

THE River Rag

Waterwatch Newsletter of the Upper Parramatta River Catchment



ISSUE No. 2 – October 2003

Exciting times ahead

The last term in the year is always an exciting one, school is almost over for the year, Christmas is around the corner, and the weather is always great! We here at the Upper Parramatta River Catchment Trust really enjoy this time too because we start to decide the winners of the Annual Waterwatch Awards.

We are also getting ourselves ready for the Harbour Cruise, which we host to thank you, our dedicated Waterwatchers for your commitment to the Waterwatch Program. You will find more information about the Cruise inside.

Something else that is exciting is the new name for the Waterwatch Newsletter. Sophie Peterson of Jasper Road Public School was the winner of our

competition and will receive a Waterwatch T-Shirt for her entry.

In this edition of the Waterwatch newsletter we welcome a new Waterwatch Group to the team, see what The Hills Sports High have been up to lately and pay a visit to Metella Reserve with Metella Road Public School.





Tell me more about the Upper Parramatta River catchment!

The Upper Parramatta River catchment is right in the geographical heart of Sydney. Here are some more facts about the area.

What is the Upper Parramatta River catchment? The Upper Parramatta River catchment is actually the headwaters of the Parramatta River and Sydney Harbour.

How big is the catchment? The catchment covers an area of around 110km² from Castle Hill in the north to Merrylands in the south, and from Blacktown in the west to Carlingford in the east.

How many people live in the catchment? There are nearly 85,000 properties with 230,000 people living within the catchment.

Which councils are in the catchment? There are four councils that are within the catchment; they are Blacktown in the west, Baulkham Hills in the north, Holroyd in the south and Parramatta in the east.

Where is the highest point in the catchment? The highest point in the catchment is on the the catchment boundary at Thompson's Corner at the junction of Castle Hill Road and Pennant Hills Road. It is 190 meters above sea level.

Where is the lowest point in the catchment? The lowest point is at the mouth of the catchment at Charles St Wharf, which is at sea level.

How many creeks are there in the catchment? There are 29 creeks in the Upper Parramatta River catchment, 61% of which are still in their natural condition.

More than just football at The Hills Sports High School

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 Trust Waterwatch Groups for the past 7 years, and continue to monitor Grantham Creek.

Last year The Hills Sports High, through their Waterwatch group, received a Greener Schools and Communities Grant from the Trust. This will enable students to develop and plant a native Australian Garden. Under the watchful

eyes of teacher Lesley Potts, the students have almost completed their project. 18-year-old Monique de'Gooyer, a student at the school commented, "The garden is going to be great once its finished, heaps of the students are really interested".

The school has also recently recommenced bush regeneration within Duncan Park. The school has previously had a long history of bush care within the park, but was taking a well earned rest. Waterwatch Coordinator at the school, Ken Siow, has rekindled the passion of the students toward tree planting, and now the group

Waterwatch Cruise

The Upper Parramatta River Catchment Trust would like to say thanks to all our Waterwatchers, and to do that we will be, once again, holding the Waterwatch Cruise. The cruise will be on Friday the 5 December and will leave from Gladesville Wharf at 9:45am. You will be receiving more information about the cruise very soon, so make sure you get your best sea legs ready and your sailing caps out.

is as active as before.

The students now alternate between Waterwatching, bushcaring and developing their new garden.

