

Meet the Monitors

Who: Bryan and Margaret Smith

Streamwatch Group: Hawkesbury Environment Network (HEN) affiliated with North Richmond & District Community Action Association.

Streamwatch Site/s: Redbank Creek, North Richmond. This is a tributary of the Hawkesbury River and enters the river north of Richmond Bridge.



Photo : Geoff Jones/Fairfax Media

History: We joined Streamwatch when we realised that the Hawkesbury was in real trouble. The area had become a target for real estate developers. The Creek, which was a wildlife corridor and a joy to all who lived nearby, was in danger of becoming polluted.

Robin Woods, a founding member of HEN and a retired academic from the University of Western Sydney (UWS), formed and financed a group to conserve Redbank Creek. This was launched at the North Richmond Community Centre and was followed by a field visit to Peel Park where the late, highly regarded, Ian McEwan demonstrated Streamwatch monitoring techniques.

We started to work with Ian mentoring students from UWS and eventually we were provided with a complete test kit. We then started to work on four test sites. Our motivation was the Council approval of a large subdivision of 1399 homes in the Redbank Catchment, which was allowed to proceed without State Government review or any infrastructure or environmental monitoring required.

Highpoints of Streamwatch Involvement:

- Contact with likeminded people
- The opportunity to make a difference by publicly exposing Councils lack of environmental responsibility towards protecting the Creek
- Contact with the young people of the Green Army when we were able to teach water monitoring techniques
- The further education offered by the Australian Museum events

Challenges:

- The biggest was a Council which was failing to meet its compliance obligations. The previous council has been replaced by a new, more aware Council which is struggling to correct the mistakes of the past.

In finishing: We have thoroughly enjoyed meeting others involved in Streamwatch both at field events and at the Museum and its functions. The enthusiasm and knowledge of Gregory, Cecil and Karen have been a joy. We are sorry to have to cease field work but *tempus fugit* (time flies) and this needs someone other than octogenarians!