

Gold Coast Catchment Association

Catchment Score Card - A Community Perspective

The Gold Coast Catchment Score Card is a realistic measure of the state of the environmental health of our catchments. So often we see a creek or river get a reasonably high score from a scientific study, when we know that, from a holistic perspective, that that river is actually in poor condition. Our Catchment Scorecard was developed with the assistance of the Griffith University School of Environmental Science and SEQ Catchments Ltd. It is designed to be used by non-scientists to provide a rating that considers a whole range of factors for your section of creek or river.

WHAT'S IN A FEELING?

When you visit a waterway you very quickly form an opinion on whether it's healthy. It's more of a feeling than a detailed understanding; but ask yourself what goes into creating that feeling. Clearly it's based on what you see, smell, and touch (it's not wise to taste water from waterways). Of course, most of your judgment is based on what you see, but you can break this down into a number of areas as well. How much litter is around? How healthy and mixed is the vegetation? How clear is the water? All these things add up to a 'feeling' for the waterway's health. To convert your 'feeling' into some form of health rating you could consider each of these areas separately, giving each a mark. Each category is rated out of 5, and the lower the mark the poorer the condition of the waterway in that category. In general, keep in mind that 5 is the best possible rating you can hope for with your waterway, and one is the worst. Then judge where your waterway might fall on this scale.

PURPOSE

To assess the health of a 100m section of waterway in a manner that can be repeated and compared over time. The score card information will be used to highlight low scoring indicators and sites in order to attract the appropriate resources to better manage and improve the health of our waterways.

RESULTS

The results from Catchment Score Cards will appear on the Gold Coast Catchment Association web site <http://www.goldcoastcatchment.org/>. Just click on the Catchment Score Card tab and you will see a map of all the Gold Coast Catchments. This is an interactive map allowing you to click on the catchment of your interest and see the score card results. At a glance you can get a measure of the true state of our catchments.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. **Choose a site** where you can see upstream approximately 50m and downstream approximately 50m.
2. Fill out the **site information** please give as much detail as possible, ensuring that someone else will be able to locate this site again.
3. Ideally both banks will be assessed. However if it is only possible to assess one bank that is OK.
4. Standing on the bank (if possible), **score each indicator from 1 to 5** and put the number in the 'Score' box.
5. **Add up all the scores** to get a total score for the site. Put this number in the final box.
6. Complete this scorecard for all **important sites** in your waterway.
7. **Send the completed score card** to the Gold Coast Catchment Association, PO Box 1206, Southport BC, Qld 4215. Or give to your Environment Group Leader



GOLD COAST CATCHMENT ASSOCIATION CATCHMENT SCORE CARD



Site Information

Date..... Community Group Name.....

Volunteer Name.....

Waterway Name.....

Site Name / Description

Location (UBD Ref / Google Maps co-ordinates/ Street Address).....

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Please score each indicator from 5 to 1.

5 = excellent health	4 = good health	3 = a range of healthy and unhealthy signs
2 = poor health	1 = extremely unhealthy	

