

MERRI GROWLER

The Friends of Merri Creek Newsletter

May – July 2015

FRIENDS OF MERRI CREEK IS THE PROUD WINNER OF THE 2011 VICTORIAN URBAN LANDSCAPE AWARD

How we help Melbourne's planners

Since the State Government began a major expansion of Melbourne's Urban Growth Boundary in 2008, Friends of Merri Creek has been advocating for the waterways, native vegetation and wildlife of our catchment, and seeking better plans that will result in healthy, liveable future suburbs.

We have been very disappointed by the trade-offs and sacrifices of environmental values through the planning processes to date. The so-called Biodiversity Conservation Strategy for the growth areas, prepared by the Victorian Government and approved by the Federal Government, legitimised the clearing of most of the critically endangered volcanic plains grasslands in the growth areas, and 'offsetting' into two new reserves west of Melbourne which mainly comprise poor quality grassland. Similarly, much of the Grassy Eucalypt Woodland in the upper Merri will be cleared.

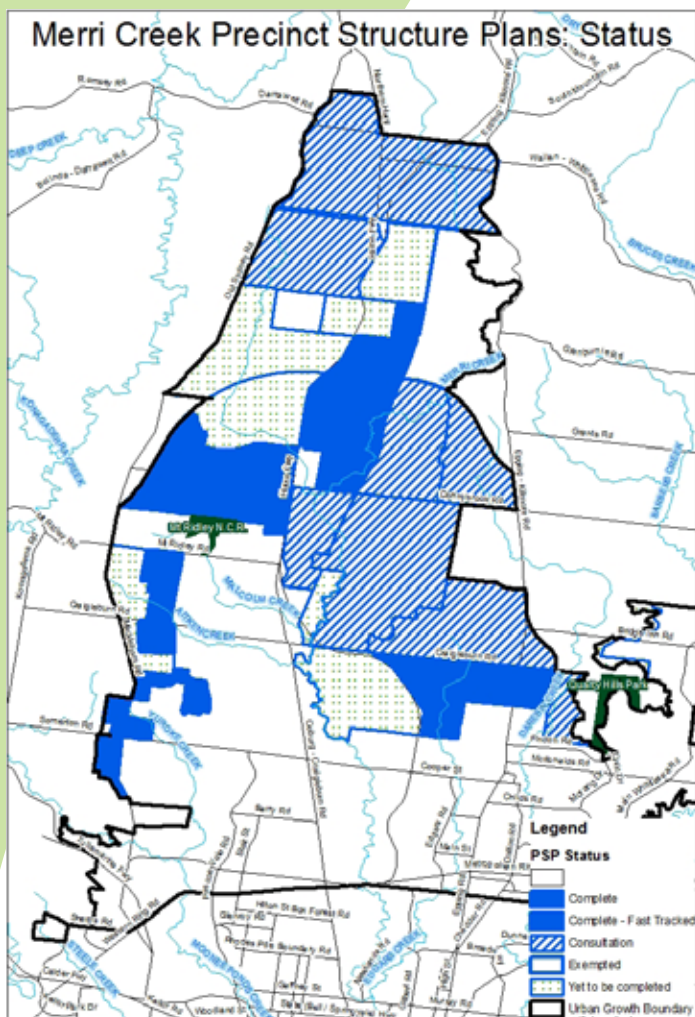
The latest stage has been the production of Precinct Structure Plans. These are master plans for new residential and commercial/employment areas to cater for 10,000 - 30,000 people each. The Metropolitan Planning Authority has been rolling out draft PSPs at such a rapid pace last year that other government agencies can't keep up.

We don't understand why these plans need to be locked in so far ahead of actual demand. Standards could and should change – for example, the Best Practice Environmental Management Standards for Stormwater are currently being reviewed, and new provisions could require more land for stormwater management. We also hope that enlightened planners in the future would set aside more land for connected open space and habitat networks through the new suburbs, to benefit residents as well as nature, like Craigieburn's linear parks.

While planning for urban development races ahead, implementation of associated biodiversity conservation actions is lagging: zoning and management arrangements for conservation areas are unclear, the Grassy Eucalypt Woodland and Western Grassland reserves that are tradeoffs for the clearing are not being delivered, and an Independent Monitor has not been appointed.

