

Merri Creek Management Committee

Key Parkland Management projects in 2013/14

Alongside MCMC's regular work with stakeholders, the organisation's broad set of skills generated requests to collaborate with external councils, companies and agencies on conservation projects. Projects typically required two or more of the following skills;

- ecological burning,
- grassland management,
- wetland management,
- community engagement,
- rail safety,
- project management and liaison with stakeholder organisations.

Several projects used a 'Focal-species' approach; devising and assessing conservation actions that target a single species. also benefit the broader ecosystem. Focal species included Large-flowered Geranium, Spiny Rice-flower, Golden Sun-moth and Plains Yam Daisy.

Fire, both ecological burns and wildfires, generated other projects, in particular the opportunity to revegetate a 1.9 ha site in Fawkner in the aftermath of a dangerous arson attack.

Details of some of these projects can be found here. MCMC commenced a contract to restore creek-bank vegetation to where a major gas pipeline crossed a 'remote' area of the creek near Beveridge. The wetland expertise of crew-member Sarah Bates ensured the successful salvage, storage and re-planting of semi-aquatic vegetation at this site. Re-scheduling and negotiation was needed when delays and unexpected changes in the engineering works clashed with seasonally-dependent restoration plans.

- MCMC's training and experience in railway land management ensured a number of conservation projects took place on Railway reserves. A grant with Melbourne Water commenced that will reduce the impact of weeds on a high quality remnant of the Hearn's Swamp along the railway in Wallan.
- MCMC has also advised the Department of Environment and Primary Industries (DEPI) on restoration work, including ecological burning, around populations of the endangered Large-flowered Geranium (*Geranium carolinii*) along a railway in Broadmeadows.
- Moonee Valley Council contracted MCMC to do ecological burning of a couple of urban parks that retain populations of the endangered Spiny Rice-flower (*Pimelea spinescens*).
- Work commenced on restoring the conservation and geological values of a 1 hectare site near Lynch Road in Fawkner that protects a population of the Critically endangered Matted Flax Lily, (*Dianella amoena*) and other uncommon remnant plants. This work, conducted in collaboration with Moreland City Council, and another partnership with Victorian Indigenous Nurseries Cooperative revealed potential for a seed orchard project at this site. A grant application succeeded in gaining funds for planting uncommon escarpment plants to boost the genetic diversity of these species.



Swamp Everlasting, a vulnerable species thriving where highly competitive weeds have been controlled as part of the Melbourne Water grant at Hearn's Swamp along a railway Reserve in Wallan.



Large-flowered Geranium, MCMC cooperated with DEPI on actions to conserve this species.



MCMC's parkland crew conducting a burn at Allan Reserve, Keilor East

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- A potentially tragic act of arson in February 2014 has removed the massive build-up of environmental weeds at a steep site in Fawkner. This has provided the opportunity to conduct revegetation that would otherwise be prohibitively expensive. Swift negotiations between Melbourne Water, Moreland City Council and MCMC has developed a plan and gained funds to treat weed regrowth and establish a framework of indigenous habitat across 1.9 hectares over the next few years.
- The *Sumner Loving* Communities for Nature grant kicked off in March 2014, with an intensive program to rejuvenate both the Merri Parklands and the local communities' engagement with local environmental management.
- Multi-year Communities for Nature projects investigating Golden Sun Moth habitat needs and conservation of remnant *Microseris scapigera* (Plains Yam daisy) populations resulted in the rediscovery and mapping of Plains Yam Daisy at sites in Wallan and in Thomastown. A second search took advantage of improved visibility after a wildfire. A community monitoring event indicated sustained restoration works at Kalkallo Common have fostered Yam Daisy establishment. A seed orchard for the species established in collaboration with the Victorian Indigenous Nurseries Cooperative (VINC) provided ample seed for direct sowing trials.



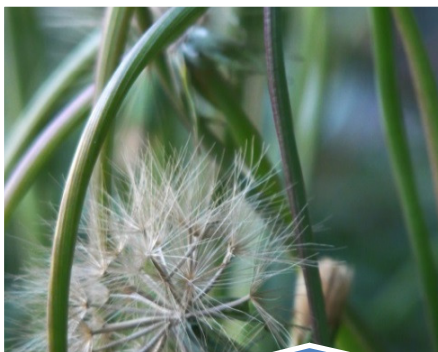
Over 500 metres of creek frontage, was burnt by the fire which narrowly missed damaging houses and factories.



Plant salvage at 'Merri Crossing' in March prior to gas pipeline installation.



A room-sized Boxthorn- disarmed by the intense fire at Lorne Street, Fawkner.



Plains Yam Daisy (Plains Murnong) Seed in seed orchard developed in collaboration between MCMC and VINC.



Launch of the Sumner Loving project in March 2014 including a Welcome to Country by Uncle Bill Nicholson.