

OUR LOCAL CREEKS: HOW ARE THEY GOING?

BY CHRIS NOON



Still Creek Landcare tests the creek water regularly at three strategic sites to monitor the health of the catchments water. We also test other sites occasionally or when requested. Recently, we did this for a local resident and showed that their creek was in good condition and at that time, kids were safe splashing around and exploring it. Obviously it is best to keep the kids out of creeks after a downpour. Our testing has found that after heavy rain, surface stuff is picked up increasing nutrient and coliform levels in the water.

As part of the Sydney-wide Streamwatch program, we test for:

- Oxygen, needed to sustain life in the water
- nutrients levels that can destroy native vegetation, ecosystems and promote weed growth
- turbidity, matter in the water that clogs streams and life
- E. coli and coliforms that endanger human health
- The presence of tiny waterbugs that are a good indicator of a healthy water system and food source for bigger water creatures

After 13 years of testing, the creeks are still in good condition, not pristine, but not deteriorating at too great a pace. All the way from high up in the catchment down to Berowra Ck, there is life in our creeks. Here is what we all can do to keep our creeks alive and healthy:

- don't clear around our creeks: nature may appear messy but it slows water flows and reduces erosion
- carefully reduce weeds that out-compete native vegetation
- use nil or low phosphorous cleaners and detergents

- minimise use of fertilisers
- collect livestock manure rather than allowing it to get in the creeks
- maintain septic tanks and water treatment tanks
- take care with any chemicals, oils and fuels as they will be catastrophic to water ways.

All the ground water eventually ends up in the creeks via drains. The rain is clean, always runs downhill so all of us can have an effect on our creeks, whether creeks pass through our property or not. If a creek passes through our property we have a special responsibility. All of us are stewards of the land and water and all of us have an impact. It's up to us what form that impact takes.



Photo is courtesy of Anne-Marie Seve, many thanks.

To find out more about 13 years of test results and how the testing is done, visit our website or contact us.

For more information, contact Nick on 9653 2056, www.stillcreeklandcare.com.au email Stillcreeklandcare@iinet.net.au or Facebook.

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