

FOOPS Working Bee 27th Nov 2010

Neil Duncan

It was a wet morning as the small group of Nancy, Karen, Maelor, Kevin, Robert Irvine and myself met in the ranger's office.

Although we were scheduled to plant at the visitors centre Hayden wasn't there (rangers Joe and Paul were on duty) so we headed down to Costas armed with a mattock, several mini mattocks and a spade to remove the weeds from Gerry's planted up plots.

As we walked down the track we were serenaded by the frogs inhabiting the dam, but the heavy rain is causing some erosion problems on the track.

The sight at the plots was almost unbelievable as the plots have almost disappeared under the massive weed growth.

Once we entered the plots we set to work but very soon Robert was suffering from hay fever as the plots are surrounded by chest high Phalaris grass.



Karen, Maelor, Nancy and Kevin clearing the head high weeds

Although the soil was saturated and some of the weeds were easy to pull out, others had massive root systems which took a lot of energy to remove and throw over the fence. The plot we were in had been divided into four subplots by our creative use of the orange tape a couple of months ago, but it took about an hour to clear just one of the subplots. By that time we were all feeling the effects of the effort.

Robert meantime had been checking out the flooded creek and our own plot which he reported had good plant growth. Soon he and Karen headed back up as they were suffering the effects of the hay fever while the rest of us tried to clear at least the next subplot.

It was good to discover little wattles, gums and other plants as we dragged away the weeds that had obscured the light from the plants. Hopefully with less competition, at least for a while, they will have a chance to put on good growth with the moisture in the soil.

Eventually we had cleared the second subplot which only leaves 3 other plots and the half of this plot to be weeded!!

The difference was staggering – the only positive being that the milk thistles are dying so will eventually allow light into the plants below.

Although we had weeded all morning without rain, as we packed up our tools the rain started and by the time we had reached the top we were wet on the outside from the rain and inside from our exertions.

We met Robert and Karen at the top and after packing away our tools Karen, Maelor and Nancy headed off.



Weeds piled as high as the fence and guards which were totally hidden in the weeds

Robert, Kevin and I had lunch in the office chatting to Joe as the rain poured down outside. After lunch Robert and Kevin headed off and as the rain had slowed to a drizzle I walked down to the creek.

The 60mm of rain in the catchment area of the creek had created a massive flow of water as the following photos will show.



Tesselated Pavement



The water was about 100m wide at the ford



Silly place to put a seat at the Tesselated Pavement



Surging along near the ford



A meadow of kangaroo grass on the slope back up the track with flooded creek in background