

We're looking good for 2011

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Photo: Meredith Schaap

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**Darebin Parklands News is published quarterly by the Darebin Parklands Association Inc
 ABN 15090517257**

Post PO Box 3, Ivanhoe, 3079

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Junior Ranger water pollution action day, where we'll learn about healthy waterways and stencil anti-pollution messages on drains around the park. After two false starts due to bad weather last year, we will hold the event on Saturday 19 February (details on the Junior Ranger page).

We've also begun work on planning the Darebin Parklands Picnic Races, which will be held this year on Sunday 20 March. If you'd like to help out at this event, please drop us a line.

And finally, a reminder that DPA memberships run for 12 months, and fall due at the start of each calendar year. So if you haven't yet re-joined, please fill out and return the form included with this newsletter. We've now introduced direct credit payments, to make it even easier for you to pay your subscription. All the details are on the form. Thanks for your support and look forward to your company in 2011.

Ingrid Svendsen

President

The business of healthy waterways

Julia Vanderoord, the coordinator of North East Melbourne WaterWatch, will speak at our next information evening, on Tuesday 22 February. Julia will give us a rundown on WaterWatch's innovative Business Champions Project, funded by the EPA and Banyule Council. The project involved working with businesses in pollution hotspots, such as the West Heidelberg industrial estate, to help them to better look after the Darebin Creek. Julia will talk about the highs and lows of the project, show some photographs and facilitate a discussion. The meeting starts at 8 pm, in the parklands environment centre, Separation Street, Alphington. All welcome.

DPA events 2011

February 11	Junior Ranger camp out [#]
February 19.....	Junior Ranger water pollution action
February 22	Information evening
March 20.....	Darebin Parklands Picnic Races
May 6	Junior Ranger wildlife spotlighting*
May 15	Park care day
May 31	Information evening
June 5	Park care day
July 17	Park care day
August 19	Junior Ranger bonfire night*
August 30.....	Information evening
October 23	Kids' Catch a Carp Day*
November 29	Information evening
December 4	Park care day

[#] Invitation only event for prize winners

* DPA members' event (guests/non members are welcome to join at the event)

Pete's page

News from the ranger in charge

Look, up in the sky...it's a new building

G'day members,

If you can remember this time last year, the parklands was like a dust bowl and we were having days in the 40s, yet here we are in January and it feels like spring with the exceptional hot day here and there.

While the welcome constant rain has been in contrast to previous years, it has created some issues for us in the parklands.

The creek has been coping a flood at least once a month; the last one the highest the creek has been since 2001. The creek geomorphology (creek floor shape) is constantly changing with sediment deposits and erosion all the way along the creek. Down at Willowbank Court, 100 metres upstream of the Heidelberg Road bridge, a large deposit of sediment has formed a sand island in the middle of the creek, which in turn directs the creek flow into the bank, causing slumping and hence more deposits. The same sort of island has been formed at the Reflection Pool as well. If you examine the creek closely you can see the changes, areas that were deep are now shallow and visa versa.

Mowing, arrgh!! Usually we have a break from mowing in the summer but this year it's been relentless. If you have a lawn at home you could testify to the amazing growth rates at present. We need to mow most areas at least every three weeks at present, with a higher priority given the dog off-leash zones and the picnic areas.

As with the mowing the weeds are having a great season too. Rohen has been battling the weeds in the planting sites and at Snake Grass. We have been trying to keep on top of it but in all honesty some areas have just got away from us. We are a ranger short for sure in a season like this.

A side effect that we weren't counting on was the mulberry trees being badly affected by with the fungal disease mulberry leaf spot. The trees have

taken a battering due to the perfect conditions for the disease we have been having.

We will look to spray the trees with fungicide for the first time in my career at the park, such is the foothold this disease has on our beloved trees. It is hoped that the application of this fungicide will reduce the effect on the trees and prolong their lives a little longer.



The new education building has been installed into its final location and we are at present desperately trying to get it ready for the new school year. Peter Grenfell has been doing all the painting inside while the rest of us are looking to install a double door and construct disabled ramp access and disabled toilet. I think the new building has blended into the park environs quite nicely, and is hardly noticeable when looking from within the park.

And finally we will be undertaking a major burn regime this autumn throughout most areas of the park. These burns will help with ecological regeneration and with fuel reduction for next summer. The burn offs will be conducted as a set of small mosaics and we will be starting in mid-March.

