

Working Bee Report – Saturday 27th April 2013 - Neil Duncan

Claude, Maelor, Terry, Robert Irvine and Liam Abdilla one of Robert's Venture Scouts were already organising tools for the day when I arrived shortly after 9am.

After dressing Liam appropriately from the left over shirts, hats and gloves in the FOOPS shed and loading Terry's ute with the tools for the day, we headed down to the creek and across to the ruins of the homestead for some more Aloe removal.



Liam with shirt, hat, gloves and vest – ready for work

Luckily the creek was running just below the top of the stones so those of us without gum boots could cross without getting wet.

We vigorously set to work and soon had a pile of aloes which Robert loaded into bags and dragged to the track to be picked up later.

The work we had done a few years ago when we placed all the aloes on black plastic to dry off and die, badly backfired as the aloes survived and then broke through the plastic and sent shoots under the plastic to form one huge mass of plant material. Pulling up one plant meant pulling up all the plants and hacking them with the mattock was not much easier.

After an hour or so of hard work we had filled our bags but there was still about half the clump of aloes to remove. It was at this point that Claude suggested that this was not a productive use of our time particularly as we looked around to find that there were several other equally big clumps and one other massive clump that would require many working

bees to remove.



Claude suggested that hiring a bobcat to come and remove the aloes would be more appropriate and we can come in and replant so other weeds don't get established. We would also remove the aloes on the steeper slopes that machinery cannot access.

While others were filling the bags I lopped and poisoned some of the boxthorn which are also starting to make a comeback on the slope. Luckily they are still small enough that they are relatively easy to cut and it shouldn't take too long to remove them compared with the aloes.

Liam also proved very enthusiastic and came in very handy to rescue Maelor's hat that had blown off in the stiff breeze.

As we had filled our bags we headed back to cross the creek and pick up the old plastic and wire frames we had removed in the February working bee. We took the wire down to the planting site near Rosette rock and the plastic to the skip as it were no longer serviceable.

While picking up the frames Robert told us about a group of RMIT land management students he had taken around the park. One of the comments from a student was about removing the graffiti on the Organ Pipes. Robert was surprised to hear about the graffiti only to realise the graffiti was actually the white droppings from the falcons that perch on the Organ Pipes. Someone had seen the droppings without realising what it was and had blogged that there was graffiti at the Organ Pipes and the word had spread that there was graffiti at the Organ Pipes!

It was fortunate that the sugar gliders were also being monitored that day and several RMIT students have registered their interest in helping with that project. It also gave them a good insight into the various projects that can be done in the park.



Robert, Liam, Terry and Claude discussing future options for aloe removal



Piles of Aloes to fill the bags - Robert, Liam, Terry and Maelor

By lunchtime most of us headed off leaving Robert to take Liam for a walk around the park.

Next Working Bee 25th May planting along Red Gum Flat

