

Friends of Skeleton Creek & Altona Bay Wetlands Inc.



July 2016 Newsletter

NEXT ACTIVITY:

Planting Day

Sunday 24th July, 1 pm to 3 pm
Creek Water Close, Altona Meadows
[Melway Map 208 D3]

This is our alternative National Tree Day event, which is one week earlier than the official National Tree Day on 31st July. Our alternative day will make it less demanding for our HBCC Ranger Libby Rigby having to assist the other conservation friends groups planting in Hobsons Bay on National Tree Day.

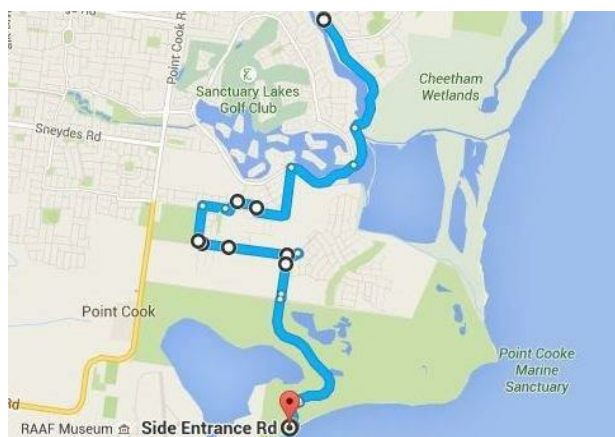
We will have 600 plants to go in at two sites - quite close to each other, near the playground in Creek Water Close, which runs off Markham Way, Altona Meadows. The usual reminder: wear comfortable outdoor work clothes and sturdy footwear (suitable for the weather conditions). Gloves and tools are provided, as is afternoon tea. This will be a busy day - so all volunteers are most welcome! Further enquiries to Denice Perryman, 0429 167 013.

Conservation Bike Ride

Point Cook Coastal Park, Sunday 17th July
12:15 pm

Weather permitting, this will be a bike ride to bring your bird book (or smart-phone bird app) and binoculars! It's a BYO ride - BYO your lunch and drinks, as we're not going near any shops. Our lead rider is FoSC Secretary Denice Perryman.

We start out at 12:15 pm from Merton St, Skeleton Creek end, Altona Meadows.



We had a good turn out for our Bromage Close activity on Sunday 26th June with 25 attending, and finishing just on time for afternoon tea.

Last Activity

Our last activity on Sunday 26th June at Bromage Close, Hoppers Crossing, we had 622 grasses, plants and trees to put in, in addition to guards and stakes, so this was our largest activity to date. The Dera Sacha Sauda Indian group had four

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We'll ride south along the shared path, over the Skeleton Creek footbridge, into Sanctuary Lakes, then into the Point Cook Coastal Park via the Side Entrance Road. We'll look for small birds, parrots and raptors at Spectacle Lakes on the way to the end. The ride is approx. 19-20 km round trip.

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 Denice Perryman on 0429 167 013.

Bromage Close activity cont. from Page 1

activities on the day, some of them very large, so thanks to the volunteers they sent.

Angela spread the poa tussock grasses further apart, so we still had some fine tuning to go.

John Stirk reported that the trowel was ideal for planting into the jute mat on the slope, but the holes cut into the mat needed to be larger.

By having some us (John Dawes, Kristine, John Stirk, Greg and Denise, along with Sash and Darren from Wyndham CC) coming one hour earlier to spread the plants, guards and stakes had been vital to the day's success.

It was also great to see some new faces join us - like Casey and Nicole Armstrong, among all the willing workers.



Brothers Rhys and Braydon Findlow from 1st Hoppers Crossing Scout Group were there to lend a hand with mum Sonya.



Greening the Pipeline

Williams Landing parkland development

Melbourne Water, Wyndham City Council, City West Water and VicRoads have received a grant to create a parkland in Williams Landing along a 100 metre section of the historic Main Outfall Sewer reserve, next to the Federation Bicycle Trail.

The Williams Landing parkland is the pilot site for the 'Greening the Pipeline' project.

The 'Greening the Pipeline' initiative is next targeted to the needs of the local community along a 3.7 km stretch of the reserve that runs through Williams Landing, Truganina and Hoppers Crossing, between Lawrie Emmins Reserve and Skeleton Creek (known as Zone 5: Community Connectivity).

The project aims to revitalise the entire 27 km Main Outfall Sewer reserve, from Millers Road in Brooklyn to the Western Treatment Plant in Werribee, into a natural and vibrant space that will connect communities and provide a unique place for neighbours to meet, play and relax.

