



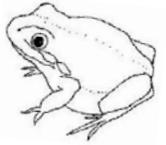
moonee ponds creek
co-ordination committee

Ponderings

Summer 2008

Issue 24

Seasonal Newsletter of the Moonee Ponds
Creek Co-ordination Committee Inc



advocate

educate

interpret

participate

rehabilitate

revegetate

It's Party Time!

There will be music, good food and other fun things.

MPCCC want to say 'Thank You' to all our friends and supporters. So we are having a party!

Friday 19 December from 5.00 pm

All ages are welcome!

At MPCCC Compound,
Parks Victoria Depot,
Woodlands Historic Park
1055 Somerton Road, Greenvale
Melway: 178 C6



This is how you get to us ...

We are based in the Parks Vic compound in Woodlands Historic Park.

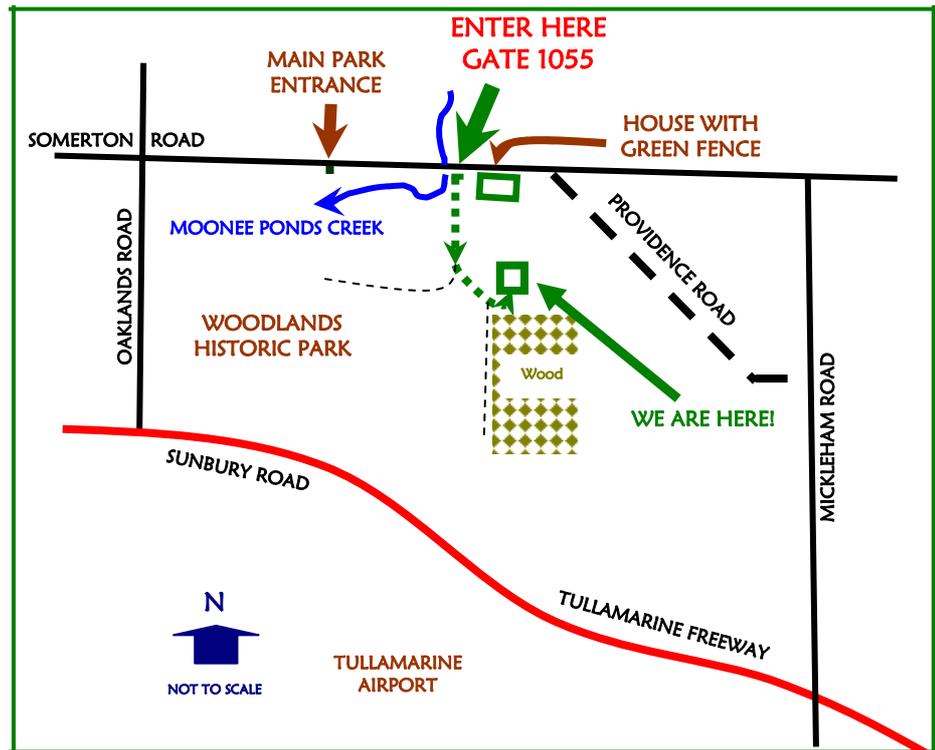
Don't use the main park entrance, but the one between the house with the green fence and Moonee Ponds Creek.

We'll put up a sign at the entrance!

We are looking forward to seeing you there on 19 December!

Please RSVP by Mon 15 December

Email to info@mpccc.org or call 9333 2406
leave a message with number of people coming and any dietary requirements.



Now is the time to register sites for Clean Up Australia 2009. So if you have an area you would like to help get cleaned up, call Steph on 9333 2406 or email to steph@mpccc.org. Clean Up Australia is always on the first Sunday in March — so in 2009 it will be on **Sunday 1 March**.

Clean Up for Businesses will be on Tuesday, 24 February, and Clean Up for Schools on Friday, 27 February.

Be part of Creating Creek Communities — join us after Clean Up for a Multicultural lunch at Flemington, more next issue.