Since last October, we have made submissions on four draft Precinct Structure Plans and the Wallan Structure Plan, and attended several meetings with the Metropolitan Planning Authority. We are arguing for the protection of significant areas of native vegetation such as centuries-old River Red Gums and critically endangered Victorian Volcanic Plains grasslands. We are scrutinising proposed planning controls for conservation areas, and opposing incursions into conservation areas by infrastructure assets such as roads and sewers.

At a recent meeting with senior policy advisors to the new State Government, we asked that the precinct planning process be slowed, and implementation of biodiversity conservation measures be expedited. We hope for a more considered, balanced approach to determining the future of over 100 square kilometres of the Merri catchment.



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Merri Musings

Merri Growler archived: Our newsletter was selected for preservation by the State Library of Victoria in September 2014 and is archived on the National Library of Australia website, Pandora: <http://pandora.nla.gov.au/tep/148391>

Update on Lakeside Secondary College land: The new Victorian Government is reviewing the process for disposal of 'surplus' public land, and we hope that they'll let us know soon what will happen to the land at the former Lakeside Secondary College. FoMC has written letters to the Minister of Education, James Merlino, the MP for Preston, Robin Scott, and the Premier, Daniel Andrews, supporting the resolution by Darebin City Council on 15 September 2014 to transfer the frontage to Crown land at the former Lakeside Secondary College (from Education Dept ownership), and appoint Darebin City Council as committee of management.

You can help: Please write in support of Darebin Council's resolution (above) to: Hon. James Merlino MP, Minister for Education, 1 Treasury Place, East Melbourne Vic 3002.



Brunswick Terminal Station update: The NoBTS66 campaign is still going on, despite works proceeding at the site, including the digging of several holes the size of Olympic pools.

The Community Reference Group has met four times, but all the community members, except the FoMC representative, walked out of the previous meeting on 10 February. Their concern is that, while Ausnet Services has its own internal Emergency Evacuation Plan (in the case of a fire or other major incident on the actual site), they refuse to share the plan because it might cause alarm in the community! The residents want all documentation with respect to risk management and evacuation planning, inside and particularly outside the BTS66 site, to be made publicly available. It is also hoped that an Independent Inquiry, promised by the Andrews Government, will soon be established.

Follow the campaign on: www.nobrunswickterminalstation.org/



Successful talk and tour: On Sunday 22 March, the Australian Plants Society Maroondah had a tour of Merri Park Wetlands, conducted by Ray Radford and Pascale Pitot, and congratulated FoMC on what we have helped to achieve. This followed a very well-received presentation to the Society in Blackburn on Friday 20 March by FoMC legends Ann and Bruce McGregor, about our restoration works.

FRIENDS OF MERRI CREEK AND FRIENDS OF MALCOLM CREEK AND GRASSLANDS PRESENT:

Birds of Northern Melbourne's Creeks and Grasslands

An illustrated talk by Dean Ingwersen, Birdlife Australia

Thursday, 14 May, 8:00pm

Hume Global Learning Centre, Craigieburn

(Central Park Avenue, corner Aitken Boulevard)

Learn about the diverse and colourful birds that live in and near Craigieburn, what they need to thrive, the seasonal migrants, the ones that have disappeared, and how you can find out more about our local birds. No charge and no bookings necessary. Supper provided. Contact Ray on 0422 989 166.



Festival at the Labyrinth: Our sub-group, Friends of Merri Creek Labyrinth, held a celebration in the late afternoon of the autumn equinox, Saturday 21 March. The group has done an amazing job, with the help of Yarra City Council, in clearing the large amount of weeds to make this significant environmental art installation a lot more noticeable to users of the path near Ramsden St Clifton Hill. It is the only known labyrinth in a Melbourne park.

Birds along the Merri in late summer

Black Kite and Horsfield's Bushlark are the latest species to be added to our survey lists, when they were recorded in our February surveys.

The Black Kite is a familiar scavenger in inland Australia, especially in the north and east, where it wheels and soars over towns and fires. Euan Fothergill recorded it at Galgi Ngarrk (Craigieburn Grasslands), and commented that he has been seeing it increasingly in a few locations around Melbourne. It is a relatively recent coloniser here and seems to be on the increase – another indication of climate change? Six raptor species were recorded across our sites, including a Peregrine Falcon hunting Rock Doves above Moreland Road bridge.

