

2003

STEELS CREEK COMMUNITY NOTES - NO 45 (October – November 2003)

Help the Creek 5th November 8PM at SC4

....To discuss issues and perceived problems; relevant authorities and representatives will be on hand to develop an action plan with interested parties. Could we have a walking track along the length of the Creek? Could we connect with the Billabong in Yarra Glen? **Is there any interest in working out an agreed landcare program for Steels Creek?**

STEELS CREEK COMMUNITY NOTES - NO 46 (December 2003 – January 2004)

STEELS CREEK AND ‘LANDCARE’ - Help the Creek Report

There were around 50 people at the meeting on November 5 to hear Roger Lord of Melbourne Water talk on the Board’s “Healthy Rivers” program and the work the Board has done towards the restoration of Steels Creek. This was a most informative evening and the attendance was nearly a record for the Centre, demonstrating the interest local landowners have in the Creek.

Following the talk there were questions to Roger and then we considered whether or not we should form a “Landcare” group to develop a management plan or projects to further help the Creek. Most people wanted to know more about “Landcare” and the various options and implications. A committee including **Ivan Filsell, Andrew Chapman, Stephen Carroll, B&I Day, and Malcolm Calder** was formed to consider the issues and options available and to report back with information and recommendations early in the New Year.

There was general feeling that we shouldn’t form a new body in the valley, but that we should look at the advantages of linking anything we finally decide to do into the existing structure of the Steels Creek Community.

2004

STEELS CREEK COMMUNITY NOTES - NO 49 (June - July 2004)

The Friends of Birds and Animals in Steels Creek

Sixty five kilos of seed per week is a lot of bird food! That is only part of what is required to sustain the 120 creatures great and small in the care of Tony Wooley and Georgina Rowley at Babbajin Park, 1 Greenwood Lane: Steels Creek's only animal refuge.

Tony acquired his interest from his British father; growing up in Boronia he lived with exotic birds, finches and other animals sheltered in the back garden. Georgina, Tony and his son Jessie care for about 80 exotic birds and poultry, 20 reptiles, tortoises, ponies, cattle, and one baby wombat named Dozer. While Jessie attends school Dozer sleeps the day away.

The Kangkoa Wildlife Shelter is operated by Fran Henderson and Steve Hunt around the corner on Hargreaves Road. Both groups focus on refuge, rescue and rehabilitation. Fran is a registered veterinarian nurse at the Healesville Sanctuary. A major objective is to return the native animals to their habitat after recovery from injuries or abandonment. Kangkoa offers a home for more than 30 native animals often orphaned through accident or malicious intent.

A few weeks ago, a white station wagon collided with two kangaroos and a wombat. A 'pinkie' or pouch survivor was found and is now in Gee long at a specialist who cares for these demanding orphans. The car will be restored but sadly, the animals are gone forever. Guns, automobiles, feral dogs, cats and foxes (the four legged terrorists of the bush) are the biggest offenders here. Just last week the toll from guns included a goshawk, kookaburra and some ducks. Tony and the team perform more than a dozen rescues and markings per month. Marking is an inspection of a corpse or injured animal to look for a pinkie and evaluate the possibilities. Tony has even used fibre glass to repair cracked tortoise shells.

Flashing his characteristic quick grin, Tony is delighted to report that Steels Creek has 72 species of native birds resident including some local wedge tail eagles with a fledgling, a peregrine falcon and at least one powerful owl. Tony & Georgina and Fran & Steve.

STEELS CREEK COMMUNITY NOTES - NO 50 (August - September 2004)

How Green Is Our Valley?

The Steels Creek Community Centre receives mail from the Port Philip and Western Port Catchment Management Authority, from Melbourne Water and from Landcare Australia, assuming that we are a Landcare group.

