

Darebin Creek News

Friends of Darebin Creek

May 2007



Activities for 2007 – Mark these dates in your diary now

20 May	Sunday	Bushland Rescue – Heidelberg West (BCC) [Gona St, Melway 31 D1, 10am]
16 Jun	Saturday	Planting Day – Ivanhoe (BCC) [Stay tuned for details !]
22 Jul	Sunday	Planting Day – Mernda (DCMC) [Northern Nature Project]
4 Oct	Thursday	Spring Frog Census – Edwardes Lake Reservoir (DCMC)
14 Nov	Wednesday	Spring Frog Census - Dundas St Ivanhoe (DCMC)
22 Nov	Thursday	Spring Frog Night and Possum Prowl - Bundoora Park (DCC)

BCC=Banyule City Council DCC = Darebin City Council DCMC = Darebin Creek Management Committee

FREE Waterwatch Training!

Interested in learning what's really going on in your local creek, wetlands or river? Can frogs, platypus or even native fish survive in your waterway?

Port Phillip and Westernport Waterwatch run FREE Advanced Training sessions for teachers, community groups and individuals wishing to help improve their river health monitoring skills by regularly testing the water. You will learn the different sampling techniques, including aquatic macro-invertebrate sampling and identification, how the data you collect is used and how to develop a strategic monitoring plan. It's fun, free and very easy to do! No science background or environment experience necessary! All equipment is provided. BYO lunch. Morning and afternoon tea provided.

Date: **Thursday 21 June 2007** Time: 9:30am-4:30pm

Venue: Darebin Parklands Environment Centre, Separation St, Alphington.

Bookings essential by calling Greg Woodward (Waterwatch Coordinator) on 9380 8199 or emailing greg@mcmc.org.au

Clean Up Australia Day Sunday 4th March 2007

by Sean Walsh

This year's event was well supported by local residents including a good number of children. In fact, some of the children worked harder than the adults, pulling together bag after bag of rubbish which we brought back to the skip. Stray shopping trolleys were no problem – they were raced against each other (see photo).



Two police officers (Constable Thomas and Constable Pesci, from Heidelberg West) appeared unexpectedly on the scene. It seems they were investigating stolen cars and thought they'd check the creek. After their patrol they decided to do something positive and joined in with the cleanup! We were most impressed as they headed off with bags and gloves, returning later with a good amount of litter bagged.

Unusual items this year included a double exhaust pipe, good looking boots and a golf club. Unfortunately the local soccer club had been the venue for an 18th birthday party the night before and the irresponsible teenagers had left a total mess around the club. I think we managed to turn the situation around.

Overall this was a very successful day with much socialising afterwards. Thanks to Damien Karney from Banyule Bushcrew and his partner for making this event possible. And thanks to all the volunteers who took the time to participate in this simple but powerful way to help the creek environment.



A Letter from Marg...

Hello to all concerned,

I hope it rained in your neck of the woods over the weekend.

Just a quick update on one of the few plantings that happened over spring at the Darebin Creek.

In October last year we, the *Indig-we-do* contractors, Friends of Darebin Creek, residents of Whittier Street and a group of like minded friends, planted 100 trees and shrubs along the creek, that were generously donated by Melbourne Water.

I managed to water the seedlings over the dry months with a backpack sprayer. I monitored the rain fall and chopped back the growth from the summer grasses like the Kikuyu and the other lively mix of weeds.

Of the original 100 plants we have a total of 35 locatable living specimens, some with a definite grip on living and thriving. I have included some photos.

The casualties were mainly among the *Leptospermum* (Prickly Tea Tree and River Tea Tree), and the *Myoporum viscosum* (Sticky Boobiolla). Others like the *Callistemon sieberi* may be just lost under weeds, and may surprise us later.

The residents and friends are looking forward to July (date to be decided) to have a check on the plantings. I will keep you updated with our plans.

Best wishes
Marg Dobson
9402 0913



Callistemon sieberi



Viminaria juncea



Prostanthera lasianthos

Editors note – Marg has recently become a member of FODC (yay!) We look forward to doing more work with Marg and the residents of Whittier St.

Wildlife Sightings

by Sean Walsh

Since our last newsletter I have seen some unusually large flocks of musk lorikeets. These are smaller than the rainbow lorikeet and have a distinctive turquoise patch on their forehead. They can be seen foraging for nectar in flowering River Red Gums along the creek.