Formerly known as Singing Bushlark, Horsfield's Bushlark is an uncommon streaked brown bird of grasslands,

slightly smaller than a Pipit or Eurasian Skylark. It has white edges to the tail (like the other two species) and bold rufous wing margins. Being a lark, it sings while hovering high, but also in low undulating flight and when perched. Stuart Dashper and the other observers at Bababi Marning had a good view of the perched bird, and saw its deep finch-like bill that is fairly diagnostic and separates it from Pipit and Songlarks. It had no crest at all so was not a Skylark. Euan had a possible sighting at Galgi Ngarrk, but not enough for a positive identification.

A total of 78 bird species was seen across the ten sites surveyed in February. Most widespread (occurring at every

site) were Spotted Dove, Rainbow Lorikeet, and Magpie. At the other end of the spectrum, 24 species were each recorded at only one site. The most numerous species were Common Myna, Silver Gull, Rainbow Lorikeet, Pacific Black Duck and Red Wattlebird.

The sites with the most diversity were Bababi Djinanang and Blyth St to Moreland Rd East Brunswick, with 34 species each. Coburg Lake Reserve had the most individual birds, an estimate of 468.

There were 26 Eastern Grey Kangaroos at Bababi Marning, and at Galgi Ngarrk the 'roo count was 137, with two Swamp Wallabies.

Ann McGregor BirdWatch Coordinator

Horsfield's Bushlark from www.birdlife.org.au



Second Merri Birdwatch survey for 2015

Bird surveys will be held from 8.45–10.30am at ten sites along Merri Creek as listed below. Beginners welcome, BYO binoculars if possible, but no dogs please, as they reduce the number and variety of birds to be seen. The contact for all Birdwatch events is Ann McGregor 0429 386 102.

Free leaflets on Merri Birds (normally \$2) are available for all participants

Surveys at the following nine sites are on 17 May and 6 September

Bababi Djinanang (Jukes Rd Grasslands),

Fawkner: Meet on the Merri Path at the end of Jukes Road, Fawkner (Melway 18 A2).

Egan Reserve – Harding Street – Strettle Reserve –

Normanby Avenue: Meet at the bluestone steps at the end of The Grove, East Coburg (Melway 30 A3).

Coburg Lake Reserve: Meet near the car park, Lake Grove, Coburg (Melway 17 H10).

Edwardes Lake: Meet at the playground adjacent to Griffiths Street, Reservoir (Melway 18 E5).

CERES – Moreland Road: Meet at the seats on the Merri Path at rear of CERES, East Brunswick (Melway 30 B7).

Merri Park and Phillips Reserve: Meet at the end of Victoria Street, East Brunswick, at the BBQ shelter (Melway 30 B8).

Hall Reserve – Yarra Bend Park: Meet at the Rotunda, Hall Reserve, Clifton Hill (Melway 2D D1).

Galgi Ngaark (Craigieburn Grasslands): Meet at O'Herns Road gate off Hume Highway, Somerton (Melway 180 E6).

Galada Tamboore: Meet at the end of Hatty Court, Campbellfield (Melway 7 K6).

Surveys at Bababi Marning (Cooper St Grasslands) are on 24 May and 13 September

Meet near the Istrian Club, Cooper Street, Campbellfield (Melway 180 K10).

Merri Creek Cultural Values Project confirms strong Wurundjeri values

A summary of the article: 'Partnerships and Indigenous cultural values recording within Victoria: The Merri Creek Cultural Values Project,' Parmington, A. et. al. (2012) in Excavations, Surveys and Heritage Management in Victoria (Vol 1).

The Merri Creek catchment sits within the larger traditional area of the Wurundjeri people. Present-day Wurundjeri Country extends across much of Melbourne: north to the Great Dividing Range, east to the headwaters of the Yarra River at Mount Baw Baw, west to the Werribee River and south to the once expansive Carrum Carrum and Koo Wee Rup swamps.

The Merri Creek stretches for around 70 kilometres from Heathcote Junction in the north to Abbotsford in the south where it joins with the Yarra. Along its length there are many natural values that are essential to its status as an important cultural and spiritual landscape for the Wurundjeri people.

In 2010 the Wurundjeri Tribe Land and Compensation Cultural Heritage Council Inc. was commissioned by Melbourne Water to undertake a Cultural Values Assessment of the Merri Creek and its environs. The objective of the study was to research and document the Indigenous cultural values associated with Merri Creek and formulate culturally sensitive management recommendations to assist in the protection and enhancement of these values. The study was also an opportunity to explore methods for determining cultural values which could be used again for other sites and areas.

