

**Waterwatch monitors continue to monitor river health since Black Saturday.**

Waterwatch monitors are helping Melbourne Water and the community in North East Melbourne collect valuable data on the water quality impacts, and the recovery process of our waterways, of the bushfires of February 2009.

**Early effects of the Bushfires**

The bushfires affected around 900 kilometres or 10% of Melbourne's rivers and creeks. The fires were preceded by a very dry and hot summer, which took its toll on soil and vegetation.

**Post 12 months- Current status of waterways**

Trish Grant, Waterwatch Bushfire monitoring Coordinator for Waterwatch Melbourne, has had the opportunity to revisit some sites that were burned, in the last few months and has observed mainly positive changes. Trish commented that she had a preconception of real devastation before re-visiting sites, but was pleasantly surprised to find she was wrong.

2009's spring and summer have seen better rainfall than previous to the Bushfires, with reasonably gentle rain falling in the effected catchment areas, but heavy enough to soak and to help revegetate and re-establish plant communities on river banks. Certainly the upper slopes of rivers took longer to revegetate than downstream, but this is to be expected due to the loss of soil from upstream. Much of this soil has re-established itself on lower banks and is providing a good organic source for bank vegetation downstream. The main plants re-establishing themselves are the Eucalypts and moss, which will both supply good soil stability for future heavy rainfall. An example of good establishment is the Diamond Creek on Ninks Road, in St Andrews/Kinglake West. (refer to photos below) When the site was visited in October there were hardly any new seedlings emerging, apart from those in protected shady pockets. However, in January 2010 Eucalypt seedlings have emerged and shot up to 80cm tall. The ground was quite dense with them. Weed invasion was also a potential problem that Trish had her eye on. So far, in general, many of the sites Trish has visited have not been struck with major infestations, with no new emerging weeds such as blackberry. However at sites with weeds, thistles seem to be the most prevalent.

North East Melbourne Waterwatch monitors began the long term study into collecting data on bushfire affected waterways in March 2009. Monitors have been collecting data on a fortnightly to monthly basis at selected points in the middle Yarra Catchment. Parameters tested include turbidity (suspended solids), salinity, nutrients and dissolved oxygen. Photographs and observations are also being collected. We are always on the look out for more monitors, particularly on the Yarra River. All training, site selection and equipment is provided by Waterwatch.

**Summer 2010**  
**Volume 5, Issue 1**

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**Far Left.** Top of Ninks Rd, looking west over creek. **October 2009**

Note that ground cover is very sparse and there are many bare patches from lyrebird scratchings. Tree ferns are green but have few fronds. Epicormic regrowth is present but not vigorous.

**Left.** Top of Ninks Rd, looking west over creek. **January 2010.**

Note significantly more ground cover. A multitude of eucalypt seedlings and some wattle. Creepers and shrub story regenerating also. Epicormic regrowth is much more extensive as is the abundance of new fern fronds. The ground is much more shaded.

*Photos by T.Grant*

## Volunteers Page

### **The Drought Monitoring Project : Get Involved**

#### **Community Water Quality Data needed to monitor significant sites in times of Drought.**

Melbourne Water (MW), who are heading the project in conjunction with the Waterwatch Program, are wanting trained volunteers to collect long term trend data on how important waterway sites (ie that provide habitat for significant species such as native fish, frogs and platypus) are impacted by weather conditions & lack of water experienced in the summer and autumn months in Melbourne. Having this data will help MW plan for responses to drought, including identifying threats and prioritising sites for environmental flows, which will broaden understandings of how waterways behave in times of drought stress. Monitors may also be able to play a key role in and preserving flora and fauna and protecting public health. This information will be useful for other water managers.



Refuge pool in Malcom Creek. *Photo by S.Crinall*

#### **Opportunities for new volunteers**

If you are a new person to Waterwatch this would be a great opportunity to begin Waterwatch monitoring to get some training, to be involved with a project that has flexible timelines and is not all year round so won't take up too much time. It's also a great opportunity to see some lovely spots on our waterways in Melbourne that you may not otherwise have known were there.

#### **How to get involved**

For further information on this project and how you can be involved, contact the North East Melbourne Waterwatch Coordinator on 9457 9885 [julia.vanderoord@banyule.vic.gov.au](mailto:julia.vanderoord@banyule.vic.gov.au)

### **2010 Banyule Community Volunteer Awards. Do you know someone that deserves to be awarded? Nominations close 19 March 2010.**

The award program aims to recognise and honour outstanding individuals and groups who have contributed significantly to the development of their organisation, the Banyule community or have had a positive impact on the quality of life of residents of Banyule. Its open to anyone volunteering within Banyule or is a resident in Banyule that volunteers their time.

Nomination categories include:

- Community Volunteer (for individuals including "Life time achievement" award)
- Young Volunteer (aged 12-25 as of 1st January 2010)
- Good Neighbour Award

#### **Nominations for the awards close at 5pm Friday 19th March 2010.**

Nomination forms and the criteria for volunteer selection can be downloaded from the Banyule City Council website through the following link:

<http://www.banyule.vic.gov.au/NewsEvents.aspx?ID=2134>

The awards will be presented at Council's annual Volunteer "Thankyou" function on Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> May, during National Volunteers week.

