

Friends of Skeleton Creek & Altona Bay Wetlands Inc.



August 2016 Newsletter

NEXT ACTIVITY:

Planting Day

Sunday 28th August

**1 pm to 3 pm, Bromage Close,
Hoppers Crossing**

[Melway Map 203 B11]

We're calling on all the help we can get as we have 600 native grasses and shrubs to go in. If you can come a bit earlier to help us place the plant tubes out, before the rest of the volunteers arrive, that would be appreciated.

As always, conservation rangers from Wyndham Council will work with us. Afternoon tea is provided.

Hope to see you there for a healthy outdoor conservation activity!

Further information from FoSC Secretary, Denice Perryman, 0429 167 013.

[Please note this activity was incorrectly publicised in our newsletter as taking place on Sunday 14 August]

PAST ACTIVITY

Bumper Crowd

Our alternative National Tree Day planting at Markham Way/Creek Waters Close, Altona Meadows, on Sunday 24th July, had a bumper crowd of volunteers!

Some of us arrived one hour earlier to put out the plant tubes at the two planting spots on Creek Waters Close. It was just as well we did - as we had 45 turn up, including our local Hobsons Bay Wetlands councillors Colleen Gates and Carl Marsich.

Thanks to having so many of our Dera Sacha Sauda volunteers and local volunteers meant we were finished by 2:45 pm and ready for our afternoon tea.



We had a bumper crowd of volunteers for our alternative National Tree Day planting at Markham Way/Creek Waters Close, Altona Meadows, Sunday 24th July.



We now seem to have a solid core of local volunteers coming regularly - a dream of FoSC joint founders Angela Whiffin and Denice Perryman for many a year!

Continued next page

Continued from Page 1



Creek Waters Close was the last site to be planted on the day.

Interpretative Signage Coming Along

We had a very productive FoSC signage subcommittee meeting at Denice's home on Tuesday 12th July with Bob Winters, our project manager, who took our ideas away to work on. We now have draft ideas to discuss. We're planning on seven to 10 signs along the creek.

The next stage in the process will be to get Fran Collings, HBCC Graphic Designer, to give us some specifications to take to a sign maker to get some quotes. Then we will know how many designs we will need.

Bat Boxes Going Up

For FoSC's Greg Orr's microbat box project, we have found a local bat box maker - Ian Miller, who we are paying with our generous grant money from the Altona Lions Club.

Denice has asked FoSC volunteer Matthew Nielsen (who came to our last planting on 24th July) if he would install the boxes on suitable trees along the creek in Altona Meadows - and he has agreed. Other than working in software systems sales, Matthew is an abseiler and used to do tree lopping in his native USA, and has all the specialist gear to do the job.

Skeleton Creek from Above

John Dawes is not just droning on - he's had results of getting a copy of Melbourne Water's aerial drone footage over Skeleton Creek.

John followed up our Melbourne Water's Gerard Morel discussion of the drone video footage (though we had the impression it was the length of Skeleton Creek and not just from Palmers Rd to the Waterhaven Estate, Point Cook). John has edited down the 1.12 GB, 14 minute video, to a short 1:10 minute version, with music, and put it on our FoSC Facebook page. Worth watching!

<https://www.facebook.com/friendsofskeletoncreek/vid eos>



The Friends of Skeleton Creek & Altona Bay Wetlands Inc. gratefully acknowledge the support of Melbourne Water

'Suburb to Sea' Conservation Field Day

Sunday 18th September, 10:30 – 13:30

Cunningham's Swamp Reserve

Fongeo Drive (near corner Marlin Cres), Point Cook

This event by the Point Cook Open Spaces Community Group is focusing on the problems our suburban litter is having on our waterways, fish and bird life.

Funded by Wyndham City Council, speakers from Melbourne Water, Wyndham Council conservation team and water departments and NatureWest will explain the significance of our local creeks and our precious wetlands, and the conservation efforts being undertaken.

A light meal will be provided after the formal talks. There is no seating provided, so it's recommended to bring BYO camp chairs or a bush rug.

Organiser Bruce Boddington of Point Cook Open Spaces (a regular at our FoSC working bees) has invited FoSC to set up an information table with NatureWest. Denice Perryman thought she could attend, then found she couldn't, so John and Kristine have volunteered in her place to set up an information table to promote our group.

Registration is essential through Eventbrite:

<https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/suburb-to-sea-conservation-field-day-tickets-26478392585>

Further enquiries to Bruce Boddington on 8376 4170.



