

Merton & Brankeet Creeks Project update

Hello Everyone,

It has been some time and quite a bit of rain since I last communicated.

Due to the rain and high flows, the spring surveys have been scheduled for early November, in the hope that flows are lower than present to improve access and sample efficiency.

I attach the following link to ask for your help with survey site suggestions. Please forward this on to your neighbours and friends for their added suggestions.

[Merton and Brankeet Creek Survey Site Submission Form](#)

You will be able to view some entries I have already made, by clicking on the pins within the map near the bottom of the page (or clicking the view submissions button). In the popup that appears, you can click the arrow in the top right to view the data entered and access the representative image loaded for the site.

As per the instructions at the top of the page, it is quite fast and easy to make an entry. An image is not mandatory, but does help to convey the stream characteristics, as we will be looking for different sample environments.

MACRO-INVERTEBRATE SAMPLING

Kirsten Hogan from Waterwatch will be undertaking the macro-invertebrate surveys, sampling from the bank edge and where possible within shallow riffles, to obtain representatives of the organisms present. Two sites on the Merton and three on the Brankeet will be selected. We will aim to select a representative site in the upper reach, likely near the Southern pigmy perch site, and the lower reach. On the Brankeet, as we would like to investigate the relationship between organism diversity and the adjoining riparian condition, we will want to target sites with differing vegetation similarly spaced along the length of the stream. Samples are collected from within a 100m length of stream, so would be good to know if riffles are present with this distance from a downstream start point identified.

FISH SURVEYS

Jason Lieschke from Arthur Rylah Institute is coordinating the fish surveys, of which there will be up to eleven. Backpack electrofishing will be the sampling technique, targeting all viable habitats travelling upstream over approx. 300m of stream. Surveys will ideally be spaced along the length of the stream to represent a variety of sites conditions, though locations in proximity (both upstream and downstream) of the marked site for Southern Pigmy Perch will be of particular interest to help determine their distribution. As per the research paper I have attached, these small fish like to stay sheltered favouring the (emergent macrophytes) reeds and sedges at the stream margins. As fish surveys haven't been conducted on these streams for well over 20 years, it will be interesting to see what we find and what habitat they are utilising.

What lives in the stream adjoining you?

Your assistance with site suggestions will be much appreciated. If there is any information you would not want to share publicly, such as relating to access or requests for prior contact, please email me this data directly and I will follow up with you.

I look forward to seeing what survey sites you nominate over the coming weeks.

Kind regards,

Christine Glassford

River Health Officer