

SPRING 2010  
Newsletter No.26

# Newham & District Landcare Group



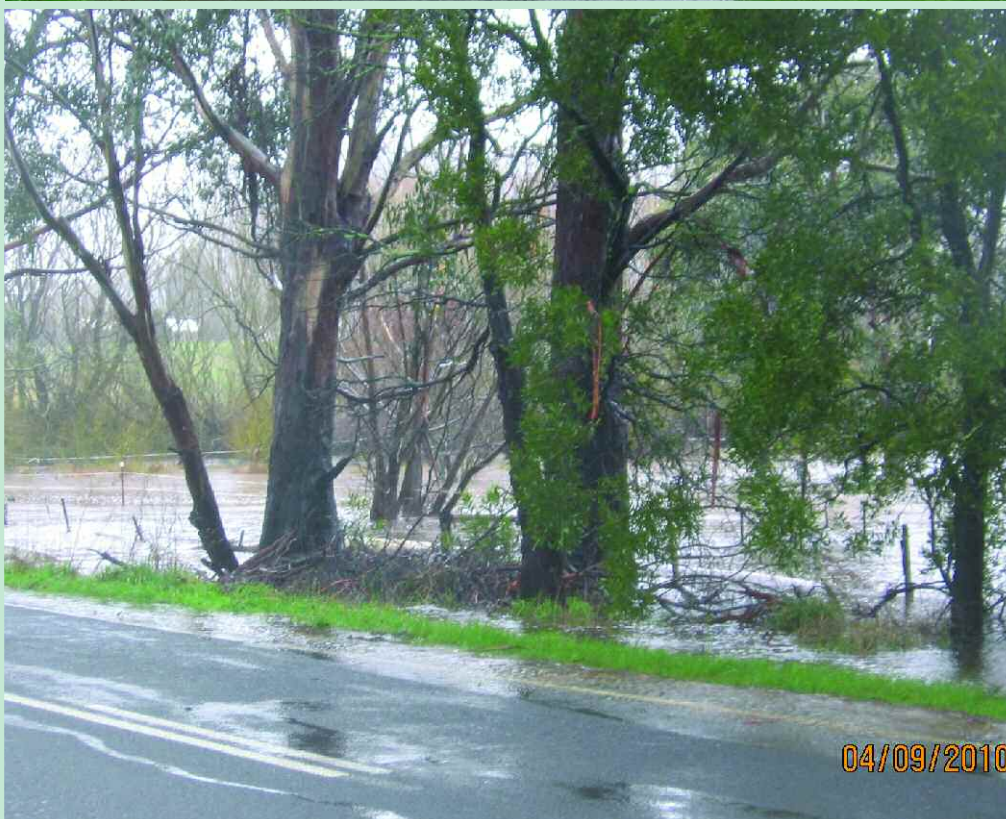
Working towards a  
healthier environment

Melbourne Water  
Victoria  
The Place to Be

Production of this newsletter is funded through  
Melbourne Water's Community Grants Scheme

Address – PO Box 314, WOODEND, 3442

## The Big Wet – Coach Road Newham



04/09/2010

04/09/2010

## President's Message

Membership is continually in a state of renewal with properties changing hands. Old members move away and potential new members move into the Newham area. I urge all to take the opportunity to introduce the new owners to Newham Landcare and the potential benefits. New people are new ideas and renewal for the group.

In this newsletter are included pictures of recent flooding that highlights that good winter rainfall has renewed our properties and points to a productive summer for farms and small holdings alike. It is also a great opportunity to plant out those areas that in recent times have been very hard because of compacted and dry ground after the prolonged dry spell.

Next year we are going to provide family friendly activities that allow our many young family members an opportunity to participate in events – look for those in future announcements.

DON'T forget our annual BBQ at Wesley Park where all members can catch up and exchange war stories about problems and solutions to improving our environment

**Nick Massie**

## 'The Sound of Music' comes to Newham

The hills were definitely alive with the sound of music one wintry Sunday afternoon at the Newham Hall. Some came in costume, all came in good voice, to sing, yodel and catcall their way through 'The Sound of Music'.

The singalong was the brainchild of Penny Roberts and Sascha Cropley, with Charlotte Roberts as MC, explaining how and when to use the contents of our props bags – so we all knew when to get out our Eidleweiss and could help Maria when she couldn't work out how to get those playsuits (the curtains Maria, the curtains!)

