

Day 15 Activity

Tales of the Todd Role Profiles Alice in Ten

Role #27 Alice in Ten - Todd and Charles River Group

You are member of the Todd and Charles River Group, whose charter is to develop the Todd and Charles Rivers as Community areas, encouraging full local and tourist use of rehabilitated areas in a staged process.

Background

"The township is rather prettily situated on the banks of the Todd River and nestles amongst some fine gum trees which give to it a cosy appearance"

- F J Gillen, 1901

The Todd and Charles Rivers are beautiful landmarks in Alice Springs. This project aims to encourage full local and tourist use of the rivers as community areas by ensuring they are maintained and improved for residents and visitors to enjoy.

Gillen's words say much about the role of the Todd River and its riverine vegetation in the character and history of Alice Springs. Not only are the Todd and Charles Rivers crucial in establishing a unique image for the town, they are a valuable recreational and environmental resource.

For thousands of years before the establishment of the town, the rivers have been part of the homelands of the Arrernte people. The landscape and river corridors are rich with sacred sites and areas of significance.

As Alice Springs has grown, those natural and cultural qualities that have been highly valued by its residents have come under increasing pressures. The very community that surrounds and uses the rivers, and the visitors that utilise them when in town, are the principal threats to their long term integrity.

The wide and sandy riverbeds lined by large and attractive river gums are a core feature of Alice Springs. Regrettably, there are degrading impacts affecting both the visual appeal and the health of the area. These impacts include river camping, litter, fire, weed infestation and disused infrastructure. Access to the rivers for recreational use is unstructured, incomplete, and in the eyes of many, unsafe.



Drawing of
"Todd River"
By: Anthony
Age: 8

In 1993 a study was commissioned to take a new and holistic view of the management of rivers. The study provided the framework by which the river resource could be rehabilitated, protected and enhanced. The '[Urban Todd and Charles Rivers Masterplan and Management Guidelines](#)' provides the basis and framework by which the 'Alice in Ten' Todd and Charles Rivers Project Group is developing its natural environment strategies and infrastructure development works, river rehabilitation plans and management arrangements. The report is available through the Alice in 10 web site.

Exceptional flow conditions for the three years up till the beginning of 2002 created a high water table and rampant weed growth. The lack of rain during the 2002 year to date has halted the weed growth to a degree and has enabled some management strategies to be implemented. This progress has been achieved with the participation, co-operation and support of the Sacred Sites custodians and the Lhere Artepe Aboriginal Corporation (Prescribed Body Corporate representing Native Title holders).

What has been done

- Improvement of stormwater drainage to both the Todd and Charles Rivers to create firebreaks and facilitate maintenance
- Protection of trees from fire through slashing and clearing
- Introduction of a weed reduction program, focussed on couch grass reduction in the river channel, introduced trees and other problem species.



What is planned

- An agreement under the Native Title Act, between Government, the Town Council and the Arrente Native Title owners, for all works and future management of the Todd and Charles Rivers in Alice Springs.
- A dual use pathway linking Schwarz Crescent to the Telegraph Station
- Channel rehabilitation works to redefine the river channel, commencing upstream of the Gap
- Dual use pathway along Barrett Drive from Stephens Road to Tuncks Road
- Dual use pathway from Tuncks Road to Wills Terrace around the base of Annie Meyer Hill
- An effective Weed Management Plan
- Parkland improvement works and dual use pathway along Leichhardt Terrace between Gregory Terrace and Wills Terrace, and



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- Formulation and implementation of strategies to increase community awareness and use of the Todd and Charles Rivers.

ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED IN THE PROJECT

Department of Infrastructure, Planning & Environment
 PowerWater Corporation
 Northern Territory Tourist Commission
 Lhere Artepe Aboriginal Corporation
 Arid Lands Environment Centre
 Central Land Council
 Central Australia Tourism Industry Association
 Arrernte Council of Central Australia
 Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority
 Alice Springs Town Council
 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission
 Tangentyere Council Incorporated
 Northern Territory Police, Fire and Emergency Services
 Greening Australia



FOR FURTHER INFORMATION REGARDING THIS PROJECT CONTACT:

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Effects on the river system

As noted above the following have been done, which should improve the health of the river.

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Concerns

After a lot of publicity at the start, not a lot is now heard about this project, so all of the plans may not have been followed up. Long term projects such as this are difficult to track.