Did you know that since the Clean Up started in 1989, 400,000 tonnes of rubbish has been collected which is the equivalent of 4.7 million wheelie bins? We worked out that they would stretch from Melbourne to Mackay — on the inland route!

The Moonee Ponds Creek Co-ordination Committee gratefully acknowledge the financial support of these Councils.





Welcome to the newsletter of the Moonee Ponds Creek Co-ordination Committee Inc (MPCCC). We are a not-for-profit, environmentally-based, community organisation that acts as a champion for the Moonee Ponds Creek

and its tributaries. Members of the MPCCC include the Cities of Melbourne, Moonee Valley, Moreland and Hume; the Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek; and representatives from the community.

Our aim is to: encourage understanding of and connection to the Moonee Ponds Creek and its tributaries; highlight its values through education, interpretation and hands-on participation; and revegetate and rehabilitate the creek and its tributaries.

Moonee Ponds Creek Co-ordination Committee Inc

PO Box 2170, Greenvale 3059
Phone: (03) 9333 2406
Fax: (03) 9333 2413
Email: coordinator@mpccc.org
Website: www.mpccc.org

Moonee Ponds Creek Co-ordination Committee Inc Staff

Coordinator:
Education & Interpretation Officer: Bronwyn Riddell
Greening Officer: Stephanie Spathis
Greening & Admin Assistant: Stella Blay

Moonee Ponds Creek Coordination Committee Members

President: Cr Gary Jungwirth
Vice President: Terry Mundy
Vice President: TBC
Secretary: Michelle Gooding
Treasurer: Joe Ficarra
Public Officer: Elizabeth Donoghue
Members: Vince Aitkin, Rob Ellis, Cr Mark Higginbotham, Cr Rose Iser, Frank Kinnersley, Julie Law and Sam Neidra

MPCCC Inc Member Newsletters and Contacts

City of Melbourne

The Green Leaflet, available quarterly. Please contact City of Melbourne on (9658 9658). For environmental and sustainability queries, please contact the Community Sustainability Officer on 9658 8557.

Moonee Valley City Council

Valley View available every six weeks, please contact Moonee Valley City Council on 9243 8888. For environmental and sustainability queries please contact Moonee Valley City Council on 9243 9142.

Moreland City Council

The Moreland City Council website offers numerous tips and information sources on environmental and sustainability issues. Please contact 9240 1167 or info@moreland.vic.gov.au

Hume City Council

Eco-Tracks Environment Newsletter, available quarterly. Contact Environment Administration Officer on 9205 2473, for the newsletter and any environmental and sustainability queries.

Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek

Established in 1997, the Friends Group contribute to the management, protection, development and use of the Moonee Ponds Creek. Contact the President, Kelvin Thomson at Kelvin.Thomson.mp@aph.gov.au.

This newsletter is kindly printed by XL Colour Digital on 100% Recycled paper.

Ponderings ...

With the planting season over, I thought things would calm down a bit along the creek, but the season has been so warm and dry that all the weeds have already gone to seed, setting in store more problems for next spring!

But if you want to see what can be done to improve the creek, have a walk along to the Brunswick SW Planters' site. At the western end of Hope Street in Brunswick — where the footbridge crosses the creek, just to the north of the bridge is a lovely area planted over two planting sessions this year, in Autumn and Spring.

Already the grasses are flourishing and seeding, and the clumps of flowers, interspersed among the grasses, look spectacular. This is in no small measure thanks to the fantastic efforts of Michael, who has wanted to plant this corner of the creek for many years, and lovingly waters and weeds the plot. There is a seat there too, where you can sit and enjoy the creek. It is so rewarding to see what can be done — and a result like this makes everyone's hard work worthwhile.

Another dedicated 'Friend' is Kaye Oddie who has been watering the new plants we put in at the lower part of the creek — they will need all the help they can have — thank you Kaye.