Newham students were word and action perfect in their renditions of 'So Long, Farewell', and Chris Wiggett must win the best costume prize as the bowing fraulein who won third prize in the singing competition.

The moment we'd been waiting for finally arrived as the Von Trapp family were escaping from the abbey and we could all at last blow our whistles very loudly – it was an earsplitting success!

Thanks to everyone who contributed to such a happy event. All who attended had a great time, those who didn't hope there might be a return performance.

## Group contacts

**President:** Nick Massie. **Treasurer:** Hilary Roberts.

**Committee members:** Penny Roberts, Sue Massie, John Luckock. Marty Dillon, Melanie Roberts and Jenny Waugh have joined the committee for 2010 – 2011. We thank departing committee member Don Lang for his contribution over the past 2 years.

**New members, general queries:** Penny Roberts; 5427 0795.

**Roadsides:** Sue Massie; 5427 0065.

**Newham Primary:** Jenny Waugh; 5427 0408.

**Animal pests:** John Luckock; 5427 0909.

**Wesley Park:** Fran Spain; 5427 0661.

**Flora, library, small tools, grants:** Penny Roberts; 5427 0795.

**Spray trailer:** Chris Wiggett; 5423 5279.

The committee meets on the first Monday of the month [February to December] between 7.30 – 9pm in Newham. All members are welcome to attend the Committee meetings to become more involved or raise specific matters. Please advise a committee member if you wish to attend. Meetings start and finish on time... and we enjoy them!



# DIARY OF EVENTS

## OCTOBER

**Sunday 17th**

### ***Lancefield Show***

Newham Landcare representatives will be in attendance promoting Landcare – pay us a visit.

**Saturday 23rd**

### ***Hands-on session at Wesley Park***

10am – 12md. Planting, weeding, collecting hardware etc.

**Sunday 24th**

### ***FoHR Wildflower Walk***

10am Hanging Rock Reserve, meet at the café.

## NOVEMBER

**Saturday 27th**

### ***School Fare – Newham Primary School.***

**Sunday 28th**

### ***FoHR planting at Hanging Rock Reserve***

10am, meet at the café. Bring shovels, mattocks, gloves etc.

## DECEMBER

**Saturday 4th**

### ***BBQ at Wesley Park***

End-of-Year BBQ at Wesley Park from 6pm. Mark it in your diary, and start training for our two great annual events – the Egg Tossing competition and the Great Scott Wellie Toss. Activities for children, great food and company!

## FEBRUARY 2011

**Saturday 5th**

***Dinner on the Hill.*** Social function for old and new members.

## Launch of weed displays at Melbourne Zoo

***Daniel Joubert***, Senior Project Officer (DPI).

A range of State prohibited weeds, including horsetails, alligator weed, salvinia and knotweed, have been locked up as exhibits in a new display at the Melbourne Zoo.

Launched on July 1, this joint project between DPI and Melbourne Zoo, gives visitors the opportunity to view and identify some of the highest priority invasive plants in Victoria. This display will encourage the 1.6 million zoo visitors to report any sightings.

When launching the display Biosecurity Victoria Executive Director Dr Hugh Millar said it was an opportunity for Victorians to discover which weed species are a significant threat to many aquatic and terrestrial plants and animals.

The majority of State prohibited weeds reported are from Melbourne's metropolitan

areas and are the highest priority declared noxious weed class and either do not occur in Victoria, or are here but can be eradicated. Visitors to the Melbourne Zoo can play a vital role in maintaining biodiversity by reporting these weeds.

Weed Spotters can now visit the Melbourne Zoo to see the State prohibited weed display and refresh their memory on the different characteristics used in identifying these species.



# Waterwatch in Newham

For nearly four years Grade 5 and 6 students at Newham Primary School have been doing 'Waterwatch' tests on the water from the pond near the school. This pond is part of Deep Creek which is in the uppermost headwaters of the Maribyrnong River.

