

August 1997

Friends of Warrandyte State Park



Newsletter

Friends of Warrandyte State Park (FOWSP) Inc. P O Box 220 Warrandyte 3113

Wonga Park - a Place of Significance

By Flora Anderson

When the municipal amalgamation process of 1995 incorporated Wonga Park into Doncaster/Templestowe to form Manningham, a study of sites of botanical and zoological significance was commissioned to augment the 1992 biological study of the area east of Mullum Mullum Creek. Both studies were conducted by Ecology Australia and both covered an area of approximately 3,500 hectares, but there the similarity ends. The majority of indigenous vegetation in the first study was public land, for example Warrandyte State Park and reserves, whereas in the Wonga Park study most of the total area of indigenous vegetation is in private ownership.

Warning bells should be ringing. If the bush character of Wonga Park is to be kept, ways must be found to achieve this goal.

This report is important for its content and its timing. It was commissioned as part of the proposed City of Manningham's Planning Scheme, which is currently underway as part of the State Government's planning reform program. The report does indeed recommend appropriate planning measures, for example the use of the Environmental Significance Overlay, and management guidelines for ensuring the long term conservation of the sites. It is emphasised that public awareness of the value of the natural landscape and biota is critical in this process.

It is fortunate that there are landowners like FOWSP members Alistair and Carol Traill (site 2) who granted permission for access to their property, but there were 27 others who denied access and, out of the 200 letters sent, 105 landowners did not reply.

Ten sites of significance were identified. The detailed description of the five identified vegetation communities, the lists of birds and mammals, reptile and plants species, as well as lists of species of State, Regional and Local Significance, make this report a

very good read indeed. For example Site 1 has been given a rating of high regional botanical significance and State zoological significance. This 240 hectare site of privately owned land at Stane Brae and Yarra Brae is adjacent to the Warrandyte State Park. Site 2 which is 75 hectares near Jumping Creek has been given the same significance rating.

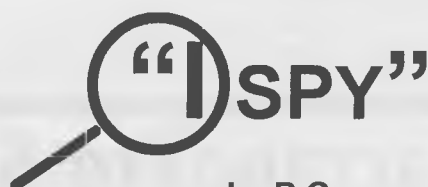
It is interesting to note that according to the report, Wonga Park is unique for the high diversity of regionally significant fauna which persists within the remnant bushland. Also of interest is that the Yellow Box grassland, which existed on relatively fertile soils, is the most depleted vegetation community, having been lost to agriculture.

A strong message from the report is the importance of small vegetation remnants such as roadside reserves as links between otherwise isolated sites of significance. New or proposed subdivisions could also play a role in providing habitat links to sites of zoological significance, as could the planting of indigenous trees and shrubs in local gardens. Incentives for sensitive land management could include rate subsidies and financial assistance with revegetation.

The usual depressing list of threats to native vegetation are all present in Wonga Park, such as weed invasion, eucalypt dieback, domestic stock grazing, rabbit grazing and fragmentation due to subdivision for housing. These are discussed and control strategies are recommended.

Now the good news. A resolution to place the report on public exhibition (non-statutory) and invite written submissions was passed at the June meeting of Manningham Council. Copies of the report are available for \$10 at Council offices.

It is not too late for you to comment and play your part in ensuring that this document is not wasted on the desert air.



by B.G

Seen a Yellow-Bellied Stump Knocker Lately?

In the turgid depths of the Pound Bend Depot office lies a foolscap size **report book**. Open the cover and you can read:

- * "Please record all sightings of fauna in this book including frogs, fish and lizards. ('reptiles')
- * Do not record dog(s), horses(s) in this book. record (these) in the Dog And Horse Record Book.
- * Please record fox and cat sightings in this book also."

Over 500 sightings of fauna are listed with the following information.

The date seen,
Recorded by,
Type of animal and number seen,
Location and time,
Male or female, adult or juvenile,
State of health and other comments.

Here are three random samples,

"19-3-93, Darren (Wonga Park Canoe Hire), Platypus, in the river at Bend of Isles, 1430, one, good health, swimming in river.