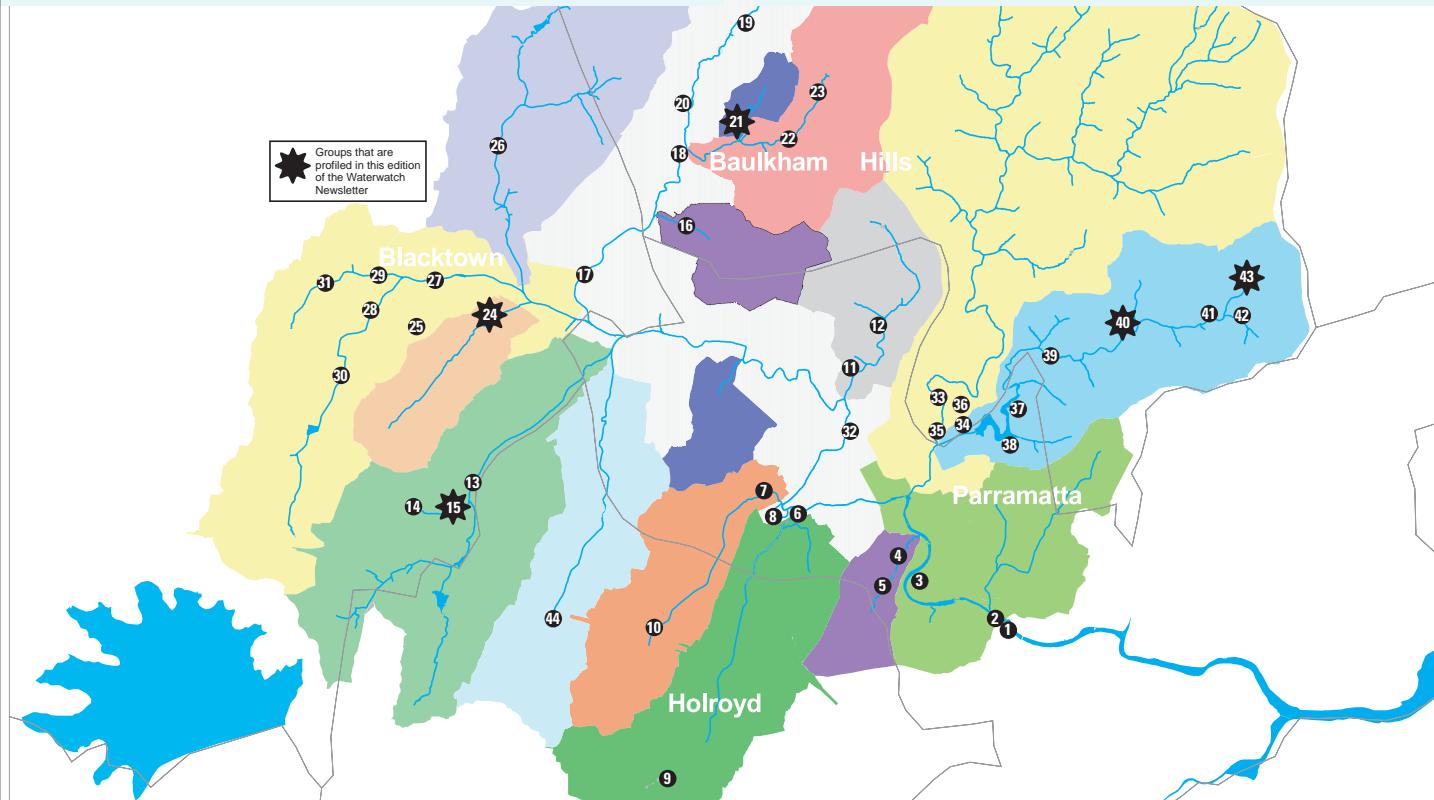


Students from The Hills Sports High really dig the Greener Grants program.

Who are our Waterwatchers in the catchment?

Waterwatch Groups	Testing Site	Map Ref.
Macarthur Girls High School	Upper Parramatta River	1,2
Arthur Philip High School	Domain Creek, Upper Parramatta River	3,4,5
Catherine McAuley Girls Westmead	Toongabbie Creek	6,7
Parramatta Marist High School	Finlayson Creek	8
Cerdon College	Finlaysons Creek, Coopers Creek	9,10
Northmead Primary School	Quarry Branch Creek	11
Quarry Branch South Bushcare Group	Quarry Branch Creek	12
Girraween High School	Girraween Creek	13
Tyndale Christian School	Metella Creek	14
Metella Road Primary School	Girraween Creek	15
Model Farms High School	Model Farms Creek	16
Winston Hills Girl Guides	Toongabbie Creek	17
Matthew Pearce Public School	Toongabbie Creek	18
Crestwood High School	Toongabbie Creek	19
Sophia Doyle Reserve Bushcare Group	Quarry Creek	20
Northwest Disabilities Services	Quarry Creek	21
Jasper Road Public School	Quarry Creek	22

Waterwatch Groups	Testing Site	Map Ref.
Baulkham Hills High School	Quarry Creek	23
The Hills Sports High	Graham Creek	24, 25
Seven Hills High School	Lalor Creek	26
Bert Oldfield Primary School	Blacktown Creek	27
Mitchell High School	Blacktown Creek	28, 29
Blacktown South Primary School	Blacktown Creek	30
Seven Hills Primary School	Blacktown Creek	31
St. Monica Primary School	Darling Mills Creek	32
Northmead High School	Darling Mills Creek	33, 34, 35
Tara Anglican School for Girls	Lake Parramatta	36, 37
Tara Junior School	Lake Parramatta	38
Cumberland High School	Hunts Creek	39
Burnside Public School	Hunts Creek	40
The King's School	Hunts Creek	41, 42
James Ruse Agricultural High School	Hunts Creek	43
Greystanes High School	Pendle Hill Creek	44



Learning from Lee

I have had many Waterwatchers ask me about the faecal coliform test, so I thought that I would run through it in this edition.