	INDICATORS	HEALTHY SIGNS	UNHEALTHY SIGNS	SCORE
LITTER: Include litter on the bank and in the water. Is there industrial wastes such as car bodies, drums etc? Are there grass clippings or palm fronds dumped?				
1	Litter	None/very little visible	Lots/wide variety visible	
2	Garden Waste	None/very little dumped	Lots/wide variety dumped	
Litter Total				/ 10
URBAN LANDUSE: (Do not fill out if your site is in a rural location) Look around your site, record how the land use, if any, considers the presence of the waterway. Is the waterway an important part of the surrounds?				
3	Buildings	Buildings present are integrated into the environment & are located an appropriate distance from the waterway.	Buildings very near to waterway, and are not integrated into the environment. Buildings and access to them impact negatively on the banks and waterway.	
4	Human Use	No human impact visible	Human tracks visible e.g walking tracks / motor bikes / horse trails /	
Urban Landuse Total				/10
RURAL LANDUSE: (Do not fill out if your site is in an urban location) Look around your site, record how the land use, if any, considers the presence of the waterway. Is the waterway an important part of the surrounds?				
5	Farming – stock	Evidence of stock control	Damage from stock access visible	
6	Farming - agriculture	No evidence of impacts	Cropping very close to waterway, bank vegetation removed,	
Rural Landuse Total				/10
PUBLIC AMENITIES/ACCESS: Depending on the landuses and surrounding area of your site public access may be important. If you are in an urban area access may be more important than if the site is in a pristine area. Does the level of public access/amenities match the surrounding area and landuses?				
7	Public amenities/access	Yes the level of public access and amenities matches the surrounding landuses and does not significantly impact on the local environment.	No the level of public amenities/access does not match the surrounding landuses and there is significant impact to the local environment.	/5
SMELL: Sit by the waterway and record any smells. Take a sample of water and record its smell (don't taste it).A strong natural smell in wetlands and estuaries should be recorded as 4 or more.				

8	Smell	No smell / natural smell	Very strong, unnatural chemical smell	/5
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GOLD COAST CATCHMENT ASSOCIATION
CATCHMENT SCORE CARD

Date.....
Site.....
Waterway.....

Please score each indicator from 5 to 1.

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	INDICATORS	HEALTHY SIGNS	UNHEALTHY SIGNS	SCORE
BANK VEGETATION: Bank vegetation plays a vital role in waterway health. Do not worry about weeds in this category; sometimes even having weed species is better than no vegetation at all.				
9	Trees	Lots of large trees present	None/very few present	
10	Shrubs	Many present	None/very few present	
11	Grasses	Present	None/very few present	
12	Vines	Present – not dominant	None present or large amount smothering everything.	
Vegetation Total				/20
WEEDS: For weed identification use the Environmental Weeds of the Gold Coast produced by GCCC. Aquatic weeds – ONLY the 4 in the booklet to be identified.				
13	Trees	Less than 5% of the trees are weed species	Greater than 80% of the trees are weed species	
14	Shrubs	Less than 5% of the shrubs are weed species	Greater than 80% of the shrubs are weed species	
15	Grasses	Less than 5% of the grasses are weed species	Greater than 80% of the grasses are weed species	
16	Vines	Less than 5% of the vines are weed species	Greater than 80% of the vines are weed species. Vines are smothering	
17	Aquatic	Less than 10% of water contains weeds	Greater than 80% of the water is covered or choked by weeds.	
Weed Total				/25
BANK MODIFICATION: concrete banks, rock walls, other man made structures which modify the banks. Are the modifications working to ensure bank stability?				
18	Bank Modification	Banks have no modification	Banks are totally converted to concrete or rock walls	/5
BANK EROSION: Look at the banks and the land extending from the waterway note if the if the soil is eroded or stable				
19	Erosion	Vegetation extends up to 30m from water, no erosion	Lots of clearing, bare ground, extensive erosion, bank slumping	/5
NATURAL FLOW: is there any modification of the water flow, the existence of causeways, weirs, dams, bridges or other structures which impede flow.				
20	Natural Flow	No structures, natural flow is maintained	A number of structures exist which significantly impede natural flow	/5
WATER CLARITY: Score clarity as a 3 in estuarine areas				
21	Clarity	Clear – can easily see the bottom	Muddy, murky, large amount of suspended solids	/5
FAUNA: Fauna Evidence – sight, hear, scats (poo), nests, breeding sites, bark scratching, foot prints. Remember to look for insects, reptiles, frogs, fish, and water critters.				
22	Fauna	Numerous birds and signs of other wild life with little evidence of	Little sign of native wildlife and numerous signs of ferals eg cane	/5

		exotic species.	toads, Indian Mynas, foxes.	
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Score Card compiled using information from Beth McDonald and Waterwatch Australia

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Total Site Score
 (Add up all scores)

/100