



FRIENDS OF WARRANDYTE STATE PARK NEWSLETTER

MARCH 1993

EDITORIAL

*Pomaderris
aspera*

It is a strange fact that many people become anxious when faced with a simple idea. They suspect that there must be some hidden agenda. They are often more comfortable with something more complex that impresses them, but they do not fully understand. In this climate of elections it is now apparent that issues about conservation are rarely given any prominence. The major parties have become instant experts on all matters of economic management. We have been deluged with facts and figures on jobs, education, privatisation, sale of government assets, and the mysteries of the G.S.T. Then there are the host of analysts sitting on the sidelines offering predictions about the recession either continuing, getting worse or being over. Economists are very good at loading the boat so it does not tip over, but fail to see that it is sinking on an even keel.

A more balanced view of the economy appears to come from some of the independent or 'green' candidates. Their policies give much emphasis to environmental factors with no deception in the substance, but a warning of our need to change many of our attitudes and traditional practices. Somehow the simplicity and commonsense of their programs does not produce much anxiety at all.

Likewise FOWSP can give us a very different slant on the way we live, and how we view economic problems. It gives us a chance to understand that any developed society is finally dependent on the way we care for the environment. We can learn much from each other and also from the Rangers who take a keen interest in our activities. But then you may prefer to sit at home and worry about the simplicity of the G.S.T.

"Every fault is forgiven to the man of perfect candor."

"People fit for self government have it."

"Independence in man or nations is an achievement not a bequest."

Elbert Hubbard.

WATER IN THE WILLOWS

Willows and Water things.....Well it was raining and rather cold so we changed the venue. The river was very high....a raging torrent???...so a sign was stuck to the Black Flat gate and folk were diverted to the Pound Bend area....weeding "Drain Flat Sedge" until Alistair Traill set up his Mini Lab. After that getting any Fowspians away was impossible. Talk about an "experience"...we'd asked Al to make it "hands on" and all were absorbed in touching, seeing, smelling, and listening (through Al's "sonar") to all those life forms which he or they found underwater. This was a fabulous activity and everyone learned SO much. Alistair-it was wonderful.....you did SO much preparation. Very sincere thanks.

THEN....Afternoon Tea, Work on the GIANT book for the Festival Float, guided tour of Frogland and we sat down in the Folly to listen to our Guest Speaker Chris Chesterfield from Melbourne Parks and Waterways, and Vince Pettigrove Science officer with Melbourne Water's Water quality testing programme. Chris will be working on getting Community groups, local Councils other Authorities (E.P.A. etc.) involved in setting up a Network of "Watchers" testing water quality and monitoring environmental and habitat quality of our River and Streams.

As our group is keen to set up "Riverwatch" we are obviously able to work together. Vince has much experience in the M.W. water testing of our Yarra and was able to offer info. support and another link in the Network. We have established some of the "protocols" of just how to report or get support and aid to stop illegal river and habitat degradation.

We have the support of Doncaster/Templestowe Councils Health Dept. Watch for more Riverwatch news.....

R.S. I am going to ask Alistair to do a "repeat" in the context of another meeting and I hope we have you all along.

Also on a different note...We were able to see how useful a "Disecting Microscope would be for general use and for use in the Nursery. We are looking for an affordable one so if you hear of any going second hand etc. etc...let us know.

ParkCare News

In and Around Warrandyte.

Jan-Feb has been a busy time with information and night walks around Warrandyte.

Pound Bend Reserve provided a great venue for local residents to become more in-tune with the wattles, as the information walk took over 50 people (with the help of a Ranger-thanks Steve) around the park noting the interesting wattles and various other plants.

A some-what smaller group of neighbours ventured around Jumping Creek Reserve and were acquainted with the natural history of the reserve through a guided walk and some eye-opening environmental activities.

The night walk at The Chase (15/1) didn't bring out the Wedge-tail Eagle but participants were amazed at the eagle's Prey Tree that we passed along the walk. Residents of Timber Reserve who ventured out on the night walk (26/2) were treated to a magical chorus of our local frogs in the area (those being the Spotted Grass Frog, Verreaux's Tree Frog, Brown Tree Frog and Common Eastern Froglet) along with the night dances of the bats as they passed the beams of the spotlight.

Coming Up....

Neighbours of Fourth Hill are joining forces on the 7th of March in a clean up and weeding day at Whipstick Gully. We hope that friends living near Fourth Hill who wish to be more locally involved will come along and join in on the action even if only for 15mins.

