

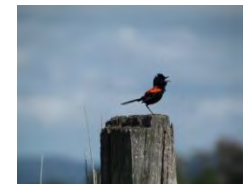


NEWSLETTER

Friends of Oxley Creek Common Inc.

"Our Community Caring for Our Common"

May 2019 - Number 33



SAVE THE DATE

FOOCC Committee Meeting

Red Shed 10 am, 14th July, 2019

TUESDAY COMMON CARERS

gather every Tuesday in the Red Shed car park to begin at 7 am.

Ph: 0429911555

OCCA General Meeting

Red Shed, 5.30 for 6 – 8.

25th June: Speaker Lindsay Wickson on koalas.

27th August: Speaker Warwick Willmott on the geology of South-east Queensland.

Ph: 07 3345 5541

OCCA Barbecue

9 Macdevitt St Coopers Plains

Friday, 31st May

Friday, 26th July.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Steve Gray

It has been a year of mixed fortunes for Friends of Oxley Creek Common. But first, some thanks. Mary Lou Simpson organizes our hardest-working volunteers, the Tuesday Common Carers. Their weeding and planting are an invaluable contribution. Mary Lou also works with Oxley Creek Catchment Association (OCCA) to bring corporate volunteers to help improve The Common. On top of that Mary Lou compiles an informative and entertaining newsletter which is always worth reading.

Liz Ferguson has contributed her remarkable energy and organisational ability to various projects and is always a valuable source of advice. Sadly, Liz has too many other commitments and is standing down from the Committee.

Hugh Possingham continues to give his time to guide seasonal bird-walks, despite his six months overseas each year, as Chief Scientist of The Nature Conservancy. Feedback from those attending is always very positive. Hugh's years of recording bird sightings on The Common, along with his contributions to ebird lists, has given us a huge database, perhaps our most valuable asset, as we negotiate for the future. Hugh has also led

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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.

these negotiations on behalf of FOOCC and the public, and the resultant Master Plan (as it applies to Oxley Creek Common) is largely thanks to him.

Thanks also to Cr Nicole Johnson and the state Department of Housing and Public Works for their ongoing interest and support. We continue to enjoy good relations with Corinda State High

School, who run cattle and sheep as part of their agriculture courses.

A major development this year is the release of the final Master Plan for the 'transformation' of the Oxley Creek catchment within the bounds of the city of Brisbane. However, the Master Plan contains a huge disappointment, inserted after the release of the Draft Master Plan. Throughout the consultation process FOOCC made it clear that it was opposed to Oxley Creek Common becoming dominated by bicycles. This went so far as a spokesman for Oxley Creek Transformation saying that materials for the 'Greenway' shared path would be 'appropriate to the area'. Then, with the release of the Master Plan we find a proposal that could see bicycles being rented from the Red Shed. Excessive use of bicycles is absolutely incompatible with the planned future of Oxley Creek Common as a bird sanctuary.

Similarly, the insertion of an 'event and activity lawn' near the Red Shed again raises the prospect of a sports field. Sources have been told this is the intended purpose. The shocking omission of any reference to those with disabilities in the draft master plan has been perpetuated in the final Master Plan, despite assurances their needs would be recognised.

OCT has also promised another round of public consultation before work on the Common begins (on current timelines in 6 – 10 years). While laudable in principle, OCT could also use this further consultation to make major changes to the existing Master Plan, rendering it meaningless.

It is of concern that Oxley Creek Catchment Association, which has board representation on OCT, has recently announced changes at the Common without any reference to our group. This includes part-time staffing at the Red Shed, and a call for volunteers for a restoration project. This may have been an oversight, but recognition of the valuable work of our group and closer communication between OCCA and the FOOCC Committee is desirable. Meanwhile, calls for OCCA to take action on woody weeds on the Common has been ignored.

I am very grateful to have led the Friends group for the past two years and to have helped develop the Master Plan for Oxley Creek Common. However, for several reasons it is time for me to step aside. There will be a need for continued vigilance to ensure Oxley Creek Common remains a sanctuary for birds, in line with the Master Plan. Powerful interest groups will want to amend the plan, and only Friends of Oxley Creek Common can provide the necessary oversight.

It is important to realise that Oxley Creek Common is not just an idle block of land without any economic significance. Based on Queensland tourism industry analysis, each overnight visitor to Brisbane, who visits The Common, is worth \$200 - \$300 to the local economy. Under current proposals there is a huge opportunity for Oxley Creek Common to reach its potential as a top birding site, situated just 7 kilometres from Brisbane's CBD. FOOCC's mission statement should be that any development should aim to make the Common easier for the birds to accommodate the humans.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

A very successful AGM was held after the bird walk on April 28th. The new office bearers and committee are as follows:

President: Hugh Possingham

Treasurer: Matthew Mendel

Secretary: Robyn Mulder

Media: Erica Heaton

Tuesday Common Carers and Newsletter:

Mary Lou Simpson

Committee: Colleen Enchelmaier; Zena Dinesen; Lynn Whitfield; Karen Gillow.

Thanks to all these people who have generously offered their time and skills to be custodians of this important natural space.

Many thanks to the out-going President, Steve Gray and Media Co-ordinator, Liz Ferguson for their energetic contribution to the Friends of Oxley Creek Common. Steve has been tireless and fearless in guarding the integrity of The Common in relation to the Council's plans for Oxley Creek. Liz has been invaluable in forging a link between FOOCC and the community, through social media. She also stepped in as Treasurer, when the position needed to be filled. We acknowledge their work and wish them well in their new endeavours.

LIVING at THE COMMON



A native bees' nest spotted near the 2nd culvert.
Photo: Judy Lucas, per Wayne Brown.

Native plants and exotic weeds alike loved the March rain. In cleared areas, thousands of new seedlings appeared. Not all of them were weeds.



