

Friends of Skeleton Creek & Altona Bay Wetlands Inc.



November 2015 Newsletter

NEXT ACTIVITY:

**'MAINTENANCE DAY', SUNDAY 29TH NOV
1 PM - 3 PM, CLARENDON CRT, SEABROOK**

This activity will include an assessment of the site and rubbish clearing in preparation for next year. This should require fewer helpers, as the site is sloping and has limited space to move around.

The day should give us an idea of how things will work out for our first working bee in February next year.

We have our Melbourne Water grant money for 500 plants, so we plan to have the majority of our planting days in the Hobsons Bay City Council municipality at this Clarendon Court site next year.

As this is a fairly small site, the improvement should be quite spectacular.

Afternoon Tea in the Shade on Mulching Day Sunday 25th October, Merton St/Markham Way Altona Meadows

On a warm day we tackled the large mounds of mulch Andrew Webster, Senior Conservation Ranger, Hobson's Bay City Council, had delivered to us.

We had nine locals help us and were ably assisted by Suzette Rodoreda, Acting Supervisor Conservation & Environment, HBCC.

I think all were glad when time for afternoon tea in the shade arrived.



We didn't get to the end of the

job, so some mulch was left for another spreading day. Most plants now have a good covering of mulch around them to help over the hot dry summer to come.

AGM 2015

**AGM
Report by
Denice
Perryman**

On Wednesday 4th Nov



we held our Annual General Meeting for 2015 at our regular monthly meetings venue at the Old Laverton School House in Altona Meadows.

The 10 people who attended brought food to share. After the sumptuous supper we then had presentations before we got down to the AGM business.

Our Publicity Officer John Dawes prepared a 19-page pictorial PowerPoint slide-show of our activities for the year, which was presented by both Denice and John, with contributions from Angela. Thank you John for putting the detailed presentation together.

This was followed by a slide presentation by our guest speaker Bob Winters. He showed us the many and varied local and migratory birds along the Creek and wetlands. Bob is a leading sustainability educator and also has a wide range of natural history and nature photography skills.

Bob lives opposite Skeleton Creek at Sanctuary Lakes, and we were fortunate to have him show us the birds and animals that inhabit our Creek and Wetlands through his eyes; the birds and animals of which most of us would not have spotted in our walks along the Creek!

For me, the most striking photo was a stand-off between a native water rat and an Australasian bittern (a large, stocky, thick-necked heron-like bird with camouflage-like plumage).

Bob had a lovely selection of photos, many taken from the upper decking of his Sanctuary Lakes home, including those of birds such as herons and egrets making the decking part of their territory. Thank you Bob.

We decided to use Consumer Affairs Victoria's model rules to run our organisation by, as these seemed to suit our needs and we would be compliant with only small changes in our current practice.

Next on the evening was the election of office bearers, as follows:

Continued next page

AGM Report

Continued from Page 1

- Secretary: Denice Perryman
- President: Angela Whiffin
- Vice President: John Dawes
- Treasurer: Ewen Cowie
- Other Committee (optional): Kristine Konings
- Other Committee (optional): Diana Hogg

It was heartening to see an increase to our Committee. Welcome to John Dawes, Kristine Konings and Diana Hogg. A 'thank you' to all past Committee members for their contributions during the year, including Elizabeth Simpson who didn't nominate this year.

We farewell Neil Tolliday who has moved to Werribee and will continue his volunteering efforts in that area, including his involvement with the Western Melbourne Catchments Network.

Our Incorporation has been renewed with Consumer Affairs Victoria for another year and the transition to the online myCAV website registration seemed very smooth.

Denice's full Secretary's Report for 2015 begins on Page 3 of this newsletter.

** The AGM PowerPoint presentation is available upon request by emailing friendsofskeletoncrk@gmail.com. It is in PDF format and 4.6 MB in size.*

WE'RE PUMPED!

Point Cook Rd/Skeleton Creek Underpass

Finally, at last, nearby resident Angela Whiffin was able to report that the Point Cook Rd underpass is water-free during periods of rain now (even during the major down-pour we had first week of November).

This has been a long drawn-out process with HBCC, stretching on well over a year, but the pump is finally installed and working!

