Friends of the Ballarat Botanical Gardens
Guiding Friends
North Gardens Wetlands Information Notes

Project background

The North Gardens Wetland was identified as a necessary storm water protection measure in the L Wendouree Landscape Masterplan in 1994. The Ballarat Botanical Gardens Masterplan and Management Strategy 1995 as an important element of the Gardens experience as it would provide site for a regional indigenous plant collection encompassing aquatic and terrestrial plants. Council h two trust funds established for the improvement of zoological gardens and enhancement of wildlife habitat within the Gardens Precinct.

Project Objectives

The North Gardens Wetland Project will achieve the following:

- Create a demonstration processing system for storm water within a very high profile site attracting over 1 million users annually.
- Provide protection of Lake Wendouree from increased nutrient and sediment loads
- Increase the habitat for avi-fauna
- Created a suitable landscape for interpreting storm water management, indigenous plants and their relationship with fauna and man.
- Provides a destination at the northern end of the Gardens and tramway.
- Creates social linkages between local residents, environment groups and educational institutio
- Improves the aesthetic standards of the site.

Project Design

The Wetland processes storm water inflows through two major drains that account for a 99 Hectare urban catchment, one quarter of the total catchment supplying Lake Wendouree. In 1999 the Corangamite Catchment Management Authority announced two grants relating to the project, namely :

The Monastery Drain Gross Pollutant Trap was completed in June 2000, with a three way funding partnership between CCMA, Eco-Recycle Victoria and Council.

Upon notification of the grants a project team was established to ensure the Wetland Project would mee the relevant water quality management, habitat creation, educational and aesthetic objectives. The project team consisted of:

Prof. Tony Wong	Monash University Centre for Freshwater Ecology
Dr Peter Breen	Monash University Centre for Freshwater Ecology
Dr Tim Fletcher	Corangamite Catchment Management Authority
Peter Bate	BCC Civil Design Unit
Adam Parrott	BCC Landscape Architect
Ian Rossiter	BCC Manager Lake Wendouree and Botanical Gardens
David Grant	BCC Arboriculturist
Uldis Neidlands	BCC Waste Management Engineer

Following design and contract specification completion in November 1999, tenders were called, and the project budget was clearly insufficient to proceed. Further funding was sought from Council and the C.C.M.A. which being confirmed in July 2000 allowed re-tendering. The project commenced in November 2000 and was completed in March 2001.

The first step was to obtain samples of water following rainfall incidents to quantify the sediment and nutrients present. Rainfall records were investigated to determine the characteristic seasonal flows and potential peak flows. Following survey of the site and relevant features, Tony Wong and Peter Breen were able to produce required volumes, water depths and levels for each of the water bodies and structures required.

Ballarat Civil Design utilised these to produce an initial layout with sections, and the project committee tackled the issues of tree removal, desirable views in and out, access and circulation. The final design was able to meet the landscape and habitat objectives, without compromising the project's primary objective of improving storm water quality.

Additional Guiding Notes:

AVENUE OF SEQUOIADENDRON GIGANTEUM (GIANT REDWOOD)
28 trees.
1863...first started.
1874 extended 50 chains to the north and thirty chains to the south.
First cultivated in Australia in 1860 and sold in Ballarat that Year for 42/- (a weeks wages for a skilled labourer).
There was an attempt to name the tree Washingtonia, after the first US President . The English, in a burst of post Napoleonic euphoria counter suggested that the name of the Hero of Waterloo might be used as Wellingtonia. That went down in America like a lead balloon!
The name means literally Big Tree
There are some of immense size and age living in California's Sierra Mountains which are said to have been big trees when Christ was born.
National treasures. Several thousand years old.
Sometimes they are called Mammoth Trees - boughs shaped like tusks.
In nature these trees and loners, grow individually among mixed forests of other coniferous trees.
Trunk and wonderful thick red bark.
Flowers tiny catkins, greenish cones, very small, about the size of a small grape. Can self layer when boughs loop to the ground.

AVENUE OF AESCULUS HIPPOCASTANUM (HORSE CHESTNUTS)
Horse Chestnuts are grown purely for their aesthetic appeal; no part of them are of commercial value.
They originated in the Balkans and were taken to England in the 17th century.
There are both white and pink flowering ones in this avenue. Tall candle-like flowers. Can grow to 30m (100ft) and are fast growers.
Fruit - round and spiny, about size of golf ball and inedible.
Make a terrible mess, dropping spent flowers and seed capsules, but very popular. Striking hand shaped leaves, first to open in spring:
Timber of no use.

FERNERY
Original Construction 1876. History of alteration and addition. Camellia House - 1877 - 78. Timber Extended a year or so later to the East to form s Shelter House 1883-4 Further Extension to the West for use as fernery. Rockery, ponds, seating, aquarium, waterfalls, exotic ferns and a camellia collection, Cathedral like battens.
Original very grandiose, a shadow of its former grandeur. Present building done by Val Lohse.

TILLY THOMPSON GARDEN.

This perennial garden is dedicated to the memory of Tilly Thompson, who with her coworkers from Lucas's Lingerie Factory raised funds to provide trees for the Avenue of Honour which runs 22km. A plan is underway to restore the avenue.

SENSORY GARDEN FOUNTAIN
Installed 1987. Made of cast iron originally from France. Council purchased it from a Melbourne dealer.