In the past we have been involved with the Rabbit Busters Program through a grant received in 2000. Since then we have had a meeting of interested people to discuss the formation of a Landcare group within the Centre, we have had talks from staff of Melbourne Water regarding recent changes to the registration of farm dams, and most recently we had a wonderful talk from Sophie Akers of the Shire on "Living with our Bushland". We all care for our land, but we do not have a focus or status on "Landcare". Many of us have received advice and support for the development and management of our land and there have been some very good results in the overall environment of the valley. But we all do it as individual landholders and, apart from the Rabbit Busters work, there is little attempt to coordinate our efforts across properties which, of course, is the philosophy of Landcare.

There is a potential within Landcare for looking at our valley as a whole and working together to make our different livings as well as improving the environment of the valley. Twice in the last two years we have had people suggest that it would be a wonderful idea to have a walking track along Steels Creek as a recreational resource for the community and as an attraction for visitors. Such a track would need careful planning and design, and the real concerns of farmers

along the creek about stock safety, rubbish and loss of privacy would need to be addressed; but wouldn't it be a great feature for the valley?

To make any progress with ideas of Landcare we need to have a group of people willing to pick up the challenge and work with the community to identify appropriate projects. There needs to be a new driving force with energy and a vision. If there is anyone out there ready to seize the opportunity, please contact the Editor of the Jolly Thing. A strong committee has indicated interest; now is the time for leadership and action!

STEELS CREEK COMMUNITY NOTES - NO 51 (October-November 2004)

LAND CARE COMES TO THE CREEK

In response to your article in the last edition of JT, I'm keen to explore **the establishment of a greater Steels Creek Landcare group**. I have made some enquiries and would like to know how many people would also be keen to join such a group. As for the landcare issues in Steels Creek; of which there are many, these could be established and prioritised when such a group is formed. It is too late for this year's external grant funding, but we could be prepared for next year.

Could you please canvas this idea in the JT and I'm willing to act as initial coordinator with any others of like mind. Regards, John O'Neill

STEELS CREEK COMMUNITY NOTES - NO 52 (December 2004-January 2005)

LAND CARE COMING TO THE CREEK

John O'Neill, Rob Fallon, Bruce Day, David Allan and Stephan Carroll (with apologies from Malcolm Calder, James Scott, Andrew Chapman and Hanna Sky) met with Greg Milne, Yarra Landcare coordinator for the CMA on Tues 16th Nov. It was agreed that the Steels Creek landcare group will affiliate under the VFF Farm Tree & Landcare Association, which will ease the administrative burden and has an attractive insurance package. We further agreed to set the boundaries of the group (generally the Steels Creek catchment area down to the Yarra) It is also proposed that we meet with and observe the workings of a nearby landcare association to gather ideas. It is proposed to call a general meeting of all those with any landcare issues to join a Steels Creek Landcare group, hopefully in Feb 05 (Details later)

John O'Neill

2005

STEELS CREEK COMMUNITY NOTES - NO 53 (February – March 2005)

Steels Creek LANDCARE Group

A public meeting to discuss landcare concerns in the Steels Creek catchment area to call for membership of the above group is to be held on Wednesday 2nd March in the Yarra Glen Memorial Hall commencing at 7.30pm and concluding at 9.30pm.

There will be guest speakers from the Catchment Management Authority and a neighbouring group. All residents in the area (rural & urban), which includes the northern parts of Yarra Glen, are invited to attend and welcome to become members. For details and membership forms. Contact: David Allan

STEELS CREEK COMMUNITY NOTES - NO 54 (April-May 2005)

STEELS CREEK LANDCARE GROUP

Have YOU Joined Up Yet?

Steels Creek Landcare Group is now a definite reality in our area, and will shortly be prioritising land degradation issues and planning actions to tackle them in the Steels Creek Landcare area which comprises all land effectively within the Steels Creek catchment, but excluding National Park and State Forest lands. The area is a unique mix of land uses including rural (agricultural and rural living), conservation, and urban fringe properties on the northern edge of Yarra Glen.