The study utilised a range of methods to determine the Indigenous cultural heritage values of the Merri Creek. These included searches of cultural heritage databases and a review of historic sources. In the case of the Merri there is a relatively high level of historical information which documents Indigenous links to the catchment.

This background research was then used to inform the locations of field visits involving Wurundjeri community members. Field trip surveys were used to capture participants' observations and cultural values for each site.

Subsequent stages involved workshops and follow up discussions with Wurundjeri Elders and community members. These sessions were informed by the field visits and maps, including aerial photography and

detailed biodiversity, hydrology, topography and geology information, as well as other background information.

In these workshops and discussions consideration was given to:

- the presence or absence of native plant and animal species utilised by Indigenous people in the past;
- physical evidence of Indigenous land and resource use in the area;
- the various landforms commonly used by Indigenous people in the past; and
- the collective evaluation of the cultural, spiritual and historical connections still held by Wurundjeri people to specific places along the waterway.

From Parmington et. al. (2012):

"For many Indigenous people today, the significance of a place is attributed to a memorable event taking place in that locality, whether it occurred recently or in the distant past. These memorable events might be a local disaster, which affected a community such as a flood, bushfire, or a place of community celebration or sorrow. Such places may be identified by landmarks such as a waterfall, a hill or mountain, an area of forest, or a single tree. Other places of attachment may be those associated with family activities and local history or folklore. Such places are considered important because they form a part of the community's identity."

Discussions within the workshops and afterwards resulted in the formation of a number of key themes, statements and findings.

Theme 1: The contemporary cultural value of the Merri Creek and its context within the wider landscape

- The cultural landscape is dynamic and areas within it are inter-related.
- The Merri Creek lies within a wider landscape which contains routes of movement, songlines, destinations and landmarks.
- The evidence of trade throughout a large part of the Country is demonstrated by the stone artefacts and other Indigenous archaeological remains. This aspect lends them greater cultural significance, and contributes to the story of traditional cultural life.
- The confluence areas located along the course of Merri Creek were the focus for ceremonies and meetings within the Woi wurrung (Wurundjeri) language group and also identified as familiar landmarks on Country.
- The relatively undisturbed condition of the landscape allows Wurundjeri people an opportunity to experience their Country to some extent 'as it was.'
- The landscape is evocative for Wurundjeri people, allowing a personal connection to the ancestors and the past.
- There is a feeling of being 'at home'; a sense of belonging for all Wurundjeri in this landscape.



Aboriginal dancers at one of MECCARG's Murnong (Yam Daisy) Harvests.

Theme 2: The cultural values of the Merri Creek are different for women and men

- The Wurundjeri are continuing to explore the ways in which men's and women's stories, places and experiences differ from one another.
- Men's and women's business allows different people to relate differently to the cultural landscape, and to perceive different cultural meanings.
- The Yarra River confluence with Merri Creek is considered by Wurundjeri men to be of particular cultural significance.
- Resources and foods such as murnong and reeds for basket making are of cultural interest to Wurundjeri women.

Theme 3: There are a number of ways in which archaeological sites are of cultural value to the Wurundjeri

- They provide tangible evidence of the long and sustainable use of the land. They also provide evidence of trade and movement through Country as well as relations between clans and with other Kulin groups.
- Stone artefacts speak of long use, long time; of ancestors and a strong community.
- The density of the artefacts and other archaeological/cultural places within the wider landscape shows that the land was heavily used, and lived in with sustainable cultural practices.

Theme 4: Cultural renewal and continuing cultural practices are essential

- The Wurundjeri are interested to reintroduce the Woi wurrung language into their Country. This could take the form of re-naming areas or places within significant landscapes.
- Being in Country strengthens the links with the ancestors, and with the past.
- The Wurundjeri are interested in reintroducing ceremony to Country, particularly if this can complement cyclical management programs (such as at the beginning of controlled burn programs).

Theme 5: Caring for Country has many aspects for the Wurundjeri

- The ancestors of the present-day Wurundjeri cared for Country in the past through cultural practices and sustainable lifestyles within rich landscapes.
- The health and quality of the environment including land, soils, water, air, plants and animals is a cultural concern and integral to the concept of caring for Country.
- Wurundjeri people are interested in working side-by-side with government and community groups who are seeking to care for the Country. This includes groups such as Melbourne Water, the Friends of Merri Creek, Parks Victoria and the Merri Creek Management Committee, as well as the wider community. Collaborative projects may include revegetation and weed control work.
- Access to Country and its natural resources, especially plant species, is an important aspect of continuing cultural practice. This could occur through culture camps, in-Country visits and activities, art and craft and education.

