the Lake suitable for swimming once again.

For further information, please contact Peter Morison, Environmental Programs Officer at the Trust.

Community Survey Results available

For the last four years the Trust has engaged consultants to undertake a survey of catchment residents to determine the key environmental issues in the catchment. Some key findings are:

1. The most important environmental issue is water pollution in creek and lakes (43%).
2. 64% of respondents would install a rainwater tank on their property if it was easy and inexpensive.
3. Of those respondents willing to install a rainwater tank, 96% would use it to water the garden, 91% to wash the car, 87% for toilet flushing, 69% for laundry washing, and 41% for drinking.

To find out more, download a copy from the publications section of the website www.uprct.nsw.gov.au or call the Trust on 9891 4633.



Water pollution is a major environmental concern in the catchment.