We want to thank all our hard working friends and all the supporters of MPCCC, so please do come along to the end of year party — we would love to see you. Steph is organising music and it promises to be a great evening!

One other thing — MPCCC has recently been awarded Deductible Gift Recipient status. Donations to MPCCC are now tax deductible.

Stella Blay

A lovely display of *Wahlenbergia* at 'Michael's' bed



Congratulations Hume Council!

For the third year running, Hume City Council's environmental work has been recognised by Landcare. The Council has been awarded the Leighton Holdings Local Government Partnerships Award.

Hume is a very environmentally active council, with ongoing programs to protect and improve native vegetation and manage the weeds in its area.

The council holds community planting days, and the annual Multicultural Planting Festival which is always great fun. It also has several programs to support rural landholders: a rate rebate for implementing sustainable land management practices; plants provided for revegetation works; biodiversity programs to help land owners look after vegetation remnants on their property, and its valuable newsletters, *Eco-Tracks* and *Hume Weed News*.

One of the Council's philosophies is to work in partnership with the community to improve the environment, which MPCCC wholeheartedly supports. Keep up the good work!

And of course, Hume City Council is one of the MPCCC's supporting councils, with representatives on our committee.

Well done Hume!

Sightings

Fauna observations along the Moonee Ponds Creek. If you see anything interesting contact Stella on 9333 2406 or ponderings@mpccc.org

There have been some fantastic bird sightings over the last couple of months ...

While trying to record the call of the **Growling Grass Frog** at Westbreen Creek, Judy Allen saw this **White-faced Heron** struggling with a **Banjo Frog**. (Could be why it had been so hard to record the frogs calling ... but she got it in the end — after two weeks of patience!)



Photo courtesy of Michael Dahlem. His great website is <http://www.mdahlem.net/birds/>. Have a look — it has some wonderful pictures.

The **Horsfield's Bronze Cuckoo** has been a common visitor along the creek. The bush crew have seen it at Boeing Reserve and heard it in several other locations.

Ginnie Moyland reports hearing several **Banjo Frogs** 'pobble-bonking' along Five Mile Creek — the first time she has heard them there. (Don't tell the heron ...)

We have also been visited by a fluttering **Grey Fantail** that was very curious to know what we were doing.



Ginnie Moyland was thrilled to see a **Sacred Kingfisher** near Cross Keys Reserve in early November.

This is another of Michael Dahlem's fabulous photos.

Charles Silveira saw two **Baillon's Crakes**, at Jacana Wetlands. These are small and shy marsh-dwellers which have a call like a frog.



The Jacky lizards are back amongst the piles of timber at Woodlands.

These colourful little creatures have been enjoying the warmth of the sun.



BAT COUNT

At the last Bat Count, volunteers counted 16,000 fruit bats leaving their roost, which is about usual for this time of the year.

The next Bat Count will be on **Wednesday 10 December at 8.15pm** — see below.



Bat Counters' 'Thank You' Party

For all you volunteer Bat Counters, and those who haven't been before, but would like to — there is to be a 'Thank You' gourmet pizza party before the next count. (Wednesday 10 December)
Meet for pizza from 7pm in the rotunda just next door to the car park for the Yarra Bend Park Golf Course.
Please RSVP by 3 December to Rodney van der Ree, phone: 8344 3661, or email: rvdr@unimelb.edu.au

Our Nursery

Not Just a Plant Nursery ...



Tawnie chicks with their backs to us

The big grey box outside our offices has been the nursery for two pairs of nesting birds — 'our' **Tawny Frogmouths** and a pair of **Black-faced Cuckoo-shrikes**. For the third year running, the Tawnies successfully raised two balls of fluff which have now fledged and left the tree, but the Cuckoo-shrikes are still hard at it, feeding their chicks. We don't know yet how many there are, but it is fascinating to watch the parents do their tag-team feeding, and seeing off the **Little Ravens** and **Magpies** that get too close.