Landcare is all about tackling land degradation problems for both economic benefit and long-term protection of biodiversity and natural ecosystems. Problems might include weed invasion, rabbits, protection of native flora and fauna and effective waterway care. Landcare encourages landholders to work together to solve land degradation problems in their own areas, often through coordinated action across a number of properties. It therefore makes sense for as many property holders as possible to become involved.

In early March, the Group held a well-attended public meeting in Yarra Glen. Councillor Di Moore and Member for Seymour Ben Hardman were present. The meeting was held to provide information about the benefits of becoming a member of Landcare and to encourage membership, which costs \$20.00 per property annually.

Members receive the Landcare magazine and access to expert information and funding opportunities for protection of land and natural resources. Steels Creek Community Centre is to receive \$800 to support its environmental work. The Member for Seymour, Ben Hardman, said these funds were for administrative support and work promoting local Landcare projects.

John O'Neill or David Allan

STEELS CREEK COMMUNITY NOTES - NO 55 (June-July 2005)

LANDCARE

On Saturday 28 May last, Steels Creek Landcare Group conducted its very first field activity. An initial small tree planting near the corner of Steels Creek Road and Gulf Road was undertaken. Despite threatening drizzly skies, about 25 members and supporters were present and planted approximately 100 trees, provided by the Shire of Yarra Ranges. Councillor Di Moore came along too. This is the first planting of a proposed series of plantings along the length of Gulf Road (weather, seasons and other projects permitting!). Following the tree planting, members gathered for a sausage sizzle at the home of

Tom, Sally and Margaret Belford – thank you Margaret, for the hospitality and the warming soup!

The next meeting for the Steels Creek Landcare Group is planned for 8.00 PM on 22 June 2005 at SC4. At this meeting, it is proposed to further consider issues suggested at the Public Meeting last March, as well as those raised by members, to determine what funds, resources and priorities would be appropriate.

Developing a long term plan to deal with identified issues can then provide the framework for action in our local area.

All members, and anyone in our local community concerned with land degradation issues, including environmental issues, are encouraged to join us. Have your say! New members are a still welcome and membership forms are available on request. Contact David Allan, Secretary

STEELS CREEK COMMUNITY NOTES - NO 56 (August-September 2005)

Weeds, Water, Wombats, Walking Track, Wildlife

Summary of all issues and activities suggested by Steels Creek Landcare Group Members on Membership Forms (as at 12 June 2005). The list goes on: weed invasion, particularly blackberries and other exotics along roads and on some private land Rabbits, Blackberries, Regeneration, Trees, Birds, Erosion, Sustainability. Interested? Help to shape this important program and obtain help with your concerns. Contact David Allan

STEELS CREEK COMMUNITY NOTES - NO 57 (October-November 2005)

Weedbuster Week – think globally, act locally!

This year, Weedbuster Week is on from 8-16 October. Weedbuster Week represents nine days where Australia's attention is focused on weed related issues. In Victoria, Weedbuster activities are actively promoted in the media.

At the recent Steels Creek Landcare meeting, the continuing spread of **Angled Onion/ Onion Weed** was identified as a worthy target for some local weed busting action at this time in our local area. We won't get rid of this prolific invasive weed in one fell swoop, but we can take some action now and over the next couple of weeks to slow it down.

It was decided not to arrange one single weed busting event, but to encourage those who can to have a go at the outbreaks along Steels Creek Road, particularly over the next couple of weeks. The task is quite simple – *simply knock the flowers off!* This will prevent the plants forming new seed and thus removes one method by which it spreads.

If you have access to a line trimmer or brush cutter, and can spend an hour or two (or more!) over the next couple of weeks, have a chat with Rob Fallon about where would be the best spot to target. You may also see Rob and others, often on a Sunday morning around ten am onwards, doing their bit to keep the invaders at bay. ***Can YOU help them?***

STEELS CREEK COMMUNITY NOTES - NO 58 (December 2005-January 2006)

Fight Degradation!

