News from Friends of Darebin Creek

July 2018

Upcoming Events

- July 29: National Tree Day
- August 15: General Meeting
- August 26: Napier Waller Reserve Planting
- September 16: Southern Rd Wetland Planting

The Friends of Darebin Creek was formed in 1995 to protect, restore and conserve the Darebin Creek and its adjacent parklands as a natural environment for the enjoyment of the community.

Presidents Report

A word from our new President,
In this newsletter you will read of the many activities that the Friends of Darebin Creek engage in. We have enjoyable and productive activities with our plantings and cleaning up along the creek. Come and join us at any of our events. See our website for further information.
Recently I went to a presentation on Rakali, the Australian water rat, put on by the Platypus Conservancy. I have never seen one in the Darebin Creek but will be watching with interest now.
I watched Craig Reucassel's "War on Waste" on Tuesday evening and thought of the Darebin Creek Sweepers, who clean up the creek on the third Sunday of the month collecting bags and bags of rubbish. Can Craigs' playful and well informed program bring about not only a decrease in the amount of rubbish that finds its way into our waterways but can he also effect some change at policy level. The Darebin creek will certainly appreciate it.
Margaret de Kam
President,
Friends of Darebin Creek.

Membership

Welcome to all our new members this year and thanks again for all of our past members who have renewed their memberships.
We are having record numbers of volunteers attending our monthly events which means we can achieve a lot more in improving the vegetation and habitat along the creek.
Sheryl Sibbison

Thornbury Bush Plot Maintenance

Thornbury Bush Plot Maintenance Sunday 29 April

When I parked at the end of Clarendon St I noticed lots of people arriving on bikes, getting out of cars and turning up for the planting event. Soon there was a crowd of people who had arrived by around 10am, ready to get into a morning of bushland activities at the Bush Plots Clarendon St entrance, Thornbury.

The site had established well over the years and plantings along the shared trail had grown while some native Spear Grasses had recruited and colonised new areas extending the boundaries of the Bush Plots. Darebin Council Rangers Todd and Bobby had prepared the site unpacking tools refreshments and laying out a couple of hundred tubes ready to add diversity and amenity to the entrance. First came the welcome and a bit of a briefing about the safety issues. Todd spoke about the working relationship between Council Bush Crews and The Friends of Darebin Creek.

When we got stuck into it people found the soil very rocky and the planting took a bit of time and quite an effort in some spots. It appears the site had been a stockpile for roadmaking materials and other discarded fill from years past which is common along our creek banks. The up side is that this well draining media is just what our plants like and the growth rates and survival were good from our previous plantings.

As well as planting we had some people doing a litter pick up and others were hand weeding and tending to the bushland. As a finishing touch most of the established plants received a summer prune to remove spent flower heads and thatch which will encourage new growth in a compact form.

As usual refreshments were served later in the event and everyone enjoyed a chat while the sky went from sunny through to cloudy and eventually a little shower fell to encourage the planting on its way. The enthusiasm and energy of the participants was great to see and with Todd's good work on the social media, the signs are there for a good year ahead for the Friends of Darebin Creek, our supporters and the local environment.

Adrian Hotchin

Banyule Norhtern Grasslands Planting

Banyule Northern Grassland planting Sunday 27 May 2018

It was a pleasure to walk down to our planting site as the area has transformed over the past few years with healthy Eucalypts, native shrubs, groundcovers and areas of grassland either side of the track. Our planting was along a basalt escarpment that sloped from the grasslands towards the creek. We planted a few River Red Gums as these magnificent trees would have once formed a major part of the vegetation along this area. We also planted Correas and Rasberry seedlings to increase the grassland diversity and provide habitat for the animals.

Around 25 volunteers joined in to make it a successful planting morning. The teamwork on the day was great with some taking on the hole digging, while others planted and placed guards around the trees to protect them from rabbits and the elements. All the watering was done at the end and some members also had a litter cleanup of the site.

We welcomed some newly joined members on the day to and had time for a drink, nibbles and a chat. Thank you everyone who came along on the day to chip in and practice bushland conservation in the Banyule Northern Grasslands Reserve

Sheryl Sibbison

Darebin Natural Heritage Film Night

Celebrating Darebin's Natural Heritage 21 April

The Darebin Parklands was a buzz with excitement with the much anticipated 'Celebrating Darebin's Natural Heritage' premier film screening. The Friends of Darebin Creek had a stall alongside the Friends of Merri Creek, representing two of the local conservation groups in the area and how to get involved. During the afternoon, some people were making the most of the perfect weather conditions by having little picnics in front of the inflatable screen and reserving prime viewing positions for the evening's spectacle.

The area was set up with deck chairs in the Parklands amphitheater and this was the perfect setting for such an occasion. During the afternoon, Uncle Bill Nicholson Jnr, Wurundjeri Elder, lead two groups on the Spiritual Healing Trail through the Parklands, while Ranger Katy took her own group to other sites around the area. As night set in, it was time for the film. Uncle Bill lead the welcome to country in Wurundjeri and spoke of the importance of preserving language and fostering indigenous land management. This was a unique moment and a great way to kick things off. Mayor Kim Le Cerf then introduced the film and explained the need for such a piece to bring focus to Darebin's Natural Heritage Areas, their protection and say thanks to all the people involved with their conservation. As the crowd drew silent, the film got underway and the amphitheater lit up with projected light and smiles from all the crowd.

The feature ran for about twelve minutes and it touched on Melbourne's history and bushland, weeds, wetlands, burning, grasslands and community involvement. It was very well received and applause rang though the Parklands when it finished. There was a panel discussion to end the night and the community got their chance to ask questions directly to the people who manage the land. Overall it was great night and a wonderful vibe with lots of passionate people all gathered to celebrate Darebin's Natural Heritage. You can go to YouTube and search 'Darebin Natural Heritage' to see the film for yourself and what the fuss has all been about.