- Wurundjeri people feel the need to explore the land further and know it well; to understand it so they can imagine how their ancestors lived and moved through the Country. The opportunities to be in Country are therefore important for cultural reasons.
- Country is central to a sense of belonging.
- Knowledge of Country, holding of and caring for Country.

Project results and next steps

The investigation confirmed that the Merri Creek, its confluence areas and its tributaries are of substantial cultural importance to contemporary Wurundjeri people. The Merri Creek remains an important cultural link to Wurundjeri's pre-contact and post-contact heritage in the greater Melbourne area.

The project documented sites of cultural significance to the Wurundjeri but also stories, thoughts and discussions that substantiate the very important links between the Wurundjeri and the Merri Creek Catchment.

As a result of the project a number of follow-up actions and activities occurred, some of which directly relate to the Friends of Merri Creek. These include:

- increased communication between the Wurundjeri and land managers along the creek including greater Wurundjeri participation in decision-making around creek management;
- increased access for the Wurundjeri to the creek;
- methods to increase awareness of cultural heritage values amongst land managers;
- methods for the Wurundjeri to participate and be involved in managing the values along the creek (including training and employment); and
- the Merri Creek Cultural Values Project should be replicated in other locations to better inform management practices and develop greater understanding of cultural heritage values.

Yasmin Kelsall FoMC Committee member



Corroboree Tree at Burnley, near the Yarra River, by Warwick Sprawson.

Coming around again

In nature nothing is wasted, plants and animals and fungi flourish and die and decay and their materials appear in other forms, providing nutrients for their successors: there is a lovely saying "Dead trees transmute into live animals and vice-versa."

Scavengers from vultures and hyenas down to ants tidy up after predators have eaten their fill, maggots and dung-beetles do their unique jobs; compost-bins magically produce rich soil from food scraps, leaves etc. We get blood-and-bone fertiliser from abattoirs and mulch from shredded woody weeds; methane is collected from tips and used as fuel, not allowed to escape and increase global warming – it's 21 times worse than carbon dioxide.

South Australia's deposit legislation not only reduces waste of resources and the amount going to landfill, but also offers active youngsters the chance to make some pocket money. Not surprisingly, its roadsides are said to have less general rubbish than Victoria's – that's the sort of responsible attitude that's been developed. Fifty years ago by contrast, when Melbourne trains had smoking and non-smoking compartments, you can guess which ones were more litter-strewn.

Much of what we consume comes in glass, aluminium, steel, paper or cardboard, or Types 1 to 7 plastic: it's great to see all those wheelies in use, and some street bins as well. But even better than recycling is reusing: glass and plastic bottles and jars should be standardised, and returned complete with their tops ready to go back into action. The Snowy Mountain soft-drink company in Preston was the last to operate that way, apart from Hoyt's which promotes reuse of its spice jars.

And there is a solution to the junk-food peddlers' throw-away mentality which trashes our environment – never mind their products' effect on people's health. Takeaways should be served only in sturdy lunch-boxes or insulated mugs with lids: customers could bring their own or pay a \$10 deposit. I've been shown one of the reusable "Keep Cups", disguised as a single-use beaker: lid included, but not insulated. No more polystyrene, wouldn't that be good...but it too can be recycled.

Naturally I buy bulk foods in my own jars at Friends of the Earth in Collingwood: the mind boggles to imagine that process being handled by a giant automated installation at a supermarket!

Among non-reusables aluminium is the champion, it takes far less energy to recycle than to extract from bauxite, and the titanium ringpulls can be used in the manufacture of wheelchairs. Steel is more complicated, the protective coating of tin must first be removed; paper and cardboard have to be de-inked. And it's important to keep plastics in circulation, since they're made from that rapidly dwindling resource, oil.

Trams are converted into restaurants, buses into motor-homes, office buildings and warehouses into apartments, empty shells into body armour for hermit crabs; op shops, outlets for pre-loved clothes, the Trading Post, garage sales also give things a second chance to serve. And obsolete cars, rail carriages or ships can be dumped in the ocean to form artificial reefs providing refuge for small fish – a nice variation on the dead trees and live animals scenario.