At a recent Landcare meeting, it was decided that a process be undertaken to enable funding applications to be made for specific priority Landcare projects. If you would like to join us in helping to combat land degradation issues, please contact the group's Secretary: David Allan

2006

STEELS CREEK COMMUNITY NOTES - NO 59 (February - March 2006)

Steels Creek Community Helps Clean Up Australia

Steels Creek Community and Yarra Glen Tree Group will again register to help Clean Up Australia on Sunday 5th March next. Our main focus will be Steels Creek Road covering its full length from Eltham - Yarra Glen Road to Greenwood Lane. Time, participants and weather permitting, we can also take a look at some of the other roadsides in the Valley. If you know of any locations that have become a dumping ground along our roads let me know.

Activities commence at 10.00 AM with registration of individuals at Steels Creek Community Centre. We plan to finish up back at the Centre for a chat and a sizzled sausage or two afterwards from around 12.30. Any strong large rubbish bags would be useful on the day, so please bring them along. Also bring gloves and wear strong walking shoes or boots and appropriate clothes. Trailers and drivers required. Contact David Allan

STEELS CREEK COMMUNITY NOTES - NO 60 (April-May 2006)

Steels Creek Landcare

The next meeting of Steels Creek Landcare Group is at the Community Centre on Thursday 6th April at 8.00 PM. We will be discussing progress towards making an application for funding in relation to a vegetation protection and enhancement project along Steels Creek Road. Simon Denby – Biodiversity Coordinator for the Shire of Yarra Ranges will also be there. This would be a good opportunity to find out more about how the Council might be able to join with us to support

local projects. All welcome. Enquiries to David Allan or John O'Neill

PS: Membership renewals are now due – please return payment slips as soon as possible

STEELS CREEK COMMUNITY NOTES - NO 61 (June-July 2006)

LANDCARE – STEELS CREEK ROAD PROJECT

Thank you to all those residents who responded with interest in the above project. Our application to the Envirofund met the 28th of April deadline and we now have to wait until about mid July to see if we are successful. The proposal is to remove and poison the stumps of elm suckers on the west side of Steels Creek road mainly between Pinnacle Lane and Old Kinglake Road, and to plant approximately 2000 trees and understorey plants. The new plantings will be concentrated where the elm suckers are removed and where adjoining landholders have expressed interest.

In anticipation of starting work in August we have a meeting planned for Wed 26th July 2006 at Steels Creek Community Centre 7.30pm.

When speaking of planting along Steels Creek Road frequently asked questions are:

1. What about the fire danger?
2. What is the council doing?

Included in our expert reference group are John Sutton captain of Yarra Glen Fire Brigade and Simon Denby, Biodiversity Conservation Coordinator Shire of Yarra Ranges who are more than willing to answer the above questions.

The topics the meeting will address are:

Landcare - Steels Creek Road Project proposed STAGE 1.

Yarra Ranges input to Landcare and Fire Protection. Fire protection built into road reserve management.

Fire protection for Steels Creek properties in general. How to get fire protection advice specific to your property.

This meeting is open to all in Steels Creek and is an ideal opportunity for local residents' input on maintaining the beauty of Steels Creek Road and considering fire control and fire prevention issues without the pressure of fire raining down on us from the Kinglake Ridge.

The meeting is free of charge but voluntary donations will be sought and donated to Yarra Glen Fire Brigade. For further information please ring project coordinator Ivan Filsell

STEELS CREEK COMMUNITY NOTES - NO 62 (August-September 2006)

STEELS CREEK LANDCARE GROUP

An interested group of Steels Creek residents attended the recent landcare meeting at the community centre to discuss planned landcare projects along Steels Creek road with the other stakeholders. These were represented by Cr Jeannette McRae and Marty White from the council, John Sutton and his team from the Yarra Glen fire brigade and Tony Fitzgerald

Kinglake Parks Ranger.

Ivan Filsell outlined our proposed weed clearing, sucker removal and replanting plans and our Enviro grant application status which is waiting, waiting, waiting. This was followed by in principle support from the council representatives and a view that council would give some support even without the grant money. John Sutton gave a clear picture of the fire brigade's support for good fire breaks to be included in the plan and general tips on a fire safe approach.