The students test the water for seven different factors:

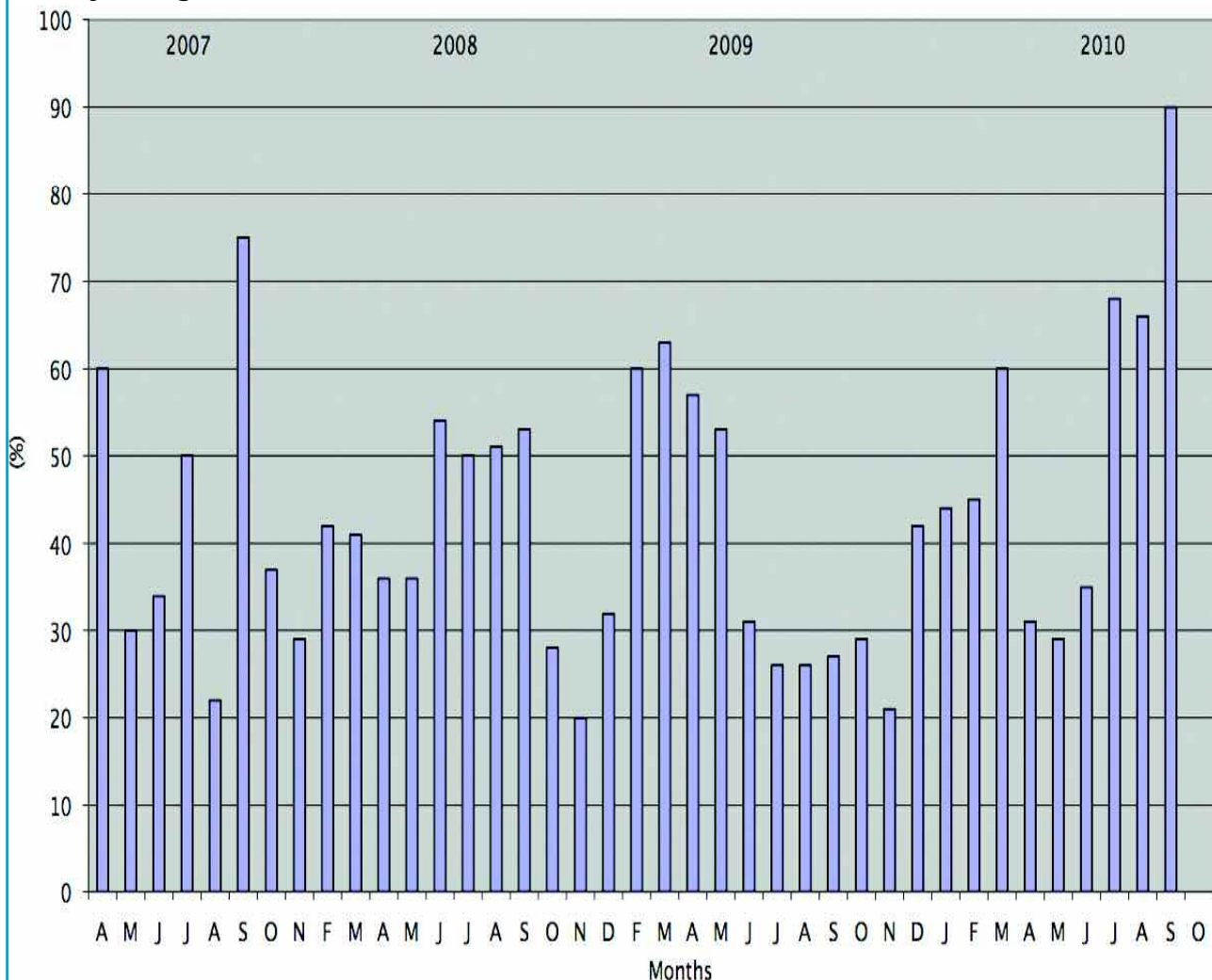
- temperature
- turbidity
- pH
- salinity
- dissolved oxygen
- phosphate
- ammonium

In future Landcare newsletters we will publish collected data from additional tests to give an idea of our water quality.

The chart below shows the amount of dissolved oxygen in the water samples taken and are generally considered to be low – too low for our pond to be used by Melbourne Water for a fish nursery. Recent heavy rains however, have had the creek running fast and the more the water being stirred up, the more oxygen gets dissolved in it.

Our September results were very exciting as they were the highest we have ever recorded.

**Jenny Waugh** (Waterwatch Co-ordinator)



## Four corporate group plantings for Spring 2010 !

Over recent years we have had a number of corporate groups assisting with planting.