Paul Prentice

Our Facebook page now has over 500 friends

If you haven't already done so, check out our wonderful Facebook page, we're sure you'll 'like' it.

Just point your web browser toward www.facebook.com/FriendsofMerriCreek

and click on 'Like' to get automatic updates to group activities and news.

Post & win: We love your Merri Creek stories, so we are now offering a free bird book for the best post to our Facebook page each month.

And we're on Instagram too

Smartphone users with the Instagram app can now share photos with #merricreek #merricreektrail hashtags at Instagram @friendsofmerricreek

A Hermit Crab (image from wonderopolis.org). Interestingly, a Hermit Crab has been filmed trying on different shells to get the right fit.



Dick's Witticisms

Some more witty one-liners from FoMC Life Member, Dick Harcourt:

If at first you don't succeed, destroy all evidence that you tried.

My mother's menu consisted of two choices, take it or leave it.

Fool's gold is at the end of the rainbow. The real stuff's along the way.

Friends of Edgars Creek Focus

Hello for the first time in 2015! I thought it would be good to update recent news for the Friends of Edgars Creek.

Our AGM has seen me retain the President mantle: I can now claim to be the longest serving President of our group, though I have to acknowledge I'm only the second one! Rob and Irene will again partner as our "Secretaries" and the Treasurer role has been taken up by Stephen Northey: it is great to have the Immediate-past President back on the committee as an office bearer. Stephen has taken on the task after the departure of our inaugural Treasurer, Anita Morgan: I would like to acknowledge her outstanding contribution to FoEC with eight years of service as Treasurer. Rob "Robstock" Burnett will continue as Works Manager, with Julie Brown taking on the catering again in 2015. I would like to thank the committee for their great efforts in 2014 and again so far in 2015; I think that only those that have been in these positions truly appreciate the time and effort that is 'volunteered' to make our groups possible. Well done!

We have begun planting again and our calendar of events is set for 2015. For May we will be engaged in Melbourne Water sponsored projects at our "Willows site" (where there used to be willows in case you are worried), and then at the Ronald Street concrete channel. The World Environment Day planting activity this year, which is sponsored by Moreland City Council and runs in conjunction with FoMC, is scheduled for May 31st. Given that this usually falls in June, FoEC has decided to run our annual Walk and Talk activity on the regular "third Sunday" spot in June (though we are yet to confirm our activity for this event). For July we return to the upper escarpment area to the Sheoaks woodland; in August the Gooseneck Meander site will expand up the hill towards Conga foods (the old Kodak distribution site); we finish the planting season in September at the Kodak bridge as we consolidate our west bank expansion around the gooseneck site. Our July, August and September activities

are supported by Satterley Pty Ltd: we thank them for a renewed three year support program that will expand upon their support through 2012-14 with project and equipment support through 2015-17.

A quick reminder that FoEC can be found on the web at www.foec.org.au and on Facebook – just look for Edgars Creek: an easy and convenient way to get prompting reminders for all our events throughout the year.

See you on the creek!

David Pavone President Friends of Edgars Creek



We have recently been visited by a gorgeous little echidna who had taken a real liking to the Edgars Creek area. It has not been sighted for a few weeks now, however it spent several months in the area around the footbridge and gooseneck area. We look forward to enhancing the local habitat further in the years ahead so we can see more of our indigenous fauna like this one!

Come along to these special events:

Mother's Day 'Planting up the Gap' & BBQ

Sunday 10 May, 10am-12.30pm

East end of Lorne St Fawkner, Melway 18A5

Help Mother Earth by planting indigenous plants to add to the habitat corridor along Merri Creek. Afterwards, enjoy a free barbecue with vegetarian and Halal options. This is the first event funded by the Merri Creek Environment Fund from community donations, so it deserves our strong support.

Family Grasslands Day

Sunday 24 May, 10:30am-2pm

Bababi Marning (Cooper St Grasslands), at gate opposite 111 Metrolink Circuit, Campbellfield. Melway 180 J12.

Support us at this event where we aim to attract interest from local people after the bird survey earlier that day.

You'll be able to see and handle live lizards and snakes, marvel at butterflies in a special enclosure, then enjoy a free barbecue with vegetarian and Halal options. Funded by Parks Victoria in celebration of our 25th anniversary.



People at a Fawkner planting in August 2014.

