



NEWSLETTER

Friends of Oxley Creek Common Inc.

"Our Community Caring for Our Common"
September 2018 - Number 30



WHAT'S ON

Oxley Creek Marine Debris Clean-up

OCCA needs volunteers

With or without a canoe

At Pamphlett Sea Scouts

1 – 4 Saturday, (date to be advised)

October, 2018

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Steve Gray

The future of Oxley Creek Common as a **bird sanctuary** now seems set. Both Oxley Creek Transformation, the company tasked with implementing council's \$100 million, 20-year plan for the catchment, and the latest Brisbane City Council budget describe The Common as a bird sanctuary. The release of the final Master Plan later this month will confirm this.

At a recent meeting Friends of Oxley Creek Common (FOOCC) were presented with a new map of the intended bird sanctuary. The revamp has seen an increase in planned

activity around the Red Shed, including a much-expanded dog park and an "event and activity lawn". Also added is a "community lease facility" on the north-eastern edge of The Common, adjacent to Medway St, Rocklea.

These changes are acceptable, but we need to remember that Oxley Creek Common can be loved to death if excessive human activity drives away the birds and other creatures. FOOCC's philosophy is maintain The Common as a site where it's easy for the birds to accommodate the human visitors.

On current timelines it will be 6-10 years before work begins, so there is a need for the community to stay vigilant as the years elapse, to make sure that today's good intentions become tomorrow's reality.

SLASHING and BALING

There have been many positives in the recent slashing and removal of mature grass on The Common. A fire hazard has been removed and the fodder has been baled and sent for drought relief.

BECOME INVOLVED IN OXLEY CREEK COMMON

JOIN Friends of Oxley Creek Common.

LIKE the **Facebook Page** of Friends of Oxley Creek Common to keep in touch.

CHECK bird sightings on **Oxley Creek Common Birds Facebook Page**.

ADD your own photos to the **Oxley Creek Common Birds Facebook Page** to help build up a library of birds and other fauna.

SIGN your friends up to receive the newsletter.

There is now better access to areas being invaded by woody weeds. With Corinda State High shrinking the area it requires to graze its animals this will become an ongoing maintenance issue.



Trucks removing some of the 1,000 bales of hay.

SG

The dozens of photographers who visit The Common each week, have been delighted with the increase in Black Kites, Black Falcons, Brown Falcons, Whistling Kites and other raptors. The Torresian Crows have not been happy. Sadly, the mowing has exposed a lot of plastic debris and metal flood detritus.

Check the box below for opportunities to help maintain The Common.



Black kites wheeling above the mown grass. SG

VOLUNTEER

Tuesday Common Carers can always use an extra pair of hands as they prepare the soil and plant trees, shrubs and grasses.

We could also do with help in **administration and IT**.

We welcome anyone with **expertise** in the frogs, turtles, lizards, snakes, fish and plants that inhabit The Common.

FAMILY FUN DAY

A very successful beginning to the Peaks to Points Festival, was held at Oxley Creek Common on July 29th. There were plenty of activities for children and people interested in the environment. FOOCC displayed maps of the proposed development at The Common, bird posters and a selection of weeds and plants common to the area.

Friends of Oxley Creek Common and Ugly Gully Orienteers shared a marquee. The orienteers offered a Grid-O activity on the mound, with 481 participants registering for electronic timing of courses ranging from beginner to expert. While many were happy to 'have-a-go' and move on, we saw several participants try to complete all courses in order, and several others repeating the same course aiming to attain the fastest time.

A more sedate offering was the nature trail activity, which took visitors on a 700m stroll to learn about the history, current uses and inhabitants of The Common while answering a multiple-choice question at each checkpoint.

For more information on orienteering visit www.oq.asn.au or check out Ugly Gully Orienteers on Facebook – the club for Western Brisbane and Ipswich. Thanks to Liz Ferguson who co-ordinated this activity and supplied this information.



Waiting to do the orienteering activity. LF

DID YOU KNOW?

Teams of weeders work along the York River, in Virginia USA to remove *Phragmites australis*, which is regarded as an invasive weed.