13-11-96, A. Nixon, Princess Parrot! (fair dinkum), Everead Drive, 3.30 pm, one female, health OK, has to be an aviary escape, (or someone's smuggling birds!)

29-6-97, Park visitors, Koalas, Pound Bend Circuit Walk, 3.30 to 5.30 pm, both sexes, adult and juvenile, Group reported 23 Koalas to Rangers."

Examples of fauna sighted and reported since March 1997: Wombats, Scarlet Robins, Pied Currawongs, Eastern Rosellas, Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos, Koalas, Wallabies, Tawny Frogmouths, Echidnas, Grey Goshawks, Deer (Fallow), Kangaroos, Tuans, Tiger Snakes etc.

Future Reports

The Dog and Horse books (s) will be reviewed.

Rabbit Rumours

The Rabbit Strategy and Management Plan for Warrandyte State Park is almost complete (as of 7-7-97). There are **rumours** of a new **ranger** coming to the Park to implement the Rabbit Control Program.

Apples for the Hearing?

On the Yarra Valley Billabongs Tour did Flora Anderson really mistake the Madeira Winter Cherry (environmental weed) for an indigenous kangaroo apple, or did I hear incorrectly?

Wildlife Utilization

Jane Dyke is shifting to '250 Victoria Pde.' where she will be issuing permits for 'wild-life utilization.'

Pigeon Bank Creek

Thursday July 24 97: Cathy Willis led a lucky group of thirteen Friends through the area. Praise is due to the local residents who have contributed their efforts and interest.

Can You Help?

Sometime Sunday night 20th July during a 'break-in' at the Warrandyte Community Centre all the vital equipment at the Warrandyte Diary office was stolen.

If you saw anything related to this matter, and have not already done so, would you report it to the local police, 98443231.

The Warrandyte Diary has been a strong supporter of the Warrandyte State Park and this has thrown quite a burden onto the Diary staff and others.

Attention all Teachers and Students

Did you know the FOWSP library is full of wonderful books which could help you with lesson planning or school projects?

There is even an education section with books suitable to both primary and secondary levels. For primary students there are titles such as:

'Outdoor Environmental Games'

'Making Trails'

'Gould League Nature Diary'

For secondary students there are many suitable books from all sections including the following topics:

Birds, Bush Food, Local Area Environment, Flora, Insects and Spiders, Mammals, Fish, Amphibians and Reptiles, Revegetation, Weeds and Fire.

Any members are welcome to borrow books for a two week period.

Happy Borrowing.

Note: If your school is not a member of FOWSP why not suggest that they support us by becoming one?



Billabongs

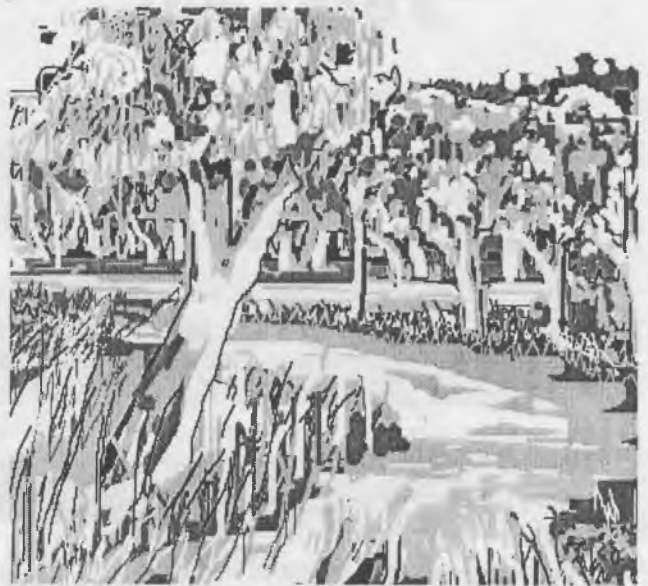
By Cathy Willis

The light drizzle barely disturbed the dark still water of Bolin Bolin billabong, which perfectly mirrored the massive River Red Gum hanging above us. It was easy to slide into timelessness and imagine Bunjil living here with his wives. Yet this is the youngest of three billabongs on the fertile Yarra flats of Bulleen and Heidelberg. It still has steep banks and deep water, making it only thousands, rather than tens of thousands of years old.

