

FRIENDS OF HODDLES CREEK NEWSLETTER

FOHC joins Hoddles Creek Primary School in habitat project

As flagged in our last Newsletter, the landscape and planting project at the school is well underway, with earthworks and Stage 1 planting completed. Planting involved the whole school community and members of FOHC

helped with earthworks, planting and (see picture) placing of plant guards. The plants are away to a great start and spring growth should see them well established. We will keep you informed of the progress in future Newsletters.



FOHC members install plant guards at the Hoddles Creek school planting

Hoddles Creek Streamflow Management Plan – where are we at?

Readers may recall our earlier concerns about Melbourne Water's draft Streamflow Management Plan for Hoddles Creek. Specifically, we flagged the Plan's proposal to work to a minimum flow of 4 megalitres per day (5 megalitres/day from July 2004), despite acknowledgment that a *minimum* flow of 6.9 megalitres per day is required to maintain a healthy stream habitat. Our concern at this imbalance was shared by Environment Victoria.

While agreeing with us that 6.9 megalitres/day should be the real target, in reviewing submissions on the draft plan, the Committee has failed to make any changes to this section of the document. This means

that, from now until the next review in 2008, Melbourne Water is likely to oversee a management plan based on minimum flow figures that its own research has shown to be incompatible with the health of Hoddles Creek. This is a very disappointing outcome and one that does not augur well for environmental protection in future streamflow management plans.

The Hoddles Creek Plan is currently with the Minister for Water and Environment, the Hon John Thwaites.

WILDLIFE RESCUE

Found an injured native animal and need help?
Ring 0417 380 687.

Thanks again to Jill the postie for delivering the FOHC Newsletter.

Thanks to Melbourne Water for their grant towards this newsletter.



Speed limits killing wildlife

Fearing for the safety of her students, you may have read the recent comments from Hoddles Creek Primary School principal, Vivienne Hammat, regarding the 80 km/h speed limit on Gembrook Road outside the school. It's not just the students who are at risk. The 100 km/h limit on sections of both Gembrook Road and Lusatia Park



Road has meant a death sentence for a succession of grey kangaroos, wallabies and wombats – not to mention native birds – on these roads.

Friends of Hoddles Creek have asked VicRoads to consider reducing the maximum speed on both roads to 80 km/h. However, even this speed is too fast in the dark or the rain. FOHC members have sat with dying animals and helped rescue joeys from dead and dying mothers. How can drivers hit animals and leave them in the middle of the road, not even stopping to see if they are alive or dead (we've experienced this first hand)? At the very least, if you do injure an animal, please phone the Wildlife Rescue Service on 0417 380 687. Why not program it into your mobile now?

Let sleeping logs lie

It can be very tempting to clean up those old logs lying around (maybe we all have a bit of the parkland mentality). But, before you do, spare a thought for the animals that call such large woody debris home. Dead logs provide habitat for invertebrates and fungi that break down the timber and return nutrients to the soil. Further up the food chain, logs may be home to brown treecreepers, thornbills, fairy wrens, robins, skinks and geckos.

And if you think the cleanup is reducing fire risk, think again. The risk posed by large woody debris is minimal and areas with fallen timber actually recover faster following a fire.

AUTUMN COMPETITION

If we were surprised by the response to last issue's competition, we were amazed that the winning entry, from Jane MacRoss, contained 311 words made from the letters of Hoddles Creek. Congratulations, Jane. We hope that you will enjoy spending your gift voucher at Kurunga Native Plant Nursery. Look out for our next competition in the Spring Newsletter.

Going, going, gone

Victoria the extinction centre of Australia? That's the finding of a recent report commissioned by the Federal Government and leaked after they failed to release the document. Under the State's Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act, 231 plants, 214 animals and 35 ecological communities are listed as threatened. In the Volcanic Plains in Victoria's west, more than 95 per cent of native vegetation has been cleared. More than 70 per cent of native vegetation in the Goldfields region in central Victoria is gone and clearing continues.

Threatened species include Leadbeaters possum, powerful owl, longfooted potoroo, spotted tree frog and spot-tailed quoll.

And while we are on the subject of disappearing species, we have received no reports of local long-nosed bandicoot sightings since our last Newsletter. Maybe Hoddles Creek has a wildlife crisis of its own? Please let us know about any sightings of uncommon birds or animals.

Come on and join FOHC

The Friends of Hoddles Creek group was formed in 1999 after a meeting of Land for Wildlife members in the area. From its inception, local resident Graeme Jameson has been a driving force, both as secretary and as an active participant in working bees and social functions. Graeme and Jill have now decided to move closer to Melbourne and Graeme has reluctantly given up his position as secretary. We would like to take this opportunity to thank Graeme (and Jill) for all their hard work and enthusiasm.

Our next meeting, on Tuesday August 19, is the Annual General Meeting and all positions are up for grabs! Now is your chance to become involved in looking after the natural beauty of Hoddles Creek, so bring your friends and join us. FOHC maintains a watching brief over local development projects, seeking to ensure that regulations related to environmental matters are adhered to. We also aim to increase awareness of general environmental issues and those of special interest to Hoddles Creek and have several 'hands on' projects.

Please ring Ray Turner on 5967 4594 for the meeting location. Dates for the remaining 2003 meetings are as follows:

- Aug 19 • Oct 21 • Dec 16

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.