The Latrobe Uni lake water level has been very low, but has still attracted some impressive wildlife including a Pelican (17th Jan), Great Egret (21st and 22nd Feb), and Great Cormorant (27th Dec and 6th Feb).

Mistletoe birds have been actively calling in the trees around Electric Spur (corner of Liberty Pde and Gona St). There are a number of River Red Gums with mistletoe just inside the park boundary. I read recently that possums normally eat mistletoe, and that where possums are absent mistletoe can expand and affect the health of trees. This particular area is well frequented by cats at night, and I hardly ever see possums there. The mistletoe birds might be a sign that things are out of balance in this section of the creek, although they are a spectacular bird (the male has a red stripe down the chest).

Despite many reports of snakes on the Yarra trail, I didn't see a single snake this summer on the Darebin Creek trail.

Finally, there was a family of Little (Brush) Wattlebirds breeding in my garden last year, and it seems the young adult has returned to feed on the flowers of the bottlebrush that I planted about five years ago, now over 3 metres tall and looking great despite the drought. It's quite useful to look after native plants during drought periods (for example, by watering them with grey-water where possible), as it gives the wildlife some relief from the dry landscape.

Unfortunately this might be my last wildlife sightings report as I now commute from Montmorency to Macleod, and no longer see the Darebin Creek on a daily basis. But I'd like to encourage anyone who is interested in wildlife to write down their sightings and send them in, and I will ensure they are published in our newsletter.

Fires...

by Damien Karney

13th March 2007

"Someone decided it would be a good idea to start a fire at the grasslands behind the factories at Dougherty Rd on the weekend. Whether it was deliberately lit or an accident I don't really know, but the result is about 80% of the grasslands has been burnt to the ground. Good for us in one way as we intended to do an Autumn burn in one area which was affected so that means we don't have to worry about the logistics of a controlled burn anymore, but bad in another way because we certainly didn't want to burn such a huge area. This means that we have to make up a small management plan for all of the affected areas for the rest of the year in order to prevent new weed invasions and to promote re-growth of remnant species. Hopefully there is enough of a seed bank still in the soil that hasn't been cooked."

Editor's note: See Wendy's photo of the burnt area on the next page. It's important that if you see a fire burning unattended, you call the fire brigade (000) immediately, as uncontrolled fires can do a lot of damage to ecosystems and property.



Creek Watch

by Wendy Miller

During March another fire was started in grass at the end of Blake Street, Reservoir, and destroyed at least one tree that later had to be removed. A fire was also started in grass along the pedestrian and cycle path on the edge of the La Trobe University southern lake. I am not sure how many other fires occurred elsewhere along the creek. These were the ones I noticed.

The spate of burned out cars around this same area seems to have abated but been replaced by weekly attacks on the footbridges between Northland shopping centre in Preston and Dougharty Road West Heidelberg. The trouble seems to have eased in recent weeks but during March and April planks along the bridges were removed or damaged on an almost weekly basis.

Three sofas and a couple of armchairs were also dumped off the Dougharty Road pedestrian bridge in March and floated around in the creek for a few weeks before being removed.

Letter writing

by Sean Walsh

A simple but effective way to help the creek environment is to make the effort to bring issues to the attention of council and DCMC. This can be by phone or by letter/email. The way government works is that it is empowered to act when the community raises an issue – so please do as Wendy has done below, and get on the blower or pen a quick complaint.

From: [Cheshirecatdiaz](#)

To: [Adrian Infanti](#)

Sent: Monday, March 12, 2007 10:15 PM

Subject: weekend rubbish dumping and vandals

Dear Adrian, following up on your suggestion last year, I am sending you details of some recent (over the weekend) incidents that require attention along the Creek, as follows:

- 1 There are three sofas and three armchairs in the Darebin Creek below the Dougharty Rd/Blake Street pedestrian bridge.
- 2 A section of the post and rail fence behind the club rooms at Sullivan's reserve in Preston has also been removed (the section abutting the gateway).

On other matters, a lot of litter - food wrappings, drink bottles and so on - seems to accumulate at the end of Blake Street out front of the in-line skaters club rooms, particularly after a meet at the club rooms. Is there any way we can bring to their attention the need to keep their end of the street a bit cleaner do you think?