Elizabeth Sevier suggested a FOWSP visit to these billabongs and was well qualified to lead it. She is a member of both Friends of Yarra Valley Parks and the Riverland Conservation Group, and has a good knowledge of the history of the area, both pre and post white settlement. Glen Jameson, Ranger for Yarra Valley Parks, also joined our group for the morning and contributed lots of interesting information.

Elizabeth showed us a map and provided some background information from an impressive and detailed report "Three Billabongs of the Yarra Flats" commissioned by (the former) Melbourne Parks and Waterways, and undertaken between 1993 and 1995. We headed off anti-clockwise, meandering through groves of Silver Wattles about to burst into flower, the result of Friends and community plantings. With no rabbits to worry about no, guards or fencing are necessary, something we can only dream of in Warrandyte. However, no grazing also means weeds flourish as well as revegetation plants. In a direct seeding plot we saw young wattles and eucalypts (seeded by machine) just outstripping tall Fleabanes, which will eventually be shaded out. All this on flats that not too long ago were full of car bodies and old fridges and overgrown by blackberries.

Across a weedy slope to our right we glimpsed the original homestead "Springview", built as a residence in 1840. With magnificent views over the billabong and river, it was a well chosen site. The local Wundjerri Aboriginal tribe had been of the same opinion, using the flats as a summer camp, moving up to Christmas Hills when dry firewood became scarce on the damp river flats. Glen told us that six hours a day of hunting and gathering provided all the food they needed - have we really "progressed"? Bolin Bolin is the healthiest of the three billabongs, having a statewide significance rating. With no off-road drainage, pollution is dramatically reduced and the water supports eels, exotic fish and Water Rats.



Pouched Lamprays have also been recorded. There are several major vegetation zones:- the aquatic zone; emergent herbfields that are inundated in some seasons and dry out to varying degrees in summer and autumn; and the relatively drier zone (occasionally flooded) on the banks and flats. Older billabongs develop melaleuca thickets in the channels - Spadonis Reserve, that we visited earlier this year, is a good example. We wandered down to one of the emergent herbfields which is usually underwater and dominated by Water Ribbons at this time of year. Instead, the damp mud was supporting numerous semi-aquatic and moisture-loving species: bright green Australian Sweet Grass; carpeting Matted Water Starwort; an extremely lush Cudweed; three different Knotweeds; Joyweed and Sneezeweed just to name a few. We soon reached the point closest to the paler brown Yarra, only about 50 metres away. A short walk back beneath the River Red Gums completed our circumnavigation.

After gratefully accepting Elizabeth's soup and hospitality we continued on to Yarra Flats Park in Heidelberg. This is old farmland with some areas still used for grazing. More mass revegetation, some by direct seeding. The Riverland Conservation area, adjoining the River and including Annalus Billabong, is fenced to exclude cats and dogs. Thousands of tussock grasses are thriving where once a sea of Wandering Jew excluded all else.

On a large sign was a reproduction of the painting "Near Heidelberg 1890" by Arthur Streeton, positioned to allow the present day visitor the same vista. With all the revegetation works there are more trees now than 100 years ago! But as for the wildflowers in the painting? These, unfortunately, are harder to replace.

Thanks to Elizabeth for a very memorable day.

Feral Hat

By Fia Clendinnen

The six foot high electrified gates clanged shut behind us. "Now we're done for," I thought. "We'll never get out of here alive."

Gentle reader, I could be forgiven for feeling paranoid. Driving for hours and hours through lonely and desolate countryside always makes me nervous. The people who were going to look after us for the weekend were wreathed in welcoming smiles, but how could I trust them? Our bedrooms were tiny and austere, and, at 6.30 each morning, just like in a prison camp, someone hammered on the doors dragging us out of bed.

This story begins some months back when Stephen and I bought shares in Earth Sanctuaries. Now I can balance a cheque book, but the stock market is way beyond my grasp. If I was going to understand how Earth Sanctuaries worked I had to go there and see with my own eyes. So I booked the family into a shareholders weekend at Yookamurra Sanctuary.

