

August 2000

Friends of Warrandyte State Park



Newsletter

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

Team Building with FOWSPian's the Rangers Perspective

By Andy Nixon

As many FOWSP members will know Warrandyte State Park staff were lucky to have three days at Wilsons Promontory National Park in the company of a number of members from your committee. It wasn't a chance meeting but an activity planned to look at management techniques in another park, to have staff and Fowspian input into discussion re. such techniques, and most importantly as a thankyou to all for the very hard work all have put in over the past year(s). As some call it in todays corporate speak – Team Building.

Without going into the details there was discussion and debate into fox, tea-tree, heathlands, fire, kangaroo, grazing, walking track, and visitor management. A valuable afternoon discussion was had on a significant project for the park this year, the development of a long term 'Environmental Action Plan'. On site visits to various locations and contributions from the local ranger staff also added value. (But we did forget to visit their plant nursery). A visit to the lighthouse was perhaps a highlight for all. Half the party stayed and in fact an enjoyable party was had - even late night discussion on the principles of *Thylacine* management proved we were still working!

It would appear from all in attendance that the trip was a great success. Personally I would like to thank all who were there for their good company, and their contribution. It is true that we not only worked but did have some good fun. In

fact there are already plans in the making for visiting another great park location elsewhere in the state at some stage in the future. So take note Fowspians – an advantage of volunteering your time for the Committee.

I must also recognise the good management support of Parks Victoria for this sort of activity. It is applaudable that PV puts effort and interest into this sort of 'team building' activity – a great management example for other public service delivery agencies to take note of. And finally, most of all it was a good occasion to get to know folk a bit better. In fact it made me think what a terrific bunch of people I work with – staff and Friends alike.

See next month's newsletter for the Fowspian's perspective



Worth Repeating

Group hops to it to save rare frog

By Salena Brunsdon

A rare frog species has received a second chance and a second home at Warriën Reserve in Croydon.

In an effort to maintain the dwindling population of the Victorian smooth froglet and southern toadlet, a preservation pond has been built at the reserve, the second for the park.

Friends of Warriën Reserve secretary David Pockett said members had become aware of the locally rare frogs after Healesville Sanctuary education officer Craig Cleeland visited the park.

"I think even he was surprised to find them here," Mr Pockett said.

"We have been focusing on revegetation of the park for a long time and we did know there were frogs here.

"But we didn't know there were two species which were rare in the area. Warriën Reserve has the only population of these frogs remaining in Maroondah."

The community and environmental group, with the help of Maroondah Council, built the second pond.

There are two species here that if there were a spill in the waterway, they would be gone forever from this area," Mr Cleeland said.

"There are three calling males for one species and only one calling male for the other. Their chance for survival isn't great.



Growling Grass Frog (*Litoria raniformis*)

"It is so important to conserve remnant populations and hold on to what's left. But whether these two species succeed or not, the pond will be great for all the other frog species in the area."

Other more abundant frog species at Warriën Reserve include the southern brown tree frog and growling grass frog.

Mr Cleeland said one of the reasons the frogs had survived at Warriën Reserve was the site's wildflower reserve.

"These frogs breed on land and their tadpoles are washed into ponds by, winter rains," he said.

"They need an undisturbed area like this to breed."

Mr Pockett said the reserve was more than 50 years old and was inaccessible to people.

Source: Maroondah Mail 18/7/00

* * Frogs Frogs Frogs * *

A Frognite Special with Mike & Pat Coupar

Would you like to know?

- which frogs occur in Warrandyte
 - where do you find them
 - how do you find them
- how to attract frogs to your garden.

You will learn all this and more at the *Frognite Special*

See photos of our local frogs and hear their calls

Without leaving the 'Folly' we will take you on a trip to some pristine areas of Victoria and New South Wales to see some of the country's most stunning frogs in habitat.

Every one is welcome. Bring your friends. Come for all or part of the evening.

Date & Time: Friday August 18th BBQ 6.30pm followed by Slide show 7.30pm

Place: The 'Folly' at the Warrandyte State Park depot, Pound Bend Road, Warrandyte (Melway 23 C10)

Artistic Fowspians

For the last few years FOWSP has been fortunate to have available for the newsletter the work of three very different artists – all are members of FOWSP. It is high time that we acknowledged these talented people and their work.

Melanie Coupar (Mel)

Mel studied art at school to year 12 level. She began drawing seriously at around 15 years of age when she commenced monthly nature drawings for the Warrandyte Diary. Ten years later, these are still continuing.

Mel, whose medium is pen and ink, also drew all the birds, insects, frogs and fungi for 'Discover Warrandyte'. FOWSP greeting cards have been made from several of Mel's drawings. In addition, she has had her work exhibited at Potter's Cottage and was a finalist in the Warrandyte Youth Arts Award last year.

