

# Friends of Skeleton Creek & Altona Bay Wetlands Inc.



## September 2016 Newsletter

### Angela and Denice Recognised - 25 Years of Community Service

The Friends of Skeleton Creek was formed in 1991 by a group of local people who wanted something done to protect and revegetate the creek environment against the fast growing urban development.

Two of the original founders were Angela Whiffin and Denice Perryman.

On Tuesday evening, 13<sup>th</sup> September, Angela Whiffin, President Friends of Skeleton Creek, and Denice Perryman, Secretary Friends of Skeleton Creek, were presented with a Certificate of Appreciation from Hobsons Bay City Council.



Angela Whiffin and Denice Perryman were presented with their Certificate of Appreciation by Hobsons Bay Mayor Councillor Peter Hemphill.

This was in recognition for 25 years of dedicated service to the community and the environment through their ongoing work with the Friends of Skeleton Creek.

Hobsons Bay Wetlands Ward Councillors Colleen Gates and Carl Marsich made the nomination.

Cr Colleen Gates said Denice's and Angela's hard work over the 25 years was a remarkable achievement and was truly appreciated. "It might have been our nomination but I'm sure the sentiment is shared by many people," she said.

"We appreciate all that you both have achieved for the area over the past 25 years," added Cr Carl Marsich.

Denice said: "The recognition was gratifying but, as all volunteers know, we do it because of what we get back from the group - friendship, connection to our area and the environment, and seeing positive changes over time. These are the motivators. We were also able to give a plug when accepting our Certificates for our wonderful Hobsons Bay Conservation Rangers, which Cr Sandra Wilson backed up."

### NEXT ACTIVITY:

#### **Mulching Day**

**Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> September**

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

[Melway Map 203 B11]

We're returning to Bromage Close - where we've put in around 1200 native grasses, shrubs and trees on our June and August planting days - this time to spread mulch to protect the plants from weeds and summer heat. Though it's doubtful we'll be watering on the 25th as our plantings have had their fair share of drenching from the record early September rains. The downpour has caused rising water levels of Skeleton Creek including at our Bromage Close site (*see photo over page*).

Denice has been in touch with Darren Wright, Open Spaces Engagement Officer, Wyndham City Council, and he is arranging mulch to be delivered to the site. We can

*Continued next page*

*Continued from Page 1*

also fix up some of the guards and stakes that may have come loose from the heavy rains.

As always, conservation staff from Wyndham Council will work with us - and afternoon tea will be provided. It could be a bit muddy and wet underfoot so gumboots or bush-walking boots recommended.

Further information about the day from FoSC Secretary, Denice Perryman on 0429 167 013.



*The recent heavy rains have caused the creek's water level to rise up the embankment at Bromage Close. Importantly, the jute matting we laid there has prevented erosion and kept the grasses we planted in place. [Photo courtesy Darren Wright]*

### **Interpretive Signage Grant Through**

Great news! We have been officially informed that the \$20,000 grant for our interpretive signage along the Skeleton Creek Trail has come through; this is in addition to the \$2000 design content grant already received.

In July our local Wetlands Ward councillors Cr Colleen Gates and Cr Carl Marsich informed us that the grant had been set aside in the Hobsons Bay City Council's 2016-17 Annual Budget, as part of the Skeleton Creek Trail upgrade, for our signage design and construction.

We are working on having 6-7 panels erected, from Carinza Ave to the Point Cook footbridge, Altona Meadows, depending on the final quoted cost of the signage design and construction by contractors.

### **Project Progressing Well**

Our interpretive signage project is progressing well with key people from Hobsons Bay City Council, contractors and our FoSC subcommittee of Denice Perryman, Angela Whiffin, John Dawes and Greg Orr.

One of the key people on the project is Andrew Webster, our HBCC Senior Conservation Ranger, who is working through the signage costs and design details with Hayden Goodall of Sardine graphic design studio, in conjunction with our project manager Bob Winters.

Hayden Goodall has completed a number of design projects with Hobsons Bay City Council - including impressive interpretive panels such as the shorebirds signage in Apex Park, Altona, and more recently in Altona Coastal Park.

Our subcommittee reviewed Bob Winters' first draft (compiled from his first meeting with us on 12th July), and we were very pleased with his efforts. Denice pre-

sented the draft with John Dawes' and her suggested changes for discussion at the September FoSC meeting, and minor changes were recommended. John has since collated these changes and sent the amended draft to Bob.