Some of these little seedlings have revealed themselves as Warrigal greens.



This creeper, *Ipomea plebia*, is becoming more prevalent in cleared areas. This seedling was competing with several weeds: Cobbler's pegs, Glycine, a rattlepod and Green panic.



This Tawny Frogmouth was sleeping soundly, obvious only to persistent birdwatchers. Photo: Mal Bryant



Two Boobook Owls were resident at Nosworthy Park, earlier this year. Some weeks later a Boobook was at The Common being harassed by the Noisy Miners. Perhaps it found life on the Corinda side more peaceful.

BIRD WALK



These Black-fronted Dotterels have not been seen, since the weed has engulfed the lagoon.



Could this swallow be showing off its lovely red face and blue back? Photo: Mal Bryant

Birdwatchers have been out in force since the March rain. Some unrecorded sightings have been: White-bellied Cuckoo-shrikes; White-necked Heron (at the Secret Forest); a Hooded Robin.

About 40 people gathered at the Red Shed on Sunday, April 28th for a bird walk, led by Hugh Possingham. It was particularly encouraging to see several young people in the group. One young bird-watcher was ticking off his sightings in his Birds of South East Queensland booklet.

One rewarding sighting was the Striped Honey-eater, which sat long enough for us to admire his sleek shape and elegant stripes. He was near the open knoll, not at the second lagoon, where they have nested. We were lucky enough to see a parade of gerygones before the second culvert and a Varied Triller.

Thanks to Hugh Possingham, whose tips ensure we are all better informed and more skilful in identifying species. It was a beautiful morning and hopefully, some of the bird-watchers had a 'first sighting'. Hugh's post on <https://ebird.org> recorded 73 species.



TUESDAY COMMON CARERS

During the last 3 months, the main focus of the weeding group has been preparing sites for plantings by volunteer groups organised by OCCA. Three sites were prepared.

A site just north of Stony Gully was cleared of Green panic, Glycine and *Rivina* (Coral Berry). Rotary volunteers planted this area and Chris Jones and her son Dylan have been watering and weeding the planting.

More plants were added to the creek bank, just inside the gate to the track. While the team were working there, Channel 7 came to film for their program 'Creek to Coast'.

A small group of volunteers planted a large area south of Commelina Gully, which had been cleared by Tuesday Common Carers.

We have been working just before the second culvert, which has not been previously visited. Our intention was to remove the *Rivina* before the seeds set. This led us into clumps of Glycine, old Asparagus fern entangled in Cockspur, dead branches smothering *Alphitonas* and Green panic a metre high.

Thanks to this dedicated group of workers and to OCCA who have organised volunteers. Over 700 seedlings have been planted.

UNIVERSITY PLOTS

Visitors to the Common may have noticed some activity in the University plantings adjacent to the fence. The OCCA Business Unit wrestled with the weeds in sections of the plots for the Community Day on 4th May. Volunteers included OCCA members and workers from the youth employment group - 'Belong'.

Where the weeds have been removed, jute mats have been put around the base of the trees. This will be done in half of each plot. This part of the study is to assess the difference between the trees where the weed mats are retarding weeds and those trees that are still competing with weeds for water and nutrients.



New trees are providing extra habitat for wildlife.

The overall aim of the planting is to study the survival rate of a selection of trees, both dry eucalypt and rainforest species. It is pleasing to see good growth on the survivors. A cedar had reached nearly two meters. We are looking forward to the results of this project.

EGRETS



A Great Egret showing its neck bulge in front of its breast, a gape beyond its eye and an obvious kink in its neck – all marks that distinguish a Great Egret from an Intermediate Egret.

Photo: Mal Bryant

NATIVE OR NOT?

Two grasses that are currently flowering at the Common are Natal Grass, *Milinis repens* and Scented Tops, *Capillipedium spicigerum*. They are easier to distinguish when flowering, but a little trickier otherwise.



Natal grass, imported as a pasture grass from South Africa, has fluffy, pink seed-heads, which are slightly hairy. It has blueish, angular stems from which the leaves stand nearly at right angles. Careful inspection of the nodes in

picture 2 shows slight hairs. It is listed as a weed.



Scented Top Grass is native and has a more erect habit than Natal grass. It has thicker, unbranched stems. The leaves emerge from silky-hairy sheaths and are at a more upright angle from the stem, than Natal grass. When the seed-head is crushed, it gives off a pleasant scent.

WHICH IS WHICH

Thanks to Carole Bristow for alerting me to a mistake in this article in the February newsletter. Here is the updated, and hopefully correct, version. Each plant has its stems to help with identification.

1. *Dyschoreste depressa* leaves and stalk. The stems are thicker than the other two plants.



2. Cinderella weed, *Calyptocarpus vialis*, but is a lighter green, has weak sprawling stems growing from the base, and when mature has little yellow flowers. The leaves are not as soft as *Dyschoreste*.



3. *Rostellularia obtusa* is a low growing native. The leaves are much firmer to touch and slightly hairy. It grows to 30 cm. The flowers are pink, with hairy spikes growing at the top of the stems.



These photos of *Rostellularia obtusa* are from Cliveden Avenue Reserve. Although this plant has not been seen at The Common, it exists in other parts of the catchment, so it may appear among its look-alikes.

CAN YOU IDENTIFY THIS PLANT?



This plant is on the creek bank between Jagera Corner and the first cement culvert. Unfortunately, it was behind a dense infestation of weeds. Someone else might be more intrepid and get a little closer. Similar plants can be seen in the the paddocks, looking east from the track to the Secret Forest, similar plants appear to be in flower.

Please send your suggestions, or any other comments and/or contributions to: Mary Lou Simpson. Email: marylouit@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

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