Denice's FoSC Conservation Bike Ride

Denice led this bike ride to Point Cook Coastal Park on Sunday 17th July. We only had four participants - Angela Whiffin, John Dawes, Kristine Konings and Denice, Perryman (*pictured above*) but still had an enjoyable ride, albeit on a cool and mostly cloudy winter's day.

Denice and Angela saw Yellow-Rumped Thornbills and a Willy Wagtail at our Creek Waters Close planting site before we met up with Kristine and John at the end of Merton St. At the Point Cook/Sanctuary Lakes footbridge and beyond we Spotted Stilts, Masked Lapwings, Coots, Dusky Moorhens the ubiquitous Swampheens.

There were quite a number of visitors at the Point Cook Coastal Park picnic grounds, where we had our BYO lunch.

Next FoSC Ride

Our next FoSC conservation bike ride on Tuesday 13th September is to Ceres, the not-for-profit, sustainability

Continued next page

Continued from Page 2

centre and urban farm located on 4.5 hectares on the Merri Creek in East Brunswick. John Dawes, a member of BayWest Bicycle User Group, has volunteered to organise this event as the lead rider.

John plans to ride from Spotswood (carpark, opposite the Westgate punt jetty) along the Capital City Trail and Merri Creek - a round trip of approx 34 km. All riders are expected to have bicycles in sound condition, and will need to sign a Friends of Skeleton Creek ride insurance disclaimer form before we ride off.

Further enquiries to John Dawes on 0408 663 376. More up-to-date details closer to the date will be on our FoSC Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/friendsofskeletoncreek/>

Did you know?

Indigenous History of Skeleton Creek Catchment

By John Dawes

When the Europeans came in 1835 the caretakers of the lower Skeleton Creek catchment were the Yalukit-willam (pronounced Yull-loo-kit wee-lum) clan of the Boon wurrung people or language group. Yalukit-willam means 'river home' or 'people of the river'.

The Yalukit-willam were the westernmost of the Boon wurrung clans, whose estate was from the top of Port Phillip Bay to the mouth of the Werribee River, including St Kilda, Williamstown, Altona and Point Cook.

At the northern source of Skeleton Creek, near Mount Cottrell, west of Caroline Springs, the indigenous caretakers were the Kurung-jang-balluk clan of the Woi wurrung people or language group. Kurung-jang-balluk means 'red ground people', referring to the red basalt soils in their estate. The Yalukit-willam most likely shared their resources with the Kurung-jang-balluk.


Kulin Nation

The Yalukit-willam and Kurung-jang-balluk neighbours were allied with other clans of the Kulin group of languages of indigenous nations in Central and Southern Victoria.

One of the Yalukit-willam leaders and very well-known indigenous spokesperson in early Melbourne was Derrimut.

Subsequent events showed Derrimut's faith in his friendship with leading settlers to be misplaced. Nevertheless, today the western Melbourne suburb of Derrimut honours his name and memory.

Waterways defined the boundaries of most of Melbourne's clans. Boon wurrung lands were mainly those with streams that flowed to the sea. Skeleton Creek supplied fish, waterbirds, reptiles, small mammals, and eels from swamps (in autumn).

Water plants supplied food and baskets to wrap and cook the abundant yam daisy (*Microseris* species, called 'murnong' by the Yalukit-willam); when harvesting the yam daisy, a portion of the tuberous root was left to be harvested the next season. 

Walk & Talk with 'Nature's Rubik' Writer

Denice Perryman, FoSC Secretary, and John Dawes, FoSC Vice-President/Publicity Officer, recently had a long walk along the Altona Meadows' side of the creek with Tom Parkinson, writer and TV and film producer, who writes a monthly article called 'Nature's Rubik' for the Sanctuary Lakes Resort website.

Tom, a Sanctuary Lakes Resort resident, wanted to write about our creek to get Sanctuary Lakes people out walking along the creek and looking at the flora and fauna. He also encouraged locals to join us.

Denice gave Tom the plant names via FoSC President Angela Whiffin. He wrote about *Dianella brevicaulis* (coast flax lily), *Acacia mearnsii* (black wattle), and *Eucalyptus camaldulensis* (river red gum).



Denice Perryman with Tom Parkinson at Carinza Ave, Altona Meadows, a FoSC planting site. Photo below was taken opposite Bruce Comben Reserve, Altona Meadows.