For more information on the awards program please contact Karen Molinaro on 9457 9955 Mon – Wed or Bianca Ellis on 9457 9841 or email [volawards@banyule.vic.gov.au](mailto:volawards@banyule.vic.gov.au)

### Duke of Edinburgh Award: Darebin Creek Cleanup. Article by Asher Harrington.

Asher Harrington has recently completed a three month clean-up of the Darebin Creek as the community service/volunteer work component of her Duke of Edinburgh award at Ivanhoe Girls' Grammar School. Asher regularly walks her dog along the creek and she was disgusted by the rubbish, which ruins the otherwise beautiful waterway. "For a long time I kept asking, why doesn't someone do something about this? Probably a lot of people walking along the creek ask themselves the same question. There is a fine line between pointing out the problem and taking initiative and fixing it yourself." The following is a summary of Asher's project:

"The Darebin Creek is like my home. I've lived in the same house nearby the creek my whole life. I've always loved the creek and its natural beauty but over the years, due to litter and pollution, its natural beauty has been dying away. To be honest, going out in the cold weather and getting soaked while walking through the dirty creek was not my ideal way of spending a Saturday afternoon but knowing that I was making even the smallest difference for the future of the creek kept me going back every week no matter what the weather gave me. The steep banks and blackberry bushes often made collecting the rubbish a difficult job. It was also frustrating to have to re-clean the same areas of the creek after the heavy rain brought more rubbish. I just tried to focus on the fact that every piece of rubbish that I picked up was rubbish that wouldn't end up in the sea. My efforts were also made worthwhile by the many positive comments from people passing by. If I could make the appearance of the creek better for a few people and maybe even inspire others to clean up too, then I knew it was all worthwhile.

Over a 3 month period I worked on an area of the Darebin Creek spanning 240 metres and collected a total of 109.25 kg of rubbish. Unfortunately, this project could really only be done during the winter due to the high population of snakes in the warmer months.

I think if everyone in the community could just make a small effort to help keep the creek clean then the future of the creek and other waterways will be much brighter. We can start by disposing of our rubbish more carefully and responsibly so that it doesn't end up in storm water drains, which then flow in to our creeks.

As an individual, I can make a small difference but if the whole community pitched in we could make a huge difference."

"Many hands make light work." John Heywood (1497-1580)



Asher in action cleaning up the Darebin Creek as part of her Duke of Edinburgh Award program. Photos by A.Harrington

### Watching a Dragonfly go from aquatic to terrestrial is a Waterwatcher's dream!

Local Waterwatch monitor John Wardzynski was lucky enough recently to see the final in-star stage of a Gomphidae (Yellow-striped Hunter Dragon fly) at Watsons Creek. John recalls that it took about 20 minutes for the dragon fly to pull out its wings and come out of its casing before flying off. A very special experience to be able to observe. (To the right you can see John's photo of the dragonfly stretching out his wings, with his old casing underneath)



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**Come along to these free Waterwatch events!**  
Bookings essential. Brought to you by Nillumbik Shire Council.



**Waterwatch websites:**  
[www.waterwatchmelbourne.org.au](http://www.waterwatchmelbourne.org.au)  
[www.vic.waterwatch.org.au](http://www.vic.waterwatch.org.au)

**Frog discovery night at Alistair Knox Park**

Join Waterwatch at the Alistair Knox Park wetland for a night of discovery. Identify different frog calls, learn about the local duck species and find out how the wetland works to clean stormwater. Please wear appropriate outdoor clothing and footwear and bring a torch.

Date: Thursday 29 April

Time: 7pm-8pm

Meeting point: Alistair Knox Park, corner Panther Place and Main Road, Eltham (Melway 21 J6)

Bookings essential: Georgia Ramsey, on 9433 3210



A Juvenile Pobblebonk Frog.  
Picture by T. Grinter

**Diamond Creek Waterwatch Bike Ride**

Presented by Waterwatch

Join Waterwatch for a 12km (moderate level) bike ride along the Diamond Creek with stops along the way to test the water and learn about environmental issues affecting the creek. All ages are welcome and lunch is provided. Please bring your own bike, helmet and water bottle.

Date: Sunday 2 May

Time: 10am-1pm

Meeting point: Edendale Farm, Gastons Road, Eltham (Melway 22 A1)

Bookings essential: Georgia Ramsey, on 9433 3210



**Waterwatch Training sessions are confirmed for 2010**—Waterwatch conducts free training sessions that focus on learning more about river health issues, how to sample, test and collect water quality data to become a fully fledged Waterwatch monitor. For training dates and bookings visit

<http://www.banyule.vic.gov.au/waterwatch/>

**Clean Up Australia Day —Sunday 7 March 2010**

'If you don't help Clean Up Australia, who will?'

Please join us in cleaning up some of the truly beautiful bush we have in our own backyard.

To search for a site and volunteer, or to register your Clean Up site, go to

<http://www.cleanup.com.au/> or call 1800 282 329.

You may also turn up on the day and register in person with the site coordinator.

**Business Clean Up - Tuesday 2 March 2010**

**Schools Clean Up - Friday 5 March 2010**

**Clean Up Australia Day - Sunday 7 March 2010**



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