

# Friends of Skeleton Creek & Altona Bay Wetlands Inc.



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## May 2015 Newsletter

### UPCOMING ACTIVITY:

**SUNDAY 24<sup>th</sup> MAY, 1 PM - 3 PM  
BUMPER PLANTING DAY  
MARKHAM WAY / MERTON ST  
ALTONA MEADOWS**

This is our biggest planting in modern times so we urge all who can attend to assist us. With all the holes already pre-dug, we aim to add 435 indigenous plants to an established planting. Denice has already contacted Narpinder from the Dera Sacha Sauda to ask for their assistance. Survival rates from last year's plantings have been good so maybe we can encourage some more rain to help them!

Meet and register at 1 pm at the sign-in table at the corner of Markham Way and the access gate to the Skeleton Creek shared path (the same spot as last month's mulching) (Melway Ref: Map 208, D3).

### A GREAT EDUCATIONAL HIT BY THE CREEK - SEABROOK PRIMARY SCHOOL WATER QUALITY PROJECT

Our group was asked by Seabrook Primary School to be involved in their theme of water quality. Angela Whiffin agreed to do some educational work with 150 students. We had three groups of 50 students come down to the Creek. Angela did a 'walk-and-talk', looking at the catchment ponds leading into the Creek and comparing



*Angela Whiffin did a 'walk-and-talk' with a group of Seabrook Primary School children, looking at the catchment ponds leading into the Creek*

these to the drains straight into the Creek. Litter was also emphasised. Denice and the students put in 150 grasses, and we talked about why we plant along the Creek.

Bob Winters did a water bugs expo, looking at what different bugs indicated about water quality. He also did a 'hopping-up-the-hill' activity, which was a great hit (or hop!).

It was looking huge when we planned it and it stayed huge. We went from 9:30 am to 3 pm, then went home

for a little lie down (once we cleaned the mud off all the things that we took down to the Creek).

Our activities once again had attracted the rain and consequent mud, but not too badly. The students were lovely and interested in the Creek, and the team worked well together.

Angela had put in a huge effort with the planning and school liaising. This showed.

#### Highlights:

- lovely students, most of whom live locally;
- plastic Australian animals and the plants we gave out as prizes;
- hopping competition; and
- the boy who was really upset because he didn't get to hold the fish in his spoon!



*Giving a helping hand planting some of the 150 grasses on the day were sisters Athena (left) and Lexi (right)*

#### Lowlights:

- the bull ant that bit one student;
- the mud;
- Angela raised the issue and was concerned about the amount of dog poo left along the Creek, and what the run-off from this does to the water quality; and
- the fact that there are no litter bins along this stretch of the Creek (Denice will contact both councils concerning the problem).



*The Seabrook Primary School students project was on the theme of water quality along Skeleton Creek*



*Denice Perryman, a retired school teacher, was in her element providing an educational activity for this group of students*

#### FIFTEEN TREES PROJECT OFFER

Chris Gartlan of the Fifteen Trees community project has contacted our group. Her organisation connects local companies with conservation workers to get donations and interest flowing to local works. We would like to put in 90 native trees for the Point Cook area.

Maddie Veale, Flora and Fauna Officer, Wyndham City Council, is investigating the possibilities. She thought of National Tree Day, but we are otherwise engaged, so she is looking further into seeing what we can jointly come up with.

Further information on Fifteen Trees community project at: <http://www.15trees.com.au/>

#### THE TURTLE'S STORY PROGRESSES

Colleen Miller from the Western Metropolitan Catchments Network (WMCN) has asked to use Cath Stephensen's turtle article and photos from our April newsletter on the WMCN website. Cath supplied the article, plus more. Colleen also invited us to visit

Werribee Park to see how her wicking project is progressing there. The Western Metropolitan Catchments Network website is at: <http://www.wmcn.org.au/>

#### NEW PUBLICITY OFFICER

We now have a Publicity Officer. Denice said she thought only important or badly behaved organisations needed one, however, "I could see the difference a professional touch added to our recent newsletters and I managed to talk John Dawes into taking on the role!"

John recently retired from the Department of Defence (Army) as a technical publications editor, and before that worked as a qualified journalist in the trade press. He will be the media contact for press releases, newsletters, NAB employee volunteers liaison, and FoSC flyers.

Anyone who has an interesting story and photos to do with conserving Skeleton Creek, please feel free to contribute. This can still be done through Denice, as the FoSC initial point of contact, on tel 93158072 or email [deniceperryman1@gmail.com](mailto:deniceperryman1@gmail.com)



## **FRIENDS MEET FOR MULCH SPREADING, ALTONA MEADOWS**

Our last month's group activity on Sunday 19th April was mulch spreading, adjacent Skeleton Creek, between Markham Way and Merton St, Altona Meadows. This day gladdened Angela's heart as we're now regularly getting local residents attending and helping in our conservation work.

Thanks to Denise, Paula, Peter, John, Kristine, Narpinder, Angela, Greg, and Nisha. A special thanks to Anamika, who joined us for the first time.

Despite the threatening rain we spread most of the mulch piles that Libby Rigby, our Conservation Ranger for Hobson's Bay City Council, had managed to get on site for us. We even managed a quite civilised afternoon tea, before the rain and wind fully descended.