The hosting landowner provides lunch and plant material, Landcare provides the tools and assists on the day and the end result is about 800 plants in the ground.

This year three groups came to us via the TreeProject organization, as have groups in previous years, whilst the fourth was a group of DSE staff undertaking a hands-on activity in 'Landcare Week'.



Being only an hour from Melbourne is a real advantage, as is having a landscape level project that the visitors can relate to (the Campaspe-Maribyrnong Headwaters Biolink), but we also show them a good time... two of the TreeProject groups have chosen to return to Newham after visits in previous years.



If you are interested in hosting a group in the future register your interest with Penny [5427 0795].



*Left: Andrea Keheler (DSE, Kyneton) planting in Newham.*

*Below: Jill Hall and Janet Hodnett (DSE, Bendigo) at same location.*





## Wildlife corridors – connections in the landscape

Wildlife corridors are vital links in the landscape connecting larger blocks of vegetated land and are important in maintaining biodiversity and the health of our landscape. They can be a roadside strip or creek with trees passing through farmland, a railway reserve crossing the landscape, stone fences lining the edge of a farm paddock or some other linear strip.

Wildlife corridors are key components for the conservation of our biodiversity (flora and fauna) and landscape health. There is much discussion on the effectiveness of corridors for nature conservation.

Thin corridors wandering aimlessly over the landscape are not as effective as those which are much wider and have direct links to large areas of forest. Wildlife corridors that connect between large forests are the most valuable for biodiversity, while longer and thinner conduits are still valuable but not as effective for maintaining biodiversity.

Our landscape can be compared with a living organism. Its blood vessels and nerves are the corridors of vegetation, connecting vital organs of remaining forest, such as vegetated hills and slopes in recharge areas, wetlands, public forests and other vegetated areas on farmland. Wildlife moving through these corridors is equivalent to trace elements needed for the efficient operation of the vital organs. Break an artery and life sustaining blood is lost.

When gaps occur in a corridor, weeds, soil erosion, or insect infestations may develop. If not repaired, native species are prevented from moving between populations as the connections are no longer available.

Wildlife corridors may originate in a number of ways. Natural corridors, such as streams and their associated riparian vegetation, usually follow topographic or environmental contours and are the result of natural environmental processes.

Remnant corridors, such as strips of eucalyptus forest in pine plantations or along roadsides, result from clearing, alteration, or disturbance to the surrounding environment. Regenerated corridors occur as the result of regrowth of a strip of vegetation that was formerly cleared or disturbed.

Protection of wildlife corridors is beneficial for maintaining biodiversity and farm productivity. This is of long term benefit to land managers, particularly farmers, who are interested in maximizing their returns from the land. By planting woodlands for self-managed fire wood production, landholders can reduce the impacts caused by firewood collection in adjoining corridor remnants, and indirectly benefit from encouraging wildlife to use these remnants. Wildlife populations next to farmland can help to reduce insect pests which may otherwise build up into plague proportions.

**Peter Johnson** (Statewide Coordinator of Land For Wildlife)



## Spot the difference: Horsetails and its look-alikes



*Horsetail cones*



*Horsetail hollow stem*



*Horsetail stems showing the joint node and sheath*

Horsetails are among the world's worst agricultural weeds due to their resilience, toxicity and ability to dominate poorly drained farmland and pastures. However, they are commonly confused with native sedges and rushes.

### **ID characteristics**

Horsetails have longitudinal grooves along a hollow stem. The leaves of horsetails are reduced to form sheaths around the stem. Instead of flowers horsetails produce cones which can produce spores in the right conditions. Horsetails have extensive underground root systems that allow them to travel up to 2m in depth and 100m laterally. Stems are also joined by nodes that can potentially form new plants. The root system, combined with the plant's ability to fragment makes horsetails highly invasive and difficult to eradicate.

### **Look-alikes**

Horsetails can be mistaken for restios and rushes such as zebra rush. Restio species can closely resemble horsetails, and often have sheaths around the joints; however horsetails can be easily separated at the node. Rushes are also similar looking to horsetails; however they are also quite firm, not hollow, like a horsetail stem.

**Julie Gooding** and **Hannah Cooke**, Weed Alert Contact Officers



*Australian rush sp*  
*Baloskion tetraphyllum*



*Horsetail restio stem*



*Horsetail restio, Elegia capensis*