Mel is about to complete her fourth and final year of a chef apprenticeship and is currently working at Saliba – a restaurant and catering business in the city.



Anthony Owen (Ant)

Ant is FOWSP's current treasurer. He studied art at RMIT and then took a course in Parks and Recreation Management at Charles Sturt University in Albury.



Ant's drawings are unique and very creative. His images have been used in publications by Nillumbik Council and the Field Naturalists Club of Victoria.

With a family of three young children, and three jobs including physically demanding work in bushland management, there is little time for art these days. As Ant himself puts it "my main problem at the moment is that I'm a frustrated artist." But hopefully when he is not so busy we can look forward to more of Ant's masterpieces in the future.

Richard Thiel

Richard is our resident cartoonist. He studied horticulture in the early nineties with a view to a career change from graphic design – this did not eventuate. Instead he satisfies his 'botanical' interests by drawing plant related cartoons which he has had exhibited in nurseries.

Richard's company Kullatoon's specialises in graphic design. Richard will do marketing promotions, magazines and newspaper ads, shop front signs, logos and much more. He has just completed a colourful poster on 'Permaculture Melbourne' which, he hopes, will be placed on all the Bayside train stations.



Galloping Grass and Other Invaders

By Cathy Willis

I have been sitting in front of the fire reading 'Ranger – a journal for conservation managers' (summer 2000), an issue featuring invasive species. A depressing way to spend a winter's night you may think. Well reading through the contents page I thought it might be. Titles such as 'Red fox threat abatement plan'; 'Thirty years of bitou bush'; 'Siam weed – a northern invader' and 'The buzz on honey bees' just to name a few. However it's actually not only a fascinating read, but also gave me a nice sense of being part of a community of conservation managers, contractors and 'friends' with a common aim to reduce the threats to our native flora and fauna.

I've got to admit to a perverse pleasure in reading some of these articles too. "Thank god we don't have that one!" sprang to mind more than once. 'Galloping gamba grass' by Trish Flores, a Parks and Wildlife Commission officer in NT was one of these. Gamba grass (*Andropogon gayanus*), a native of tropical Africa, is a truly amazing plant. It can grow 2.3m in its first year and produce 250 000 seeds with a viability rate of 48-64%. That's well over 100000 babies! It's got lots of other very clever attributes as well, but one weak point in its biology – seed viability declines to less than one percent after a year. Its encouraging to know that such research on weed biology is being done. In this

case should allow management agencies to develop a control strategy to eliminate gamba grass infestations within a couple of years.

What prompted me to write about the article is a chart Trish Flores has included that sets out 'weediness/invader characteristics'. She has used it to demonstrate that Gamba grass has almost all of them, but it is relevant to any plant in any state, or for that matter anywhere in the world.

It struck me that her characteristics checklist should be compulsory reading for the nursery industry, especially before any new plant is allowed to be put on sale. Features such as fast growth and a wide tolerance of climatic conditions are very attractive to people wanting an "instant" garden. Many exotic garden plants that come from climates similar to ours, but don't have to cope with controlling factors such as predators, parasites and diseases native to their region of origin. Then there are those with attractive berries that birds love to eat and consequently spread through the bush. Unfortunately these features (and many others) can give a plant species an unfair advantage over the local plants, and we end up with an ever expanding list of environmental weeds.

Of course there are numerous plants for sale in nurseries that aren't a problem in the bush. The safest ones to plant are those that sound really fussy! In the long run the best solution is for those of us living in bushy areas to look after the natural vegetation that we already have, and to plant indigenous.



OLIMPIQS

Medallion Awards for July

Elizabeth Sevier who for years has worked at, and helped organise revegetation activity for the coupe area at the Park depot.

Betty Mifsud who has consistently 'run the course'; over the years working and helping in the coupe area.

Neal Tessier who for a long time has been reliably helpful with the bringing, assembling and

dismantling of our original market stall at the monthly Warrandyte market.

Roving Reporter

The editor has received several dispatches from I-Spy's B.G. who headed off interstate with wife Margaret in late June.

Their trip has taken them to Mount Isa via Bourke, north to the Gulf of Carpentaria, across to Borrolooa in the Northern Territory and on to Kununurra and Broome in Western Australia.

No doubt there will be many tales to be told on their return.



Jumping Creek River Walk

By Margaret Humphries

I hadn't walked through Jumping Creek Reserve since last winter, so as I was in need of some quiet reflection, I drove down to the river.

As I walk down the track, alone at last, the late afternoon hush seems to fall as the evening closes in. The Burgan closes in overhead, dimming the already fading light and forming an aisle to walk along. The thick, bright green moss a carpet that deadens all sound. The bright green contrasts so vividly against the dark brown trunks, emphasising the need for a reverent hush.

