



moonee ponds creek
co-ordination committee

Ponderings

Autumn 2011

Issue 33

Seasonal Newsletter of the Moonee Ponds Creek
Coordination Committee Inc

advocate

educate

interpret

participate

rehabilitate

revegetate



We really 'Cleaned Up' at Debneys Park and Kensington...

A big **THANK YOU** to all who supported and attended our annual Clean Up at Flemington and Kensington on Sunday 6 March.

For the 5th year running, CityLink Neighbourhood Connections coordinated the day and what a great day it was!!!!

The weather was beautiful and 'Wild Action — the Zoo that comes to you' was a big hit with the Community as they had close encounters with our native animals — I loved Cobber the wombat so cute, so soft.

We had 172 people register at Debneys Park, 140 bags collected, a tyre and truck guards, pipes and other yucky things! And at Kensington we had 30 people sign on. They collected about 30 bags, a mattress and more yucky things!

So 202 signed on at the two sites, 170 bags collected along about 4km of creek and the surrounding area. There was so much mess left by the floods, there was plenty to collect. I think about 300 came for a delicious lunch, sausage sizzle and African food (yum!)

What a great effort — what a great community! Bronwyn Riddell



Moonee Ponds Creek Strategic Plan Launch

Please come to the launch of the Strategic Plan and help the MPCCC decide on its future direction.

Tuesday 3 May, 4.30 for 5.00pm

Strathmore Sports Club, Mascoma Street,
Strathmore (16 H8)

RSVP by 28 April to info@mpccc.org

If you can't make the launch, go to the MPCCC website MPCCC.org, to download a copy.

What's in this edition?

- ➔ Clean Up Australia Day report
- ➔ News of MPCCC
- ➔ Jacana - 10 years of transformation
- ➔ Creek activities
- ➔ A weed to watch out for
- ➔ Exciting sightings
- ➔ Diary Dates

Jacana Wetlands — nine years of transformation



Jacana panorama 2011 (south of the road bridge)



Looking north to the bridge in October 2003



Looking north to the bridge in April 2011



The new wetlands, 2002



Looking east in September 2004



Looking east in April 2011

A huge effort, and many thousands of plants later, Jacana is transformed...

When work started at **Jacana**, in early 2002, it was little more than a broad shallow grassy valley, the Broadmeadows Retarding Basin, with the Moonee Ponds Creek curving down it. Today, there are corridors of trees along the Creek and skirting wetlands; and clumps of trees and shrubs providing shelter and habitat for the increased wildlife taking advantage of the new wetlands created by Melbourne Water. These wetlands were created to remove nitrogen and litter from the water flowing down Moonee Ponds Creek.

Regular planting sessions with the **Friends of Jacana Wetlands** have transformed this valley. The increase in birdlife was almost immediate, noticeable less than two years after the work started. Local residents have noticed the increase in frog life too, with numerous frogs taking advantage of water in their gardens when the wetlands dry out between rain events.



Planting at the spoon drain in May 2007



The same site in April 2011

Sightings

Fauna and flora observations along the Moonee Ponds Creek. If you see anything interesting, please tell us about it, contact Stella, at ponderings@mpccc.org.

Galahs v Hawks at Strathnaver Reserve — Tony Smith tells of an exciting match ...

An old friend talked me into attending the Strathmore Veterans cricket quarter final where the local wildlife provided the more interesting entertainment.

I noticed a small hawk hovering, well before a flock of galahs turned up to try to feed on seed amongst the recently mown oval grass. Soon it was on! But was it the galahs mobbing the hawk? Or the hawk trying to isolate some vulnerable galah? It is hard to imagine the latter as the hawk was definitely no bigger and looked a bit lighter than your average galah. But there were many times when that was what the hawk appeared to be trying to do; though there may have been even more when the hawk, either perched high in a eucalypt or on the wing, was being harassed by many galahs.

The entry of a second hawk did not change the outcome, although it seemed to cause the galahs to get even more serious. When they eventually decided the threat was under control the galahs regrouped in their feeding area, but only after some complex manoeuvres which saw them coming in, in tight pairs from a wide range of approaches. Meanwhile a family of magpies had also been taking an interest in proceedings and seemed to decide to side with the galahs, moving from the pavilion roof to become sentry-like outriders around the feeding flock.

Keep up to date with things happening along the Creek, such as the Tullamarine Landfill, Woodlands quarry sites, and proposed developments by visiting MPCCC.org

A Weed to Watch Out For

This weed is an absolute shocker! It is **Asthma Weed**, (*Parietaria judaica*) also known as **Sticky Weed** or **Pellitory**. And I thought I had left it behind when I moved from Sydney three years ago, but sadly, I have recently seen it three times in Victoria, once in Port Campbell, and twice, here, in Melbourne, in Yarraville, in Francis Street, and in Turner Street, Abbotsford, where it is well-established in the front steps of several houses and at the base of front walls, very close to the Yarra River and Merri Creek. If it gets into either of those corridors it would be easily spread by human and animal traffic along the rivers.