Todd Hunter

Olympic Park Planting Day

Olympic Park Planting and Maintenance Sunday 24 June.

As I drove in to the Olympic Park carpark it appeared as if the Friends had finally cracked the big time with a full carpark and large crowd. Upon closer inspection, the crowds were there for the junior soccer, and the planting event was a little harder to find, tucked away along the creek. However, a good turnout of over twenty five were able to plant over 750 shrubs and tussock grasses.
Our ranks were swelled by a couple of hard-core Darebin Creek Sweepers, Ruth and David and the ever-present Paul Prentice. Great to have them joining in with the planting and hopefully we can repay the favour for their monthly creek clean-ups.

The bush plots adjacent to the Olympic Park ovals across the creek from Northland are starting to look great after first being planted out by the Friends in 2016. This will certainly help improve the area as a wildlife corridor, as well as making it look much nicer for locals and shared trail users.
It was remarked that one of the plants, *Pelargonium australe*, makes a great addition to native gardens with its pink flowers and lovely form. They strike readily from cuttings so you can have self-seeded plants growing around the parent plant.
Thanks to Kelly from Banyule Bushcrew who ably set out plants and provided cuppas and Tim Tams at the end. A big thanks to all the volunteers from the day as well and we look forward to seeing you along to more events in the future.
Peter Grenfell.

Green Street Revegetation Group Event

Green Street planting and weeding morning July 15

It was a fabulous turn out by the Friends and local residents for our rescheduled Green St Planting and Weeding. After being washed out at our last event with the Green St Revegetation Group, it was great to see the sun out and lots of smiles as we gathered along the creek. We had 22 helpers come along to plant, weed and mulch a beautiful section of creek in Ivanhoe. After starting off with a bit of a handweed to some clear space, we got into planting along the top and down the creek bank. We used an array of indigenous plants species including the showy Austral Stork's Bill (Pelargonium australe) and Austral Indigo (Indigofera australis), bird protecting Heath Wattle (Acacia brownii) and grassland staples Kangaroo Grass (Themeda triandra), Wallaby Grasses (Rytidosperma sp.), Tussock-grass (Poa sp.) and the Mat-rushes (Lomandra sp.). We planted around 250 plants and the selected species have been used to create habitat, stabilise the bank and also showcase the native species on offer that can be used at home. After we planted and watered, it was time to lay down some newspaper and mulch. This practice will suppress the weeds and give the plants a good head start by holding in the moisture. We finished off the morning with some delicious homemade cakes and pastries and a warm cuppa. Thank you to all the volunteers and landowners for helping out and creating this wonderful bushland space along the Darebin Creek.

Todd Hunter

Darebin Creek Sweepers

We are pleased to say Sarah the founder of the Darebin Creek Sweepers is of on her adventure and two of the group members have stepped up and taken over to keep the group going.

Check out the Details on the Darebin Creek Sweepers Facebook Site and look for their great looking new sign with directions to the meeting site. Clean ups are the third Sunday of the month at 10.30am for an hour or so.

Sheryl Sibbison.

Annual Trolley Muster

Tuesday 5 June

On Tuesday 5 June, staff from Darebin Bushcrew, Banyule Bushcrew and Darebin Creek Management Committee met to conduct the annual Shopping Trolley Muster. As in previous years, we drove along both sides of the Darebin Creek in 4WDs and tried to spot larger dumped items in the creek, including shopping trolleys and motorbikes. We used a variety of methods to pull out large items including a 4WD vehicle winch, ropes with grappling hooks and muscle power. At times we had to get into the freezing cold water with waders to fasten the winch hook. On two occasions when we winched motorbikes out from the water, a large short-finned eel slid out into the water. Amazing what these hardy creatures can turn into habitat. This year we pulled out only six trolleys, three motorbikes and two O-Bikes. This was the smallest result ever for the Trolley Muster in sixteen years. Hopefully this lower result represents local communities valuing our creeks more, as well as the fine clean-up work done by community volunteers including the Darebin Creek Sweepers.

Peter Grenfell

Pollution in the creek July

Pollution Event 9 July

Almost six years ago to the day, another large foam pollution event was seen at the start of July coming out of the same West Heidelberg Industrial Estate drain (DAR 48). About 200 metres of creek had turned white and bubbly as the unknown substance moved through the system. The substance was absent of odour and was being frequently agitated at each riffle and basalt outcrop, aerating it to a foam. The EPA and relevant stakeholders were contacted straight away and the investigations began. The EPA tried to trace the source of the pollution up the drain but were unsuccessful. They explained that the broadness of the estate and transient nature of the substance had made it very difficult to find where it was coming from. We might not of had any luck finding those responsible this time but If you do witness any pollution events, please call 1300 EPA VIC (1300 372 842) and report it. Prompt reporting by more members of the community means the greater the chance of getting the EPA out on site to locate the source and hold those responsible.

Todd Hunter

Contacts

Margaret de Kam: President	0409 133 049
Sheryl Sibbison: Memberships/ Treasurer	0416078615
Todd Hunter: Social Media	FoDC Face book Page
Darebin Creek Management Committee	9499 4454
Water Pollution (quote drain sign number)	9695 2777
Shopping Trolley Hotline	1800 245 022
Wildlife Rescue	0500 540 000
Victoria Police Motorcycle Squad	9380 7283
EPA	1300 372 842

Contact Friends of Darebin Creek
Email: friendsofdarebincreek@gmail.com
Website: http://www.friendsofdarebincreek.org.au
Facebook page:
https://www.facebook.com/friendsofdarebincreek