



NEWSLETTER

November 2014

Edition No 45

FFDC Inc. PO Box 5044, Heathwood Vic

Website : ppw.landcarevic.net.au/ffdc

email: ffdc1999@gmail.com

FIRST FRIENDS OF DANDENONG CREEK Inc. no A0039273V

TANJENONG TALES

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President's Report

Welcome to the 45th edition of Tanjenong Tales.

At this year's AGM Charlie Miller resigned as president after leading our group very ably for 6 years. We all owe him a huge debt of gratitude for the work he has willingly put in over that time. He will remain on Committee as vice president and continue to edit Tangeonng Tales and care for our website.

I have now moved from the relatively cushy job of Vice –president to lead the re-elected committee of nine. – Myself, (Vivien Holyoake), Charlie Miller (vice -president), Vicky Pearce (minute secretary), Barbara Richards (membership secretary), Frank Sullivan (treasurer), Bill Jones (head of water testing), Tim Hughes, Mat McCabe and Lex Edmond. We have 3 vacancies and welcome nominations at any time.

Chris Macfarlane has retired from the committee but his whole family will continue to organise and run our BBQs and Ashley Miller has retired to concentrate on her studies. We thank them both very much for their contribution.

National Tree Day this year was our most successful with more than 80 good folk putting in 3,500 plants along Manson's reserve. See full story on page 3. As it was the 25th Anniversary of National Tree Day, Planet Ark had teamed up with Toyota to produce gardening gloves, sunhats, t-shirts and backpacks for all participants, while we provided the usual free sausage sizzle. There was a lot of leftover clothing in children's sizes as most of our participants are adults so these were donated to a local primary school gardening club who were very appreciative.

(Continued on page 2)



Volunteers from the Box Hill Buddhist Association on National Tree Day

President's Report (continued)

Looking back on the 15 years of our existence, we have helped to create Yarrabing Wetlands, the Carpark on Wantirna Road, the shade trees now flourishing on the creek's northern bank, and continuous revegetation from Wantirna Road down to Manson's Reserve. We were able to negotiate for the Bluff cliff area to be weeded and replanted. Tim & Lex have also spent several years negotiating with Melbourne Water, VicRoads and Eastlink owners to restore the water flow through Winton Wetlands which has finally happened in the last week on November this year. Walkers should now see it thrive as a wetland again.

So what for the future? Yarrabing wetlands are being enlarged as far as Mint Street by Knox Council with help from Anita Infanti and her planting volunteers. National Tree Day Planting will continue to infill the native bush along Manson's Reserve. You may have noticed one section has been left with weedy grasses – this is because this section contains native grasses which are an endangered habitat so that area is being carefully weeded and restored by the professional experts.

The Dandenong Creek shared pathway along "the bluff" near Simpsons Crt in Heathmont has finally re-opened in August 2014. Repair work including planting has finally been completed. We commend the council and staff for there efforts towards restoring this very important community asset.

In the meantime have a wonderful Christmas and restful holiday season.

Vivien Holyoake— President



Filled in spoon drain now allowing the natural flow of water back into Winton Wetlands.

FFDC National Tree Day Event - Sunday 27 July 2014

We had another highly successful National Tree Day event on Sunday 27 July in Mansons Reserve Wantirna. Around 80 members and volunteers turned out in excellent weather conditions to plant a total of 3,500 grasses, shrubs and trees in 90 minutes. The event was followed by our usual free sausage sizzle that was enjoyed by all the volunteers.

The plants included: silver, black and hop wattle, tall sedge, prickly current bush, tasman flax-lily, manna gum, hop goodenia, prickly tea-tree, woolly tea-tree, tussock grass and hazel pomaderris.

Thanks to all the members and volunteers. A special thanks to the Box Hill Buddhist Association who have participated in our tree planting events for the past 4 years. Without their efforts we would not be able to plant so many plants.

Thanks to Craig Mauger and the Maroondah Bushland Management team for preparing the site, supplying most of the plants, digging the holes and assisting on the day. Thanks to Melbourne Water for the grant to supply an additional 1000 plants. Thanks to the Macfarlane family for organising the sausage sizzle.

Thanks to Jane Butcher at Yarra Valley Toyota for supplying free National Tree Day gloves, bags, caps and tee-shirts. They were very popular.

