



moonee ponds creek
co-ordination committee

Ponderings

Summer 2009 / 10

Issue 28

Seasonal Newsletter of the Moonee Ponds Creek
Coordination Committee Inc

advocate

educate

interpret

participate

rehabilitate

revegetate

Update on the MPCCC

A lot has changed in the more than a decade since the Moonee Ponds Creek Co-ordination Committee was formed. This edition of Ponderings finds us in the middle of a process of determining refreshed directions for the next decade.

Central to that future, a new Strategy Plan for the Creek is in preparation to provide a fresh overview in the light of the original Concept Plan and new realities both on the ground and in the ground rules. A draft version of that plan will be available before Christmas with the period for feedback extended to early February.

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What's in this edition?

- MPCCC update
- Have your say on the plan
- What's been happening along the creek
- Clean Up Australia day is coming
- Exciting Sightings

The Strategic Plan is coming ... make sure you have your say!!

In July, the MPCCC engaged a consortium of consultants (Land Design Partnership, Urban Enterprise and Golder Associates), to prepare a Strategic Plan for the Moonee Ponds Creek. So far the consultants have held discussions with a variety of stakeholders along the creek and expect to have a draft plan ready for comment in mid December.

Thank you to all members of the working party overseeing the development of the plan, and to all who have so far participated in the discussions.

The draft will be available to read at **all libraries** in the four municipalities that the creek runs through:

- Hume
- Moreland
- Moonee Valley
- Melbourne

It will also be posted on the **MPCCC website**:

- www.mpccc.org

It is important that everyone who cares about the creek and its future direction takes the time to read the plan and makes a comment – even if it is only 'well done'!

Written comments are to go to Nick Walker at Hume to be forwarded to the consultants, by **11 February 2010**:

Email Nick at: nicholasw@hume.vic.gov.au
or post to:

Nick Walker, Manager Sustainable Environment
Hume City Council
PO Box 119, Dallas VIC 3047

Thank you, in advance, for your contribution!



Introducing the consultants to the creek

On Saturday, 15 August 2009, the Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek organised a bike tour so the consultants developing the strategic plan could familiarise themselves with the Creek. Starting from just south of Woodlands, the group rode down the creek to Docklands with members of the Friends telling them about various aspects of the creek on the way down stream. A picnic lunch next to the creek added to day, and a strong northerly wind helped their progress!

The travelling party from left to right: Remi Bint (Land Design Partnership), Cr Jo Connellan (City of Moreland), Frank Kinnersley, Kelvin Thomson, MHR, Bernadette Scullion and Greg Hocking (both Land Design Partnership), Carolyn Layton, Mike Ruzzene (Urban Enterprise)

They are pictured at the five way junction in the bike track at the footbridge behind Strathmore Secondary College below the Pascoe Vale Road off-ramp from the Tullamarine Freeway with the Victorian Space Science Education Centre and the Craigieburn rail line in the background.

The Moonee Ponds Creek Co-ordination Committee gratefully acknowledges the support of these councils



Update on MPCCC (cont.)

Most importantly, the plantings which have been central to MPCCC's role are continuing with direct support of the individual municipal councils while MPCCC will continue to provide relevant information more widely.

Our use of facilities at Parks Victoria's Woodlands office came to an end during the year and with it we need to take a break from our traditional Christmas parties. However between the celebration of the 20th anniversary of Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek last winter and an anticipated launch of the new Strategy Plan in late autumn 2010, channels for more social contact remain open.

We are particularly fortunate that the last of our permanent staff, Stella and Bronwyn, have thrown their considerable energies into voluntary roles with the Friends, providing a lot of indispensable help and continuity of knowledge. This was essential in providing the Strategy Plan consultants access to our extensive collection of resource materials. Stella recently accepted nomination as Secretary and Public Office of MPCCC and Bronwyn serves as an active alternative representative of the Friends to MPCCC as well as continuing work she had underway with other important stakeholders.

I would like to particularly recognise the role of Michelle Gooding who served as Acting Co-ordinator on partial secondment from the City of Moonee Valley during a period in which the MPCCC had been unable to otherwise fill the role. Michelle continues to be very active with the Creek and the Committee in her role with Moonee Valley.

