



Ponderings

Winter 2013 Issue 41

Seasonal Newsletter of the Moonee Ponds Creek Coordination Committee Inc

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East West Link Vandalism

So much destruction for so little gain ...

I strongly urge you to look at the detailed design of the proposed East West Link. Go to:

<http://www.linkingmelbourne.vic.gov.au/pages/detailed-project-design.asp>

There you will see the destruction that is proposed for Royal Park, and for the Moonee Ponds Creek.

Although the road is supposed to be in a tunnel under the Park, during its construction it is going to be an open cut – with the park “restored” when the construction is completed. This is a ludicrous suggestion – how can mature trees be restored? How can patches of remnant grassy woodland vegetation be restored? They can't.

Further destruction is proposed with the Elliott Avenue interchange. That winding road that wanders through the grassy woodland of the park will become a huge highway, with tunnel entry and exit carved out of the middle of the Park. All tranquillity will be lost.

But the greatest insult to the Park will be the huge flyovers that are proposed at the western end of this new monstrosity. FOUR flyovers are proposed right over the top of the Trin Warren Tam-borre wetlands and its storage pond. This is a very significant site, one loved by birds and humans alike. It will be destroyed. The water might still be there, but dominated by the flyovers, noise and fumes. I doubt if the birds will want to be there. You only have to go down to the southern end of the Moonee Ponds Creek and where the vast Bolte Bridge leaps across the Yarra to see what it will be like – desolate.

And so to the poor abused Moonee Ponds Creek. Over the past two decades, the Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek have been working to revegetate the creek, to improve its habitat values, biodiversity and amenity, despite the handicap of CityLink marching along its bed. We have made some progress, but now these same areas that Melbourne City Council has earmarked as Open Space for the many new residents that are expected to come to live in the redeveloped industrial areas, have been selected as the route of proposed link to the port. And northwards, the linking flyovers will be built to the west of CityLink, so the western side of the Moonee Ponds Creek will be wiped out between Racecourse Road and Footscray Road and likely up the middle of the Creek or over the top of Travencore Park from Racecourse Road to Union Street.

Parks and open space are there for a reason – we need nature in our lives. Without them our quality of life is so much poorer, not to mention the non-human lives that depend on natural open space.

For Royal Park and the Moonee Ponds Creek corridor, the East West Link is sheer madness and irresponsibility on so many grounds, including environmental, liveability, social and financial, and public transport accountability. With imminent climate change we should be reducing our reliance on the car, not destroying the city's lungs so that more people can use their cars to travel across the city. It makes no sense, we are not living in the 1950s – look to the future Premier Napthine – we don't need this road.

Campaigns are being organised by the Friends of Royal Park (friendsofroyalpark-parkville.org), and Adam Bandt, (adambandt.com).

Urge you to speak out! Ed.

Bandicoots at Woodlands

The back paddock at Woodlands is now home to 22 Eastern Barred Bandicoots.

These little insectivorous marsupials were thought to be extinct until 20 years ago, when a small population was discovered sheltering among wrecked cars at the Hamilton tip in western Victoria (Zoos Victoria). Since then a breeding program has brought them back from the brink.

Fourteen were released on Tuesday, 2nd July, and a further eight on Thursday, 4th July. According to Brendan Sullivan, Parks Victoria Ranger in charge of the Northern Plains, so far, all seems to be going well and no dead ones have been found.

From 15th July, trapping will begin to assess their health, and the numbers that are surviving. The traps will be laid out in a grid, which will give a good idea of the population from the numbers trapped.



Eastern Barred Bandicoot
(Source: Zoos Victoria)

A lot of work has been done to prepare the site for their release. The fox population in the park is high, with something like two to four foxes per square kilometre, but for the last two months, the area inside the fox-proof fence has finally been fox free. A high fence was erected around the area proposed for the bandicoots and originally, this had an electric wire along the top to prevent foxes climbing over it. But wily Mr Fox worked out that if he didn't earth himself, he wouldn't get a shock! A fox had been observed hopping up onto the top, electric wire, and then jumping down unscathed. So the Woodlands fence has been re-designed, with a floppy top and no electric wires.

In addition, Parks Victoria has been working hard to reduce the rabbit population in the back paddock, and although there are still some inside the fence, the numbers are down by nearly 90%. Rabbit control measures will need to be maintained but the numbers are currently acceptable.

Removing this pressure from the vegetation, and the recent rains means that now the grass is flourishing and the area is looking very good – perfect habitat for the new residents, which need native grasslands, especially tussock grasses, for cover and nest building.