The project is endorsed by 'Greening the West' and its 23-organisation strong partnership of councils, govern-

ment agencies, and industry and community groups committed to greening Melbourne's west.

Our FoSC group was invited to the 'Greening the Pipeline' workshop on 28th June, but no one from our group could attend. We will follow up for future involvement.

Lions Fund Bat Boxes

The Lions Club of Altona have now presented us with a cheque for \$300 for FoSC member Greg Orr's microbat boxes. This should get us about six boxes.

At our FoSC July meeting, Greg reported that his proposed bat box manufacturer has retired. Angela Whiffin has since been in discussion with Ian Miller (husband of NatureWest co-ordinator Colleen Miller) who may make the boxes. Greg will contact Ian directly with the design he would like, including specifying marine ply.

Greg and Denise will select and photograph suitable trees, and also look at islands in the creek that may be suitable to create a wildlife habitat. The choice of trees and habitat to fix the boxes and the photos will be sent to Andrew Webster, Hobsons Bay CC senior ranger, for his approval.

Matthew Nielsen, an abseiler, who comes to some of our Friends activities, could possibly be involved in putting up the bat boxes.

FoSC Signage Subcommittee to Meet

After receiving the \$2000 Hobsons Bay City Council grant towards our interpretative/educational signage along Skeleton Creek, and sorting out the graphic design element, we have now planned our first signage subcommittee meeting for Tuesday 12th July, 7:30 pm, at Denice's home in Altona Meadows.

Our signage subcommittee is Denice Perryman, Angela Whiffin, John Dawes, Greg Orr, and Bob Winters.

Ideas to date to go on the signage are: Denice - snakes and frogs, weeds, phragmites and things that live in them (water hens, cisticola, etc); Greg - water rat habitat as a focus for water quality, native fish; Bob Winters - birds; Angela - indigenous plants to preserve the environment; John D: indigenous history; Andrew Webster - frogs and snakes.

Bob Winters is the 'interpretative content producer' (not the graphic designer) and is providing the nature values, messages and photos. The graphic design element will be done further down the track, once we get approval of extra funding, including for construction, in coming months.

Our local Wetlands Ward councillors Cr Colleen Gates and Cr Carl Marsich have informed us that \$20,000 is set aside in the next HBCC budget to be used for our Skeleton Creek signage design and construction.



FoSC Sign's Old PO Box

The 'Indigenous Planting' sign on the Seabrook side of the creek that has our old Laverton PO box address needs updating. John Dawes will investigate with Denice how to remove the old information, as we now use Denice's home address as our FoSC postal address (for convenience and to save PO box charges).

If anyone knows of any other FoSC signs with outdated information like this one along Skeleton Creek please let us know.

The photo above of Shelley Kerr (left) and Ronel Burger of The Altona Adventurers (a social walking group which Kristine and John D belong) is from The Altona Adventurers Facebook page.

'The Bernie Fox I knew'

By Denice Perryman

In the June 'Park Watch' newsletter of the Victorian National Parks Association (VNPA) there's an article on the recent passing of Bernie Fox, a past president of the VNPA and passionate conservationist.

His passing is a reminder of the incredible value of the commitment made from foresighted people like Bernie in looking after our natural environment.

To quote the tribute written by Paul Dodd, from Birdlife Australia, which I feel aptly sums up the Bernie I knew: "With no previous experience, I found myself studying the habits and behaviour of our local wildlife, and also found out something else about Bernie - hang around with him long enough and you'd find yourself doing something you didn't think you could do."

That was him to a tee. Goodbye, Bernie.



Getting Ready for 2017 Grants

The grants for Melbourne Water open in October, but we're planning now where we want the grant money to go.

Wyndham CC were keen to continue at Bromage Close in Hoppers Crossing, and perhaps in Tarneit, where we have an interested resident wanting plantings there.

The potential sites in Hobsons Bay were the rocks or the mound near the Skeleton Creek footbridge, off Ravenswood Crt, Seabrook, or the area further south of the creek nearer Denice's home.

Andrew Webster, HBCC senior ranger, is getting a list of sites together for us, too.

Once we have our sites worked out, we will contact Gerard Morel, our man at Melbourne Water, for a 3-way onsite meeting.

Membership

Friends of Skeleton Creek & Altona Bay Wetlands Inc.

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

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Please send to: friendsofskeletoncrk@gmail.com

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FRIENDS OF SKELETON CREEK

2016 CALENDAR

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

Sun 24 Jul - National Tree Day (alternative day), Creek Water Close, Altona Meadows

Sun 14 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).

All are welcome! The next FoSC meeting is on Wednesday 3rd August.

Friends of Skeleton Creek Committee

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