The Timber Reserve Friends/ParkCare group are inviting all neighbourhood "friends" to be a part of this very special group. Come along on the 13th of March when we hope to farewell the Blue Bell Creeper that has made its way into the park and has started to make its home there. As lovely as it may look it really doesn't belong.

Where to from here?

ParkCare is beginning to spread its wings to encompass other conservation areas in the Middle Yarra Region. I will be reviewing the needs and issues faced by friends and conservation groups that are involved in nature conservation in this region.

A ParkCare Newsletter is currently being drafted which will map out the various friends/conservation groups in the Middle Yarra. If you are aware or are part of yet another valuable friends group, please contact me or send along an article (it need only be very brief) describing the activities and function of your group. If you have any suggestions or would like to be more closely involved in this project please do not hesitate to contact me on 844 2659 or at P.O.Box 61, Warrandyte 3113.

Fay Valcanis
ParkCare Officer.



Hot House Gossip

Brachycome multifida

NEEDED....Helpers at the Warrandyte Festival Display. If you would like to give us half a day or a couple of hours please contact Margaret Burke. Also needed are people to man the normal Market Stall at Stiggants Res. on the first Saturday on each month. 844 1060

A new venture into revegetation at the Park is the garden Ben is lovingly planting around the Folly. It is of the "Cottage" style and will serve as a beautiful example of imaginative use of indigenous plants. How many times have you heard people say things like "natives are out of fashion," (boring or the like.) Well send them to Ben! Revegetation in the "coups" is about to take off again in the next month. If you would like one to be "in charge of" or mother along. Contact Pat...you too could be direct seeding, bare root planting, messing around with funny bits of underlay or all sorts of experimental ideas she (and others) come up with.

Use of wierd things like hard granulated plastic "sand" and other substitutes for the commonly used but environmentally disastrous Nursery industry products is well under way in our Nursery. Colin Arnold from BoxHill Council Nursery has been an inspiring mentor. We are planning a trip to his Nursery for all members who wish to see his methods "in action".

Gail Roche is in charge of the Float in the Festival Parade. She needs young F.O.W.S.P.ians to be involved. The centre-piece will be a giant book..."Discover Warrandyte" and from it will be emerging lots of characters from our publication. SO get in touch with her and put your names down for an amazing experience....Beyond Imagination. Gail A.H. 722 1926 or leave a message for her with Margaret Humphrey at the Park Office 844 2659.

....Next Page....

Those members who bought the "Spiders" book recently (all were snapped up) are now showing off their I.D. and spider general knowledge. Folk seem more than a little fascinated by these eight legged creatures.

On a serious note we must point out that the attendance at the Sunday meetings has dropped off over the last year. This years programme will reflect that we notice and hope to respond by choosing different projects AND to add an educating dimension to the family Sundays. If you are NOT a regular please DO come along and join in. We try to make these days....FUN, INTERESTING, EDUCATIONAL as well as task oriented. We always have something to involve children AND we do understand families can't always attend and try to avoid making you feel "guilty". We are not just a group for "experts" or the "in" crowd. We'd love to have volunteers to help organise these functions or to suggest how to add to the development of the theme. Now....what can you or your family offer to the group? V.N.P.A. conference this long weekend, and you will be able to hear all about it and the decisions made which will affect the "Friends" movement. Marg, Ian, Gay, Flora, Fay, Pat, plus ? are all attending and promise lots of "gossip" at following meetings.

Funny things about attendances....Thursday at the Nursery just keeps on growing. Most Thursdays we have about 30 people. We look to the skills and talents or interests of those attending to plan activities. If you just enjoy the company that is wonderful. If you would like to have a little task or project of your own just ask Marg and Pat to work one out for you. Revegetation works will begin in earnest as Autumn is here. Building projects are many and varied from large(the "Poly-Folly") middle(a bit of fence) to small(nesting boxes)so builders....report to Ian Burke.

Frogland is just the most amazing place at the moment. Lots of things in flower, growing, making the area look like it has been that way for years (not just since last June!) and the variety of fauna is increasing all the time. (Mind you the Long-necked Tortoise who recently set up home is living well DECREASING our frog population!) We now have plans in train to form a "lower" holding pond and to design boardwalks so we are able to move around(and enjoy) the area without disturbing the wetland. Pat, David and Don are at design stage and we plan to ask Melb. Parks and Waterways Council for a grant to fund this project.

Our thoughts and practical support are also with the group at Brogil Creek. With two large blots on an emerging wonderland Joy and Debbie need sympathy and encouragement. The Eltham Council plan more than that and the S.E.C. is also in full support. A large planting is to take place in Arbour Week and we hope lots of members call along to help. Joy 844 2638.