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Essendon Residents

As we work our way south down the Creek, we have reached the story of the Essendon Residents planting group.

This group of families who lived along the Creek at Essendon, were motivated by the bare, empty view of the Creek that they looked at from their houses, and the wind that whistled uninterrupted down the Creek corridor. And in 2005 contacted MPCCC to help transform it.

They looked after four sections of the Creek between the northern end of Primrose Street and Albion Street in the south.

This is a particularly difficult section of the Creek: not only to plant in, with steep banks and rocky soil, but to access it at all! It is this section where the bike trail abandons the Creek because the banks are too steep, and the area too narrow for the trail – and it was this section that the Essendon Residents took on!

Areas on both sides of the Creek at the northern end of Primrose Street were planted in 2005, but little of that planting now remains. It is a pretty part of the Creek, with rocky riffles and a pool – marred by collected rubbish left by the recent high flows adorning shrubs and banks.

Spot planting occurred at the southern end, near the Albion Street bridge, and this has been more successful, but the most successful plantings occurred inside the fence along Hopetoun Avenue. Here trees and mid-storey shrubs planted in 2007 are now well established, with *Correa alba* flowering profusely.



Planting on the steep slope above the Creek at Hopetoun Avenue, near Albion Street, in 2005, and the same bank in June 2013



Inside the fence, Hopetoun Avenue opposite Flannery Court in June 2007, and in June 2013.

Bird Life on the Creek

Can you tell your egret from your white-faced heron?

Birdwatchers along the Moonee Ponds Creek corridor have been invited to participate in the reporting of bird numbers and species for an Australia-wide project, writes Anna Lanigan.

The project is a partnership between BirdLife Australia and Melbourne Water, and aims to build upon current survey coverage of wetlands and waterways occurring throughout the greater Melbourne area.



An Egret foraging in the Royal Park wetlands



White-faced heron



By conducting regular repeated surveys at sites throughout the region we will be able to identify significant habitats for birds and those that may benefit from further management to increase biodiversity. We will also be able to track trends in bird populations between seasons and in the long term.

Chris Purnell of the Threatened Bird Network, at BirdLife Australia, will be running events this spring to train observers interested in contributing in survey methods and species identification.

For more information and training resources please visit <http://www.birdlife.org.au/projects/melbourne-water-biodiversity-surveys> or contact Chris Purnell at chris.purnell@birdlife.org.au

Bandicoots back at Woodlands: (from front page) There are plans to release more bandicoots into this area, to even out the balance of males and females, as more males were initially released than females. So to ensure the best chances of breeding, in the near future, more females will join this new colony. Eastern Barred Bandicoots have one of the shortest gestation periods of any mammal – just 12.5 days! Then the young stay in the pouch for a further 60 days, and by the time they are 75 days old, they are independent!

This wonderful project is a partnership between Parks Victoria, Zoos Victoria, Conservation Volunteers Australia and the Department of Environment and Primary Industry. We wish it every success, but how sad that the only way this beautiful creature can survive is imprisoned inside a high fence.

National Tree Day is upon us again!

Sunday 28th July ...

is the day to get out, get down and get dirty helping to restore our natural environment.



There are two sites along the Moonee Ponds Creek:

Westmeadows: The Tarnuk – go to the end of Wright Street, and walk along the path to the site (Mel 5 G6).
Time: 10.00am to 1.30pm, with a free BBQ.

Gowanbrae: Join the Gowanbrae Residents Group under the Trestle Bridge, next to the Creek to plant this area that used to be covered in weeds and rubbish – go to Adelaide Boulevard and walk south along the trail (Mel 16 C3).
Time: 10.00am to 12.30pm with a free BBQ to follow.

Wear sturdy shoes, and bring gloves if you have them – tools and all equipment will be provided.

For more information go to:

<http://treeday.planetark.org/find-a-site/>

Gold Dust Wattle at The Tarnuk – planted NTD 2005



Council Creek Activities



Moreland City Council update by Vince Andreana.

I have just begun working at Council filling in for Lori whilst she is on maternity leave. Council, with the assistance of several community groups completed works associated with three Melbourne Water grants along the creek. These projects included weed control, mulching and planting along the creek in West Brunswick and Gowanbrae, and along the Westbreen Creek in Pascoe Vale. All sites have established well despite some minor flood damage and continue to improve the natural values of the creek.

