

DAMPER CREEK DOINGS

June 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

Editorial:

Bushland Restoration, The “Bradley Method”

The “Bradley Method” is a term frequently bandied about while our Friends’ group conducts weeding working bees. I penned this piece to clarify what this term means and how it originated.

The Bradley sisters lived in the Sydney North Shore suburb of Mossman. In the 1960’s they developed a method of regenerating degraded bushland that has been widely adopted and adapted to different situations. The sisters walked frequently in the nearby *Ashton Park* (now part of the Sydney Harbour National Park) and, as many of us do, often pulled out weeds along the walking paths. For years they persisted with this casual weeding, pulling those weeds they found most offensive. The Council would periodically conduct a campaign to clear out massive quantities of weeds, an expensive and futile activity. Neither the Council efforts nor those of casual volunteers such as the Bradley sisters seemed effective in producing a long term solution to the problem of weeds.

The sisters noted that, a little back from the path, there was reasonably good bush which harboured few weeds. These weeds were the source of the seeds which frustrated the removal of weeds from the margins of the paths and noted that once the weeds were removed from the “good” areas they seldom returned. Not only that, but the “good” areas expanded with time. The sisters developed a method based on this observation which involved fastidiously clearing weeds from “good” areas and working on the margins. The margins then regenerated from seed from the “good” areas or from seed stored in the soil. This observation resulted in the first principle of the “Bradley Method”,

1. Work outwards from the good areas to the bad

Consider that conventional weeding, removing the worst weeds first, results in forcing the weeds back towards the good areas whereas the *Bradley Method* forces the weeds away from the good areas and allows the “good” areas to expand.

2. Make minimal disturbance

Native plants have largely evolved to propagate on undisturbed soil. Disturbance of the soil usually favour the exotics.

3. Let native plant regeneration dictate the rate of weed removal

The bush will recover if competition from weeds is removed. The seeds from “good” areas will re-colonise the ground if the right conditions are provided.

Is this relevant to Damper Creek Reserve?

History has shown that there are strengths and deficiencies of the *Bradley Method* in different situations. Much of the vegetation in Damper Creek Reserve is the result of revegetation programmes. The *Bradley Method* does not involve the use of revegetation but relies on the capability of existing stocks of remnant vegetation to re-colonise cleared areas. Every year the Friends' group and the Council plant thousands of plants in order to give the Reserve a natural appearance. These plants are the source of seeds which should ensure that the Reserve becomes a self-sustaining ecosystem. A high priority needs to be given to revegetated areas to ensure weeds do not overwhelm them.

Recent experience has shown that, within areas of heavy weed infestation, good areas of indigenous vegetation can exist. Careful clearing exposes these plants and, once mature, they will spread into the open areas. Once these plants have started to set seed, the *Bradley Method* can work its magic. Until that point, persistence and diligence is required and, as we have often seen, revegetation efforts can be overwhelmed by weeds.

Weeds growing within a clump of native vegetation can be removed then wait for the native vegetation to fill in the gaps and exclude further weeds.

Upgrading the Bushcrew Compound

Work has started on demolishing the old buildings on the site; the first stage being the removal of the old garage (pictured). We look forward to a “new look” Bushcrew Compound with a vastly improved

appearance and improved facilities for the staff. The Friends will be assisting at a later date to help revegetate the site.



Park Road Nature Strips

We are proud of the Park Road nature strips which were planted out by the Council and the Friends in 2018 as part of our Jubilee celebrations. These have progressed quite well due, at least in part, to the weeding efforts of the members together with Council staff. In recent weeks several hundred new plants have been added to the plantings with some new species. We look forward to seeing these plants establish themselves before the coming summer. There is sure to be an interesting floral display this spring.

Melbourne Water Grant tube stock plantings

Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic restriction on public gatherings, and the subsequent cancellation of the FoDCR Community Planting Day planned for May, the tube stock plants financed by the Melbourne Water Grant will now be organised and planted out by the Council Bushcrew free of charge. The Friends' group has requested that, in accordance with the Grant application goal, tube stock will be for infill planting on the slope between the main duck pond and the rear of the Park Road properties. This area has recently been cleared of weeds by members of FoDCR (in accordance with the COVID restrictions and individual members weeding solo). It will form a continuous strip of high-quality vegetation which connects with the very successful nearby area planted out two years ago.

Cyclists on Damper Creek Reserve Walking Trails – Safety

Recently a number of instances have been reported of cyclists travelling at high speed on the Damper Creek Reserve walking trails. This concern has been discussed with Council staff. A FoDCR safety notice is now on both noticeboards in which bike riders are advised to ride slowly, ring a bell as a warning of approach to walkers, and to give way and to ride respectfully. While cyclists cannot be excluded from the Reserve, it is definitely not an official cycling trail and is not designed as a shared trail. A little investigation showed that Damper Creek Reserve was listed as a cycling trail on the “Alltrails” website App. Alltrails has been contacted and Damper Creek Reserve is no longer listed on their site as a road bike cycling trail.

Friends of Damper Creek Reserve activities during COVID-19 restrictions

Members are notified that all meetings, guest speakers, working bees and community events have been cancelled until restrictions are fully lifted. For non-members, please be aware that we often communicate by email. By becoming a member, you will be automatically added to our email list.

Please direct membership enquiries to the secretary c/o P.O.Box 2063 Mount Waverley 3149 or via email:

secretary.dampercreek@gmail.com General information including past newsletters is available on our website - www.friendsofdampercreek.org.

Damper Creek Reserve remains a popular walking destination and this use is permitted for exercise purposes provided users observe appropriate “social distancing” of 1.5 metres as advised.

Diary Notes

Unfortunately, we cannot predict when our normal programmes will resume (ie monthly meetings and working bees). The July meeting and the July working bee have been cancelled due to current COVID-19 restrictions. The FoDCR committee will continue to liaise with the City of Monash Bushcrew and the Monash Halls of Management. Alvie Hall has been closed for some weeks and is now only open to very small meetings with restrictions in place, being a limit of 12 persons (with social distancing observed) and no use of the kitchen. Deep cleaning has to occur after each group meeting in the Hall. These restrictions

and requirements make the hall unsuitable for our current use. The Secretary will be in touch with Monash Halls of Management again early in August to check on the unfolding situation.

Our guest speakers for this year have been postponed until 2021. We will continue to seek out more guest speakers for 2021 and would appreciate any suggestions. Please be assured that FoDCR continues to be active behind the scenes.

The content of this Newsletter reflects the opinions of the Editor and the Friends of Damper Creek Reserve. Content is welcome and should be emailed to dougscott@bigpond.com or to the secretary at secretary.dampercreek@gmail.com .

***If you see something in Damper Creek that you think needs attention, please contact Monash Council on their website and leave a report:
www.monash.vic.gov.au/contact/request-a-service***

Damper Creek is part of the Yarra catchment and is financially supported by Melbourne Water and Monash City Council