As I move on, the old wombat holes are currently being refurbished. Very desirable residences, overlooking the river and close to the greengrocer's.

A close neighbour, the Yellow Robin, having abandoned that spring nest hanging over the river, flits silently from twig to ground. Under a fallen branch it catches an unwary insect, then hurries on to finish dinner before the dark sends everyone to bed.

As I sit and watch, the sky darkens and the river slowly vanishes, the only sound is of water rushing over rocks, in a hurry to move on. I move on also, up the escarpment and out into the open where it is lighter and cooler, a bow wave crosses the smooth flow of water, a platypus is looking for dinner.

Night finally steals the light and as I turn to leave, this peaceful place has again exerted its influence over me. I feel I can now go back and face the noise and bustle, the demands of our daily lives, grateful that this special spot is there when I need it, but leading its own life as it has done for a thousand years or more.



Yellow Robin

Library Report

from Ray Clarke

I have checked the list and re-sorted the books into correct order (approx. 20% were out of place). I made more shelf room by placing the Peregrine books on the top of the shelves.

The following books are missing as of at May, 2000

AR106	Field Guide to Victorian Frogs	Jean Morse
B205	Field Guide, Birds of Aust.	Simpson & Day
BF301	Wild Food in Australia	B & J.W.Crib
EN515	Geology of Melbourne District	Mines Dept.
FI	Aust. Pond & Stream Life	J.Child
F902	Inland Angling Waters Vic.	Turnbridge et.al.
FL610	Field Guide Indigenous & Exotic Grasses	M.P.& W
FL651	Germination of Local Plant Seed	M. Ralph
FR1301	Fire	M.Bence
W1201	Field Guide to Weeds in Aust.	Lamp & Collett

Technical books T 1101 to T 1111

Tapes 2108 to 2112

This is a considerable list. So could members who use the FOWSP library and know they have borrowed any of these books at some time (however long ago) please look very carefully for them and if found return the books to the library.

City of Manningham Environment Seminars 2000

By Flora Anderson

Bill O'Connor, fish biologist at the Department of Natural Resources and Environment (DNRE) Flora Fauna Branch, was the speaker at the 6th Environment Seminar for the year held at Currawong Bush Park Conference Centre on July 6th. And a most engaging speaker he is too. These seminars are now in their 4th year - a fine achievement for all those involved in the organisation.

Bill's expertise lies in the area of native fish and the associated issue of river management. Although he discussed all Victorian native fish, Bill used the Macquarie Perch ('mackas' he calls them) to illustrate the need for healthy river systems and intact riparian vegetation. Macquarie Perch naturally occurs in rivers running north from the Great Dividing Range (GDR), but was introduced to the Yarra about 100 years ago. Rivers running south from the GDR flow to the sea and fish of these rivers spend a period of their life in the ocean.

Macquarie Perch lay their eggs in shallow stretches of rivers where clear water ripples over pebbles and rocks. Sounds idyllic. It's idyllic for the fish too, and even better if riparian vegetation extends right to the river's edge while shrubs and trees overhang so that leaves, twigs and the occasional branch drop into the water creating a perfect environment for the invertebrates fish feed on. Better still if the natural flow of the river is maintained so that heights vary with the seasons and water temperature is kept on an 'even keel'.

We hardly needed to be told of the poor condition too many of our waterways are in and we marveled that fish could survive at all. I thought, darkly, that the fish which are artificially introduced into many rivers for the benefit of

recreational fishing, probably don't survive very long even if they are not captured on a fishing line.

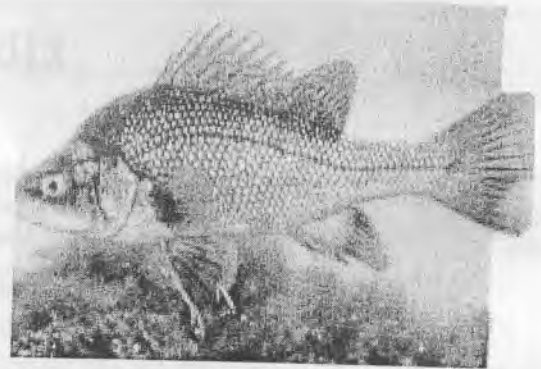
Bill's slides graphically illustrated management issues - river bank erosion caused by cattle, sheep and horses having direct access to river water, as well as deliberate vegetation removal by landowners. One sad case was the result of bad feeling between neighbouring landowners - the loser - the beautiful river. With erosion comes masses of silt which is anathema to fish.