There was also often an increase in food and drink litter around Sullivan's Reserve after the Preston West Cricket Club would meet, but I gather the season may be over for cricket this year. Perhaps they could do with a reminder before the season next year. I am not sure what the agreement is with the Darebin City Council on this but I assume there must be some obligation for them to pick up their own litter (including broken chairs, empty drink bottles and food wrappings).

Best wishes for continuing on with the great work you and your team do,
Wendy Miller FODC

Darebin Creek Signage update

The City of Darebin has implemented their signage strategy for the Darebin Creek and the results are looking good – see Wendy's photo below. (Perhaps some members might like to contact Banyule council to encourage them along in putting signs up on their side of the creek.)



Update from City of Darebin

by Chris Cobern

[Apologies Chris for the late publication of this summer update – ed]

Frog Census

We again participated in the Melbourne Water Spring Frog Census. This year we made recordings at Bundoora Park where we recorded Growling Grass Frogs and Common Froglets. We also recorded Common Froglets and Spotted Marsh Frogs at the Mount Cooper Wetlands.

Snakes

Also lately we have often encountered snakes when we have been working along the Darebin Creek. In the lower sections of the creek, South of Bell Street, the main sightings are mostly Tiger Snakes with occasionally Brown Snakes. In the northern section from the Northland Shopping Centre to Bundoora Park our sightings are almost always Brown Snakes. We also have a healthy population of Little Whip Snakes at Bundoora Park.

Vandalism

Recently we have been getting a lot of vandalism of our entrance gates and padlocks. I have had to replace padlocks that have been cut and have even had to replace a gate that was damaged beyond repair. Vandals have been entering the reserves to dump stolen cars and they often also set fire to them. If anyone notices anything suspicious or a dumped car in the Darebin Creek Reserve they can call the City of Darebin Local Laws department on 8470 8682.

New Staff

We have two new members on the Darebin Creek Bushland Management Team they are Manni Skoppellos and David Moon. Both are very much looking forward to being involved with our Friends of Darebin Creek activities.

Chris Cobern

Team Leader, Darebin Creek Bushland Management

A grey currawong, out hunting in grasslands,
What would he build, if he had hands ?

- Sean



National Song Competition “One Life, One World, Our Future”

As part of the 2007 Murray-Darling Basin Commission International River Health Conference the nationwide song search is now on! We are inviting all Australian Primary and Secondary Schools to submit a song with an environmental theme to be considered for the official Conference CD. If your school environmental song is selected as one of the fourteen top songs it will become part of the official CD distributed across Australia and played during the event.

The song must be developed and played by students! Adult mentoring and assistance is encouraged, however lyrics and the general feel of the song must be student managed. It is a requirement that the final version of the song is recorded professionally in a studio. Adult involvement in the recording process is appropriate. Your song should be no longer than four minutes. In past years schools have developed their environmental song as part of their music subject and their music teacher has played a key mentor role. Your song could be about your local river, beach, a favourite tree or even environmental action your school has taken.

The National Song Competition is now open and all CD's must be submitted no later than August 01, 2007. Your song on a CD must be received on or prior to this date to be considered, no late entries will be accepted. The Competition is open to any Australian Primary or Secondary School. The official Conference CD is then printed as a professional CD with the 14 winning entries. As a winner your school will receive complimentary copies of the final CD.

You need to send your broadcast quality version of your song on CD to:

National Song Competition
Firestarter
PO Box 692
North Melbourne Vic 3051

Please include your music teacher name, school name and contact details and a 50 word blurb about your song.

Got anything to say? Contributions to the FODC newsletter always welcome. Please forward these to cheshirecatdiz@optusnet.com.au by 30 June 2007.

Contact Numbers

President	Sean Walsh	0419 511 328
Media Liaison	Fay Loveland	0405 790 150
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Water Pollution? Call EPA (quote drain sign's number if known) 9695 2777

Darebin Creek Management Committee 9499 4454

Melb. Wildlife Sanctuary & Indigenous Nursery 9479 1206

Shopping Trolley Hotline 1800 245 022

Litter Report Hotline 1800 352 555

Wildlife Rescue Hotline 0500 540 000

Vic Police Motorcycle Squad 93807283 or 000