The fire brigade was keen to emphasize that Steels Creek is very much on their fire protection map and any residents requiring specific fire protection advice are most welcome to approach the fire brigade.

Tony Fitzgerald gave a positive report on the State of Kinglake National Park after the recent fires and showed that in spite of much worry at the time, the long term effect of the fires is positive. This was reinforced by the recent Lyrebird survey that showed good numbers even in the burnt areas. Tony was also able to outline future control burn plans including more around Brock Spur and Mt Everard but only, he assures us, if conditions are right.

STEELS CREEK COMMUNITY NOTES - NO 64 (December '06-January 2007)

STEELS CREEK LANDCARE GROUP

At last we have some money! The long awaited grant from the Envirofund has at last materialised in our bank account giving us the funds to start the weed control and planting program we have been talking about for months.

We were strongly advised not to commit any of the funds until we actually received them. This proved to be good advice as it has taken nine months from starting the application to actual receipt of funds.

The delay has probably saved us a lot of heartache as, if we had planted in winter/spring, by now we would be watching young plants dry up. We now have time to prepare for autumn/winter planting if the drought breaks. Meanwhile the council has completed clearance pruning along Steels Creek Rd. and has done a pretty neat job. Now mowing is well advanced, normally I complain that they mow too early before native wildflowers have set seed, but not this year most are well and truly dry. Ivan Filsell, Steels Creek Road Project

2007

STEELS CREEK COMMUNITY NOTES - NO 65 (February-March 2007)

Steels Creek Community Helps Clean Up Australia 4 March

Steels Creek Community and Yarra Glen Tree Group will again register to help Clean Up Australia on Sunday 4th March. Our main focus will be Steels Creek Road covering its full length from Eltham-Yarra Glen Road to Greenwood Lane. Time, participants and weather permitting, we can also take a look at some of the other roadsides in the Valley. If you know of any locations that have become a dumping grounds along our roads let me know.

Activities commence at 10.00 AM with registration of individuals at Steels Creek Community Centre. We plan to finish up back at the Centre for a chat and a sizzled sausage or two afterwards from around 12.30. Any strong large rubbish bags would be useful on the day, so please bring them along. Also bring gloves and wear strong walking shoes or boots and appropriate clothes. Trailers and drivers required. Contact David Allan

STEELS CREEK COMMUNITY NOTES - NO 66 (APRIL 1 – May 2007)

PLANTING DAYS - STEELS CREEK LANDCARE

After a long wait for funding to arrive and an even longer wait for rain and good planting conditions at last we are ready to start planting Steels Creek Road Stage 1. Our funding is for the removal of problem trees, spraying of weeds and planting appropriate indigenous trees, shrubs and ground covers. Stage 1 is from Pinnacle Lane to Old Kinglake Road on the west side. This section has been chosen as it contains significant native vegetation, it connects designated areas of roadside significance and adjoining landholders are in support of the project. This project has had advice and support from the Shire of Yarra Ranges and Yarra Glen Fire brigade as well as weed control and native vegetation experts.

All we need now is help and support of all local residents who love trees, birds, animals and an improvement to the lovely Steels Creek environment. Please come and help plant on:-

SUNDAY 15TH APRIL 9am to 12 noon Planting 12 to 1pm REFRESHMENTS.

SUNDAY 29TH APRIL 9am to 12 noon Planting 12 to 1pm REFRESHMENTS.

A selection of tools and protective clothing will be available but additional spades, mattocks and watering cans would be welcome.

To volunteer or for more information and the chance to win a small PRIZE please ring:- Project coordinator Ivan Filsell

STEELS CREEK COMMUNITY NOTES - NO 67 (June – July 2007)

STEELS CREEK LANDCARE

We have now had three planting days in Steels Creek Road and the evidence of our activities is plain to see, rows of polythene guards and canes! If the weather patterns are kind and continue to produce rain over the next few months we should see hundreds of new trees peeping over their guards. We have also planted a range of shrubs and hundreds of native lilies to add to the wildflower display that Steels Creek was once famous for. Our next planting day is scheduled for Sunday June 17th 9am until 12noon, families of all ages most welcome. After this one we will have a break until spring. A very big thank you to the regular band of planters who have put in such a good effort so far.

