

Rehabilitating the Red Hill Creek in Neerim South

Landholders involved in the Red Hill Creek project for the past eighteen months have completed stage 2 of the rehabilitation works. The project (reported in the Neerim Star in April 2017) focused on reducing erosion and heavy weed infestations along the Red Hill Creek and restoring habitat for threatened species in the area.

Funds were contributed by the Neerim District Landcare Group who received a grant from the Department of Environment Land Water & Planning's community volunteer action grants (Round 2) to help undertake the creek rehabilitation.

Farmers met with the Latrobe Catchment Landcare Network facilitator John Crosby early on to discuss how to better manage the weeds along the creek, apply for permits with the West Gippsland CMA, reinstate habitat for threatened species and what methods were available to them.



Meeting to discuss threatened species on the Red Hill Creek
L-R Jenny Komsky NDLG, John Crosby WGCMA/LCLN, Chris Kelliher, Mick Perry,
Noelle Brajkovic, Dilys Price, George Price (David Johnson not in photo).

Landholders were assisted to reduce infestations of glyceria weed along a 6ha stretch of creek and fenced around 2km of creek to keep livestock from accessing the project areas and protect adjacent remnant vegetation. Farmers learned methods of weed control from Habitat Creations Gippsland experts in the field using bio-active control in a safer approach on the use of chemicals around waterways.

We planted over 2300 indigenous plants on five farms over a total area of 3ha along the creek and celebrated the first day of winter with a community planting morning at a Red Hill Creek farm.



Eddie Anderson & George Price enjoy a cuppa during the planting morning along the Red Hill Creek

Biodiverse plantings are helping to restore habitat and feeding niches suitable for threatened species including Powerful Owl, Growling Grass Frog and Greater Glider known to frequent the area.



Threatened species: Growling Grass Frog, Powerful Owl & Greater Glider

Indigenous seed from the West Gippsland Seed Bank was used to make mud seed bombs with primary school students at the Neerim District Rural Primary School in Nayook and the Neerim South Primary School. These 'mud bombs' were 'thrown' by landholders for planting into the wetter eroded areas of creek to help better stabilise creek banks.

Kinder children from the Mary Beck PreSchool discovered tadpoles at Neerim South and drew pictures of plants and animals on cardboard guards for one of our farm's planting mornings.



Students from St Pauls Anglican Grammar School developed an innovative drone film for the project and provided aerial footage of the weed and planting works along Red Hill Creek during 2017. Now available on Youtube *'Landcare helping farmers to rehabilitate Red Hill Creek in Victoria'*.

Several nest boxes were installed and the Landcare group held a community spotlight night on threatened species at Neerim South. Guest speaker, wildlife ecologist & owl guru Ed McNabb, gave a fascinating insight into our local owls and thanks go to the Western Port Landcare Network for arranging this.



Fauna cameras enabled us to capture foxes, cats and native wildlife on film and farmers undertook fox control along the creek with 6 foxes being taken out. Dom Bromilow of Deepergreen further developed Pest Management Plans referring to the creek as a single ecological corridor.

The project received a lot of support and interest from farmers, students and the wider community and a big thank you goes to all who contributed their time.

The dedication of the landholders has inspired interest to plan for stage 3 to further reduce glyceria and willow infestations along the creek.

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Project Manager