



Water for Life

National Water Week

National Water Week is an annual event held in October across Australia, hosted by each State and Territory. It involves the community in getting involved, protecting and conserving our precious water resources. This year will be the 14th annual National Water Week.

September-November 2007
Volume 2, Issue 3

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Come and celebrate National Water Week by coming along to these free Waterwatch events!

Whittlesea Frogs on Wheels

9am – 12pm Saturday 20 October
Norris Bank Reserve, Bundoora

The Darebin Creek is home to the endangered Growling Grass Frog in the Bundoora area. For a chance to see and hear this special creature, grab your bike and join us for a morning of discovery. This leisurely 5km ride stops at a Growling Grass Frog habitat where participants will help identify and record the frogs, discover what's in the creek and find out how water quality can effect frog populations. Snacks provided. Bookings essential by contacting the City of Whittlesea on 9217 2195 or email SustainabilityPlanning@whittlesea.vic.gov.au

Wetland to Wetland Ride- Waterwatch Snapshot 2007

10am-1pm Sunday 14 October
Darebin Parklands Environment Centre, Alphington

Ride your bike from the Ivanhoe Wetlands in the Darebin Parklands, heading north along the Darebin Creek up to the La Trobe University Wetlands and return to the Darebin Parklands. Stop along the way to look for waterbugs and frogs in local wetlands and test salt, temperature, turbidity and pH levels. Results will go into the Waterwatch community database and the Waterwatch Statewide Snapshot. Lunch will be provided at Darebin Parklands on return.

Bookings essential by contacting Banyule City Council, Megan Kemp 9457 9816 or email megan.kemp@banyule.vic.gov.au



Young Pobblebonk Frog. Photo by T.Grinter

This event is part of Spring Outdoors, mostly free environmental events in September and October brought to you by Banyule, Manningham and Nillumbik Shire Councils. Call Megan Kemp on 9457 9816 for your free brochure of all the events.

Don't forget! Spring Frog Census is here! Spring is one of the best time to get out to your local park, wetland or river to record frog calls to send to the Melbourne Water Frog Census. Dates of community events where all are welcome are on the back page or for more information visit <http://frogs.melbournewater.com.au/>

Waterways Badge Day - written by members of the 1st Greensborough Guides, of their trip to the Plenty River.

We, the first Greensborough Girl guides went to a fun filled night of rivers and junk. We did a lot of tests to see about the health of the Plenty River [in Greensborough] for our "healthy waterways badge". On the 1st of May we met a lady named Julia who taught us about the waterways and gave us a better understanding of how unhealthy the Plenty River was.

There were 11 of us at the river. We started the evening by picking up rubbish on the river bank.

We found a lot of junk like grubby 6 pack holders, tennis balls and even bouncy balls. There were wine bottles, noodle boxes, socks and golf balls. In the end we filled 13 bags full of gross rubbish. Not to mention stinky. Later on we tested the water.

First Julia went into the river and filled a drink bottle and buckets full of water. We tested the temperature, salinity, pH (acidic and alkaline) and the last test we did was we tested the muddiness. We saw a lot of bugs and pollution. It was really awesome and really, really fun.

We saw that our water wasn't as healthy as it should be. In fact it was very poor water.

Poor in health and in its greeny brown sight. When we went back to Guides on Tuesday we brainstormed a heap of ways to make it better and so the dams and rivers have not got rubbish in them. We thought of some ways we can help the waterways:

- don't litter
- wash cars on the grass (if allowed)
- pick up dog poo

**These are things we can all do,
And they are really easy too.
To keep the animals and river clean,
So we are all happy and can all be seen.**



1st G'borough Guides with Julia at the Plenty River. C.Meritt



Montmorency South Primary School at the Yarra River Conference. Article and photo by Tobey Henry

Congratulations to the six students from Montmorency South Primary School who presented at the 2007 Melbourne Water Yarra River Youth Conference, held at the MCG. The Conference involved students working with mentors to develop their own presentation to teach other kids about the natural environment.

The students gave a fantastic presentation about various aspects of the Yarra River. They performed a dreamtime story of the Yarra, made an entertaining and educational film and demonstrated some Waterwatch tests that they conducted. They finished up their presentation with an interactive quiz and a board game highlighting the main issues concerning the health of the Yarra. Overall, they did an excellent job and proved to be intelligent and enthusiastic environmentalists! This is the first time the conference has been held in Melbourne. It was a fabulous two days. This would never have happened without Lyn Hill (teacher) Thank you!!

