

FRIENDS OF HODDLES CREEK NEWSLETTER

How healthy is Hoddles Creek?

Melbourne Water has recently released their Hoddles Creek Draft Streamflow Management Plan for comment. While the Plan claims to provide a 'balance' between concern for the environment and rights of water users, key recommendations raise serious concerns about how these issues are being considered.

Each year, diversion licences provide for the withdrawal of more than 500 megalitres of water from the Hoddles Creek system (this includes Hoddles, Blackleather, Wombat and Wet Lead Creeks). This water is used for irrigation of vines, orchards and tree farms, especially during the warmer months. During the past three years, below average flows have led to restrictions on diversion.

Minimum Environmental Flow

Studies conducted on behalf of Melbourne Water show that a minimum monthly flow of 6.9 megalitres per day is necessary during the warmer low flow months in order to maintain the

health of Hoddles Creek. Below this minimum environmental flow rate, availability of habitat declines, exposing instream inhabitants to a high level of risk.

However, current irrigation levels have led to flow rates of only 4 megalitres per day – just 58% of the recommended minimum flow – a level found by Melbourne Water to be associated with long-term risk to the health of Hoddles Creek.

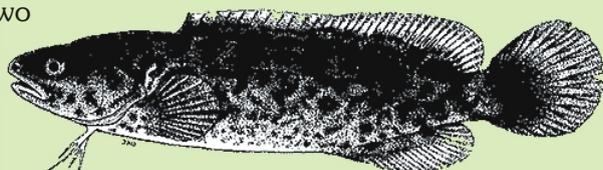
Future targets

The Draft Management Plan proposes to continue with the 4 megalitres per day flow limit until mid-2004, after which the minimum flow will be raised to 5 megalitres per day. *There is no timetable in the Plan for the implementation of the 6.9 megalitre per day flow rate, found by Melbourne Water's own research to be the minimum flow consistent with the long-term health of Hoddles Creek.*

Friends of Hoddles Creek have made representations to Melbourne Water on this issue and encourage you to express your opinions, too. The draft Management Plan can be viewed on Melbourne Water's website – www.melbournewater.com.au – then select 'Waterways' and 'Streamflow Management'.

Who lives in Hoddles Creek?

Hoddles Creek is home to a range of native fish and crustaceans, platypus and water rats and it may also provide habitat for the rare large footed myotis, an insect eating bat. Two of the fish inhabitants include the potentially threatened River Blackfish (pictured) and the Mountain Galaxias. The River Blackfish may be pale green, yellowish, brown or black in colour, with a marbled



pattern with larger dark blotches. It can grow to 600mm in length, but is more usually seen at sizes up to 450 mm. The Mountain Galaxias is a small freshwater fish found only in

Australia. It has a small head, a large mouth and

short-based fleshy fins. Its colour is highly variable, ranging from yellow green to brown above, olive to silvery below, with speckles, blotches and banding.

(continued overleaf)



Planning a sneeze-free garden

While gardens are full of allergens, there is a lot that asthma, hay fever and sinus sufferers can do to protect themselves. These two conditions are based on allergic reactions to 'trigger' substances, or allergens, such as pollen, that are present all around us. Reaction to an allergen leads to the breathing difficulties of asthma and the itchy eyes and runny nose of hay fever.

Pollen-induced asthma can result from a slow but cumulative effect of pollen deposits in the lower respiratory tract, so it may not be solely due to exposure on a day when the pollen count is high.

Reducing allergens

One good way is to plant Australian natives, as these are largely bird or insect-pollinated, whereas many introduced trees are wind-pollinated. Limiting wind-pollinated plants will reduce the amount of pollen in the air.

Allergen-free plants

Most native plants including Angophora, Banksias, Billardiera, Callistemon (bottle brush), Correa, Epacris (heath), Eucalyptus, Grevilleas, Hakea, Hardenbergia, Kangaroo Paw, Kennedia, Melaleuca, Mint Bush, Native Frangipane and Waratah. Native grasses, sedges, bog and tufting plants are also desirable.

Plants to avoid

Trees such as ash, birch, elder, liquidamber, maple, oak, olive pine, plane. Other plants such as arum lily, carnation, freesia, hyacinth, jasmine, wisteria.

Who lives in Hoddles Creek?

(cont'd)

The Mountain Galaxias can grow to 135mm, but is more commonly less than 70mm. It eats a range of food items, including insects (aquatic and terrestrial), spiders, crustaceans, molluscs and worms.

SPRING COMPETITION Where am I?

Our spring competition requires you first to un-jumble the Hoddles Creek road names listed below. Then on each line, you will find several unused letters that lead you to where I am (the answer to the competition).

The prize is two bottles of superb Yarra Valley wine – 1 bottle of Domain Chandon Brut 1998 and 1 bottle of Green Point Vineyards Chardonnay (a big thank you to Tony Jordan, of Domaine Chandon, for this prize).

Entries should be sent to The Secretary, Friends of Hoddles Creek Inc, PO Box 298 Yarra Junction Vic 3797 and must be received by the last mail on Friday November 15. The winner's name will be chosen at random from all correct entries. The winner will be notified and the result and winner published in our Summer issue.

**SSCRHTONEEAETENPIK
KUAASRIALTPA
RIVALYS
LOLWRCYE
ASMETANHONS
SFETATOC
HETRCERLEKFCEAKLAB
ILIWILSE
LTOMGWIEULY
TLONRAEAG**

Name:.....
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Address:
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Phone:

Email:

Answer to competition:
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What is FOHC?

The Friends of Hoddles Creek group was formed in 1999. We maintain a watching brief over developmental projects and seek to ensure that regulations related to tree clearing, maintenance of wild life corridors, water usage from local waterways and use of chemical sprays are adhered to. We also aim to increase awareness of general environmental issues and those of special interest to Hoddles Creek.

We have several 'hands on' projects involving weed clearing (Blackleather and Hoddles Creeks), regeneration (Yellow Gum Road and a possible project at Hoddles Creek Primary School) and indigenous plant propagation. Apart from work, we also have luncheons and organise other fun activities, such as nature walks and nest box construction.

Come and join us

There is no age restriction, all that is required is an interest in helping to maintain the special environmental aspects of Hoddles Creek – your home. If you would like to join, or if you would like more information about the group, simply complete the details below and send to FOHC, PO Box 298 Yarra Junction, Vic 3797.

Name:.....
.....
Address:
.....
Phone:

Email:

I'd like to join Friends of Hoddles Creek.

I'd like more information. Please ring me.

Thanks again to Jill the postie for her help in delivering the FOHC Newsletter.

Thanks to Melbourne Water for the grant for this newsletter.