Friends founder, Kelvin Thomson, has facilitated the Friends' taking a greater share of responsibility, including a very successful bicycle tour with the Strategic Plan consultants. Kelvin also arranged for Mark O'Brien, from his office, to take over as MPCCC Secretary during the year. As part of his duties, Mark had to expedite the final move out of Woodlands.

Moreland Councillor Jo Connellan provided guidance both within the Working Party responsible for MPCCC's dealings with the Strategy Plan consultants and, with Melbourne Councillor Cathy Oke, on governance building on the outcomes of a workshop held at the City of Moonee

Valley earlier in the year.

A new face at the City of Hume, Nick Walker has led the Working Party with support from officers from other councils with considerable collective experience of the Creek and ongoing MPCCC Treasurer Joe Ficarra as representative of the Friends. They developed a brief for the consultants, conducted a selection process and continue day to day liaison.

I would also like to publicly acknowledge the contribution over many years of Karen Wilson from an early role as a council-provided Secretary to the then Moonee Ponds Creek Association through her time with the City of Hume which recently came to an end as she accepted a position with Sustainability Victoria.

Other Friends, local planters and more continue to do important work for the benefit of the Creek environs. Over the summer all are encouraged to look at the draft Strategy Plan and provide feedback so that we get the best possible final Strategy Plan to provide guidance for and beyond the next decade.

With councils needing to reduce their involvement in the administrative side of the MPCCC and resurgent interest from the Friends, catalysed by Kelvin and Kerrie's generous hospitality, I recently became President of MPCCC with a central objective of producing an outcome in the interests of all of a widening circle of stakeholders. I bring a lifetime's interest in the Creek from a childhood home demolished so the Creek could be diverted to make way for the Freeway via six years down the Creek at lunchtimes at Strathmore High to an adult lifetime of roles in local sporting organisations looking after arrangements with councils for use of facilities adjacent to the Creek, not to mention many walks with a couple of dogs.

While voluntary and landholder work for the betterment of the Creek environs will continue in an ever more supportive social climate, despite development pressures, nobody yet knows exactly how the MPCCC should restructure itself for the future. Armed with a Strategy Plan, finding that direction is the other task of 2010.

Tony Smith
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Clean Up Australia Day will be on Sunday 7th March 2010

If you have a site along the creek that you would like to 'clean up', NOW is the time to register!
Go to www.cleanup.org.au/au/Campaigns/register-a-clean-up-site.html to register your site.

Bronwyn will be doing her usual clean up celebration at the Debney Meadows Primary School, Flemington, through the CityLink Neighbourhood Connections Program, so come and join in the clean up there from 10.00-12.00, or after you have been working at another site, come to Flemington for a free lunch and multicultural celebration from 12.30—2.30 and join the fun.



What's been happening along the creek?

Plenty of work has been going on along the creek ...

This year, the plantings along the creek have been organised and run by Moreland, Hume and Moonee Valley

In **Moreland**, there were 13 plantings with Friends' groups along the creek. Volunteers from eight friends groups came along to help: Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek, Essendon Residents Group, Friends of Westbreen Creek, Brunswick South West Planters, Gowanbrae Residents Group, Friends of Jacana Wetlands, Strath Oak Planters, Friends of Strathmore Ponds. Some 7,000 plants were given a new home by over 200 volunteers over the four months of planting, (May-August 2009).

Thank you everyone who came along to support Sam Neidra of Moreland — I know that on some days he organised for holes to be dug — a bonus that makes planting much easier!

One of the planting days coincided with the Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek 20th anniversary celebrations at the Jacana Wetlands. On a cold day in June, the hardy friends planted around 300 shrubs, grasses and other plants then had a barbeque provided by the Lions Club, and birthday cake.



Hume had one planting day and one festival at sites along Moonee Ponds Creek

- ◆ **30 May 2009:** Friends of Sacred Kingfisher planting – Moonee Ponds Ck Westmeadows, 8 participants, 200 plants
- ◆ **2 August 2009:** National Tree Day – The Tarnuk, Westmeadows, 40 participants, 750 plants.



In **Moonee Valley** there were two plantings along the creek — with the Friends of Five Mile Creek, (a tributary to Moonee Ponds Creek) in July and with the Boeving Reserve Troopers in August.

This planting coincided with the consultants' Bike tour of the creek and they saw community involvement in action. The wonderful 'snake' the children made from the empty tubes shows how many plants were put in on this successful planting day.