Bob had three rules for any changes:

- Rule 1 - can't extend the amount of text unless there isn't much there;
- Rule 2 - if someone wants something new/added - they must suggest what must come out in its place;
- Rule 3 - Bob isn't sensitive so go for it!

### **New Logo for Friends of Skeleton Creek**

Our current logo does not suit our needs in promoting our group on different formats, such as a wide banner used at field days, or to use on other publicity/promotional layouts. A new FoSC logo is also required for our new interpretive signage.

Seeking a professional and specialised graphic designer, John Dawes initially made contact with Hayden Goodall of Sardine graphic design studio, through Andrew Webster. John and Denice had a very productive meeting with Hayden at his home studio in Newport. His draft concepts are due to us for review by 23<sup>rd</sup> September.

### **Greg's Logo 'Ideation Techniques'**

*By Denice Perryman*

At our September FoSC meeting, Greg Orr presented some "ideation techniques" to guide the eight of us present to separately come up with our own logo designs.

It made us focus on what was important and then he got us to develop the other people's ideas into a possible logo, thus making us "let go" of our own designs. I thought it was a fascinating process. Ewen and I came up with more developed concepts the next day, when John and I met with Hayden Goodall of Sardine graphic design studio.

Many thanks to John for his efforts at keeping us moving and focused on this project. John, as our publicity officer, has spent considerable time developing concepts and looking into what makes a good but simple logo from his past publications experience. Thanks also to Greg who took us through an alternative process for developing our logo ideas.

### **Lions Bat Box Publicity**

Bat box publicity shots and official "thank you" to the Altona Lions Club (who donated the cost of making the bat boxes) will be at our next Hobsons Bay Council mulch spreading/maintenance day on Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> October, at Merton St/Markham Way, Altona Meadows.

FoSC's Catherine Curtain (and Altona Lions Club member) had the brilliant idea of getting Lions Club members along to help with our monthly activity and then do a tour of the bat boxes in the trees. Denice is organising a date for FoSC volunteers and abseiler and Friends' supporter Matthew Nielsen to install the boxes before then.

Greg Orr came up with the suggestion for a safe home for our local native microbats along the creek and researched and organised to have four boxes made by Ian Miller (husband of Colleen Miller, coordinator at NatureWest).

## **Last Activity**

### **Another Feel Good Day**

**Sunday 28th August, Bromage Close, Hoppers Crossing**

Denice, John S, John D and Kristine took plants to the site and spread the tubes out about an hour earlier.

Some 35 volunteers (not counting the small children we welcomed) put in 600 native grasses, shrubs, and a few trees, along with stakes and guards.

The day was so well attended - possibly enticed by the warm and sunny weather - that Greg Orr said he couldn't even get parking in Bromage Close.

We had put a call out to Narpinder to request extra hands from her Indian Dera Sacha Sauda 'green army' volunteers - and they did not disappoint.

This was a successful day with a good feel to it; we even spotted a hare out to enjoy the day!

### **Magpie Swooping Mayhem!**

*By Denice Perryman*

I've recently had an unpleasant magpie experience and wanted to warn others.

While bike riding past the playground in Creek Waters Close, Altona Meadows (near our planting day in July) I had a magpie swoop and peck me on the side of the head.

He actually drew blood and completed three perfect "bomb runs" making contact with my face each time.

I finally remembered the same thing happening last nesting season too and I put my hand in the air - and kept it up. This warded off further runs. This magpie seems only to hate bike riders, not walkers.

So if you're riding in the vicinity of the playground, I suggest that you wear eye protection and keep your hand raised!

### **Interesting Facts**

Each year, five to 10 Australians lose an eye through magpie attacks (I have never been swooped while I have an arm high in the air).

Only male magpies swoop - and only some of the males do it. They only swoop in the nesting season while the young are in the nest and stop when the young leave the nest.

Magpies normally mate for life and remain solo if a partner dies - however if a male dies while the female has young she will immediately take a new partner, even one of lower status. Yes, there are snobs in the magpie world too, but pragmatism wins over in these circumstances.



So be aware - and safe bike riding along the creek!

*\* There's even a website dedicated to the magpie swooping season and the reporting of attacks at:*

*<http://www.magpiealert.com/>*

## Strategic Planning

Susie Inglis, Landcare Facilitator at NatureWest, came to our Group Survey Subcommittee meeting at Denice's home on Wednesday 24th August and looked at the information we had collected on our group. She then ran us through the NatureWest Strategic Plan. Denice and John will share the job of producing our strategic plan, which will then come back to the group for comment and possible changes.