Slowing it down by Martina Neale

This article is, as you will see, about drains. To you, the mention of the word may conjure up negative notions like smell, litter, foaming bubbles, poo, grey water and nasties from the road.

To me, a drain is a scene of beauty. I see a long open drain in the ground, widening as it gets closer to the water. Furnished with ledges, and rocks, and reeds interspersed with flowering lilies and brown cigars. To me, the smell is something to get rid of, a challenge to be met, and certainly nothing to be paralyzed by.

In order to begin being accountable, we can start making it our business to find out where the storm water drains are, in our neighbourhood. Where they lead, and what the water quality or mud quality is, of the local creek. Then from there, lead the route back to your house. The Council can provide you with information on how to locate the flow of your storm water, all the way to the nearby creek or river.

Open drain – this is where the work can be done. It may not look like much at this point. But if that's the case, you can help change that open drain for the better. It has the potential to become a small ecosystem that filters, and oxygenates and energizes the passing water. Its entrance into the creek becomes a highlight in water quality.

The principle of a good-working filtering drain, is to slow the water down. Everything that goes too fast creates bad results. The slowing down process, will allow water, in a thin film, to run over rocks and ledges, fall down riffles, climb up the next rock, with enough energy to do so.

The thin film of water allows the sun, that element we are going to have a lot of in the future, to maximally expose its energy on the water and treat it. A thin film is clever. The principle was utilized in an invention on the ABC inventors show last year. The invention comprises a water purifier on the roof. A flat plastic bag, like a mattress, lying on the pitched slope of the roof. The base is black, with stepwise terraces, following the pitch. Each step has a bulbous shape in its centre. This allows a THIN film of water, to pass over it. The heat of the sun evaporates it quickly. Then the clear ceiling of the bag, not far above this, will catch the formed condensation. This is collected at the base. (Even seawater will allow itself to be purified like this) The upshot of this is that, by the bulbous shapes and the steps, extra time and opportunity is given to do work on the water that other wise would not be there.

In the case of the drain, while thin water film exposure is created by the rocks; the filtering of toxic and excess materials is done by sunlight and the plantings. Plants have a way of absorbing and neutralizing toxins, of growing bacteria on their roots that scrub the water clean. Chemistry is used to its full potential. Acid goes to alkaline for a good terrain in the receiving creek.

A healthy food choice with each meal gives you a brick by brick build-up of health over your whole life, with benefits at the end when you need it most. Our effort, brick by brick, for the build-up of the health of our water, gives in the same way, untold benefits when we will need it most. That is, it will lead to the success of a natural complex process. The natural process at hand, for us to contribute to, is the maintenance of the quality of the water we have in our neighbourhood.



Martina Neale (pictured left) was until recently a Waterwatch monitor for the Friends of Diamond Creek—Hurstbridge. She is pictured here with fellow Waterwatcher Anne Fitzpatrick. Photo by J. Vanderoord

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Waterwatch Events and Training Program September-November 2007

Merri Creek Moonee Ponds
Waterwatch Coordinator

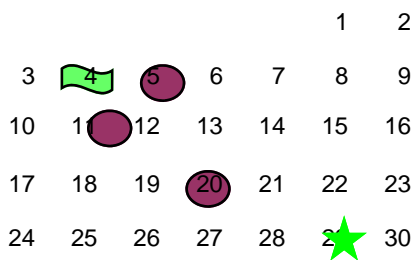
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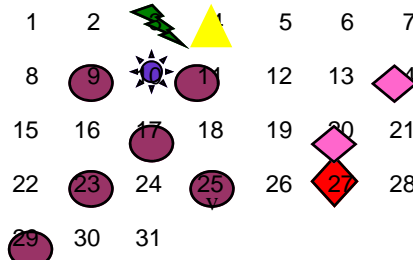
Waterwatch Training for new monitors/ groups and refreshers

Sustainable Homes Program. To register for these FREE workshops and for more information go to www.sustainablehomes.vic.gov.au

September



October



November



Come along to participate in these watery events! Mostly FREE!

Banyule History of the Plenty River (Spring Outdoors)

Nillumbik sugar glider walk

Whittlesea Spring Frog Survey and spotlighting

Darebin Creek froggers event in Mill Park

DPA "Catch a Carp day" for kids

Community frog census walk nights (DCMC)

Waterwatch bike rides on the Darebin Creek

Please note: Bookings essential for most of these events. Contact Julia for more information



Drawing of *Daphnia sp.* by S.Crinall



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