In the shade-house we have a pair of **Fairy Wrens** nesting in a tray of *Carex* tube-stock — they have made a little tunnel amongst the stems and lined it with feathers.

There are three tiny pink babies hiding in the nest and we have to be careful not to spend too long in the shade-house, keeping the parents away.

Think of the birds as the hot weather approaches ...

With the hot dry weather, birds really appreciate some water to drink or bathe in. We have a dish outside that attracts a beautiful array of visitors — **Crimson Rosellas**, **King Parrots**, **Red-rumped Parrots**, **White-plumed Honeyeaters**, **Fairy Wrens** and **Willy Wagtails**.

But if you are going to provide water, think about whether the birds will come to rely on it. Don't put it out so often that they expect it to be there, because if you go on holiday and it isn't there, they are likely to suffer.



Cuckoo-shrike and nest



Fairy Wren nest



White-plumed Honeyeater and a Willie Wagtail that has just had a bath

Some thanks ...

Thank you Fuji Xerox!

Fuji Xerox have donated a grant of \$2,000 for work in an old meander of the creek at Oak Park.

This is the third year the company has provided us with funds to do environmental work, and we are very grateful for their support.

The money will go towards purchasing plants for a community festival at the Strath Oak Planters' site at Oak Park. Thanks to Nina and Bob Eason for organising this grant application.

Thank you VicTrack!

VicTrack has donated \$500 to MPCCC and the VicTrack staff have also had a whip round and donated a further \$145.05. We hope to use this money to buy the *Flora of Victoria*, for our reference library.

We had a great planting day with the VicTrack staff, (see the next page) turning the barren area next to the rail yards in West Melbourne into something more appealing. The soil there is a mixture of fill, but thanks to Glen LeRossignol who has been adding mulch for a period of time, the plants will have a better chance of surviving.

Thank you planters!

At the end of the planting season we had quite a number of seedlings left over.

Some of our fabulous Friends have collected a selection and planted them along the creek.

In particular, we would like to thank Kaye Oddie, from Lower Moonee Ponds Creek, John Hughes from Gowanbrae; Michael Bialczak from Brunswick South-West Planters, Julie Law from ... well from all along the creek really! And Donna Matthews who also comes to planting days all along the creek.

Thank you all for caring about the creek and for your continuing support and hard work. It all helps to contribute to the habitat corridor we are trying to create along the creek.

Chrysocephalum apiculatum



VicTrack's Staff Tree-Planting Day

VicTrack staff joined members of the MPCCC in a tree-planting day on Mainco land near, Footscray Road, on Friday 29 August 2008. VicTrack's CEO and about a dozen staff spent a warm Friday afternoon planting over 600 trees and plants to revegetate an area adjacent to the Moonee Ponds Creek. The event was part of VicTrack's efforts for Keep Australia Beautiful Week. Special thanks goes to Glen LeRossignol from Rail Business for the organisation of the event and ongoing management of revegetation works.

It was such a successful day, that we hope to do more of these events with VicTrack. We are also very grateful to the staff who made a donation to MPCCC.



Farewell Dave!



It is with a considerable degree of envy and great regret that we say 'Farewell' to Dave Cull from planting days and the bush crew.

Dave and Annabelle, his partner, are off on an adventure — they have set off to see Australia. Travelling in a converted Hiace, they plan to spend at least a year exploring roads less travelled.

We will miss his immense knowledge and great good humour.

Good luck Dave we wish you well and hope to see you again!

What about doing a course?

The Northern Institute of TAFE in Epping has several certificate and diploma courses for people who are interested in the management of natural areas and resources.

You can learn about natural environments, geology, soil, water in the landscape and other catchment processes, how to identify plants, fauna, habitat restoration, land management and lots more.

