



moonee ponds creek
co-ordination committee

Ponderings

Spring 2010

Issue 31

Seasonal Newsletter of the Moonee Ponds Creek
Coordination Committee Inc

advocate

educate

interpret

participate

rehabilitate

revegetate



National Tree Day 2010



What's in this edition?

- Eight years at The Tarnuk
- Plan progress
- News from the MPCCC
- Diary dates
- Exciting Sightings

National Tree Day at The Tarnuk

Did you come to the National Tree Day planting at The Tarnuk?

Then you'll know how excellent it was with so many committed and enthusiastic people all planting together.

Hume City Council hosted the event in conjunction with the Friends of Upper Moonee Ponds Creek, Melbourne Water and Planet Ark.

The Strategic Plan Progress Report

A snail would easily win at this pace ...

Optimism was high following the workshop with the consultants that we held in June, but unfortunately the subsequent draft of the Strategic Plan they presented was still not satisfactory.

Kaye Oddie deserves enormous thanks for her work in pulling together yet another round of feedback on yet another draft. The Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek and the MPCCC Working Party responsible for supervising the Strategic Plan consultancy are deeply appreciative of all her efforts.

Everyone involved in getting the Plan finalised, including the Working Party, is increasingly frustrated by the time it is taking to get the process finished. We have received excellent feedback from interested people and organisations along the Creek, but it has been difficult to get it properly incorporated into the final document.

Hopefully we are now in sight of a final draft that will meet our needs and expectations. Once this is achieved, we will have a better basis for considering the future of the MPCCC.

National Tree Day is an annual Planet Ark initiative and attracts many thousands of caring people from all walks of life. Last year alone, 312,000 people were involved in planting events all over Australia.

This year at The Tarnuk, 23 people enjoyed the weather (in spite of the forecast) to plant over 900 local native tress, shrubs, herbs, lilies and grasses alongside the Moonee Ponds Creek at Westmeadows. Many trees and shrub were planted adjacent to previous sites and a significant number of grasses were planted along a small section of creek which has been subjected to erosion recently and near some other remnant grasses.

Hopefully they will all survive to provide some stability and some diversity. Thank you to all those who came. The area is being gradually transformed and wild life is coming back to the area. See the article inside "Spring planting at The Tarnuk".

It is wonderful to see the transformation that eight years of dedication by the Friends of Upper Moonee Ponds Creek have achieved at The Tarnuk.

In this, the first of a series of articles celebrating the contribution made by the Friends Groups along the Creek, we look back at what The Tarnuk used to look like.

Of course it wasn't called The Tarnuk in 2002, when we first started planting there, but all the hard work that has gone into the area around this section of the Creek is beginning to pay off. The pictures tell the story and seeing the difference shows that it is all worthwhile and gives hope for what can be achieved.

Thank you to all the dedicated folk who have contributed over the years — see what you have done!

Eight years ago it looked like this ...



The same site today



Not much better five years ago ...



Now it looks like this ...



News from the MPCCC

MPCCC is involved in consultations along the creek

As part of our input to the life of the Creek environs, MPCCC is often asked for input into a variety of activities along the length of the Creek, for example, to comment on developments proposed in the catchment. The redevelopment of the **Oak Park Sport Aquatic and Recreation Centre**, was one such request.

We were disappointed to see that the development was described as *backing on to* the Creek.

This appears to be a classic example of a missed opportunity.

From an environmental and non-vehicle-bound human perspective, we would prefer to see the development as *facing* the Creek, as do the adjacent units at 2 Margaret Street, Oak Park, and properties on the other side of the Creek in Brosnan Crescent, Strathmore.

A Creek-facing design could provide attractive areas at the Margaret Street and Main Street ends of the Creek boundary, which, together with improvements to the informal track on the Oak Park side of the Creek between the footbridges at Margaret Street and Melissa Street, Strathmore, would create a loop with the section of shared use Moonee Ponds Creek Trail on the Strathmore side of the Creek of the kind recommended in the forthcoming Strategic Plan for the Creek.

The embankment along the edge of the playing field is one that has received a lot of attention from the Strath-Oak Planters over the last few years. It would be good to see this steep site

changed from being the back-side of the sports centre, to being an invitation to play.

Landscaping the Port of Melbourne

Port of Melbourne Corporation (PoMC) will be preparing a Master Plan and works program for improving several buffers and public access areas around the port, including near Moonee Ponds Creek.

To ensure the plans complement the local projects MPCCC and FoMPC are planning, the Port of Melbourne Corporation has invited representatives to meet their landscape architects, and representatives from PoMC's planning team. Using maps of the initial areas they are looking at, they want to gain a better understanding of our plans and projects for the creek area before PoMC begins putting its Master Plan together.

We applaud the PoMC for taking our plans into consideration at this initial stage rather than inviting comments on already developed plans.

Moreland art commission at Gowanbrae

On a slightly smaller scale, the MPCCC and the FoMPC have been invited by Moreland City Council to help in the initial stages of an exciting art commission for an area next to the community centre at Gowanbrae. Because of our involvement and long term interest in the area, Moreland asked that we share our expertise, insights and perspectives about Gowanbrae, to contribute to the development of a brief for the artists.

The Tarnuk

Still lots of bare areas in 2008 , this area suffered during the dry times



National Tree Day 2008



November 2008

Now it looks like this ...



National Green Day site, 2010.
What will this site look like in eight years?



Spring planting at The Tarnuk

Greeted by a ruffle in the creek reeds, as a Black Swamp Wallaby startled by our presence bounds away!

An afternoon of weeding, chatter, shared skills, mallet noise on wooden stakes, buckets of water and many trays of indigenous grasses and ground covers put in their place at the grassy woodland site.