Source: *Rambunctious Garden* Emma Marris p 101

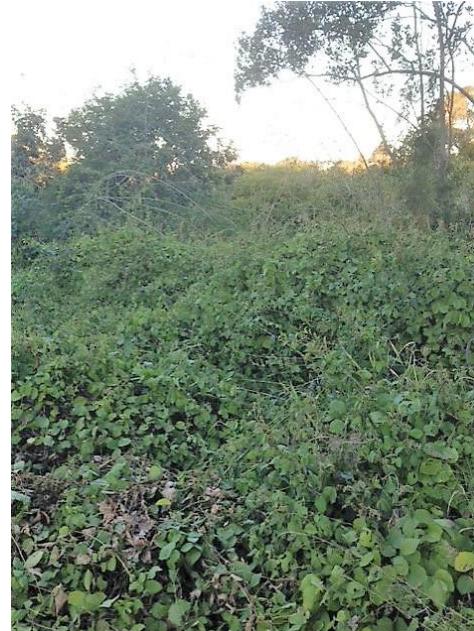
TUESDAY COMMON CARERS

Our weeders have been occupied with several areas since May. An infestation of *Commelina benghalensis* has been removed from the second main gully along the track. This gully also had plenty of asparagus fern and glycine. Birdwatchers are now using this cleared area to move closer to the creek.

A patch of *Commelina*, which had been initially removed by Telstra volunteers, was revisited. Once the *Commelina* was removed, workers were immediately confronted with glycine. However, lomandras, dianellas, acacias and the occasional Alphitonia are relishing the space to grow.

We have continued to work around 'Stony Gully'. South of the gully has been re-planted, and asparagus fern, glycine and cat's claw creeper have been removed from around the mangroves.

Currently, we are continuing the work of Thursday Creek Care north and south of the fence where glycine has smothered everything. The pictures show the extent of the problem and the magnificent work done by this hardy band of weeders.



Glycine infestation in full seed MS



Cleared area where new shoots of *Phragmites australis* were found under the glycine. MS

LIVING at THE COMMON



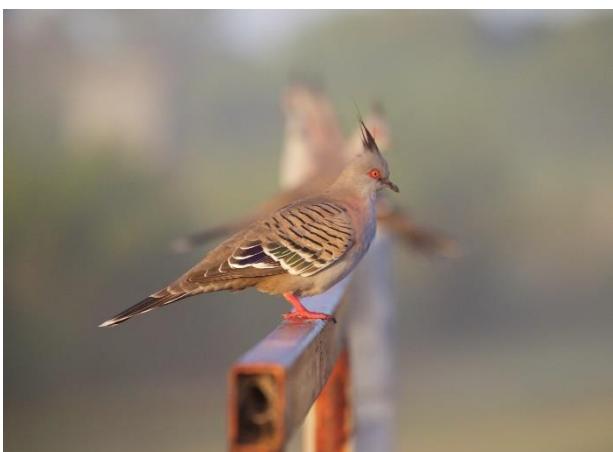
A welcome plant that has regenerated itself, is *Cullen tenax*, Emu Foot. This is a host plant for the Chequered Swallowtail Butterfly. MS

Brown Quail continue to flourish at The Common. One walker reported three families of 5 – 15 birds in each family. The Quail have been seen in the open where *Einardia nutans* is growing. Tuesday Common Carers have been mindful of removing too much weedy grass, which would reduce the cover for these delightful birds. Perhaps they are more resilient than we think. They do like to retreat under the cockspur for shelter.



This Drongo appeared to be enjoying the nectar on the eucalypt flowers. The photographer watched as it made its way up the tree, inspecting the flowers.

PB



Crested Pigeon SG

Once only found in inland Australia, it is easy to dismiss this beautiful bird, because it is becoming so common in the city, where there is apparently enough food on the ground.

When the sun catches the lower wings, there is a spectacular display of iridescent green, violet and gold. It is always a pleasure to see suchairy legs and spunky hair-do.



Blue-tongued lizard. SG

With the onset of warmer weather, reptiles are moving at The Common. There are a variety of snakes in this area, many of which will be looking for new habitat, especially where the weedy grass has been removed.