It will grow just about anywhere; its roots penetrating tiny cracks in masonry making it very hard to eliminate.



Asthma Weed, (Weeds Australia Identification website)



Asthma Weed

But the worst characteristic of this plant is its ability to set off allergic reactions and asthma attacks. This is how ABC Gardening Australia presenter Meredith Kirton described it: "...it's covered in tiny sticky hairs which, if they touch your skin, can cause a rash, which itches and then turns red like a burn. The plant has tiny flowers that release airborne pollen. If it gets in your eyes it can cause conjunctivitis, or up your nose can cause rhinitis and it can make you wheeze or trigger asthma attacks. One of the dangerous things about asthma weed is that it flowers all year so you're always at risk." (Meredith Kirton, ABC 17/11/2007).

Weeds Australia website (www.weeds.org.au) defines it as a: "Perennial herb with spreading to erect stems to 80 (rarely to 100) cm long. Stems reddish to green. Leaves 1.5-9 cm long, lanceolate, ovate or rhombic, hairy on both surfaces, strongly veined; leaf stalk 1-1.5 cm long. Single seeded dry fruit (achene) maturing dark brown to black, hard, 1-1.2 mm long and 0.6-0.9 mm wide."

This is a very invasive weed that is hard to get rid of. It spreads via its thousands of seeds which stick to clothing and animal fur, and are also wind dispersed – one square metre of this plant can produce 250,000 seeds! – and it can readily grow from pieces of root. It is susceptible to Glyphosate, and this is one of those occasions when chemical use is the best solution. Unless every bit of root is removed it will just grow back, and it is very hard to remove the roots from crevices like this one. If you are asthmatic or suffer from allergies, wear gloves if you handle it, and take care not to rub your eyes or inhale the dust (pollen) from it. And don't put it into the compost, but bag it, and make sure that all propagules are destroyed.

Asthma Weed has been declared a noxious weed in NSW, let's try to prevent it from spreading here in Victoria.



Asthma Weed growing in a crevice in Turner Street, Abbotsford, where it is well established.

species including: identification, biology, distribution, diet, habitat, scientific classification and endangered status. Wherever you are you'll be able to find information on more than 700 animals at the swipe of your finger. The app is free, and can be downloaded from the iTunes App store.

(Source: Info Vic email newsletter from the Victorian Government)

What's happening along the Creek?

Moreland update from Lorene Arthur

Join Friends of Westbreen Creek in celebrating the beginning of the planting season!

The planting season is nearly upon us and there is plenty happening this season along the Creek in Moreland.

The first planting for the season will be on **Sunday 1 May KW Joyce Reserve** with the Friends of Westbreen Creek.

It promises to be a fun day with a **Welcome to Country from a Wurundjeri Elder**, opening of the planting season by Moreland City Council Mayor Councillor Oscar Yildiz JP and plenty of planting and Waterwatch activities for the kids, all followed by a BBQ lunch.

Activities start at 10am.

Be sure to wear sturdy shoes and gloves.

Revegetation works are continuing on the Gowanbrae slopes and the new Community Centre and associated parklands are starting to take shape. Community planting days are scheduled for Gowanbrae on June 18th and **National Tree Day** on July 31st to build on the existing and new plantings. Planting is also continuing with groups such as the Strath-Oak Planters at Margaret Street, Oak Park and Brunswick South West Planters, West Brunswick.

The Melbourne Water Northern Sewer Project is nearing completion & a number of shaft sites in public open space are being decommissioned. The area at Bass Street, Oak Park on the Moonee Ponds Creek is about to be dismantled and Council will receive funds to contribute to the upgrade of this area and the immediate vicinity along the Moonee Ponds Creek. Council will commence a community consultation process with local residents and the Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek about this upgrade project at the end of the Easter period.

Moonee Valley Council report from Michelle Gooding

Path realignment works are almost complete at Nursery Bend, these works have improved the safety of the path by removing a very tight corner and steep drop off.

Landscaping works will continue at the site over the next few weeks and planting will occur during this season primarily through Conservation Volunteers. You can get involved by visiting their web site at www.conservationvolunteers.com.au

In the coming weeks the next stage of path works will commence behind Strathmore North Primary School.

These works will again improve safety for the path users.

Tree maintenance works will be completed on the Moonee Ponds Trail during late March and early April. These works will focus on improving sight lines and overhead clearance.

Debneys Park Stage 3 project has commenced with path improvements on Racecourse Rd. Landscaping will soon follow.

Moonee Valley City Council has a new staff member, Kathleen Kemp. Kathleen is the Sustainable Transport Officer and has commenced a safety audit process for the Moonee Ponds Creek Trail. If you have concerns about the path you can contact her on 9243 8888.