Scones with jam and cream accompanied the late afternoon tea and coffee break prior to departure.

Special thanks to Simon and Amanda (Hume City Council) Kane Travis, (for returning with the Alluvium Consulting staff, their families and friends for their third spring planting) and to all our regular planting volunteers.

Sight of a remnant Gold Dust Wattle on the bank, and Bulbine Lily in flower gave a little time for reflection, on the contribution over many years from inspiring greening officers who have worked with the community volunteers, planting to diversify this site.

Julie and Kim, FOUMPC.

Fires in The Tarnuk

I was saddened to see that again, the *Phragmites* in the Creek at The Tarnuk have been the victim of arson. Not as bad as two years ago, and this time confined to the creek bed, but still very depressing that someone thought it a good idea to set light to the reeds.

The area that was so badly burned in 2008 is struggling to recover. Unfortunately Chilean Needle Grass has taken advantage of the fire exposed earth. Some planting has taken place in the burned zones, but it is a huge task to combat the weeds.



What's been happening along the creek in Moonee Valley

Lots of plants have been given a new home along the Creek this planting season in Moonee Valley.

Between April and October, 20 planting events were organised, the last one will be 10 October (see Diary Dates on the back page).

So far, 413 people have been part of the revegetation of the Creek Corridor planting a massive 4,919 plants! Imagine the difference this is going to make to the lives of the creatures, (and humans) that live along the Creek.

In addition to this, three plantings were completed by contractors. One at Boeing Rail reserve where another 1,255 plants were given a new home; Brosnan Crescent embankment – 600 plants were put in to support the work of the Strath-Oak Planters; and Talbot Reserve where 25 mature trees were established to take the place of the Ash trees that spread their progeny far and wide in the bush..

Thank you team!

We have wonderful helpers to get *Ponderings* folded and put into envelopes for mailing. This was the team of volunteers responsible for the Winter mail-out:

Stephen, Michael, Hayden, Anthea, Jarrod, Dean, Alyssa, Alec, Jack and John (from Strathmore Secondary College and Strathmore North Primary School).

They deserve a huge :'**Thank you team!**'

While we don't want to put anyone out of work, we would prefer to send you your *Ponderings* electronically. It's better for the environment!

So if you would like to get *Ponderings* sent to your Inbox, please send your email address to ponderings@mpccc.org.

The environment thanks you!



Diary Dates

Date	What?	When?	Where?	Melway Ref	Council
Sun 10 Oct	Wildflower walk	11am - noon	Strathnaver Reserve, Strathmore	16 E6	Moonee Valley
Sun 10 Oct	Friends of Five Mile Creek, planting	2 - 4pm	End of Government Road, Essendon	28 J2	Moonee Valley
Wed 20 Oct	Bat Count	7.30pm	Yarra Bend Golf Course car park	2D G7	
Sat 23 Oct	Wildflower walk	11am - noon	Arcade Way Reserve (Arcade Way entry), Avondale Heights	27 C2	Moonee Valley
Wed 17 Nov	Bat Count	7.30pm	Yarra Bend Golf Course car park	2D G7	
Sun 5 Dec	Royal Park Bird Survey	9 - 11am	Meet at the car park next to Royal Park Wetlands, Manningham St, Parkville.	29 C12	
Wed 15 Dec	Bat Count	8.00pm	Yarra Bend Golf Course car park	2D G7	

Wildflower Walks in Moonee Valley Moonee Valley Council is running two Wildflower Walks in October (see *Diary Dates* above for details of where and when).



Take a stroll through the wildflowers of Moonee Valley during two guided walks with Council's Conservation Ranger. Learn about the local flora and fauna in Moonee Valley within our nationally significant grasslands, how they are managed and how you can help to protect them. These are free events, no need to book. Wear closed-toe shoes and a hat, and bring water to drink. For more information, call Moonee Valley City Council on 9243 8888.



Sightings

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



The most exciting sighting — Julie Law reports seeing a **Swamp Wallaby** bounding out of the Creek when she and friends arrived in The Tarnuk for National Tree Day (see the article p. ?) How fabulous to have such a delightful creature living so close to us!

One of the workers with Conservation Volunteers Australia, working at Horseshoe Bend, saw a **Crested Shrike-Tit**.

These spectacular little birds with their glossy yellow fronts and bold black and white stripes on their heads, like to live along water courses, with a home range of up to 50 hectares foraging area. They feed on insects in tall gum trees, and even some tall wattles.

One visited the water trough at Woodlands in the hot summer before we left there — it is great to know that they are living along the Creek.



Have you ever been on a Bird Count?

The Friends of Royal Park hold Bird Counts in the Park every three months, the next one is in early December (see calendar). Bird Counts are always fun — there will be someone there to help identify the birds you see. Why not go along to the next one and help count the birds in the Park? Wear drab coloured clothing, a hat and closed-toe shoes, take binoculars if you have them, and water to drink.

For more information, contact Gabrielle Stannus on 9329 2801 or info@friendsofroyalpark-parkville.org

Bat Count



At the Bat Count in September, the counters recorded some 22,260 bats — this was more than twice as many as this time last year when there were around 10,000 in the camp.

The next bat counts will be 20 October and 17 November, meet at 7:30pm, and the last for the year on 15 December, meet at 8:00pm, Yarra Bend Park golf course Car park (2D G7)

New and regular counters welcome and very much appreciated. For further information contact Dr Rod van der Ree, on 8344 3661, 0412 562 429 or rvdr@unimelb.edu.au

Why not go along and help? — it is fun and rewarding.