Let me set the record straight: we had the time of our lives. When the weekend was over and we aimed the old Volvo back towards Warrandyte the first thing our kids said was, "When is the next shareholders weekend; You've got to promise to take us."

There are five Earth Sanctuaries and Yookamurra is in South Australia, between the Murray River and the Barossa Valley.

John Wamsley, managing director of Earth Sanctuaries, likes to draw attention to himself by wearing a hat made out of a skinned

feral cat, you might have seen him on television. John was at Yookamurra, and on his head, of all things, was a blue terry towelling hat. He's a man with the gift of the gab, he talks and talks. He is funny, provocative and vastly knowledgeable. But sometimes I'd find myself shaking my head. *Does he really expect me to believe this?* John is critical (to put it politely) of the way our governments manage our national and state parks. If those parks were handed over to him he swears he could do a much better job at a fraction of the cost. The arguments on both sides of this debate are so explosive that I am not even going to stick a toe in.

In a nutshell, this is how Earth Sanctuaries works. Wamsley buys up vast tracts of high conservation value land (Yookamurra Sanctuary, for instance, is 3000 acres), surrounds them with very expensive six foot high electric fences, eradicates every feral cat, fox and rabbit and then releases into the sanctuary the endemic native animals. At Yookamurra he has successfully re-introduced Numbats (*Myrmecobius fasciatus*), Silver Boodies (*Bettongia lesueur*) and Brush-tailed Bettongs (*Bettongia penicillata*). The Bilby (*Marcotis lagotis*) breeding program is progressing well. When numbers are sufficiently established, Bilbies will also be released into the bush to fend for themselves.

Earth Sanctuaries generates funds through ecotourism and by selling shares. Apart from anything else, my time at Yookamurra made me appreciate the beauty of the mallee. The surrounding farms are sad and barren, the land should never have been cleared. But inside the sanctuary the bush is pristine and vivid with desert colours; there are the footprints of all kinds of animals in the dust; and the sky is alive with birds.

Lofty Latest

The Friends of Mount Lofty met on June 24th and reported the following findings: The survival rate of previous plantings inside the fence was most encouraging. There was evidence of wombats inside the wetland enclosure, droppings were seen and evidence of burrowing underneath the fence. A large wombat burrow was also found.

Not such good news is that rabbits have re-entered the exclusion fence - one was seen and there were lots of droppings. Weed control issues within the fenced area need to be addressed as well as further plantings. Guidance will be

sought from Park Staff.

Other issues which are concerning the 'Friends' include: fishermen digging for worms within the enclosure; riverbank erosion; the presence of a rope swing and horses still being agisted on the hill.

Having spent time collecting two bags of rubbish, The 'Friends' would like to suggest some signage at Lower Homestead Road such as 'take rubbish home'.

Probably the most unexpected sighting of the day was that of a dead cow in the river!

FOWSP THURSDAY PROGRAM

AUGUST 7TH Normans Reserve Fern Gully MORNING ACTIVITY

Meet on site at 10.00am

Once this area was choked by Ivy, Pittosporum and Cotoneaster. After several 'Friends' and Green Task Force working days almost all weeds have been removed. We will do a check for any regrowth and plant some of our rare ferns and other plants into the site.

Leader Joan MacMahon. Meet at the car park at the end of Bradleys Lane, North Warrandyte (Melways ref. map 23 B12)

AUGUST 14TH Community Centre Planting

Meet on site at 1.15 pm

Joan MacMahon has worked wonders on the gardens around the Warrandyte Community Centre. Come and inspect this wonderful indigenous garden and put in a few more local plants.

Leader Joan MacMahon. Meet at the Warrandyte Community Centre car park in Webb St, Warrandyte (Melways ref. map 23 F11)

AUGUST 21ST Fourth Hill Ramble

Meet on site at 1.15 pm

A walk on Fourth Hill in the vicinity of Betton Track which will be full of late winter surprises. A little hand pulling of Cootamundra Wattle's along the way.