... West of the Underpass

West of the Point Cook Rd/Skeleton Creek underpass there is a very rough and uneven stretch of walking/cycling path going up to St Anthony Court, Seabrook.

We have put in a letter of support for a submission from Hobsons Bay City Council to replace this path with something which is safer and more substantial.

Cunningham's Skink Poaching

UPDATE

As reported in October, Wyndham City Council had been very concerned that Cunningham's Skink lizards had been poached from along the Creek.



To try to tackle the problem, Natural Environment Officer Maddie Veale had council staff talk to local residents on Saturday 24th October to see what they knew.

We joined them in their efforts and, with community help, we were able to identify a number of local persons of interest. We are waiting for a final outcome and possible prosecutions.

Melbourne Water Grant 2016 for Growling Grass Frog Habitat



We have applied for a \$5,666 grant from Melbourne Water for 2016. This will be to improve the habitat for the Growling Grass Frog at Bromage Court in Hoppers Crossing. This area was one of our early sites in the Wyndham City Council municipality.

On revisiting it was amazing to see the difference a few years had made to the growth of our plantings and the transformation from a barren site to a more complex environment.

Growling Grass Frogs like a variety of sites with their habitat, and we plan to put in River Red Gums, Einadia and Enchylaena Saltbush (*shown opposite*) and Lignum Grasses to give some terrestrial habitat while they're out of the water.



This Hoppers Crossing area has had increasing urbanisation and greater population pressures in recent years.

Friends of Skeleton Creek Membership Renewal 2015/2016

We are sending out our membership renewal form for those of you who would like to renew. Some of you who are not yet members may like to become a member.

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

Cost for Individual FoSC Membership/Mailing List is \$10.00, and FoSC Family/Mailing List is \$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.

Details of payment is on the FoSC Membership Form.

The membership form is a separate PDF attachment with this newsletter mail-out. You can also request the membership form anytime by emailing:

friendsofskeletoncrk@gmail.com

Volunteering through Volunteer West

Denice attended a Volunteer West information launch at Point Cook on Friday 13th November. Volunteer West is a community organisation that operates across the western metropolitan region of Melbourne. Its purpose is to inspire and value inclusive and active participation in volunteering, and build the capacity of volunteer involving organisations.

The idea is to link and match prospective volunteers with organisations in need of volunteers. This process is to be supported by Wyndham City Council. FoSC will now register to have volunteers sent to our activity days. The Volunteer West's website is at:

<https://volunteerwestvrc.wordpress.com/projects/>

CALENDAR OF ACTIVITIES FOR 2016

After negotiations with Hobsons Bay City Council's Ranger Libby Rigby we have firmed up a number of activity dates for 2016.

As our July 24th National Tree Day planting is not on the actual National Tree Day (Sunday 31st July), Libby is happy for us to have our 1 pm to 3 pm time slot for the day. Our midweek planting will be on Tuesday 14th June, 10 am – 12 pm. More details will be in the December newsletter.

Our proposed FoSC 2016 activity dates for both Wyndham City Council and Hobsons Bay City Council are:

- 28 Feb, Clarendon Court, Seabrook
- 27 Mar, Bromage Close, Hoppers Crossing
- 17 Apr, Clarendon Court, Seabrook
- 22 May, Clarendon Court, Seabrook
- 14 June, midweek planting, Clarendon Court, Seabrook
- 26 Jun, Bromage Close, Hoppers Crossing
- 24 Jul, National Tree Day (*alternative day*), Creek Water Close, Altona Meadows
- 28 Aug, Bromage Close, Hoppers Crossing
- 25 Sep, Bromage Close, Hoppers Crossing
- 23 Oct, Merton St/Markham Way, Altona Meadows
- 27 Nov, Bromage Close, Hoppers Crossing

FoSC Christmas Break-Up Meeting Invitation

Our last meeting for the year will be a Christmas break-up gathering. All people interested are invited to Denice's home at 12 Hopetoun Court, Altona Meadows, on Wednesday 2nd December at 6:30 pm.