MAY

Saturday 2: MECCARG* Site Maintenance

Meet at Connolly Ave Coburg, south of Murray Rd bridge, 1–3pm. Melway 18 A11. Wear sturdy footwear and gloves. Contact: Melissa 0417 255 873 or www.facebook.com/meccarg.

Saturday 2: Sumner Loving Weed Workshop

Merri Park Wetland, Northcote, Sumner Ave near Traill St, 1.30–3.30pm. Melway 30 C8. Help restore this fantastic almost natural wetland area in the heart of the suburbs, while you learn about local weeds. Funded by Communities for Nature. Phone Ray or Monica at MCMC 9380 8199.

Saturday 2: Free Movie – Cane Toads: The Conquest

Riverside Community Activity Centre, 8 Doreen Rogen Way, South Morang (Melway 183 G12) 1–3pm. Enjoy a presentation about one of Melbourne's invasive frogs, then watch the quirky documentary about Australia's most invasive amphibian. Bookings: Jane on 9380 8199 or jane@mcmc.org.au

Sunday 3: Litter Clean Up – Reservoir

Ngarri-djarrang (Central Creek Grassland) Davidson St Reservoir, 10am–12noon. Melway 8 B12. Phone Paul 9489 5062.

Sunday 3: Streamteam Water Quality Testing

Upstream of St Georges Rd bridge, enter from Miller St, Nth Fitzroy, 2–3.30pm. Melway 30 C10. Phone: 9354 9885.

Sunday 10: Mother's Day

'Planting up the Gap' & BBQ

East end of Lorne St Fawkner, 10am–12.30pm. Melway 18A5. Help Mother Earth by planting indigenous plants to add to the habitat corridor along Merri Creek. Afterwards, enjoy a free barbecue with vegetarian and Halal options. Funded by the Merri Creek Environment Fund and Moreland City Council. Phone Ray or Monica at MCMC 9380 8199.

Thursday 14: Talk – Birds of northern Melbourne's creeks and grasslands

Hume Global Learning Centre Craigieburn, Central Park Ave (cnr Aitken Blvd), 8:00pm. Melway 386 F7. Speaker Dean Ingwersen, from Birdlife Australia.

Sunday 17: Second Bird Survey for 2015

9 sites along the Merri. See Page 3 for details.

Sunday 17: Northcote Gorge Planting & BBQ

Enter from East St off Westgarth St Northcote and follow the flags, 10am–12.30pm. Melway 30 G 11. Help restore the Merri Creek Habitat Corridor at this site, with "gorgeous" views! Funded by Darebin City Council. Phone Ray or Monica at MCMC 9380 8199.

Sunday 17: Friends of Edgars Creek Planting:

Stream bank revegetation along the concrete channel area. Ronald St North Coburg, 1–3pm. Melway 18 A9. Funded by Melbourne Water Community Grant. Phone David on 0428 130 268.

Monday 18: Habitat Gardening Presentation

7–9pm CERES Ecohouse. Funded by Communities for Nature, and supported by Darebin City Council. Numbers limited so please register early with Ray or Monica 9380 8199 or admin@mcmc.org.au

Sunday 24: Second Bird survey for 2015 at Bababi Marning

See Page 3 for details. To be followed by the event below.

Sunday 24: Family Grasslands Day

Bababi Marning (Cooper St Grasslands), at gate opposite 111 Metrolink Circuit, Campbellfield, 10:30am–2pm. Melway 180 J12. See and handle live lizards and snakes, marvel at butterflies in a special enclosure, then enjoy a free barbecue with vegetarian and Halal options. Funded by Parks Victoria in celebration of our 25th anniversary.

EVENTS

Thursday 28: Waterwatch Training

Become a citizen scientist by learning how to test water quality of your local creek. CERES, Van Raay Centre, room 3, 10am–3.30pm. Register with Jane on 9380 8199 or jane@mcmc.org.au

Sunday 31: World Environment Day Planting, Litter Clean-up & BBQ:

Edgars and Merri Creek confluence (basketball stadium), North Coburg, 10am–12.30pm. Melway 18 A10. Celebrate World Environment Day (5/6), with other local Friends groups. Funded by Moreland City Council. Phone Ray or Monica at MCMC 9380 8199.

JUNE

Saturday 6: MECCARG*

Venus Transit Planting

Meet at the Murnong Circles, Connolly Ave Coburg, south of Murray Rd bridge, 1–3pm. Melway 18 A11. Wear sturdy footwear and gloves Contact: Melissa 0417 255 873 or www.facebook.com/meccarg.