Landscaping works are planned for the end of John St in Oak Park to provide safer pedestrian access to the creek. A planting day will be scheduled once the landscaping works have been completed. Sites are currently being prepared for upcoming community and school planting days these events include:

- **National Tree Day, on Sunday 28th of July. 10am – 12:30pm** Gowanbrae Residents Group at the Trestle Bridge, Adelaide Boulevard. Gowanbrae. (Melway Ref 16 C3)
- **Sunday 4th of August. 10am - 12noon.** – Friends of Westbreen Creek at Joyce Reserve, Pascoe Vale. (Melway Ref 17 A6)
- **Saturday 24th of August. 2-4pm.** – Brunswick South West Planters at Braddy/Denzil Don Reserve, Brunswick. (Melway Ref 29 B6)

Hume City Council update by Melissa Doherty



Hume is running a **National Tree Day** event with the Friends of Upper Moonee Ponds Creek at The Tarnuk on Sunday 28 July, from 10am to 12.30pm (Melway 5 G6).

There is also going to be a **Spring Planting Day** on **Wed 4 Sept**, for corporate volunteers, council staff and local residents.

This is happening in Broadmeadows Valley Park, at the end of Barry Road (Melway 6F3), and is to celebrate Biodiversity Month and Landcare Week. It is to plant a buffer next to an important area of remnant grassland, near Yuroke Creek, which flows into Moonee Ponds Creek. Have a look at: <http://goo.gl/maps/N7rTt> a link to a Google Map, which has all the information about the site the day, and how to RSVP.

Planting with Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek at Horseshoe Bend and Oak Park Ford



Earlier this year, the Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek were awarded a community grant from Moonee Valley City Council, to improve the vegetation in the bend of the Creek at Boeing Reserve, Strathmore Heights – Horseshoe Bend. And on Saturday 25th May, we got together for a planting session. Michelle Gooding from MVCC brought the plants and tools, and we spent a lovely sunny morning giving a new home to 600 native plants. The plan was to provide improved habitat as well as improve the appearance for humans, so a mixture of pretty low level plants and mid-storey shrubs were planted into pre-dug holes.



About 20 people, including the 1st Strathmore Cubs came along to give a hand, so the work was soon done, and everyone tucked into lunch provided by the Friends.



Moonee Valley City Council update by Michelle Gooding



Napier Park is transforming. Have you noticed and wondered?

In short, we are above grounding the stormwater that runs under the park to return it to the surface, as it used to be prior to the 1960's.

Works are almost completed for the swale (shallow creek line) and the tank should be installed by the time this goes to print.



The *serious* tank being constructed under Napier Park

The tank will collect water that has passed down the swale, being filtered as it goes, with gross pollutants, suspended solids and some nutrients being removed by the reeds and other vegetation growing in the swale, before the water reaches the tank. This water will then be used for irrigation, which will distribute the treated and collected water from the tank back to the reserve trees.

Some timing alterations have been made, which will see the swale lined with 'jute mat' which is a biodegradable material designed to retain soil, and the planting of the swale will occur in Autumn to give plants the best chances for establishment.

The pipe will not officially be opened until after the planting has been completed and the plants have had a bit of time to establish. Keep an eye on the Council's web site for future planting events in Napier Park.

The ford at Oak Park

After the rains of the night before, this steep site was a very tricky one, when around 30 or so people assembled to tackle the planting on Sunday, 14th July! But the conditions didn't deter the determined folk who had turned up to plant – special thanks go to the 2nd Strathmore Scouts and the Green Welfare Force (an Indian volunteer group) whose enthusiasm and hard work were an inspiration.



The slope "before"

Earlier in the year, as part of the Corridors of Green scheme, dozens of elm suckers had been cleared by Moreland City Council and Melbourne Water, so that the area could be revegetated to create habitat for birds, reptiles, insects and animals.

Now the elms have been replaced by a wonderful mix of small and tall – from grasses to Red Gums, with shrubs like Correas, Goodenias and Wattles in between. At the foot of the slope, in the Creek line, we planted Juncus and Callistemon, that don't mind getting wet; altogether, 450 plants were established. A very satisfying result in treacherous conditions! Thank you everyone for coming along to help!



The bucket brigade – passing water up from the Creek to water the plants

The guys from Moreland who gave up their Sunday to help – thanks guys!

