Tanjenong Tales

FFDC Newsletter March 2022

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President's Report - Welcome to the 67th edition.

Everyone here at FFDC is looking forward to what is shaping up to be an interesting, exciting and hopefully productive 2022. Planning is well underway for our World Environment Day event, where we're looking to have over 4,000 plants returned to the creek corridor in Bayswater this June. This event will be run jointly with Bayswater Rotary, and we've invited a number of other community groups to setup a marquee, including Knox Environment Society and Boobook Wildlife shelter.

In July, our National Tree event will be conducted along Tarralla Creek in Croydon, and we're thrilled to be partnering with the newly formed Friends of Tarralla Creek to run this event. If you're on Facebook, please 'like' Friends of Tarralla Creek and reach out to them if you're in the area - they are looking for new members. We have requested support from Melbourne Water to conduct eDNA sampling of one of the local catchments, after receiving a credible report from a resident of a recent (within the last 18 months) sighting of a platypus.

Anthony Bigelow - President

Knox Sustainability Leadership award

Our work in the area was recognised on Australia Day by Knox Council. Our President, Anthony Bigelow, received the Sustainability Leadership award. The acceptance speech can be found here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NH0AvwHEJ8c. This adds to the Premier's Community Sustainability Award received by the group back in November last year for the "Eels of Dandenong Creek" video.

Tranquil scene at Lake Knox

Daylighted section of Tarralla Creek in Croydon

Save Lake Knox campaign

The campaign is in full swing at present, and representatives from the various community groups are meeting fortnightly as we navigate this next phase and increase the profile and pressure on the State Government. Look out for the Lake Knox Flyer appearing in local businesses across the suburbs. The public notice period will soon occur for the two permits currently with Knox Council. The permits cover the proposed replacement of Lake Knox and the subdivision. Once the notices are up, will let members know.

Collaboration with Monash University

We are thrilled to announce that FFDC and Monash University will be working together on a range of research projects with 100 students majoring in Ecology and Conservation.

The 100 students each year (who are in their 3rd year Bachelor of Science), will be completing a subject called Applied Ecology which is a core unit in the Ecology and Conservation major.

We are looking forward to working with the students who will be helping us delve further into our conservation work in the area.

The subject is focused on providing students with an understanding of the theory and practice of conservation management.

A key objective of the subject is to provide students with the skills and tools to move into jobs in natural resource management, where Monash University provides them with experience in both field work and in applying tools to support evidence-based decision making.

A big thank you to Dr Carly Cook and team at Monash University for facilitating this.

FFDC Clean Up Australia Day event

We had around 60 volunteers at our Clean Up Australia Day event on Sun 6th March along the creek at the end of Armstrong Rd in Bayswater. 12 bags of rubbish were collected which is way down on previous years but that is a positive. It was a joint event with Bayswater Rotary.

Some unusual items collected included an iPad and iPhone, most likely stolen and dumped along the creek. Hopefully these items can be reunited with their owner.

Powerful Owl along the creek - Roger Nicoll

FFDC Committee members and volunteers on Clean Up Day

Tree Hollows project

We are currently in the early planning stages for a tree hollows project.

The overall project objective is to arrest the declining tree hollow nesting habitat along the creek for kookaburras, cockatoos, galahs, parrots, gang gangs, powerful owls etc. Quite a few large trees with hollows have been blown down in recent years by the increasing intensity of storms. This has led to increased competition for nesting sites for the above species and potentially less breeding in the area.

We are working with Melbourne Water to target Winton Wetlands in Wantirna as the chosen site for this exciting project which is subject to a grant application. We will keep you posted on progress.

World Environment Day planting event

This event is planned for Sat 4th June from 10:00am to 12 noon at the end of Armstrong Rd in Bayswater. 3000 to 4000 grasses, shrubs and trees will be planted along the creek.