Removal of snags also causes erosion by increasing water flow. Reservoirs unfortunately have brought unforeseen problems. Rivers are running high in summer with very cold water released for irrigation so that water temperatures are the wrong way around for fish survival.

Only 11 days after I attended this seminar, a letter to the Editor of The Australian came to my attention. Titled "Replant the Banks", it congratulated the South Australian Government on taking the salinity fight to the Courts and condemned N.S.W. for "not preventing stock from drinking directly from waterway courses of the Murray Darling basin". The writer went on to inform readers that water problems caused by river bank erosion and defecation are described in the Commonwealth 'State of the Environment Report' as "particularly severe."

Thank you Bill O'Connor. It's up to us now to do what we can at our local level.

If you would like to read more. Find Chapter 7 of the Report. Australia; State of the Environment 1996.



Feral Future Findings

"When Matthew Flinders visited Sydney between 1802 and 1804, his botanist, Robert Brown, was so intrigued by all the weeds he saw that he drew up a list of them - twenty or so, in all. They included plantain (*Plantago major*), nettle (*Urtica urens*), scarlet pimpernel (*Anagallis arvensis*), shivery grass (*Briza minor*), petty spurge (*Euphorbia peplus*), mouse-eared chickweed (*Cerastium glomeratum*) and catchfly (*Silene gallica*). These and other weeds probably came from England, but there was also swinecress (*Coronopus didymus*) and Cape gooseberry (*Physalis peruviana*) from South America and swan plant (*Gomphocarpus fruticosus*) from South Africa. The bitter leaves of the gooseberry were used in place of hops for brewing beer."

Source: *Feral Future* by Tim Low; published by Viking.

Reynolds road Widening Continues

The stretch of Reynolds Road between Andersons Creek Road and Springvale Road in East Doncaster is to be widened, guaranteeing the loss of more remnant native vegetation and the loss of another beautifully treed stretch of roadside.

The Vicroads proposal is for four lanes of traffic (presently two), two turning lanes into two side roads and Springvale Road, a 6.6 metre wide median and an onroad bike lane. At this stage footpath proposals are unclear.

A flora and fauna report carried out in May this year by Botanicus Australia found most

of the remnant vegetation to be Valley Grassy Forest – an endangered vegetation community in Victoria and so of State significance. Vicroads have a planning permit before council at the moment. If you would like to put in an objection to any part of the proposal, keep an eye out along the section of Reynolds Road concerned for the planning application noticeboard. Once these go up community members will have around 20 days to lodge an objection.

A copy of the standard objection form can be obtained by ringing Manningham City Council on 9840 9333.

Vicroads are expected to commence works in January next year.



Zoological Meanings

Gymnorhina tibicen (Australian Magpie)

tib-ee-sen

“flutz-playing naked-nose”

Market Stalwart Retires

The FOWSP committee has received a letter from Betty Oke our faithful market and festival roster organiser. Betty says “*health problems have forced me to review my commitments and I have reluctantly decided to resign my position of market roster organiser*” she goes on to say “*I would like to express my thanks and appreciation to the roster members who gave up their Saturday mornings so willingly. I have met many fine people who help make FOWSP such a great organisation. May you continue to grow and spread your message ever wider.*”

The market stall is such an important shop front for our group, but without Betty’s superb

organisational skills it would probably not exist today. For more than ten years Betty has done a magnificent job persuading and cajoling members do a stint on the stall. Even the most reluctant members always seem to enjoy the experience and many come back for more.

FOWSP would like to say a big **thanks** to you Betty for all the hard work you have put in over the years, not only in organising the market and festival rosters, but for all the time you and Neal have put in to run the stall. We wish you all the very best.

Betty and Neal will remain members of FOWSP and will still be down at the market trailer most Saturdays.

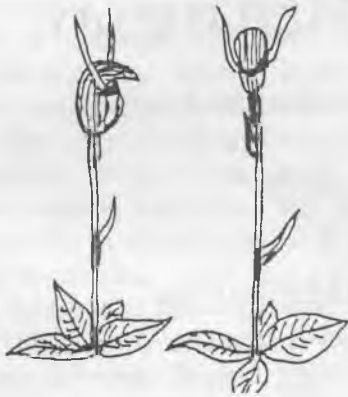


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Trim Greenhood (Pterostylis concinna)

This late winter flowering orchid is on the increase in Warrandyte. Six years ago a small population of this colony-forming greenhood was found at Mount Lofty. It was guarded from rabbits. The colony has now spread with over 2000 rosettes counted this year, many with flowers.

Needless to say the guard has now been replaced by a small fence to accommodate the growing population.

FOWSP Membership Form

Name

Address

.....

Tel. no.

- Family \$20
- Single \$15
- Concession \$10