Mangroves

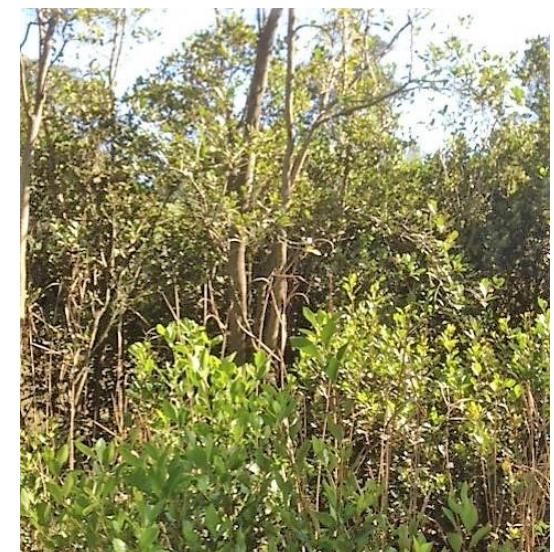
Oxley Creek, like many of the waterways in the Moreton Bay area, has a fringe of mangroves for much of its length. These mangroves provide essential habitat for aquatic creatures and bird life. They protect the creek bank creating secluded, still water where fish and crustacean nurseries can flourish.

Mangroves act like a kidney in the life of the waterway. If there are no healthy mangroves

– there is no healthy catchment. Mangroves can store up to five times the carbon stored in tropical forests. Crabs help by carrying leaves below the mud.

Mangrove Watch has completed 3 surveys of the mangroves in Oxley Creek, the first in 2013-14, then in May 2015 and May 2016. The surveys reveal that there is a 78% cover, with 17% lost in the 2011 flood.

The dominant species along the creek are *Aegiceras corniculatum* (River Mangrove) and *Avicennia marina* (Grey Mangrove). These two species form a double hedge, with low growing *Aegiceras* on the creek edge and the taller species, *Avicenna*, growing to 20 m behind.



New mangroves now a metre high. MS

The first survey after the 2011 flood showed 50% of mangroves were dead, but still standing. Subsequent surveys show good recovery, especially the *Aegiceras* species. The 2014 Mangrove Watch survey found that 21% of the creek bank was dominated by broad-leaved pepper trees, *Schinus terebinthifolia*. This plant is a Class 3 Pest, which grows over the mangroves and eventually smothers them. Where Tuesday Common Carers have freed the mangroves from weeds, new mangroves have reappeared. There are also some substantial areas where *Phragmites australis* have reappeared. It is likely that mangroves will regenerate where the *Phragmites* have stabilised the bank.

So next time you scan the creek edge, think of the important work these plants are doing. Thanks to Jock Mackenzie for this information.

Bird Habitat

This tangle of vegetation is a sight that most nature lovers, especially weeders, look at in horror. What might be struggling under the asparagus fern and cockspur? Possibly there are mangroves, perhaps broad-leaved pepper, or even a rain forest tree.

Birds take a different view. All they are looking for is food, shelter and a lookout.



A tangle of habitat beside Oxley Creek. MS

In the five minutes I looked at this 'mess', five different birds used this entanglement. A White-browed Scrub-wren played in the branches, a Brown Honey-eater looked for food, a Lewin's Honeyeater stopped briefly to survey the scene, a Rufous Whistler flew in briefly. Meanwhile a Mistletoe-bird was busy in the lower branches and fairy-wrens danced about the dead branches nearby.

Send comments, corrections and contributions to
Mary Lou Simpson. Email:
maryloulit@hotmail.com

Friends of Oxley Creek Common Inc.
represents a broad range of individuals and community groups that have shared visions in educational, social, ecological and agricultural sustainability.

Become a friend of The Common

Pay your membership directly into our BOQ account – BSB 124017 – A/c 20161909

Return this form or the appropriate details to:
friendsofoxleycreekcommon@gmail.com
or
PO Box 319, SHERWOOD, Qld 4075

Tick the box to receive our newsletter.

Name: _____

E-mail: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

P/code: _____ Date: _____

Membership:

Single	\$15	<input type="checkbox"/>
Concession:	\$12	<input type="checkbox"/>
Family:	\$20	<input type="checkbox"/>
Group:	\$30	<input type="checkbox"/>
Corporate:	\$80	<input type="checkbox"/>
Donation:	\$....	<input type="checkbox"/>

PHOTO CREDITS: SG: Steve Gray; MS
Mary Lou Simpson; PB Peter Bowman; LF Liz Ferguson.