We have been successful in obtaining a grant of $8,000 from the "Planting Trees for The Queen's Jubilee" fund, a new program to celebrate The Queen's Jubilee in 2022. The money will be used to plant additional trees at the event. It is a joint event with Knox Council and Bayswater Rotary.

EoDC2 Update

Progress on this project has slowed in the past year due to COVID restrictions. The section of Bungalook Creek between the confluence with Dandenong Creek and the Belgrave railway line has been approved as one of the EoDC2 projects by Melbourne Water. The project is being scoped up at the moment and works will include weed control and revegetation. Works should commence later in 2022.

Drain Sock Trial

The location has been chosen for the trial of the drain soc underneath the railway bridge on the Belgrave line along the creek in Bayswater. However, we're still waiting on additional advice and support from Knox Council's maintenance team before deployment can occur.

Eels of Dandenong Creek short film

It's just over a year since our award winning short film, The Eels of Dandenong Creek was released. Since then it has been viewed over 35,000 times on our social media platforms. This short film touches on their amazing lifecycle, what the eels meant to our indigenous nations, and how urbanisation is affecting them. In November last year, FFDC received the Premiers Sustainability Award for the film.

Eastern Rosella landing on its hollow

Yellow Tailed Black Cockatoos along the creek - John Cull

Saving Our Skinks Project

The COVID restrictions has meant the project has been on hold for most of the past 2 years. We are hoping we can restart in 2022 and will keep you updated on developments.

Save our Sugar Gliders Project

Following the lifting of the latest lockdown we have recommenced installing the nesting boxes along the creek. Hoping to have the installations completed early in the year before we reach out to the residents who have volunteered to host nesting boxes in their own gardens.

We are currently preparing to conduct a census of the 50 installed boxes along the creek in April.

Pollution Monitoring

There has been some vandalism to some of the monitoring equipment along the creek in recent months which is extremely disappointing. Bio2labs is working on repairs and replacements.

Melbourne Water is funding the maintenance and support of the equipment along the creek for the next 2 years, FFDC greatly appreciates their support for this ground breaking project.

We are also working with Bio2lab on ways of sharing the data collected by the equipment with the public and we will let you know when we can.

Knox City Nature Challenge - Friday 29 April to Monday May 2

In 2022, councils across metropolitan Melbourne are collaborating to participate in the world wide City Nature Challenge. Help Knox compete with cities from around the world by taking pictures of native plants, birds and animals between the 29th of April to the 2nd of May 2022 using iNaturalist on your phone. Join the city-nature-challenge-2022-knox project on iNaturalist. Let's show the world the incredible biodiversity in Knox.

During the 4-day window of this challenge, snap a photo of a plant, insect, bird or animal and upload it to iNaturalist making sure you add it to the city-nature-challenge-2022-knox project . The observations will automatically be pooled to this project so that residents of Knox can compete with participants from cities all over the world.

Tarralla Creek

Tarralla Creek, between Dorset Rd and Eastfield Rd in Croydon, is now available for public use. Many people who have watched this great development with anticipation are already enjoying walking around it and exploring all the corners. A new friends group called Friends of Tarralla Creek has formed to support the environment along the Creek. The works by Melbourne Water to daylight this section of Tarralla Creek (which is a tributary to Dandenong Creek) are in their final stages, and the area is already buzzing with wildlife.

Dates to mark on your calendar:

FFDC World Environment Day planting event - Saturday 4th June 2022 - 10am to 12 noon. End of Armstrong Rd in Bayswater. Look for details on our Facebook page or website.

FFDC National Tree Day planting event - Sunday 31 July 2022. Daylighted section of Tarralla Creek in Croydon

Spotted

Yellow Tailed Black Cockatoos and Powerful Owls spotted along the creek in March. See photos on pages 2 and 3.

This newsletter is published by First Friends of Dandenong Creek Inc.

Next edition of the newsletter is in July 2022, please email us your ideas for articles or stories of interest by the end of June 2022 to: ffdc1999@gmail.com.