## **FOSC FACEBOOK PAGE ISSUES**

Friends of Skeleton Creek Facebook page contributors may have noticed that they've not been able to post anything there of late. Peta Keown, administrator of the FoSC Facebook page is working on the issue. It is to do with privacy settings, but she may not be able to get it 'liker' friendly until her Internet connection is also sorted out. "We certainly need people posting to get conversation flowing, otherwise there's no point to the whole page," Peta said.

## **BEST WISHES TO NEIL**

FoSC member Neil Tolliday's brush with the hospital system has had positive outcomes for him. A stent was put into the artery in his leg and circulation has improved. Denise delivered our best wishes and a card to Neil.

## **POINT COOK RD UNDERPASS FLOODING AN ONGOING PROBLEM**

The Point Cook Rd/Skeleton Creek underpass is still a safety hazard for all shared path users when flooding occurs. Colleen Gates, Mayor of Hobson's Bay City Council had informed us that Council had purchased a pump, however, the problem is still not fixed. We will contact Colleen and Carl Marsich, our Wetlands Ward Councillors, again. If this fails, we shall attend a Council meeting with a BayWest Bicycle Users Group representative to get this pedestrian and cycling safety problem fixed once and for all.

## **FRIENDS STAR IN STAR WEEKLY**

Goya Dmytryshchak, the highly-regarded senior journalist from the 'Maribyrnong & Hobsons Bay Star Weekly', contacted Denise to get a publicity shot after we sent her our flyer, advertising our mulching day on



*Some of the Friends of Skeleton Creek volunteers photographed after a mulching day activity adjacent the Creek, between Markham Way and Merton St, Altona Meadows*



*Friends of Skeleton Creek with their backs into mulching on Sunday 19th April*

19<sup>th</sup> April. Denise Perryman and Elizabeth Simpson obliged for the photo-shoot by Star photographer Kristian Scott, which was opposite the 'Denise Perryman Seat', towards end of Merton St, Altona Meadows. So we were in the local paper of 15 April, with the headline "Friends meet to mulch"!

## **UPCOMING MIDWEEK PLANTING**

We have a midweek planting on Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> June, from 10 am - 12 pm, at the Markham Way / Merton St, Altona Meadows, site. This activity is to keep us on track with our big grant from Melbourne Water for this year. We plan to put in 200 plants, which will bring our in-ground total up to 635 plants.

## **HOBSON'S BAY COMMUNITY FUND GRANT**

We have \$1000 to spend from the Hobson's Bay Community Fund grant money. Angela suggested expanding the sloping site on Creek Water Close, Altona Meadows, as this site has done particularly well. Denise will contact Hobson's Bay City Council to see if we can set this up.



## CARINZA AV GRANT COMPLETED

Denice and Angela have now signed off on the 2014/15 Carinza Av, Altona Meadows, grant and it has been sent off to Melbourne Water, together with John Dawes' media release.

Local newspapers were sent the media release, with photos. The 'Hobson's Bay Leader' ran a short paragraph titled 'Project Finishes' in its April 29 issue, while the editor of 'Around Laverton Community Newspaper', Lynne Muir, has told John that she plans to run the story in its June issue. FoSC photos from last July, on National Tree Day, and a more recent one, follow, along with some text extracts from the media release.



What was bare landscape with few trees eight years ago beside Skeleton Creek, off Point Cook Road, Altona Meadows, has been transformed into a lush and sheltered area for people's enjoyment today.

## FRIENDS OF SKELETON CREEK

### 2015 CALENDAR

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

(**Hobson's Bay City Council** activity highlighted in **bold**, Wyndham City Council activity underlined)

**Sun 24 May** - Planting between Markham Way / Merton St, Altona Meadows

**Tues 16 June** - Planting between Markham Way / Merton St, Altona Meadows

Sun 28 June - Planting at Carshalton Crt, Hoppers Crossing

**Sun 26 July** - National Tree Day planting between Markham Way / Merton St, Altona Meadows

Sun 23 August - Planting at Carshalton Crt, Hoppers Crossing

Sun 27 September - Weeding / Maintenance at Catalina Court, Point Cook

**Sun 25 October** - Mulch spreading (if needed), Markham Way / Merton St, Altona Meadows

**Sun 22 November** - Weeding at Clarendon Crt, Seabrook

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

The next FOSSC meeting is on Wed 3 June, 7:30 pm, at the Old School House, Laverton (corner of Kiora St and Cameron Av).



*The Friends of Skeleton Creek gratefully acknowledge the support of Melbourne Water*

The now completed revegetation work and recreation facilities began its transformation with the help of local conservation group Friends of Skeleton Creek, Rotary Club, Hobson's Bay City Council and Melbourne Water.

Since eight years ago, Friends of Skeleton Creek has been actively planting and mulching in this area, which is adjacent to homes in Carinza Avenue, and have made a noticeable difference in the area's biodiversity.

On National Tree Day in July the Friends group had 24 volunteers working to put in 400 indigenous plants, and planted 200 more in September.

The Rotary Club of Laverton Point Cook donated some \$25,000 and worked with Hobson's Bay City Council to design and contributed greatly to the construction of the rotunda (officially opened in 2007), playground, and surrounding garden beds.

The success of the environmental rejuvenation at Carinza Avenue was in no small part due to a \$2640 grant to Friends of Skeleton Creek last year through Melbourne Water's Community Grants program. ☒