Ivan Filsell project coordinator.

For more on planting days and Landcare issues contact David Allan or John O'Neil

STEELS CREEK COMMUNITY NOTES - NO 68 (August-September 2007)

STEELS CREEK LANDCARE

Thank you to all those who have participated in the plantings along Steels Creek Road over the past couple of months. We are planning further plantings in the spring, so we are hoping to keep the momentum going again then. Further details will be announced in due course.

In the meantime, if readers have other Land Care issues that they feel strongly about but feel daunted in taking on by themselves, why not discuss how it might be tackled through the wider resources of Landcare.

Contact John O'Neill or Dave Allan

STEELS CREEK COMMUNITY NOTES - NO 69 (October-November 2007)

OH DEER WHAT CAN THE MATTER BE?

Steels Creek Landcare is applying for funding through the Port Phillip and Westernport Catchment Management Authority (PPWCMA) to embark on a three year integrated pest animal management project to investigate management options for the problem of feral and/or native animals damaging tree plantings and crops. This effort is expected to be an inter-agency effort involving local land holders, together with the Shire of Yarra Ranges, Melbourne Water, the Australian Deer Association, the Kinglake National Park and your local Landcare group.

Initial activities are being planned to determine the extent of the problem and to then develop appropriate responses. Activities are expected to include surveys to determine which properties are affected, a joint information and educational session to raise awareness and a demonstration project to trial options. Participants in Melbourne Water's Stream Frontage Management Program and Greening Australia tree planting programs as well as landholders experiencing tree and crop damage are invited to come forward to participate. Expressions of interest about receiving further information or participating in this project are now being sought.

Most of us are not up at three in the morning to see the animals but find broken tree limbs and damaged foliage later in the day. Browser or grazer? Deer or marsupial? How to tell? What to do?

To register your interest by contacting David Allan

STEELS CREEK COMMUNITY NOTES - NO 70 (December 2007-January 2008)

Land care: Help replant the Valley

Annual General Meeting of Steels Creek Landcare Group will be held on Thursday 6th December 2007 at the Steels Creek Community Centre, 699 Steels Creek Road, Steels Creek, commencing at 7.30 PM.

During this year, Steels Creek Landcare has been undertaking the Revegetation Program along Steels Creek Road. This has so far resulted in approximately 1000 trees and shrubs being planted during the autumn and winter period, when rainfall was kind (if not particularly abundant). We have a similar planting target still ahead of us. Our intention had been to recommence planting in the spring, but lack of rainfall during that period and concern about lack of rainfall and high temperatures over summer has resulted in deferral of further planting until Autumn 2008. Assistance from many people with planting so far has been greatly appreciated, and the results are now starting to become evident. We look forward to further community plantings in the autumn – winter period next year. If you would like further information, please contact Ivan Filsell.

Steels Creek Landcare has also recently applied for funding to facilitate a new project aimed at demonstrating and evaluating different methods of managing damage to vegetation (including stream-side and other revegetation projects, existing vegetation and also vines) that is being caused by deer, in particular sambar. We expect to hear results of our funding application during December. We are currently developing a questionnaire for circulation in the wider Steels Creek area that will be inviting landholders to register with this project and to

provide further details about the extent and location of damage being experienced. Watch your mail box – we hope to hear from you! The bigger the response we get, the better will be the result. If you would like further information, please contact David Allan.

