

Merri News

AUGUST 2011

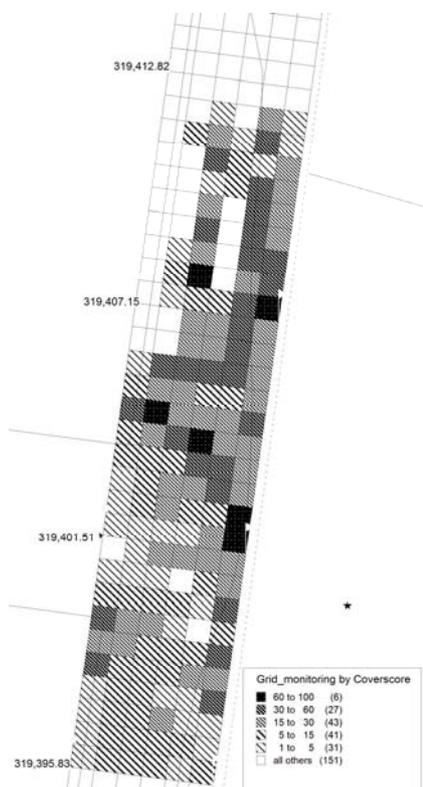
The quarterly newsletter of Merri Creek Management Committee (MCMC) - caring for the Merri Creek

Gorses for courses

Gorse, a prickly, invasive bush threatens native grasslands by competing with native plants and also by making it difficult and more dangerous to conduct ecological burns, which grasslands need.

On 11 September, volunteers can join a 'Gorse Force' assisted by the results of an innovative weed mapping exercise. Weed mapping makes the work of Gorse control more efficient and effective.

MCMC is assessing new mapping procedures through our Caring for Our Country project. At Kalkallo Common Grassland, aerial photo interpretation of a Gorse infestation has been tested on the ground using traditional grid assessment techniques. The participation of Holmesglen TAFE students allowed over 400 assessments of five metre plots in just a few hours.



The students' work resulted in this map (at left), which shows different densities of Gorse. It indicates where different Gorse control methods may be needed, depending on density.

We are also comparing the map with aerial photos to see if the photos are sensitive enough for us to detect these density differences. If they are, it would save a lot of time.

To assess the value of this approach, we will track the progress of Gorse removal at the Kalkallo site by repeating both aerial and ground testing over the next year.

Join the 'Gorse Force' at Kalkallo Common on Sunday 11 September

You can participate in this exciting project by helping out at Malcolm St, Kalkallo, 10am-12.30pm. Melway 367 F2. Light refreshments provided.

Top photo: MCMC Parkland Management Team members get some 'Gorse on their Forks' at Kalkallo Common at a Gorse removal in February.

Bottom photo: Holmesglen TAFE students, led by their tutor (and active Friends of Merri Creek member) Pascale Pitot, learn that monitoring in grasslands needs coordination!



For upcoming community events see the MCMC website: www.mcmc.org.au

Students leap-frog to success

Congratulations to Coolaroo South Primary School's *Leap Frog Squad* (right) who have won a place at the *International Kids Teaching Kids River Conference* in Adelaide in October 2011. The squad made an outstanding contribution to the recent *2011 Melbourne Water Kids Teaching Kids Conference*, where students delivered quality workshops to other students.



Their teacher Lorraine Carli, says: "I can't begin to tell you what this has done to the kids' confidence and self esteem. They are so proud and excited."

MCMC is delighted to have helped Coolaroo South Primary School develop their workshop. We provided information about frogs, indigenous plants and how catchments and wetlands work, including a guided visit and activities at the Merri Park Wetland in Northcote.

MCMC's support for Coolaroo South Primary School was made possible by funding from The Ian Potter Foundation for our *Together by the Merri* project.

Funds for stony knolls and tip site

MCMC has gained funds to commence works at two sites where we haven't previously worked.

Kalkallo: The Department of Sustainability and Environment has granted \$9,900 for restoration works amongst stony knolls in the part of Kalkallo Common south of Donnybrook Cemetery. We will assess the site and control weeds around significant plant species.

Campbellfield: Hume Council has contracted MCMC to commence weed management and planting along the Merri Creek escarpment east of the Bolinda Rd Tip site, which is being converted to public open space.

Ex MCMC staff member returns: We are delighted to welcome Arthur McManus back to the Parkland Management Team. After several months travelling the world, Arthur returned just in time to fill a vacancy.

Brunswick Terminal Station news

The latest design for the expanded Brunswick Terminal Station, next to Merri Creek in Brunswick East, shows most of the electrical equipment housed within three main buildings. This is a big improvement on earlier plans. However, MCMC still has concerns about the adequacy of the proposed landscaping for the creek interface and is working to achieve a better outcome.

The Merri Creek Environment Fund

The Merri Creek Environment Fund is seeking donations for revegetation and conservation works in the Merri Creek catchment. *Donations of \$2 or more are tax deductible.* Please make cheques out to Merri Creek Environment Fund and send to MCMC, 2 Lee Street, East Brunswick, 3057, or drop in a cash donation (sorry, no credit card facilities) or contact us to arrange a direct deposit.

Students envision *Tree Sprawl*

During June, RMIT Architecture students exhibited at CERES in Brunswick a selection of their works based on consolidation and expansion of open vegetated space around Merri Creek, Melbourne.

The project coordinator, Mauro Barraco, RMIT Senior Lecturer, says: "these projects encourage regeneration and proliferation of open vegetated landscape – 'tree sprawl' indeed, instead of urban sprawl."

The ten student design projects were complemented with photos of Merri Creek habitat by MCMC Ecological Restoration Planner, Brian Bainbridge.

Book available: The designs, photos and two essays are now published in *Tree Sprawl*, available from the MCMC office for \$20 (plus \$2 if posted).

Learning about Wurundjeri life

MCMC staff recently enjoyed an enlightening training day about Wurundjeri culture and some of the issues faced by the traditional custodians of Merri Creek.

The Wurundjeri Tribe Land and Compensation Cultural Heritage Council held the training at the Convent in Abbotsford, where they have their office.

After a welcoming smoking ceremony, staff learnt about Wurundjeri family life, hunting methods, recognising stone artefacts, and the impacts of colonisation.

We highly recommend this training for anyone wanting more awareness of Wurundjeri culture.

Wurundjeri book: You too can learn about the Wurundjeri, with the book *People of the Merri Merri: The Wurundjeri in Colonial Days*, available at the MCMC office (see below) for \$20 (plus \$3 if posted).

Merri Creek Management Committee produces these quarterly newsletters for the wider community in the Merri Creek catchment. You can download this in colour from our website (see below) or contact Ray Radford for a hardcopy at:

Merri Creek Management Committee 2 Lee St East Brunswick VIC 3057. Phone: 9380 8199 Fax 9380 6989

Email: admin@mcmc.org.au Website: www.mcmc.org.au