Finally, thanks to the following committee members Viv, Vicky, Bill, Matt and Lex for their efforts on the day. Planning for next years event in Manson's Reserve is already underway. Hoping to see many members and volunteers there.

Charlie Miller—Vice President

Water for Winton Wetlands

The Winton Wetlands are a "billabong" of Dandenong Creek in Wantirna that features ponds, mature Manna gums and many birds including Kookaburras. After EastLink was built, water that would normally flow into the Wetlands was diverted into a spoon drain (narrow earth canal) that flows directly into the creek. This has lead to a drying out of the area.

Management of the area is complex, with EastLink/ConnectEast, VicRoads and Melbourne Water all being stakeholders. A previous effort by FFDC Committee Member Tim Hughes to re-establish the natural flow of water after rain into wetlands had been unsuccessful, due to the complex land management issues.

Not to be deterred, earlier this year Tim Hughes and I wrote a brief proposal on how to rectify the problem which we sent to Alexandra Monson, the Environmental Manager of EastLink. The proposal was quite simple. Fill in the spoon drain near Power Pylon 34, and create a shallow ditch to encourage water to flow via the ditch into a natural water course that feeds the wetlands.

To Alexandra Monson's credit, the proposal got distributed to VicRoads, and to Heather Graham at Melbourne Water, who took up the cause with energy, experience and enthusiasm. Heather Graham negotiated with the relevant bureaucracies and obtained the necessary permissions, culminating on the works being carried out on November 25. (see photo on page 2)

Congratulations to all concerned, especially Tim Hughes, who has pursued this matter for several years and Heather Graham.

Lex Edmond—FFDC Committee

Spotlight on a Committee—Vivien Holyoake

I moved to Bayswater in 2001, but had lived in Mitcham since childhood so I was aware of the Dandenong Creek but not in any detail until my parents moved to Vermont in the 1970s. We walked along the Creek many times feeding the ducks with the grandchildren and being thankful for the paved walkways as both my parents ended up needing wheelchair access to their beloved natural environment.

In 2003, I went to a First Friends of Dandenong Creek Clean Up event and joined the committee soon afterwards as a way of helping with the creek that had given my family so much enjoyment over the years.

I am now entering my 13th year with the FFDC committee serving as secretary many years, vice president and now president. I have learned a great deal about water quality testing, indigenous plants, birds, frogs, wetlands and lobbying skills so it has been a very beneficial relationship all round.

Dates to mark on your calendar

Sunday 1st March 2015 —9:00am to 11:30am—FFDC Annual Clean Up Australia event. Meet at the Information Stand at the end of Marlborough Rd, Heathmont.

Sunday 26 July 2015—1:00pm to 3:30pm - FFDC National Tree Day planting in Manson's Reserve Wantirna. A free sausage sizzle will be held afterwards.

For more up to date information on the events above you can check details on our website:

ppw.landcarevic.net.au/ffdc

Next edition of the newsletter is in March 2015,

Stop Press

Melbourne Water (caretaker of our Dandenong Creek), are in the planning stages for major works in our section of the creek between Bayswater Road, Bayswater and Boronia Road, Wantirna, to improve the social and environment features of the area. FFDC are currently part of the preliminary brainstorming consultation and will be seeking feedback from our wider group once feasibility has been undertaken (in approximately 8 months) to feed into the potential option development. We will keep you updated in our future newsletters as this project progresses.

Spotted!

A single male Common Koel has been frequenting our area for several months now. Normally a bird of the tropics, he is very rare in our parts. He is jet black, larger than a magpie with a long tail, cream beak and brilliant red eyes. You will find him at the top of the tallest trees but will probably hear his piercing very human like "coo-ee" call long before you see him.

FFDC Committee for 2014-2015

President: Vivien Holyoake

Vice-President: Charlie Miller

Secretary: Vicky Pearse (minutes)

Barbara Richards (membership)

Treasurer: Frank Sullivan

General Committee:

Bill Jones

Tim Hughes

Matt McCabe

Lex Edmond

Life Members:

Barry Robinson

Frank Sullivan

Vivien Holyoake

Committee meetings are held on the 2nd Thursday of each month (Feb to Nov) starting at 7:30pm in Room 4 at the Federation Estate, 32 Greenwood, Ave, Ringwood.