Sunday 7: Litter Clean Up – East Brunswick

Clara St, 10am–12noon. Melway 30 A5. Phone Paul 9489 5062.

Sunday 7: Streamteam Water Quality Testing

Upstream of St Georges Rd bridge, enter from Miller St, Nth Fitzroy, 2–3.30pm. Melway 30 C10. Phone: 9354 9885.

Saturday 13: Planting – Ngarri-djarrang (Central Creek) Grasslands, Snake handler & BBQ

Davidson St, Reservoir Melway Map 8B12 Planting will further the decades-long work by community, council and MCMC to protect and restore this wonderful wildflower grassland. Funded by the 25th Anniversary of National Landcare Fund and Darebin City Council.

Sunday 21: Friends of Edgars Creek Educational Session

For details see www.foec.org.au Phone David on 0428 130 268.

Saturday 27: Sunbury Rings Planting

Wirilda Crt, (Parking off Hopbush Ave) Sunbury 10 am–12.30pm. Melway Map 362 F12 Help establish and enhance Box-Ironbark revegetation at the entrance to the Sunbury Rings Reserve, and learn about this culturally significant site. Funded by the Wurundjeri Council. Phone Ray or Monica at MCMC 9380 8199.

JULY

Saturday 4: MECCARG* Planting indigenous species

Meet at Connolly Ave Coburg, south of Murray Rd bridge, 1–3pm. Melway 18 A11. Wear sturdy footwear and gloves. Contact: Melissa 0417 255 873 or www.facebook.com/meccarg

Sunday 5: Litter Clean Up – North Coburg

Keady St, 10am–12noon. Melway 17 J8. Phone Paul 9489 5062.

Sunday 5: Streamteam Water Quality Testing

Upstream of St Georges Rd bridge, enter from Miller St, Nth Fitzroy, 2–3.30pm. Melway 30 C10. Phone: 9354 9885.

Sunday 12: Third of 5 woody weed control Block B Bababi Marning

Help to rid these native grasslands of Broom, Gorse and Briar Rose bushes. Light refreshments provided. Meet at gate opposite 111 Metrolink Circuit Campbellfield, 10am–12.30pm. Melway 180 K12. Phone Ray 0422 989 166.

Saturday 18: Sumner Loving Planting & BBQ

Merri Park Wetland, Northcote, Sumner Ave near Traill St, 1.30–3.30pm. Melway 30 C8, follow the flags. Help restore this fantastic almost natural wetland area in the heart of the suburbs. Funded by Communities for Nature. Phone Ray or Monica at MCMC 9380 8199.

Sunday 19: Friends of Edgars Creek Planting

Sheoak Woodlands escarpment planting. Access from Ronald St or Livingstone St, North Coburg – and follow the signs to the site, 1–3pm. Funded by Melbourne Water Grant. Phone David on 0428 130 268.

Sunday 26: Darebin City Council National Tree Day Planting

Edwardes Lake Park, off Griffiths St Reservoir, 10am–12.30pm. Melway 18 E5. Light Refreshments provided.

Sunday 26: Yarra City Council National Tree Day Planting & BBQ

Kevin Bartlett Reserve, Burnley 10am–12.30pm. Melway 59 B1. Funded by Yarra City Council. Phone Ray or Monica at MCMC 9380 8199.

AUGUST

Saturday 1: MECCARG* Planting indigenous species

Meet at Connolly Ave Coburg, south of Murray Rd bridge, 1–3pm. Melway 18 A11. Wear sturdy footwear and gloves. Contact: Melissa 0417 255 873 or www.facebook.com/meccarg

Sunday 2: Planting & Litter Clean Up at Strettle Wetland

Friends of Merri Creek site near Strettle Wetland Thornbury, 10am–1 pm. Melway 30 B3. Help look after the site managed by the Friends with the support of the Darebin Bush Crew. Light refreshments afterwards. Contact Martin 0403 942 965.

Sunday 2: Streamteam Water Quality Testing

Upstream of St Georges Rd bridge, enter from Miller St, Nth Fitzroy, 2–3.30pm. Melway 30 C10. Phone: 9354 9885.

*MECCARG = Merri & Edgars Creek Confluence Area Restoration Group

Friends of Merri Creek Inc.

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