One of the main questions that I am asked is why do we want to know about faecal coliform? Faecal coliform bacteria live in warm-blooded animal's digestive system such as our stomachs. Which is why raw sewage, which is the discharge from our toilets, would have high levels of faecal coliform bacteria. For that reason a high faecal coliform result is a good indicator of sewage pollution in our waterways.

As always there are some important things to remember when you are testing for faecal coliform;

- Always make sure the equipment you are using is sterilized, this make sure that only faecal bacteria will grow.
- No matter the amount of the water that you sampled, always multiply your result so that it is the same as it would be if you had take a 100ml sample.
- Only count the dark blue colonies, these are the faecal bacteria.

If you do have any more questions about faecal coliform or any of the other tests please contact me at llau@uprct.nsw.gov.au or call 9891 4633. Otherwise, well done and keep Waterwatching!

Planting our future!

Just after our last edition of the Waterwatch Newsletter, Australia celebrated National Tree Day. Many of the schools within the catchment got out the spades, gloves and boots, slapped on some sunscreen and got stuck into their school gardens.



James Ruse Agricultural High School love getting into National Tree Day.

Metella Road Public School... not the new kid on the block

As he looks over the now 2 meter high trees that he helped plant 5 years ago, teacher, Anthony Pearce of Metella Road Public School remembers back to all the Waterwatch groups that have grown up at the school. With 6 years Waterwatching experience Metella Road Public School is certainly no new kid on the block when it comes to water testing.

"At Metella Road Public School we see the environment as an important part of our students learning. Waterwatch is a great way for us to help them learn about their local environment", commented Anthony Pearce.

10-year-old Krishnil Sami said, "I really enjoy Waterwatch, its such a fun way to learn, you don't even know that you are learning".

The students really enjoy getting down to Metella Reserve where for years the school has been involved in water testing, tree planting and water bug surveys.

Jessica Carpenter of year five said, "Every Monday and Tuesday we came down to the creek to see how clear the water was".

Danielle Figuera commented, "We have learnt that all kinds of animals live in the creeks, and so we want to do something to help make sure the creeks stay clean"



Waterwatchers from year 5 at Metella Rd Public School keeping watch over Metella Creek.

Waterwatch Awards

It's almost that time of year again, when we announce the winners of our Annual Waterwatch Awards. Lookout for all the winners in the December issue of Streamline. If you don't receive Streamline, please contact Mathew on 9891 4633, or mferguson@uprct.nsw.gov.au and we can make sure one is sent out to you.

Waterwatching without a waterway!

Most people would think that to do Waterwatch you would need a creek near your school. Murray Farm Public School doesn't so we simply brought the creek to them.

Lee has recently done a series of water quality workshops for the school's year two science enrichment class by bringing buckets of water from our waterways to their school.

Christopher McLennan from the school said, "I found the water tests really interesting and I enjoyed them very much"

While Jonathan Lau said, "I am so proud to be a young scientist helping protect our water bugs and rivers"

School Waterwatch Coordinator and Assistant

Principal, Karon Hopping, was really keen to join Waterwatch. "Lee has made helping our students learn so easy. They all really love getting involved," she added.

Lee commented that the training workshop worked out really well! So just tell all your friends in other primary schools about the possibility of "Waterwatching without a waterway".



New Waterwatchers at Murray Farm Primary School enjoying their mobile waterway.

Waterwatch networking day a success!

The Trust recently held training and networking day for all the school Waterwatch Coordinators in the catchment. It was a great day to catch up with some familiar faces and to meet some new ones. Thanks to Mrs Rita Kuksal of Crestwood High School and Mr Juris Mieziš of Jasper Road Public school who both made fantastic presentations on the day. Thanks also to all the other teachers who made the day so successful.

Thank You!

A big thank you and well done to the North-west Disability Service who ran a Waterwatch Stall at the opening of Bunning's Dural. The day went really well, with a number of people showing interest in Waterwatch.



The young people from the North West Disability Service at the opening of Bunning's in Dural.

Ask Lee

Recently many of our schools celebrate National Tree day. So we thought we would ask Lee about tree planting and how to go about it.

So Lee, can tree planting be part of our Waterwatch program?

Actually it is a very popular Waterwatch program. If possible, the site would be near a creek or at your school.

What's the best way to go about planting trees?

Well firstly contact me and I will visit the site with you and help you decide on the right plants for the site.

Can I just plant trees anywhere I want?

No, some places need trees, some places need shrubs while others may be better suited to native grasses, but I can help you out with that.

Where do I get the trees?

If you let me know how many trees you need and I can organise a delivery.

Contact Us

For more information about Waterwatch or water testing please contact:

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or visit our website at
uprct.nsw.gov.au



If you need a hand in promoting your Waterwatch group, have an idea for a story or a question for the newsletter, or if you would like to receive this newsletter via email please contact:

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