Leader Pat Coupar. Meet at the at the end of Betton Crescent, Warrandyte, to pool cars and drive in. (Melways ref. map 35 D2)

AUGUST 28TH Discover Scotchman's Hill MORNING ACTIVITY

Meet on site at 10.00 am

Come and visit one of Warrandyte State Park's newest additions. Over the last few months there has had much weed work and also a fuel reduction burn. First we will have a wander over the reserve and then try to remove a concentrated patch of broom from the best orchid area on the hill.

Leader Joan MacMahon. Meet at the top of Scotchman's Hill off Magpie Lane, Warrandyte. (Melways ref. map 23 G11)

SEPTEMBER 4TH Helga's Haven

Meet on site at 1.15 pm

FOWSP member Helga Hagen has kindly invited us to visit her 20 acre property in Hussey's Lane. There are several dams with great habitat for frogs and plenty of natural bushland as well as fantastic views.

Leader Helga Hagen. Meet at the property, 15 Hussey's Lane, South Warrandyte. (Melways ref. map 35 F5)

SEPTEMBER 11TH Mount Lofty Wetland MORNING ACTIVITY

Meet on site at 10.00am

This will be the first activity at Mt Lofty since it became part of the State Park. We will inspect previous plantings and do some more enrichment plantings of rare wetland species.

Leader Flora Anderson. Meet at the end of Lower Homestead Rd, Wonga Park. (Melways ref. map 279 B4)

SEPTEMBER 18TH A Visit to the 100 Acres Reserve

Meet on site at 1.15 pm

This reserve in Park Orchards is a gem. At this time of the year the wildflowers will be stunning. It will be a chance to compare and contrast the vegetation with Warrandyte's bushland.

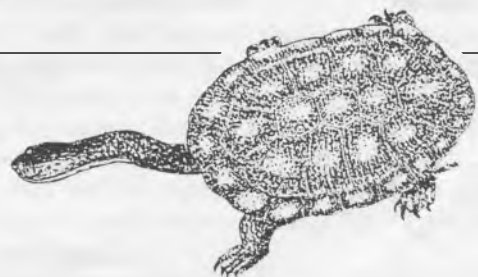
Leader Jane Pammer. Meet at the car park at Domeney Reserve, Knee's Rd, Park Orchards. (Melways ref. map 35 E9)

SEPTEMBER 18TH Frogland and Nursery Garden Maintenance MORNING ACTIVITY

Meet at the depot 10.00 am

The plants we put in around the outside of the old hardening off have thrived, just a little weeding needed. Frogland is also looking great - time to plant up around the new pond with some rare aquatics.

Leader Pat Coupar and Jenny Hoskin. Meet at the WSP depot, Pound Bend Rd, Warrandyte (Melways ref. map 23 C10)



Calendar of Sunday Events

AUGUST 31ST Koornong Riverwalk

Time:- 1:30 - 4:00 PM

Follow up on the previous weed control along the River Track. Admire the highlights of the year's work. Small digging tools will be useful. Followed by afternoon tea. Bring a plate to share.

Leader: Cathy Willis

SEPTEMBER 21ST Timber Reserve

Treasures

Time:- 10:00 - 1:00 PM

A wildflower walk through the reserve to look for orchids, some of which will be flowering. Followed by an inspection of Pittosporum Gully

Fence for some maintenance weeding. BBQ provided, with meat, bread and BBQ supplied, BYO salads and drinks.

Leader: Brian Phefley

Note: this is not the last Sunday in the month

OCTOBER 25TH - 26TH Spring Camp at Anglesea

It's the perfect time to see one of the best wildflower heathlands in the State. Come for the day or stay for two. Camp site yet to be decided.