Many members will be receiving accounts for their subscriptions for F.O.W.S.P. as many fall due at this time of the year. If you are one of those wonderful people who wish to save our helpers lots of work you may like to get in early with you sub. If you get a "pink slip" (it may be white of course) please, please respond as quickly as possible. F.O.W.S.P. runs on a "shoe-string" indeed and those \$10s are very important. If you would like to add a donation -perhaps to make you feel more of an "involved" member, perhaps simply because you can afford to- that money will make a large impact on how well we can often achieve some objectives. We promise that FOWSPian budgets make every cent stretch an incredible distance!

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repens

NOTICE OF COUNCIL MEETING

TO ALL INAUGURAL MEMBER GROUPS of the
NORTH EAST BUSHLAND ENVIRONMENT COUNCIL

SUNDAY 14th MARCH '93

AT 2 P.M.

CHRISTMAS HILLS HALL

(Ridge Road - uphill from Yarra Glen Road)

Agenda NEBEC Full Council Meeting 4/3/93

Constitution

1. Discussion of Amendments to Draft Constitution
2. Amendments of Constitution
3. Ratification of NEBEC Constitution

First Official NEBEC Committee and Office Bearers

4. Election of Committee
5. Election/Appointment of Office Bearers

Membership

6. Formal acknowledgement of NEBEC Group Members

Identification of Watsons Creek Wildlife Corridor

7. Presentation of proposed Corridor location/size from interim Steering Committee
8. Discussion on Steering Committee Recommendations for Corridor
9. Agreement on actual location and size of Wildlife Corridor

Future Activities

10. Identification of immediate tasks regarding Corridor
11. Tasks/Decisions for NEBEC Committee
12. Tasks/Decisions of each member group regarding Corridor Proposal

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUERIES PLEASE TELEPHONE
FELICITY FARIS DIANE SILVERI
850 8296 710 1331

\$1 donation per head would be welcome to cover hall costs

NORTH EAST BUSHLAND ENVIRONMENT COUNCIL.

Our Friends group needs a number of representatives to become members of this emerging, very important organization.

Marg. Burke was the initial member of the interim council however she simply does not "stretch" far enough to be an effective rep. AND do those other things like co-ordinate F.O.W.S.P. etc. SO she would like hear from some of you who would like to take on this rewarding position.(s) All information available at the Park or from M.B.

The main aim of this council will be to set up a viable Wildlife Corridor from Warrandyte State Park, along Watsons Creek, to Kinglake National Park incorporating existing reserves(eg One Tree Hill) The freezing of M.W. land sales, linking the E.L.Z and encouraging Landcare, Land for Wildlife and Conservation Covenants as high priorities with local private land owners.

This meeting will be very important and F.O.W.S.P. needs to be part of this Council.

Please Contact Margaret Burke a.s.a.p. so as to look over current documentation.

Nomination forms are available.

BILLABONG PLANT UP - APRIL 4

APRIL 4th.....1.00pm.....Stiggants Reserve.

F.O.W.S.P. along with the Townscape Committee (Joan MacMahon is our representative) will be working to plant the area around the new Billabong created by Doncaster/Templestowe Council. Lots of our special wetlands plants will go in also other plants supplied by us. Jane Marriott from C.O.D.A.T., an old friend, will bring plants supplied by Council as well. We will be doing Billy-tea, damper on sticks and Joan is planning to bring the Brownies to help. We need lots of you to come out for a lovely community project. Harry Heath always supports this special day and we shall inveigle the tourists to help. Enq. Marg or Gail.

Skeletonized Leaves



THE WHIPSTICK GULLY / 4th HILL PROJECT

'Friends' have an opportunity to be involved in this exciting project. Lots of things will be happening including the following: The 'Victory' mine is being made safe for visiting {even folks in wheelchairs will be able to have a look}. The Gully is having some major earthworks done to restore it to its original state. The long-lost creek is being recreated, and then revegetated. Massive weed removal is planned along with the establishment of a walking circuit {with interpretation signs highlighting places of historical and botanical interest}.

It's going to be a major co-operative effort involving park staff, our group, Stephen Ray {CODAT} conservation officer, Fay {our Parkcare Officer}, Georgie Waterman {Interps. consultant} and {hopefully} a number of grades from Warrandyte Primary School. The active involvement of students from the school is one of the most important aspects of the project. We hope to give the students a sense of love for and ownership of their local bush.

For this wonderful process to happen we need a few people who'd like to help the children learn to distinguish pest plants from "the goodies". You don't need to be an expert - we'll be learning on the job.

Interested? Either Fay or myself would be delighted to hear from you when you have time to call us.