Denice will provide the main course and those attending are asked to bring a dessert or a salad. Please let Denice know if you are coming to make planning easier - phone 9315 8072 or deniceperryman1@gmail.com

You're Invited ...

Western Melbourne Catchments Network is inviting interested people to a workshop on Saturday 28th November (11 am - 3 pm) to help formulate the future plans for the new Natural History Centre at The Homestead, Werribee Park.

The Western Melbourne Catchments Network (WMCN) is a not-for-profit association for individuals, groups and organisations that share an environmental vision connecting the community to our local environment.

The workshop will start at 11 am with a short introduction and tour of the Natural History Centre followed by lunch. At about 1 pm, facilitated workshops will begin to discuss ideas for educational, promotional and curating activities at the Centre. *Details in the invitation opposite.*

Further information about WMCN at:
<http://wmcn.org.au/>

SECRETARY'S REPORT 2015

Presented at the Annual General Meeting on Wednesday 4th November by Denice Perryman

This has been a year of growth for our group. Firstly, we have picked up a publicity officer, John Dawes. John retired in 2013 from the Department of Defence (Army) after 20 years as a technical publications editor, and before that worked as a qualified journalist in the trade press.

He is our media contact for press releases, newsletters, FoSC flyers, NAB employee volunteers liaison, produces our forms, and also looks after our mailing list database. Our newsletters are much more inviting to read and have no misaligned page columns, poor grammar, misspellings and typos in them as I was prone to.

We also have a Facebook Community Page, started by Peta Keown and now administered by John. This social media platform is regularly updated and reflects what our group is doing.

Secondly, we seem to be developing a group of 'boomer-angs' who come back to us on a regular basis. This has made us a stronger group as the return people are developing relationships among the planting volunteers, and getting to know one other.

Our ever-reliable Indian Dera Sacha Sauda group of helpers have again been our mainstay and helped us fulfil our planting requirements each working bee. Without this group we would not be able to take on the tasks we do; I am also reliably informed that the name Sacha Sauda means "true deeds" – so true!

We've had Melbourne Water grants for the last two years and have applied for one again this year. Wyndham City Council have assisted us this year, so we now have a working relationship involving grants with two councils.

We also successfully applied for a Hobsons Bay Community Grant. This range of grant sources also makes us a stronger group, too.

We have taken on more community roles. We had signage put up, and lobbied to eventually get the Point Cook Road/Skeleton Creek underpass flood-proofed. Member Wrenford Brown had a successful outcome in dealing

Continued next page

You are invited to the Natural History Centre

28th November 2015
11:00 am – 3:00pm
At the Homestead,
Werribee Park.



Website: www.naturalhistorycentre.org.au
Email: coordinator@wmcn.org.au
Facebook: Natural History Centre - Melbourne's West

Please come along for an introduction to the Natural History Centre, join us for lunch, and help formulate our future plans.

RSVP for catering by email: coordinator@wmcn.org.au
Or phone Colleen on 0401 645 468

AGM's Secretary Report

Continued from Page 3

with Creek vandalism near his house (but we will take credit for that, as he used our FoSC letterhead!).

We were pro-active in holding the stakeholders at the 'The Islands' Waterhaven Estate in Point Cook accountable for the unannounced temporary damming of our Creek.

In Brief: Our 2015 Activities

1. On 12th February, Denice and Angela went down to see how our Carinza Ave, Altona Meadows, planting was getting on and removed 130 stakes and guards to assist the plants.

2. We were represented by Angela, Neil and Denice at the Grants and Volunteering Expo on 19th February at Wyndham Civic Centre.

3. On 22nd February, mulch spreading at Merton St/Markham Way, Altona Meadows. It was pleasantly surprising to have seven local residents turn out to help with the process of wheel-barrowing mulch and spreading it around our plants on a stinking hot day.

4. During February Peta set up our Facebook Community Page for us.

5. Our 22nd March planting at Kerford Crescent, Point Cook, was a pretty hot day, but we did some 'speed planting' of 500 plants followed by afternoon tea.

6. On 19th April we had mulch spreading at Merton St/Markham Way, Altona Meadows. This day gladdened Angela's heart as we had 10 local residents attending and helping us in our conservation work.