Over the past year or so, we have been slowly building experience in how Landcare projects can be approached in the Steels Creek area. If you have land or vegetation degradation issues that you want to tackle but need some help to undertake, why not discuss it further with Landcare.
Contact John O'Neill or David Allan

2008

STEELS CREEK COMMUNITY NOTES - NO 71 (February-March 2008)

Landcare

At its Annual Meeting last December, Ivan Filsell stepped into the role of Coordinator, taking over from John O'Neill. We have recently received advice that grant applications for projects have had mixed results. We have again received Support and Promotion & Development funding. However due to the overall amount of funding available, our recent application for funding a Deer and Pest Animal Management Project was not able to be funded.

Steels Creek Landcare proposes that it will continue with the Deer and Pest Animal Management Project, but in a modified form. The first actions will involve circulating a community survey to discover the extent and nature of damage being encountered. This survey is expected to be circulated shortly.

It is also anticipated that further action will be programmed for additional planting and mulching of the revegetation work commenced last year along Steels Creek Road - further details of dates and activities will be publicised at Steels Creek Market and in coming editions of The Jolly Thing.

For further information, contact Ivan Filsell or David Allan

STEELS CREEK COMMUNITY NOTES - NO 72 (April-May 2008)

Landcare Dinner and Promotion

This will be a social night for people with common interests in local rural and Landcare issues to get together and informally discuss problems and solutions, or to just enjoy. There will be special guests on hand to help with expert information, options and solutions.

To be held at Roundstone Winery on Friday 18TH April. 6.30 to 10.00 pm. Cost:\$20 per person - Two Course Dinner (Including Wine on tables) Your \$20.00 meal ticket will also be your joining fee and ongoing membership of Steels Creek Landcare Group.

Reserve your place now and for further information David Allan or Ivan Filsell

(STEELS CREEK COMMUNITY NOTES - NO 73 (June-July 2008))

Landcare

The Steels Creek Landcare "Roundstone dinner and promotion night" was a great success. There were over 70 attendees from the immediate area who had ample opportunity to question the special guests and to transfer useful information while enjoying the good food and wine. The high volume of conversation and many positive comments indicate that the evening was very worthwhile. Thank you to all who attended and to those who took the time to fill out a response form, this gives us useful information for future planning.

Responses generally fit into the following topics;

1. Animal and bird pests.
2. Weed problems and treatment advice.
3. Council related – equipment hire and poisons.
4. Council related – drains, erosion control and bore regulations.
5. Whole farm plans.
6. Fire and emergencies.

These topics will be covered in information nights, dates to be confirmed in the near future.

The first item you will receive is a survey on animal and bird pests, this will assist in pinpointing problem areas and species so that remedial action can be planned. Your help in completing the survey will be much appreciated.

Weed problems and treatment advice will be the subject of our next information night, details will be published as soon as our experts can be pinned down. Contact Ivan Filsell

STEELS CREEK COMMUNITY NOTES - NO 74 (August-September 2008)

Pest Animals and Birds Survey Update

Thank you to all those who responded to the survey on Deer, Other Pest Animals and Birds in the Steels Creek area, that was conducted during June.

Responses have now been summarised, and they do confirm what many have already known, that there is damage being caused by deer (generally sambar), rabbits, sulphur crested cockatoos, mynahs and starlings. Mention was made of some 'roo damage, but on the basis of responses received, 'roos have not been identified as a significant problem in general.

As noted on the survey forms, Hoogies have donated a gift voucher that will be presented to one of the respondents to the survey. A draw to determine the winner of the voucher will be conducted at the first Steels Creek Market in August.

It is intended that information about these issues and the experience of other groups in the Yarra Valley and elsewhere will now be accessed, and ideas for management of problems will also be sought. This information will then be shared with those who responded to the survey, and will also be summarised as a Steels Creek community resource document.

If you have any questions, please contact David Allan, Steels Creek Landcare Group

Steels Creek Landcare Group

Weed control

Responses from our member survey indicated a high level of concern about weeds and weed control. Kirk McDonald, Rural sales manager with Hoogies, kindly gave his time to address this issue. The first step in dealing with weeds is to be able to identify them and this was aided on the night by a table full of fresh picked weeds from the surrounding area that members brought along. These included the common problems of cape weed, sweet pittosporum, bridal creeper and a selection of the many bulb species that were popular garden plants 100years ago and have escaped to be environmental problems now.