Winter Planting Calendar

Date	Time	Friends Group	Location	Melway	Council
Sun 28 July	10am-12.30	National Tree Day	The Tarnuk, end of Wright Street, Westmeadows	5 G6	Hume
			Trestle Bridge over Moonee Ponds Creek, Adelaide Boulevard, Gowanbrae	16 C3	Moreland
Sun 4 Aug	10am-12.00	Friends of Westbreen Creek	Joyce Reserve, Northumberland Road, Pascoe Vale	17 A6	Moreland
Sat 24 Aug	10am-12.00	Friends of Sacred Kingfisher	Moonee Ponds Creek, opposite Circular Road, Westmeadows	6 B8	Hume
	2pm-4pm	Brunswick SW Planters	Moonee Ponds Creek, Braddy/Denzil Don Reserves, Victoria Street, Brunswick	29 B6	Moreland
Wed 4 Sept	10am-3pm	Spring Planting Day – Everyone is welcome!	Broadmeadows Valley Park, next to Yuroke Creek, park at end of Barry Road	6 F3	Hume
Sun 29 Sept	1pm-3pm	Friends of Upper Moonee Ponds Creek	The Tarnuk, end of Wright Street, Westmeadows	5 G6	Hume

Need information? If you need information about any of these planting days contact:

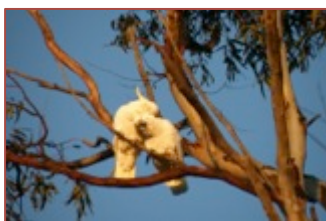
Hume: Melissa Doherty-9205 2466. **Moreland:** Vince Andreana-8311 4386. **Moonee Valley:** Michelle Gooding-8325 1830

Sightings

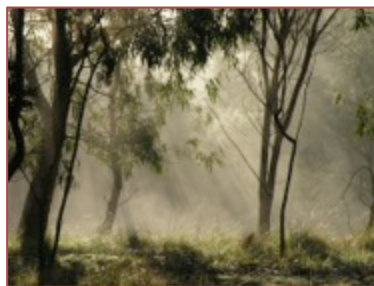
The sightings are a different bunch this time!

Anna saw this group of students at Trin Warren Tam-boore in Royal Park – they are engineering students who have come all the way from California. They plan to return every year for the next five years, to study these beautiful wetlands.

It is ironic that they can see the value in these wetlands, while our road makers and politicians cannot, and are proposing to put the new East-West Link right through them.



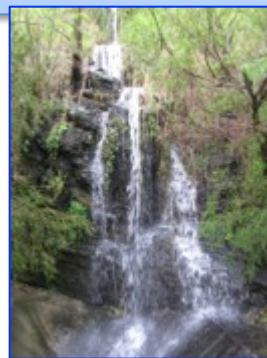
Cockatoos in a gum tree next to the Creek, and the sun slants through the frosty mist at Woodlands taken by Anna on a chilly early morning walk



Gems of the Creek

What is your favourite bit of the Creek? It may be natural or it may be man-made – tell us about it, with a picture if you can, so that we can all begin to see the Creek differently, and appreciate what we have. Here are two to get us going – Kaye Oddie sent these pictures of the syncline at Union Street, Brunswick, and a waterfall pouring down the rocks there, after heavy rain.

Send your ideas to Stella, at ponderings@mpccc.org - I look forward to hearing about them.



Union Street Syncline and waterfall, just north of Brunswick Road

NOTICE: Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek AGM

Everyone is Welcome!

The Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek has been working to protect and enhance the Creek for over 20 years. Its objectives are:

To ensure the preservation, restoration, environment protection and ecologically sensitive development and maintenance of the Moonee Ponds Creek and adjoining catchment areas.

The 2013 Annual General Meeting of the Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek will be held on Friday, September 20, 5:30pm at the offices of Kelvin Thomson, 3 Munro St, Coburg. .

For information and membership, contact:

The Secretary, Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek Inc
PO Box 2127, Oak Park, 3046. Tel 9329-0635



Bat Count



Rain in the middle of the April count interrupted the exit of the bats, and only 18,000 were counted – about half the expected number for that month. Then the cold wet weather in May sent half the bats north for the winter, so only about 11,000 were counted at the May count. In June, things had returned to more normal figures, with 15,-16,000 being counted at the mid-winter session.

The next counts are on **Wednesdays 21st August**, with a meeting time of 5:30 pm; and **18th September** at 6.00pm.

We will be meeting in the usual meeting spot at the Car park for the Yarra Bend Park Golf Course (Melway map 2D G7), which is on Yarra Bend Rd, off Heidelberg Rd

Your continued assistance with this project is greatly appreciated! New counters and regulars are very welcome. For more information, contact Rod van der Ree on 8344 3661, 0412 562 429 or rvdr@unimelb.edu.au