7. In April, Denice, Angela and Bob Winters were involved in educational work with 150 students from Seabrook Primary School. We had 150 students (three groups of 50 students) come down to the Creek. Angela did a 'walk and talk', Denice and the students put in 150 grasses and Bob did a water bugs expo. Angela had put in a huge effort with the planning and school liaising.

8. In May, Denice persuaded John Dawes to accept the role of publicity officer, relieving her from the newsletter and flyer editing/production and media release duties.

9. On the planting day 24th May at Merton St/Markham Way, Altona Meadows, we had 25 helpers and put in over 300 plants - a very successful day considering the number of plants we put in.

10. Our midweek planting was on Tuesday 16th June at Merton St/Markham Way, Altona Meadows. We put in 200 plants, which totalled 635 for the year. The midweek planting attracted a small but friendly and happy group who worked hard.

11. In June, Denice and Ewen attended a Consumer Affairs Victoria (CAV) briefing session on how to use the new myCAV website (which has replaced the CAV paper-based functions involved in running an incorporated association).

12. At our Carshalton Court, Hoppers Crossing, planting on the 28th June we had 22 helpers and put in 278 plants on a lovely balmy day.

13. National Tree Day on 26th July was a great success with 36 helpers putting in 375 plants on a miserable, cold

windy day. It all happened despite the weather!

14. The Hobsons Bay Community Fund planting on 9th August had 22 planters helping us put in our 333 plants. It was pleasing to have our Wetlands Ward councillors there to assist - Mayor Colleen Gates and Carl Marsich.

15. Angela and Denice gave a talk on our activities at the Friends of Newport Lakes AGM on 18th August, and was well received.

16. Thanks to Ewen for getting us our ABN and tax file number. These will be useful in applying for grants.

17. The Creek was temporarily dammed at Point Cook to allow developers to put in sewage connections to the new Waterhaven Estate. This was done with no prior notice to local residents or our Friends group. Melbourne Water approved the works. Our group contacted the Hallmarc Group developer, Wyndham City Council and Melbourne Water to express our displeasure. Time will tell if our Creek will return to its previous health and if the local biodiversity was not affected.

18. At the 23rd August planting at Carshalton Court, Hoppers Crossing, we put in 400 grasses and had 14 people to help us. It was a good day with pleasant weather and a relaxed atmosphere.

19. The Wyndham Building Blocks program offered us the opportunity to promote FoSC on Tuesday 1st September. Denice and Angela did a five-minute presentation (and we picked up two email addresses from people as we were leaving!).

20. On Saturday 17th October, five regular FoSC members joined Hobsons Bay City Council's annual 'Friends End of Year Event' at Merri Creek, East Brunswick. We had a guided walk in the Merri Creek wetland, a catered-for picnic lunch, followed by a short tour of the CERES Community Environment Park. Thanks to Andrew Webster and Suzette Rodoreda for hosting such a fabulous day.

21. We applied for our 2016 Melbourne Water Grant, nominating the days and sites for our working bees.

22. On 27th September we had a weeding/maintenance day at Kerford Cres, Point Cook. We had 13 people turn up. It was nice weather and Emma from Wyndham City Council assisted us.

23. On 25th October we had a mulch spreading day at Merton St/Markham Way, Altona Meadows. It was a warm day as we tackled the large mounds of mulch Andrew Webster delivered us. We had nine locals help us and were ably assisted by HBCC's Suzette Rodoreda.

24. We have reviewed our roles and duties in the Consumer Affairs Victoria model rules and we are ready to adopt them tonight.

In summing up, not only have we survived another busy and productive year working for our Creek but also this has been a year of growth for our group.

So a big THANK YOU to all our volunteers and council staff in the two municipalities for your hard work and effort for the Friends of Skeleton Creek and Altona Bay Wetlands in the past year. ☺

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Contributions to the newsletter are welcome. Please send to: friendsofskeletoncrk@gmail.com

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 www.facebook.com/friendsofskeletoncreek

FRIENDS OF SKELETON CREEK

2015 CALENDAR

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

Sun 29 November - 'Maintenance Day' at Clarendon Crt, Seabrook

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



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

Friends of Skeleton Creek Committee

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