Kirk emphasised the need for a planned approach to weed control that provides many methods of attack on the problem. Non-chemical methods of attack include cultural, biological, physical and mechanical methods. These should be adopted as part of an overall plan designed to advantage desirable plants and disadvantage undesirable ones (weeds). Chemical weed control has its place as part of the overall plan but used alone or indiscriminately can cause as many problems as it solves.

A number of important points came out of this meeting that may be useful to our members and others in the area:

1. Kirk MacDonald through Hoogies has a strong back up team for advice on weed control measures and appropriate use of chemicals.
2. Katie Jacobson, Shire of Yarra Ranges landcare coordinator and Kirk can help with short courses on farm planning and chemical handling.
3. Landcare members can attend these courses at a considerable discount.
4. For more information contact Steels Creek Landcare Group or Kirk or Katie direct.

Kirk's talk was informative and well prepared and presented and all who attended left with a new enthusiasm to tackle the weed problems with a new plan. Ivan Filsell, Landcare Coordinator.

Landcare

Further to the Steels Creek survey of deer and other pest animals and birds, there have been a number of actions happening behind the scenes. Steels Creek Landcare is a member of the Yarra Ranges Landcare Network and several other network member groups have expressed interest in what is happening around Steels Creek. This has resulted in a recent meeting organised by the Shire where interested groups were present along with representatives of several other stakeholder individuals and organisations. The object of the meeting was to better understand concerns and also the range of possible management options that could be of use. The importance of taking a well planned approach to any management action was emphasised by all.

Next steps are likely to be - identifying specific areas where actions could best be undertaken, planning what action would appear most appropriate in those areas and how it could best be undertaken. It is also likely that a guide to possible resources and management techniques will be compiled that could be made available to affected land holders.

For further information, please contact Ivan Fillsell or David Allan

2009

STEELS CREEK COMMUNITY NOTES - NO 77 (February-March 2009)

Clean Up Australia Day – 1 March 2009

As advised in the last Jolly Thing, Steels Creek Community and the Yarra Glen Tree Group have in recent years joined forces to participate in Clean Up Australia Day. We have focussed on our own 'front yard' by doing a cleanup along Steels Creek Road, generally from Eltham –Yarra Glen Road to the end of the bitumen at Steels Creek.

We have also covered some other nearby roads when participant numbers have permitted and have also been successful in getting the Shire to take on a clean-up that was beyond the scope of our own resources.

This year, we have again registered to participate in Clean Up Australia Day in 2009. The date will be 1st March (a Sunday morning) and we will again focus primarily on Steels Creek Road. If we get enough people on the day, I'm sure that there are some other locations we can also tackle!

Starting time and sign in is at 9.30 AM, at Steels Creek Community Centre (the Yarra Glen Tree Group will be starting further south) on 1 March 2009. Bring gloves and wear strong shoes or gumboots (no sandals or flipflops please!).

So please keep this date in mind – the more the merrier, and the quicker we get the job done.

We will conclude the clean-up with a cuppa and a chat at the Steels Creek Community Centre, to share war-stories about how it went.

Contact David Allan

STEELS CREEK COMMUNITY NOTES - NO 81 (October-November 2009)

Landcare

Landcare is **in temporary suspension while so many of our active members are so badly affected by the bushfires.**

We want to keep the structure in place and reactivate in the near future.

Meanwhile we continue to care for our land as best we can.

The first stage is to wait and see what will regenerate, the second stage will be to replant appropriate varieties and the third stage will be to control the mass of weeds that are naturally the first thing to regenerate.

Before the fires we were planning some rabbit control programs and if my observations are anything to go by this will probably be one of the first programs to re-start.

I think this spring will be very busy for me, and all in the valley, but I hope to get back to more normal operations soon.

If there is anyone out there who would like to assist with Landcare activities please give me a call. Ivan Filsell, Landcare coordinator