Seeya in the park,

Peter Wiltshire

News in brief

Talks sought on council works

The DPA is seeking talks with Darebin Council to agree on a consultation process as the council implements the recommendations of the parklands master plan. Like many in the community, the DPA was surprised and unimpressed when the council late last year ripped up bluestone paving in the Yarana Road carpark and cut new paths through the park without public notification or consultation. The DPA is also disturbed that the council plans to build standard-issue fences rather than ones that are in keeping with the park's bushland and heritage character, as recommended in the master plan. Protocols for consultation, and for ensuring that works enhance rather than damage the unique character of the parklands, will be vitally important as the council moves to undertake bigger master plan projects in the coming years. We hope to discuss these issues with senior council staff shortly, and will report the outcome to members in future newsletters.

Melbourne Water history cash

The DPA is delighted to report that Melbourne Water is backing our forthcoming history publication. The DPA has obtained a \$1000 community support grant, which will be used for promoting the book, and Melbourne Water has also generously made a special \$2000 contribution, which will help historian Sarah Mirams source suitable images for the book. Sarah has now finished the first draft of the manuscript, which will be published later in the year.

Last chance for DPA calendars

A few copies of the 2011 DPA calendar, featuring winning shots from the DPA photo competition, are still available for sale. You can buy a copy from the environment centre, Alphington Community Centre, Johnny Fs greengrocer or at any DPA event. Alternatively, you can fill out and return the order form on our website at www.dpa.org.au.



Helping nature to heal itself

Ranger Rohen Davis gave a fascinating talk at our November information evening about bushland regeneration, a technique she is using with amazing results at sites including the Snake Grass (before and after pictures below). This is an edited extract of Rohen's talk. The full text is on our website.

The Society for Ecological Restoration primer explains, "Ecological restoration is the process of assisting the recovery of an ecosystem that has been degraded, damaged, or destroyed." But as I see it restoration is helping nature heal itself with a little human intervention.

On every site restoration aims and resources are different. Before I start at any site there are a few questions I ask myself.

One of the first principles of regeneration is to decide where you want to go. Do you want to restore a pre-European ecosystem? This may be impossible as important parts or processes of the system may be missing. Or do you want to restore a self-sustaining conservation area with as many elements of the natural ecosystem as practically possible?

The next question is what type of ecosystem did the area previously support? What was the ecological vegetation type? Also the geology, aspect, climate rainfall etc. will play a part in what species are suitable. The next thing to think about is how degraded is the area? Were all of the plants and animals removed from the site? Or were only some parts of the system destroyed or removed?

Knowing this can give you an idea of what type of restoration is needed such as rehabilitation – as in almost starting from scratch, bringing in soil, plants and starting ecological processes from nothing.

Or to the other end of the spectrum where natural regeneration is present. This could be where some native species are still persisting but are competing for resources with exotic species, or important processes may be absent such as fire or grazing from herbivores.





Pollution action day – at last!

After two postponements due to rainy weather the Junior Ranger water pollution action day will be held on Saturday 19 February, from 2-4 pm. After some great activities and a visit from the WaterWatch trailer, we'll be heading out to paint anti-pollution messages on drain covers around the parklands. Meet at the environment centre, Separation Street, Alphington.



TELSTRA FUNDS FOR JUNIOR RANGERS

The Junior Ranger Club has received a \$1200 grant from the Telstra Kids Fund. We'll be using the money for some great Junior Ranger activities this year, so watch out for details in future editions of the newsletter.

The DPA is enormously grateful to DPA member and Telstra employee Jeff Letherby, who helped organise the grant for us.

If your mum or dad (or aunty, uncle or grandparents) work at Telstra, or another organisation that has a grants program, ask them if they would like to apply for a grant on behalf of the DPA. We can use the money for JR activities or for projects in the parklands.

Your mum or dad's work might also have a volunteer program that would let them get paid to come and help with planting and other activities in the parklands. If so, we'd love to hear from you.

JR FUN COMING UP

As this edition of the newsletter was being prepared, a lucky group of Junior Rangers were getting ready for the time of their lives at the JR camp out.

Winners Lucy J, Georgia L, Gabriel J, Max J, Lily M and Minette R are set to enjoy a fantastic night in the park, with a personal spotlight tour and a campfire dinner.

All financial Junior Rangers can go into the prize draw, which is held at the end of each year. Make sure your membership is paid up so you can enter.