Green Wedge Environment Seminar Series

Wildlife



4th September	Lindy Lumsden	Bats
2nd October	George Paras	Native Fish of the Yarra
6th November	Andrew Bennet	Wildlife Corridors
4th December	Linton Staples	Foxes

Held at 7.30pm on the first Thursday of every month at the Warrandyte Community Centre, Yarra St Warrandyte

Enquiries: Bill Mallinson 9840 9338

FOWSP Committee

Mike Coupar	9903 9567
Ron Taylor	9844 4285
Flora Anderson	9722 1776
Pat Coupar	9844 1650
Joan MacMahon	9844 3213
Anthony Owen	9844 1344
Cathy Willis	9844 1841
Julie Bishop	9844 4661

Contact person
Contact person
Public Officer

Newsletter editor
Newsletter editor
Treasurer

Secretary
Membership

Jenny Hoskin	9808 9231
Alistair Traill	9722 1518

Wildlife Rescue

Julie Pryor 9722 1117

Market

Betty Oke 9844 3763

Park Office

9844 2659

Animal Road Deaths

by Joan MacMahon

There is lately a heightened concern about the large number of native animals being killed and badly injured on roads in Wonga Park and Warrandyte.

If you've been reading our 'Rescue' column in previous newsletters you'll have some idea of the scale of the problem.

In our desire to move rapidly across the face of the earth - who has not heard the dictum "Speed is the essence"? - many humans give little thought to the consequences for our precious and dwindling wildlife.

The human obsession with speed has two significant disadvantages for our wildlife. As well as the obvious road trauma there is the continual (incremental) habitat destruction as roads and bridges are widened, straightened, upgraded etc, etc. All of this extremely costly activity is justified on the basis of moving ever increasing numbers of human beings faster and with greater safety. (You'll have worked out by now that I don't earn my living in the road construction industry!)

The following article appeared in the Winter 1997 edition of Wilderness News (Issue no. 148).

"ANIMAL ALERT"

In addition to all the other hazards of the road, Australian drivers are confronted by a truly formidable array of wildlife, both common and endangered. Hitting an animal is more than just distressing, or expensive, it can be deadly for all involved. Obviously, a warning device designed to keep animals out of the path of moving vehicles would be an ideal solution to the problem. If it works.

Peter Green, of Ikan Imports, assures us that the Canadian-made Hobi ultrasonic animal alert has a proven record of success. It is a simple, inexpensive

device that can be attached to a car, truck or motorcycle.

According to Mr. Green, Hobi was invented in 1979 by Eric Hobdinger, an Austrian, as a deer alert. "The following year," he said, "Hobi won the Invention of the Year Award at the Vienna Convention; and, after two years of testing, it was recommended by the Blue Circle Society. In North America, where deer and moose present a problem, provincial authorities using Hobi are saving thousands of dollars each year on vehicle repairs and downtime.

"In Australia, we have been marketing the original Hobi since 1985 and have sold more than 15,000 units. It deters kangaroos, wallabies, emus...even insects! The well-being of Australian travellers and our native wildlife can be enhanced by fitting Hobi to a vehicle."

Wilderness News would welcome feedback from readers driving alert-equipped vehicles."

Sounds marvellous doesn't it?

In the accompanying advertisement the following features are listed:

- Warns wildlife with ultrasonic waves.
- Operates in the 18,000-20,000 Hertz range. Too high for humans but gives a definite signal to animals.
- They can hear you up to 400 metres away.
- Effective at speeds as low as 30km/hr.
- Easily and quickly mounted in seconds.
- No batteries, no wires, wind activated.
- Easy to install with self-adhesive backing.
- Used successfully by Round Australia Rally Drivers

Should you wish to purchase send a cheque or money order to IKAN IMPORTS, P.O. box 481 Willetton WA 6955 Phone/Fax (08) 9332 3726 or Phone/Fax (08) 9384 5602



On hearing of this device our fourteen year old son Daniel immediately expressed his sympathy for any wombats residing in the alarm zone - "It'd drive them crazy - they'd have to find a new home!"

Worth Repeating

Logfire Fauna Threat

By Kristin Owen, environment reporter

Keeping the home log fires burning is threatening the survival of many native animals. More firewood is taken from Victoria's native forests than wood for woodchips, according to the Victorian National Parks Association.

The logs for burning feed fires in one in five Melbourne homes and up to half of rural Victoria's households.

