

Another great year in the park

Despite the ravages of floods, gales, and occasional acts of vandalism, the parklands continue to look great. How fortunate are we to have this exceptional natural resource on our doorsteps in the middle of one of the world's largest cities? And my dog loves it too. But all of this comes by hard work, not by accident. Our thanks, as always, go to ranger Pete and his dedicated team, as well as to the many volunteers who give their time to weed plant and clear away litter. We had several very successful park care days this year. The first next year will be Clean Up Australia day on March 2nd: bring family and friends, join us for a couple of hours, and go away with a warm fuzzy glow. Our strategies to encourage native birds back to the park are proving very successful. We have installed lots of nesting boxes (thanks to Leader Newspapers for the grant) and continue to work on reducing the numbers of Indian myna birds.

Look out for the rosellas – not to mention the rainbow lorikeets, dusky moorhens, and pacific black ducks to name but a few – next time you're in the park. Check out the snake grass wildflower area in full bloom.



Snake grass wild flowers [Photo Meredith Schaap]

Finally a gentle reminder to renew your membership. Get in early and renew now for 2014. Don't forget to visit our stall at the Wetlands Music Festival on November 17. I look forward to seeing you at the last DPA event for the year on November 26

Mark Creamer

President

26 November [6.00pm-9.00pm]

General meeting, BBQ and tour of park.

There will be a general meeting of DPA members at 6.00pm to discuss the special resolution to adopt the "model rules" from Consumer Affairs. Then join Ranger Pete for a tour of the park leaving at 6.30 or relax with our Master Chef at the BBQ. These activities are for members only but you can join on the night.

Events calendar 2013

24 November.....Gum leaf painting
26 November.....General meeting, BBQ and tour
25 February..... Information Evening
2 March.....Clean Up Australia Day
18 May.....Park care day
27 May.....Annual General Meeting

Pete's page

News from the ranger in charge

Wet and weedy but the natives love it

Things have been busy, as you'd expect in the park. I can't remember such favorable growing conditions occurring over the past few years but that might just be the fact that we are in the middle of it right now. We are mowing almost all the time currently just to keep on top of it. The weeds have been enjoying a bumper crop also, especially around the riparian areas.

Once again I have to thank the DPA Thursday crew who have moved into weeding the Snake grass area and done an amazing job, and probably saved the site from massive weed invasion next season by getting most of the weeds before they set seed.

Michael Mann has continued to volunteer almost daily and helps me with the mowing, but passionately manages the nest box project and Indian Myna control program at the park.

We are having good results with the nest boxes with Kookaburras, lorikeets, and ringtail possums rearing young in them. The mynas though active in around 43 of the 118 boxes have only laid eggs in 4 of the nest boxes at present.

Our current Indian Myna control count is at 235

I also invite you to look up our Mr. Kookaburra video on you tube. The link is below. Michael's relationship with his feathered friend is worth watching. Make sure you have the sound on.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h4R7-32Mz4U>

This Sunday the 17th November the DCMC and Darebin Council are hosting a Spiritual Healing Trail day and tribute to its founder the late Uncle Reg Blow.

The event starts at around 1pm at the picnic area and will include the Darebin Mayor unveiling a plaque dedicated to Uncle Reg next to the Peace Tree which Reg planted several years ago on the Picnic area below the observation tower.

There are a few things on this Sunday around the place, but we already have 200 bookings for the trail walk so the day should be good.

The first ducklings of the year are about and the long neck turtles are leaving the wetland areas in search of places to lay their eggs. So if you see them looking lost around the park, just leave them and make sure your dogs don't get them.



Eastern Rosella below Mt Puffalo [Photo M. Mann]

Peter Wiltshire
Head Ranger



JR NEWS ROUNDUP

Junior Ranger bonfire night -11October

On a beautiful still night the bonfire was lit by Ranger Pete and the large crowd was enthralled by the spectacle. The kids loved it!! Pete did a great job handling the fire and the crowd.
NB.This event had originally been scheduled for August but had to be postponed.



Junior Ranger bonfire night 2013 [Photo A. Dureau]

Junior Rangers gum leaf painting.

Sunday 24 November 10.30 am

Come to the parklands to paint gum leaves and turn them into fantastic Christmas cards. Join us
At the Education Centre-Separation street
All materials provided.

Full Junior Ranger event details will be on our website soon

DPA+NMIT REVEGETATION PROJECT

In 2010 students from NMIT Fairfield campus began work in the parklands under the expert guidance and direction of NMIT teacher and DPA committee member, Debra Nette.

The students were enrolled in the Diploma of Ornamental Horticulture and the Certificate 111 in Parks and gardens. The units of study encompass ecosystems, habitat management, weed identification and control, indigenous plant identification and plant establishment techniques.

With assistance from the Rangers, Peter Wiltshire and Rohen Davis work began on the "The hill" which is the north facing area between the bike path and the lookout tower. The plan was to turn it into native grassland area. The area was covered in Kikuyu and in winter the yellow flowering Soursob was the predominant weed species. It is important to adopt a long term strategy when trying to reclaim an area. Weed control was undertaken before any planting was done. Herbicide was applied to the area and weeds removed by hand for 2 years.

Some native species were direct seeded and tube stock of Kangaroo grass, Spear grass and Wallaby grass were planted directly.

The before and after photos below tell the story, the area is now lush with native grasses.



2010



2013

Up and down the creek



News from Darebin Creek Management Committee inc.

Darebin Creek Environmental Education Program

So far in 2013, the DCMC Darebin Creek Education Program has worked with over 30 schools and community groups engaging over 3500 students. The most popular activities have been:

- What Is That Waterbug?
- Fascinating Frogs,
- The Catchment Story.

Finding waterbugs has become difficult due to the amount of streamside habitat that was lost from scouring of the banks during flooding, most recently on 30 June.

DCMC is working towards minimising the severity of flash flooding in the creek during high rainfall events.

Recent DCMC events

Sixteen people took part in this year's Darebin Creek Bird Survey on 13 October in West Heidelberg.

Lead by Michael Cincotta from La Trobe University, 48 species of birds were recorded and whether they were breeding, such as a magpie lark [pictured].



Magpie Lark

At the end of the survey, two quite tame ferrets were also found wandering along the creek [also pictured], making quite a bizarre sight for the assembled group.



A very friendly, furry ferret

Around 30 people attended DCMC's Frogs Night Out evening on 23 October at the Parklands Environment Centre.

Therese Grinter and I gave a presentation on local frog species and threats they are facing before going on a walk to try and hear frogs calling.

We heard about four species – Common Froglets, Striped Marshies, Eastern Banjos and Ewings Tree Frogs. It may have been too early in the year to hear Peron's Tree Frogs, which usually breed over summer. Both events were part of Banyule Council's Spring Outdoors program.

Last Friends of Darebin Creek event for 2013

Sunday 24 November 10am to 12.30 – Woody weed removal at Cherry Street, Macleod. Look for the signs and the bush crew vehicle. Join us for a cup of tea afterwards. Melways 20 A7. Thanks to City of Darebin Bushcrew.

For further details and other upcoming Friends events go to www.friendsofdarebin creek.org.au

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