Also, a reminder that the Junior Ranger park after dark wildlife spotlighting walk with Ranger Pete will take place on Friday 6 May, so put a note in your diary now and make sure you don't miss out.



Tell us your parklands story

Do you know kids have been having fun in the parklands for over a hundred years? Doing things like stealing fruit, getting shot at by angry farmers, making canoes to float in the creek, camping out, exploring, bird watching, playing cricket, fishing and sliding down the steep hills.

The DPA is writing a history of the parklands, which will soon be published as a book, and wants your memories, so we know what kids do by the Darebin in 2011. Tell us a true story about the parklands. It could be:

- Your best adventure in the parklands

- The scariest moment
- The funniest moment
- What you have learnt in the parklands
- Your happiest memory
- Your favourite part of the parklands.

All stories will be preserved as a valuable record for future historians. Entries must be no longer than 100 words, and can be submitted by email to info@dpa.org.au no later than 28 February. The two winning entries, as judged by historian Sarah Mirams, will receive a great prize.

PICNIC RACES COMING SOON

The fun and games of the Darebin Parklands Picnic Races returns on Sunday 20 March, from 12 noon – 4 pm. Bring your family and friends and your picnic lunch and try your hand at the boot toss, sack races, egg throw and more. With the King and Queen of the Mountain challenge up Mt Puffalo and Kinder Corner games for the littlies, there is something for everyone. We've also got some special surprises up our sleeves for this year's event.

Can you spare an hour to assist the DPA to organise the picnic races? We need people to help with the games and on the membership desk.

If you can help, please contact the event coordinator, Ann Ritchie, at info@dpa.org.au.



Senior scholars visit

DPA founding member Sue Course and ranger Peter Wiltshire recently lead an enthusiastic group from Yarra Valley U3A on a guided walk through Darebin Parklands. The group learnt about the parklands' history, geology, botany and wildlife, and also got the lowdown on the DPA. Group member and photographer Michael Woods captured the event. If your club, social group or workplace would like to tour the park, contact peter@dcmc.org.au.

750 tubes of green happiness

Thank you to all who came along to our successful park care propagation day on 5 December last year. A special thanks to Ranger Rohen, who was a huge help with the whole event. Fifteen boxes (nearly 750 tubes!) of local *Lomandra longifolia* and *Dianella longifolia* seeds were propagated and these have now started to germinate. The warm and wet conditions have been perfect for germinating and growing thus far. A big thanks to the Greenwood family for taking home some tubes too. Now is the time to commence thinning out the seedlings, so that there is only one healthy plant left in each tube. Either gently tease out the excess plants (pot them up for your own garden if you wish), or alternatively simply chop off the unwanted seedlings with scissors. Although this may seem wasteful, it is critical to ensuring we end up with one healthy strong plant in each tube. These plants will make wonderful additions to

the creekside plantings throughout the park later in the year, and we look forward to an even more successful propagation day in this December.

– Peter Revill, plant nursery coordinator



Photo: Meredith Schaap

Darebin Parklands Association – 2011 Membership Application

Junior Ranger Members Family name: _____ First name(s): _____ _____	Parents and Other Members Family name: _____ First name(s): _____ _____
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Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

I would like to receive DPA news and updates by email (please print clearly)

Membership Type	Cost	Qty	Total
Junior For all kids who want to have fun and contribute to the park	\$2		
Concession Unwaged, seniors and students	\$10		
Individual One person	\$15		
Family One or more adults plus Junior Rangers, from the same household or family	\$20		
Corporate	\$50		
Donations Donations of \$20 or more are tax deductible. Make your cheque out to our partner Landcare Australia Ltd and you will receive a tax receipt.			
Return this form and payment to: The Treasurer, DPA, PO Box 3, Ivanhoe 3079 Please make cheques payable to: Darebin Parklands Association Inc. Or pay us directly (add your name as a reference): BSB 633108 Acc 116325457			

My interests are: <input type="checkbox"/> Urban parks <input type="checkbox"/> Plants <input type="checkbox"/> Animals/birds <input type="checkbox"/> Geology <input type="checkbox"/> Other...	I can help out with: <input type="checkbox"/> Planting/horticulture <input type="checkbox"/> Event organising <input type="checkbox"/> Development projects <input type="checkbox"/> Grants/fundraising <input type="checkbox"/> Other...	Office use only Date: Payment received by: Payment by cheque / cash / direct credit Database: new / renew
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**Darebin Parklands News is published quarterly by the Darebin Parklands Association Inc
 ABN 15090517257**

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