There are full-time and part-time courses available. These courses are designed to prepare you for a career in natural resource management, but even if you don't want a change in your career, they are excellent and eye-opening courses that will give you a completely different way of looking at the world around you.

For more information call the Agriculture and Animal Science Department, NMIT, Epping on 9269 1060 or visit: www.nmit.vic.edu.au

Fires in The Tarnuk

An arsonist has been at work

I don't know if you have been to The Tarnuk in Westmeadows recently, but over the past few months several fires have been deliberately lit in the park. I went to see for myself last week, and was greeted with a very sorry sight.

A long stretch of the creek — about 150 metres, has been set on fire — the dense rushes (*Phragmites*) have been burned to the water and although these are now starting to re-shoot, the fires have been devastating to the surrounding vegetation.

When I was there, a lone Reed Warbler was singing in the un-burned section of reeds, and I couldn't help wondering how many nests and other creatures were destroyed by the fire. Fortunately the Banjo frogs or Pobblebonks (*Limnodynastes dumerilii*) and the Common Eastern Froglet (*Crinia signifera*) were happily making their presence known, but this area is the habitat of the endangered Growling Grass Frog (*Litoria reniformis*), and we can't afford to lose it.



Looking north — burned out planting bed, with weed grasses regrowing

A large area planted by our volunteers has been burned out, and although some of the better established shrubs may re-shoot, most have been killed. The soil is bare, and only the Chilean needle-grass (awed of national significance) is regrowing, and the seeding Chilean needle-grass in the unburned section has a ready seedbed to spread to.



Scorched Red Gum above the regrowing *Phragmites*



Melted tree guard and cooked *Acacia paradoxa*



In large areas, all that is left are the stakes and re-sprouting weed grasses



Creek bed with blackened stumps of reeds and scorched *Acacias* in the distance

Regenerating Yellow Gum



There is some good news ...

On a happier note, the native vegetation is adapted to fire, the *Phragmites* is growing and I found one little Yellow Gum with a green shoot appearing from what looked like a completely dead sapling. And we hope that some *Microlaena stipoides* may germinate next year, depending on what seed is in the soil.

According to the CFA, they have attended to 30 or 40 calls to deliberately lit fires along the creek this year — a staggering number.

Melbourne Water, Police and Parks Victoria personnel are patrolling the area but they are also calling on residents to be vigilant and report any suspicious behaviour. We know many of our readers regularly use the tracks along the creek, and they have been responsible for reporting many of these fires, so if you do see anything or have any relevant information about the fires, please call Detective Senior Constable Gerry Mercovich from Broadmeadows Police 9302 8211 or the Duty Officer at Greenvale Fire Station 9333 1244.

Of course **if it is an emergency, dial 000.**

Exciting opportunity for a new community facility

In a bend along the Moonee Ponds Creek at Mascoma Street, Strathmore, there is a parcel of land that used to belong to Hume City Council — a relict of the boundary changes of 1990. Moonee Valley City Council (MVCC) recently purchased this land from Hume.

It is a 1.7 Hectare site that used to be Hume's nursery, and currently has a small commercial nursery on it, (we don't know what the lease arrangements are with this nursery) however, the area is zoned for community open space.

The purchase will enable MVCC to rectify the blind corner on the creek-side bike track, possibly to re-align the track to cut off the large detour round the loop of the creek.



Approx site at Nursery Corner in the bend in Moonee Ponds Creek at Strathmore

Photo: Google Earth

There are a few buildings on the site, including shade houses and an administrative building, but it would be a wonderful site for an environmental centre.

In the future, it could provide MPCCC with an ideal home, if we ever have to move out of Woodlands.

If you have any ideas about what you would like to see the site used for why not drop us a line, email to ponderings@mpccc.org, snail mail to PO Box 2170, Greenvale 3059.

Let's see if we can put together a scheme to take to Council.