VNPA spokesman Charles Sherwin said many animals were threatened with extinction because their forest habitats had been changed by firewood cutting and collection. Extracting fuel wood is even allowed in some parks and reserves.

The swift and superb parrots, the gray-crowned babbler, the brush-tailed phascogale or tuan, squirrel glider and carpet python were among the species at risk, he said. "Make no mistake, the firewood industry has enormous environmental costs," Mr Sherwin said.

He said half the firewood extracted from state forests came from Victoria's most threatened forest type - the box-ironbark forest.

Source: *The Herald Sun* July 21st 1997

Singular Species Synecology

Species Enrichment Survey A Layman's Review

By Ben Gotlib

The aim of the walk on the afternoon of Thursday June 19th was to look at one aspect of the Warrandyte State Park's Flora Management System. This system is enhancing the long-term survival of those threatened plants which are down to their last population(s).

The plants have been propagated at the nursery and the progeny used to enrich the specific plant in situ, as well as being planted in other similar habitat areas where similar associated species exist in the Park.

The activity enabled an interested group of Friends to visit several sites in Jumping Creek Reserve and The Common where rare and threatened species had been identified and planted in the last few years.

We pooled vehicles. Then, travelling by four wheel drives and on foot, we were led by Ranger David Van Bockel and Pat Coupar to revisit the secluded sites to see how the plants had survived the last summer and variables such as flooding, drought heat and cold.

Special maps had been prepared to share and at each location David briefed the group on the flora management of the site and answered questions. The areas had each been given colloquial names for easy reference. These were: Arrowgrass Rill, Wheelrut Gully, Elliptica Flat, Watergrass Gully, Wonga Fence,

The species planted for enrichment in this survey are as follows:

Carex brownii (Sedge)

Cynoglossum latifolium (Forest Hound's Tongue)

Eryngium vesiculosum (Prickfoot)

Haloragis heterophylla (Matted St John's Wort)

Lilaeopsis polyantha (Australian Lilaeopsis)

Neopaxia australasica (White Purslane)

Pandora pandorana (Wonga Vine)

Pomaderris elliptica (Smooth-leaf Pomaderris)

Ranunculus inundatus (River Buttercup)

Triglochin striatum (Streaked Arrowgrass)

Those involved in the project are David Van Bockel, Pat Coupar and (later) Cathy Willis with expert advice from Graeme Lorimer, David Cameron and Cam Beardsell.

This was an unusually intriguing and informative activity reflecting a carefully thought out hands on approach over a period of time.

Incidentally, we noted that the perennial rabbits had been kept at bay by plastic guards. Some progeny plants had deliberately been left unguarded to assess rabbit damage. It was found that many of these plants had been severely grazed. It also appeared that wallabies had reached over the guards and partly nibbled some of the species we surveyed.

Time ran out on the day for several people, so perhaps another visit in six to twelve months time would be appreciated.



Synecology: the study of ecological communities in their environment.

Sunday Family Activity

Timber Reserve Treasures

DATE: September 21st

Time:- 10:00 am - 1:00 pm

Ranger Brian Phefley will lead a wildflower walk through Timber Reserve to look for orchids, some of which will be flowering. This will be followed by an inspection of Pittosporum Gully Fence for some maintenance weeding.



BBQ provided,
with meat, bread
and BBQ
supplied, BYO
salads and drinks.

**Note: this is not
the last Sunday
in the month**

Start Worrying About the Weather

By Mike Coupar

In the last weather article (May Newsletter) we brought you the optimistic news from the Bureau of Meteorology that there would be "no significant bias towards either wetter or drier than normal conditions over most parts of the continent for the April to June period". However, they are now predicting dry conditions during July to September. Perhaps we should really start worrying about the weather!

The Head of the Bureau of Meteorology's National Climate Centre, Mr Bill Kininmonth, said on Friday the 18th of July that the El Nino event continued to strengthen during June. "The central and eastern equatorial Pacific Ocean became warmer, and the trade winds across most of the tropical Pacific are much weaker than normal."