Have you seen this?

The museum has just released a free app for iPhone, iPod Touch and iPad, the **Field Guide to Victorian Fauna**.

The app lets you explore useful and interesting information about each



Diary Dates

Date	What?	When?	Where?	Mel	Council
Sun 1 May	Friends of Five Mile Creek, planting	2 -- 4pm	End of Government Road, Essendon. MVCC are providing plants for the rather steep and recently mulched area near the Bike path bridge at Lionsville. FoFMC and extra volunteers will enjoy scones & a sausage sizzle after the planting	28 J1	Moonee Valley
Sun 1 May	Friends of Westbreen Creek planting	10 -- 12 noon	KW Joyce Reserve, Northumberland Road, Pascoe Vale	17 A6	Moreland
Tue 3 May	Moonee Pond Creek Strategic Plan release	4.30pm	Strathmore Sports Club, Sid McGain Oval, Lebanon Reserve, Mascoma Street, (Pascoe Vale Road end) Strathmore	16 H8	
Sun 15 May	Friends of Upper Moonee Ponds Creek planting	12.30 -- 4pm Afternoon tea 2pm	The Tarnuk - end of Wright St Westmeadows	5 G6	Hume
Wed 11 May	Bat Count	5.15pm	Yarra Bend Golf Course car park	2D G7	
Sat 21 May	Strath Oak Planters, planting	10 -- 12 noon	Moonee Ponds Creek, Margaret Street, Oak Park	16 G7	Moreland
Sun 5 June	Friends of Five Mile Creek, planting	2 -- 4pm	End of Government Road, Essendon	28 J1	Moonee Valley
Sun 12 June	Friends of Upper Moonee Ponds Creek planting	12.30 -- 4pm Afternoon tea 2pm	The Tarnuk - end of Wright St Westmeadows	5 G6	Hume
Wed 15 June	Bat Count	5.00pm	Yarra Bend Golf Course car park	2D G7	
Sat 18 June	Gowanbrae Residents, revegetation	10am -- 1pm	Lanark Way, Gowanbrae	16 C2-3	Moreland
Sun 26 June	Royal Park Bird Survey	9 – 11am	Meet car park at Royal Park Wetlands, Oak St Parkville.	29 C12	
Sun 3 July	Friends of Five Mile Creek, planting	2 -- 4pm	End of Government Road, Essendon	28 J1	Moonee Valley
Wed 13 July	Bat Count	5.15pm	Yarra Bend Golf Course car park	2D G7	
Sun 23 July	Brunswick SW Planters, planting	2 -- 4pm	Union Street Escarpment, Brunswick	29 B8-9	Moreland
Sun 31 July	National Tree Day,	10am -- 1pm	New path to community centre, Primula Blvd, Gowanbrae	16 C2	Moreland
Sun 31 July	National Tree Day	10am -- 1pm Followed by lunch	The Tarnuk - end of Wright St Westmeadows	5 G6	Hume

For more information about planting days: in **Moreland**, contact: **Lori Arthur on 8311 4386**;

Hume: **Simon Cordingley on 0409 702 086**;

Moonee Valley, (other than with Friends of Five Mile Creek), plantings are being coordinated by **Conservation Volunteers**, for information go to their website at conservationvolunteers.com.au

Bat Count



The March count was a really quick one — all over in about 20 minutes — but worth the effort with approximately 45,000 bats counted leaving Yarra Bend!

For the next 5 or 6 months Rod will be enjoying some long service leave travelling through central and western Australia. He says he will think of the counters each month when counts are on, as he gazes at the setting sun and watches the many stars emerge in the outback sky somewhere.....

Jo Ainley from ARCUE will continue to run the counts in Rod's absence - but emails will still originate from his email address. And Jo will have his mobile phone if you need to contact her.

The next counts are on Weds 11 May with a meeting time of 5:15 pm, 15 June at 5.00pm and 13 July at 5.15pm

Meeting in the usual meeting spot at the Car park for the Yarra Bend Park Golf course (Melway map 2D G7).

New counters and regulars are very welcome.

For further information contact Jo Ainley, on 0412 562 429 or rvdr@unimelb.edu.au

Royal Park Bird Count



The next **Royal Park Bird Counts** will be
Sunday 17 April and Sunday 26 June
9am to 11am,

Meet at the car park,

Trin Warren Tam-boore

(Bellbird Waterhole) – Royal Park Wetlands, Oak St, Parkville
(Melway 29 C12).

No experience required! All equipment provided. For more information, please contact Nicole Spillane on 0401 276 948 or info@friendsofroyalpark-parkville.org

Can we send you *Ponderings* electronically?

We would prefer to send you *Ponderings* electronically. It's better for the environment, and less of a burden on our minimal resources.

So if you would like to get *Ponderings* sent to your Inbox, please send your email address to ponderings@mpccc.org.

The environment thanks you!