Thank you to everyone who came along to support Michelle Gooding.



Ben Cate, was one of the people helping to plant in Moonee Valley. He is a member of the Moonee Valley Green Corps team who gained their Certificate I in Conservation and Land Management during 2009.

For 6 months they worked on many sites across MV and further afield including, Strathnaver Reserve, Five Mile Creek and Delhi Reserve. Ben won an apprenticeship with MVCC. Well done Ben, we wish you well!



There was only one planting day with the Friends of Lower Moonee Ponds Creek, in **Melbourne** City. Bronwyn brought Indigenous food for the volunteers to sample, and about a dozen people came along to help, but the weather was against us, and we were soon seeking shelter from driving rain.



Sightings

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

There have been lots of amphibious sightings over the past few months ...



Friends of Westbreen Creek have been very active this year, and have been rewarded by seeing a wonderful array of wildlife living in and around, or visiting the creek.

Judy Allen reports hearing **Growling Grass Frogs** (*Littoria reniformis*) at Joyce Reserve, Pascoe Vale! This is great news, as these pretty green and gold frogs are nationally listed as 'vulnerable' and in Victoria they are listed as 'threatened'. It is so rewarding to know that everyone's hard work along the creek is having such fantastic results.

In the annual frog survey, the FoWC estimated that there could be as many as 25 Growling Grass Frogs along the creek!

They like the emergent vegetation, sedges, rushes etc lining slow moving or still water bodies, and they also like grasslands, where they probably over-winter — all the types of things we have been trying to preserve and revegetate along the creeks.

These are one of Australia's largest frogs, the females (larger than the males) can be up to 104mm long — much bigger than the Common Eastern Froglet (*Crinia signifera*). Interestingly, in 1867 they were introduced to New Zealand, where they are now common — I hope they aren't as destructive as our other animal export — the possum!

See the *Environment Australia website (environment.gov.au)* for lots of interesting information about this frog, in the *Biodiversity, Species Profiles and Threats database*.

Westbreen Creek is also the home of many Pobblebonks, Common Eastern Froglets and Yabbies which attract the attention of a **White-faced Heron** and **Little Pied Cormorant**.



We had two interesting visitors to our water trough at Woodlands before we left: a **Grey Shrike Thrush** and a **Crested Shrike Tit**. They were both taking advantage of the water in those hot days earlier in the year.



When you have been walking by a patch of reeds along the creek, have you heard the little bird with a big voice? It has a very varied call, and you know it is there because it is so noisy, but it is very hard to see! It is the **Clamorous Reed Warbler**.

Go to The Tarnuk at Westmeadows, or the Jacana Wetlands — anywhere where there are large patches of *Phragmites* or Sedges in the spring and summer, and you will be bound to hear them.



The **Black Swans** were back nesting in the lower part of Moonee Ponds Creek. Friends of Lower Moonee Ponds Creek reported seeing a nest below the railway bridges near Dynon Road. Let's hope the nest survived this year.

Tullamarine Landfill

The Tullamarine Landfill has had a 36-year life. The landfill - a former stone quarry - was a disposal site for "prescribed waste", much of it from industry. In 2007, it was acquired by Transpacific Industries Group (TPI), when the company purchased the Cleanaway waste management business from Kohlberg Kravis Roberts. TPI closed the landfill on May 13, 2008 and it has now moved into a capping, rehabilitation and long-term aftercare stage.

The Tullamarine Landfill Rehabilitation Committee (TLRAC) is a forum in which TPI can engage with the community and other key interested parties over the landfill's rehabilitation issues. Members include TPI, general environment groups, Western Region Environment Centre, Environment Protection Authority Victoria, Melbourne Water, Parks Victoria and Melbourne Airports Corporation. TLRAC meets once a month.

A website (www.tlrac.org) has been set up to support the TLRAC Guiding Principles by providing an independent forum for disseminating communication materials used in the process, in particular, to embed the principle of transparency. It is the key communication tool to inform people what decisions are being made and by whom, and where the decision-making process is at. The site will be updated with Independent Observer's reports and meeting records, technical and other relevant reports and communication materials generated as part of the process on a regular basis. so check it out. If you want further information or would like me to ask question or gain information please email Bronwyn Riddell at bronwynriddell@hotmail.com. The next meeting is 8th December.