Joan MacMahon



Wildlife Watch

So pleased to report the sighting of a pair of Powerful Owls. Ross Coupar saw them together in a tree on the Island. A couple of days later Ian Roche and Steve Perlen saw them again...this time in Wildcat Gully. This is such good news, and a good opportunity to remind members of our Wildlife Watch responsibilities. If you see any fauna which may need reporting.....Phone the Park. Marg or any Ranger 844 2659

KOORNONG REVEGOS

Contact Leader -
Cathy Willis
844 1841.



Our first meeting for the year turned out to be one of the hottest days this summer, so only a few of the hardier sub-species in the group turned out for some light weeding and a shady walk to work on a management plan. This is coming together and should keep us on the right track and put things into perspective.

Despite our heat affected brains being only semi-functional we looked with renewed sight at our work after a months break. Periwinkle Hill and Creek are transformed and we are proud of the results. Our spring plantings have flourished, with no losses, and we have more planned for autumn. This year we will continue follow up weeding, and gradually move down the slope and along the track to the old carpark, mainly using Bradley techniques.

Work continues on the first Wednesday of each month, so grab your two pronged weeder and we'll see you at 10am.

Fallen Eucalyptus
viminalis...Manna Gum.

Seed being collected
by many eager helpers
at the Koornong.

Reflections on the Festival

By Pat Coupar

THE AUTUMN BIRD - a reclusive orchid

The Autumn Bird Orchid (*Chiloglottis reflexa*) has been flowering in the Warrandyte State Park since late summer. It is by no means an uncommon species yet it is perhaps one of the most overlooked of all our local orchids. This is probably due to its dense bushland habitat, unusual flowering time and in some years its reluctance to flower at all.

The majority of Warrandyte's orchids bloom in late winter and spring. During these months orchid watchers become accustomed to walking through the bush with eyes to the ground. The summer-flowering Hyacinth Orchid (*Dipodium punctatum*) however, is easy to see growing amongst the grassy understorey of Fourth Hill and The Common. This magnificent orchid is one of the largest terrestrial orchid in Australia. During December and January its tall, fleshy, burgandy-coloured stems bear spikes of speckled pink flowers. Now, in autumn, these have been replaced by dangling oval pods containing minute powdery-brown seeds.

In comparison to the ostentatious Hyacinth Orchid, the diminutive Autumn Bird Orchid is a recluse. It is found in cool shady areas under Burgan, Pomaderris and Christmas Bush. The orchid grows in large colonies favouring the soft sandy soils close to the river. Pairs of dark green oval leaves lying flat on the ground are often more noticeable than the flowers.

The flowering stem of the Autumn Bird is longer and more slender than that of other bird orchids and superficially the small single flower bears more resemblance to a mosquito or gnat orchid (*Acianthus* spp). But on closer inspection the distinctive clusters of glands known as calli are visible on the dark purple labellum. Overall the flower is reddish-brown or greenish-brown in colour and well camouflaged against the leaf litter amongst which it grows.

The Autumn Bird Orchid is known to be a shy flowerer at times, but flowering prolifically in some years. Perhaps the unseasonally wet weather interspersed with some hot sunny days will provide the stimulus this little orchid needs to flower. And at this early stage it's looking promising with a number of flowers already observed and several more plants in bud.

Fascinating Facts from Flora

Flora Anderson will continue her "FASCINATING FACTS" as of next month. As you know she has come to the end of her list of indigenous plants. This of course is not the end at all as now we begin the other lists of fascinating information which Flora will intrigue us with. This month she is busy at an appeal tribunal associated with her involvement with the Angair Heathland group near Lorne. Our thoughts are with her.

Access

"Perhaps it would be a good idea to add the Melway Reference for activity venues. Some of us do not know where all the parts of the Park are...by the way where is the "Folly"?(and what is it?)"

FOWSP

Great idea and we will begin adding those ref. details to our Newsletter ads. The Folly is at Melway Ref. 23-C : 10. It is the name we give to our Multi-purpose Building built by our members near the Office/Nursery at Pound Bend, Funded with grants from Depts. which now both have different names. It serves many purposes but loosely it is a kind of "clubrooms". Love to show you round.

BOOK SALES

Enclosed is our books "Flyer". No books available until the Festival. Members discount makes it \$12 per copy. Bulk orders 25% discount. Post order to P.O.Box 220 W'dyte or hand to Committee member. Sales at launch, tent at Festival, from Park Office.

ANSWERS: 5. Frog 6. Cat
FOOD CHAIN. 1. - 2. Heron 3. Grasshopper 4. Echidna