"In addition, the Southern Oscillation Index (SOI), a measure of the cross-Pacific atmospheric pressure gradient, remains strongly negative" he said. The SOI for June was -24 following the -22 in May. "These data indicate the event is the strongest since the episode of 1982/83, a period of widespread drought in eastern Australia", he said. June rainfall across much of southern Australia was significantly below average, consistent with the near extreme low value of the SOI and the other strong El Nino characteristics.

Also, total rainfall since March has reflected the developing El Nino pattern with significantly below average rainfall for the period over South Australia, Victoria, and parts of New South Wales.

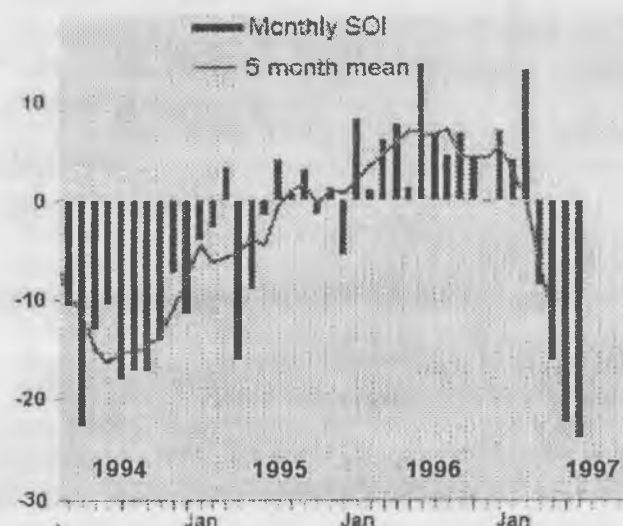
Historical precedents and the newer outputs from computer models point to a high probability of the El Nino pattern persisting for the remainder of the year. As a result, there is a strong likelihood of significantly drier than normal conditions expanding across much of eastern Australia during the coming months. Those areas most at risk of recording significantly below average rainfall for the July to September period

include most of Queensland and Victoria, southern New South Wales, southern South Australia, and much of Tasmania.

The Southern Oscillation Index (SOI) gives us a simple measure of the status of the Walker Circulation - a significant atmospheric pattern affecting rainfall from Australia to South America. During El Nino episodes, the Walker circulation weakens and the SOI becomes negative eg. the annual average SOI during the drought of 1982 was -13.

Other changes during these episodes include cooling of seas around Australia, as well as a slackening of the Pacific trade winds which in turn feeds less moisture into the Australian/Asian region. There is then a high probability that eastern and northern Australia will be drier than normal. The link between SOI and rainfall is strongest during the winter and spring periods (June-November).

Notice from the latest SOI graph that it has been strongly negative for the last 3 months. Cross your fingers and toes that it goes back to zero or even into the positive!



Preliminary notice - mark it in your diary **SPRING CAMP AT ANGLESEA** (Weekend of October 25/26)

Join us while we explore the heathlands and forests of the Anglesea area.

We've been inspired to visit this neck of the woods since our 'not so new' ranger David Farrar expressed his great delight at the time he spent working down there.

We'll be staying at the Anglesea Camping Ground where there are comfortable cabins as well as camping facilities.



REGISTRATION BY AUSTRALIA POST

PP 346802 / 0005

If undeliverable please return to

Friends of Warrandyte State Park Inc.

P.O. Box 220

Warrandyte, 3113

You are invited to
CELEBRATE
the safeguarding of
Mt. Lofty
with a free BBQ lunch and champagne

WHEN: Sunday August 17th at 12.30 pm

WHERE: At Mt. Lofty
(Melway ref, 279 B4 - Lower Homestead Rd.)

R.S.V.P: By August 7th

Joan MacMahon 9844 3213

Mike Coupar 9903 9567(bh)

Pat Coupar 9844 1650(ah)

Cathy Willis 9844 1841(ah)

BYO: other drinks, glasses, plates, etc

Pest Plant Seminar

Date: Thursday August 28th 7.00pm to 10.00pm

Place: Currawong Bush Park, Reynolds Rd, Warrandyte (Melways ref. map 34 H6)

Speaker: Glen Jameson

Bookings essential (no charge) - phone Donna Stoddart 9840 9307