Tom also passed on to us that Skeleton Creek links a series of basalt rock springs - starting at Mount Cottrell and running all the way south into the Cheetham Wetlands. His article has now been published at:

http://www.sanctuarylakesresort.com.au/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=31&Itemid=341

Archaeological Sites

In the Wyndham Council municipality there are over 10 archaeological sites, once large campsites, which indicate social and economic activity by Aboriginal residents between the Werribee River and Skeleton Creek. In the

Continued next page

Continued from Page 3

Hobsons Bay Council area a number of archaeological sites of significance to the indigenous community are located throughout the municipality, particularly along the coastal trail.

Several sites have been found on the banks of Skeleton Creek, outside of the former Cheetham Saltworks. These sites may be part of a continuous line of occupation on both north and south banks of the creek.

[References: Susan Priestley, 1988, 'Altona - A Long View', Hargreen Publishing & City of Altona; Dr Ian D Clark, 2011, 'The Yalukit-willam - The First People of Hobsons Bay', Hobsons Bay City Council; Myer Eidelson, 2014, 'Yalukit-willam - The River People of Port Phillip', City of Port Phillip; 'The First People of Hobsons Bay', Hobsons Bay City Council, http://www.hobsonsbay.vic.gov.au/Community/History/Demographics/The_First_People_of_Hobsons_Bay; Gary Presland, 'Wyndham's Aboriginal past' Wyndham City Council, <http://www.wyndhamhistory.net.au/items/show/1528>

This article is also found at 'About Friends of Skeleton Creek & Altona Bay Wetlands Inc.' Facebook page, under 'Long Description' https://www.facebook.com/friendsofskeletoncreek/about/?entry_point=page_nav_about_item

Wyndham Seniors Festival Walk

Wyndham City Council is organising a Seniors Festival Walk along Skeleton Creek from Tarneit on Wednesday 26th October. Angela, Denise, John D and Kristine have volunteered to help our group on the day. More information to come.

VNPA's FriendsNET Newsletter

The Victorian National Parks Association (VNPA) has published its FriendsNET August newsletter. Worth a read!

VNPA is an independent, non-profit, membership-based group, which exists to protect Victoria's unique natural environment and biodiversity through the establishment and effective management of national parks, conservation reserves and other measures.

The link to the FriendsNET newsletter page is:

<http://vnpa.org.au/page/volunteer/victorian-environment-friends-network/victorian-environment-friends-network-newsletter>

FRIENDS OF SKELETON CREEK

2016 CALENDAR

**** Starting and finishing time of activities are 1 pm to 3 pm, unless otherwise advised.**

Sun 28 Aug - Bromage Close, Hoppers Crossing

Sun 25 Sep - Bromage Close, Hoppers Crossing

Sun 23 Oct - Merton St/Markham Way, Altona Meadows

Sun 27 Nov - Bromage Close, Hoppers Crossing

Note: sometimes we may need to adjust our plans close to the time of each activity.

Friends of Skeleton Creek meetings are held the first Wednesday in the month, starting at 7:30 pm, Old Laverton School, Altona Meadows (corner Kiora St and Cameron Ave).

The next FoSC meeting is on Wednesday 7th September. All are welcome.

Friends of Skeleton Creek & Altona Bay Wetlands Inc

Membership

Your volunteering at our activities is highly valued, even if you can only find time to contribute a few hours during the year. Membership is not compulsory, but it can help you feel more connected with our group.

Cost is: Individual FoSC Membership/Mailing List - \$10.00; Family FoSC Membership/Mailing List - \$15.00

Membership is effective from the AGM date of 4th November 2015 through to the next AGM and renewal date of 2nd November 2016. Payment details are on the FoSC Membership Form.

You can request the membership form any time by emailing: friendsofskeletoncrk@gmail.com

FoSC Newsletter Subscription

Email Changes? Unsubscribe?

If you want to advise of a change to your email address or unsubscribe from this newsletter, please email us with the necessary details to: friendsofskeletoncrk@gmail.com

Friends of Skeleton Creek Committee

| Secretary | President | Vice President |
|---|--|--|
| Denise Perryman deniceperryman1@gmail.com | Angela Whiffin angelawhiff@hotmail.com | John Dawes dawesj2@gmail.com |
| Tel 0429167013, 93158072 | Tel 0430551631, 93692892 | Tel 0408663376 |
| Treasurer | Postal Address | Facebook Community Page |
| Ewen Cowie de.cowie@bigpond.net.au | 12 Hopetoun Court Altona Meadows 3028 | Administrator John Dawes |
| Tel 93158603 | CAV Incorporation No. A0029721P | Friends of Skeleton Creek Email |
| | | friendsofskeletoncrk@gmail.com |