

DAMPER CREEK DOINGS

February 2020

The newsletter of
FRIENDS OF DAMPER CREEK RESERVE INC
Reg no. A0029531G
www.friendsofdampercreek.org
P.O.Box 2063 Mount Waverley 3149
Email: secretary.dampercreek@gmail.com

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Editorial:

Thus far, the weather for 2020 has served up a veritable smorgasbord! We entered the new year with some trepidation. We had none of the rain we often see around mid-December and the early start to a horrific bushfire season had us fearing for the survival of the many plants that we added to Damper Creek in 2019. Add to that community concern regarding fire safety in the reserve and the year did not begin well. Fortunately, we have had good rains in the new year and plants are thriving. There are even signs of a false Spring with plants which are normally dormant during the Summer throwing up new growth. Perhaps there will even be a second flowering of some plants.

I suggest you take a look at the Jubilee planting in Park Road which is thriving! There are around 30 species planted there. Among them you will find native bluebells, everlasting daisies, trigger plants, yam daisies, running postman, native violets and several species of wallaby grass. I would like to draw your attention to the excellent stands of kangaroo

grass which are currently adorned with their copper coloured seed heads. This grass was once common in the area but agriculture and introduced pasture grasses almost eliminated it. The planted areas are nearly weed free, a testimony to maintenance by certain dedicated FODCReserve members and bushcrew staff.

28b Park Road VCAT hearing

The VCAT hearing on December 9th was well attended by FODCReserve members. Thanks to those who attended and contributed to the “*show of force*”. Unfortunately, due to a technicality, the matter was put aside and the applicant has now made a new submission to the Monash City Council. We will keep you informed.

Monash Bushland Safety Strategy

The City of Monash regularly monitors fire risks in its reserves. Maintenance is carried out annually including maintenance of firebreaks, selective removal of dead trees, reduction of vegetation density, removal of weeds, removal of fallen branches and dead material.

Note that Damper Creek is assessed as a low risk area due to its small size. As a reserve set aside for conservation, maintenance of the reserve will inevitably be a compromise between conservation values and safety. Dead trees are invaluable for habitat, as are fallen logs and branches. If you observe carefully you will see that dead trees are pruned to ensure that, if they fall, they will not endanger park users. Fallen logs and branches are allowed to remain for habitat but a healthy separation is maintained between these wild areas and private property.

The “*Bushland Safety Strategy*” brochure is available from the City of Monash. You can make an afterhours emergency call on 9518 3555 or, if you suspect there is a fire in the reserve, ring 000 without delay.

Council Meeting February 25th

Councillor Rebecca Patterson has put up a notice of motion for the February council meeting to rename *Damper Creek Reserve* to *Damper Creek Conservation Reserve*. This proposal has been accepted in principle previously but has never been formally accepted. We expect this to be implemented with little controversy. The advantage to FoDCReserve is that, as a Conservation Reserve, developments such as paved cycle paths, lighting and other intrusive infrastructure would not be considered. We fully support any move

which would preserve Damper Creek as a passive recreation and conservation resource.

Power Line Pruning

We have all seen the results of poor tree pruning of street trees so it was with some alarm that we heard that pruning and perhaps tree removal had been proposed to take place under the High Voltage (HV) power line that runs from the end of Sunhill Road and (over the creek) up to the end of Tarella Drive. On 17 January, several FoDCReserve members and City of Monash staff met on site to discuss the situation.

As background, the HV power line was installed at the time that Sunhill Road was planned to be extended to meet with Tarella Drive via a road bridge across Damper Creek back in the 1960s. This pre-dated the decision to save Damper Creek from development and create the Reserve.

We were accompanied by the Monash Council Co-ordinator of Arboriculture, David Edwards and Michael Grant, Horticulture. A number of trees in the vicinity were examined and discussed. It is important to note that the prime responsibility of pruning in the vicinity of power lines lies with the City. If the work is not up to standard the power company (Origin) may come in to protect the power lines with a level of tree removal that would not be deemed acceptable by either FoDCReserve members or the City of Monash.

There are a number of trees that are in danger of shedding branches onto the power lines. David discussed these in some detail and proposed measures that would be necessary to satisfy the safety of the power line.

After a lengthy discussion, it was pleasing to note that it was agreed that some of the trees of concern, (and being fully mindful of safety issues), will be trimmed and monitored rather than removing them entirely at this present time. However, as some trees are ageing, they may have to be removed in the future, but in the meantime new plantings can take place.

Some of the pruning will need to be monitored as the long-term safety of the tree may be compromised. I left the meeting with confidence that the various branches of the City will conduct the work in the interests of FoDCReserve. A full report by David, following his meetings

with the authorities involved, will be received shortly and when a plan for the future is put into place, the community will be fully informed. FoDCReserve will keep members updated also.

Guest Speakers

We are delighted to have four speakers lined up for 2020. Dominic Bowd will talk about his work on the ecological restoration of the Riversdale Golf Club grounds for our March meeting. Later in the year on two occasions Ian Moodie, a noted local naturalist and photographer, will join us (topics to be advised); Steve Sinclair, a plant ecologist with the Arthur Rylah Institute will talk on his special areas of research (title to be advised) and, at the November meeting, Campbell Miles will present a video of his latest expedition.

Our guest speaker programme is an important part of the vibrancy of our group and we are always on the lookout for interesting and informative speakers. We are very pleased with our plans for 2020.

News from the Friends of Scotchmans Creek and Valley Reserve (FSC and VR)

The next meeting of FSCVR will be held on Wednesday 18th March 2020 at 7:30 pm at Alvie Hall. The meeting will be addressed by Stephanie Bubnich from the City of Monash, the Recycling and Education Officer for Monash. All welcome.

Note that FSCVR are on Facebook: Visit them at facebook.com/fscvr

Newsletter Help

I would welcome someone to volunteer to give our newsletter a little "spruce up" to make the presentation a little more contemporary. If you can help please send me an email on dougscott3@bigpond.com. I will not be available to edit the newsletter for the March edition. This will need to be arranged at the February meeting.

For your diary

Wednesday, 26 February, First monthly meeting for 2020, 7.30pm at Alvie hall. Discussion item for agenda: ***FODCR on Facebook***

Clean up Australia Day - Sunday, 1st March,
from 10 am to 12.30pm. Meet at Park Road car park, for registration. BYO gloves, water bottles, and wear all weather clothing and solid shoes. Children to be supervised by a responsible adult. All welcome.

Guest Speaker Dominic Bowd -“Ecological Restoration at Riversdale Golf Club”. 7.30 pm Alvie Hall, **Wednesday, 25 March** – followed by supper and then a Monthly meeting

Sunday, 29 March, Working Bee,10 am to 12.30 pm

Weeding and clean up - Meet at the noticeboard near the Stephensons Road carpark