## 'Survey123 for ArcGIS'

Wayne Dunn used the 'Susie get-together' on 24th August to go through the digital mapping project he and John Dawes have been working on with NatureWest Coordinator Colleen Miller, along with Parks Victoria intern Nibras Awaja.

Wayne requested from Denice and Angela a list of plant species being planted by the group along Skeleton Creek. Along with other data fields, this information is being added to the customised 'Survey123 for ArcGIS' smartphone app.

We are the 'guinea pigs' for this NatureWest pilot project, which will be rolled out to the other conservation groups in the western catchment in coming months. Wayne and his wife Vicki (regulars at our working bees) are currently on holidays in the USA.

## Boneseed Removal

The boneseed removal near Cheetham Wetlands is supposed to happen soon. FoSC's Greg Orr, a keen boneseed spotter, is to provide Denice the details of the invasive boneseed on Hobsons Bay Council's land - so she can give Andrew Webster one more job to do!

## Keeping Andrew Busy

Our HBCC senior ranger Andrew Webster is looking at sites for our next year's grant from Melbourne Water. Denice has also asked him to do some weed control at Merton St/Markham Way and at Clarendon Crt. He is also taking action on our old Laverton PO Box sign in Seabrook. Through all this he is still pleasant to deal with. Thank you again, Andrew, we very much appreciate your collaborative efforts.

## Erosion Watch

Bernie McCarrick, our Parks Victoria ranger, informed us that there has been significant erosion in Cheetham Wetlands this month, due to the higher tides lately.

## FoSC Bike Ride Cancelled

Our FoSC conservation bike ride from Spotswood to Ceres Environment Park, East Brunswick, on Tuesday 13th September was cancelled due to the wet weather. Stay tuned for this ride again or another alternative ride. FoSC's Wren Brown has offered to lead a ride on his new electric bike - which sounds challenging for the other riders on their non-motorised versions behind him!

## Greens Offer

Colleen Hartland - Greens MP, Western Metropolitan Region, State Upper House, would like to hear from us about any ideas, concerns or interests that may help improve the Western suburbs for local people. If we

## Friends' River Red Gums Planting in Tarneit



*Yasmine, a Tarneit resident, initially contacted us about planting trees to fill in a bare patch near her home. On Monday 22nd August, Yasmine, Angela, Wrenford, Kaye and Denice planted five River Red Gums there. We then enjoyed very nice coffee and cake afterwards. Yasmine will water the young gums - and Wren has given instructions for them to grow rapidly! [Photo by Wren Brown]*

would like her to attend a future event or meet our group to discuss the issues that matter, to contact her. Denice has replied to Colleen thanking her for her offer of assistance if required in the future.

## Wildlife Spotter

Here's a good idea for those with a bit of time: Wildlife Spotter is an online citizen science project. From emus to superb lyrebirds, from bettongs (rat-kangaroos) to bandicoots, from brush turkeys to Tassie devils, and even feral cats and foxes - scientists want to know which species are roaming both in the wild and in urban areas. To find out more, go to <https://wildlifespotter.net.au/about/>

## FRIENDS OF SKELETON CREEK 2016 CALENDAR

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

**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.*

**F**riends 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 5th October. All are welcome.

**FoSC Newsletter Subscription  
Email Changes? Unsubscribe?**

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



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

Friends of Skeleton Creek Committee		
Secretary	President	Vice President / Publicity Officer
Denice Perryman	Angela Whiffin	John Dawes
<a href="mailto:deniceperryman1@gmail.com">deniceperryman1@gmail.com</a>	<a href="mailto:angelawhiff@hotmail.com">angelawhiff@hotmail.com</a>	<a href="mailto:dawesj2@gmail.com">dawesj2@gmail.com</a>
Tel 0429167013, 93158072	Tel 0430551631, 93692892	Tel 0408663376
Treasurer	Postal Address	Facebook Community Page
Ewen Cowie	12 Hopetoun Court	Administrator John Dawes
<a href="mailto:de.cowie@bigpond.net.au">de.cowie@bigpond.net.au</a>	Altona Meadows 3028	Friends of Skeleton Creek Email
Tel 93158603	CAV Incorporation No. A0029721P	<a href="mailto:friendsofskeletoncrk@gmail.com">friendsofskeletoncrk@gmail.com</a>