The CityLink Creek Connections program has come to an end. Altogether, we have run 150 events, and involved 9,824 participants — it has been a fantastic three years — thanks to Bronwyn Riddell who has achieved so much to bring the communities together along the creek.

Spring Planting Day at Royal Park

It was a great day, although the wind tried to blow us all away! The Lord Mayor John So and 175 members of the community planted over 2000 plants beside the bike path at McPherson Field, Poplar Road Reserve.

There were lots of other activities — local Indigenous educator Brendan Marcs shared



his knowledge of making and throwing Wonguim (boomerang); Jane from Waterwatch had water from the creek with all manner of invertebrates for people to examine with microscopes; City of Melbourne Ranger, Danielle, gave away bike maps, and park info, and there were bush foods to taste.

Lunch was a wonderful combination of traditional Aussie BBQ lunch provided by Rotary North Melbourne and delicious tastes from Africa and the Eritrean Coffee Ceremony provided by Tahia and Sainab from the African Women's



Photos courtesy of Bruce Crotty

Network — a great bringing together of communities.



St Joseph's Biology Day

Faye Ball introduced 25 boys from St Joseph's secondary college to an Indigenous view of the creek and her country, and taught them how to make string from plants. They also learned about the creatures in the creek with Jane from Waterwatch.



Last Planting Days of the Season

After all the dry weather we have been having, it seems incredible that we had to postpone some Planting Days in August because of the rain, but we did! As a consequence we held three more sessions since the last edition of *Ponderings*, at the end of August and beginning of September:



Friends of Strathmore Ponds

There was a very convivial feel to this planting day! (There usually is of course — our Friends are such great people!) We transformed an area where there was nothing — just a deep layer of mulch — with a mixture of 414 grassland plants and shrubs. Carol, along whose fence we were planting, joined in. Jane from Waterwatch collected bugs from the creek for children of all ages to investigate with microscopes, and there were *Creeky Creature* activities for the children.



Boeing Reserve Troopers

Nineteen 'Troopers' came along to celebrate Fathers' Day by putting in some plants. It was good to see the things put in at previous planting session doing so well. It was such a beautiful sunny day that we sat around chatting for some time into the afternoon after giving 735 plants a new home — mostly grasses, with *Acacias*, and *Allocasuarinas*, *Convolvulus* and *Wahlenbergias*.



Gowanbrae Residents

This really was the last planting day of the season, attended by fourteen stalwarts — including Stefanie, new to Gowanbrae — we look forward to seeing her again next year! All 559 plants were planted with enthusiasm — a mixture of wildflowers and ground covers, with a few Red Gums. A windy day, but our avid bike riding volunteers were pleased to have a tail wind homeward bound!



Thank you everyone for your participation in the planting season — we couldn't do it without you — see you again next year!
And a huge 'Thank you' to planting staff Stephanie, Dave, Stella and Elissa for a wonderful community planting season.



XL Planting Day



In September, we had a great planting day with the staff and clients of XL Colour Digital. This printing company has a very dynamic attitude to working sustainably and employed a consultant to advise them on how to improve their environmental footprint.

The company approached us as a means of connecting to and contributing to the improvement of, their local environment. We organised an afternoon for them, combining an introduction to the way in which local Indigenous people use plants from the creek to make string, an exploration of the life in the creek, weeding and, of course, planting plants suitable for the harsh conditions along the creek in North Melbourne — mostly salt bush and *Lomandra*. It was a great and fulfilling afternoon — fabulous to meet and work with people who put their values into practice.

We are very grateful to XL Colour Digital for their continued support, in printing *Ponderings*.



MPCCC would like to thank **XL Colour Digital** for kindly printing this edition of *Ponderings*.

It is printed on FSC Certified recycled paper from mixed sources, to ISO 14001.

XL Colour Digital
28-32 Bruce Street
Kensington Victoria 3031
Telephone: 03 9372 5111
Facsimile: 03 9372 5888
Email: digital@xlcolour.com.au

