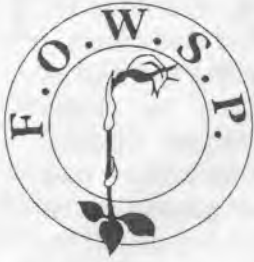


March 2002

Friends of Warrandyte State Park



Newsletter

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

Management Plan Under Review

By Flora Anderson

Robin Crocker & Associates have won the contract to review the existing Warrandyte State Park Management Plan, consider current issues and lay down future management strategies. It is acknowledged that the 1990 plan provides a sound basis for Park management, but needs to be updated because there have been additions to the Park and increased visitor pressure, to say nothing of the increased pressure from adjoining suburban gardens i.e. cats, dogs and environmental weeds.

The review will not involve the community as extensively as it did in the 1980's but public comment will be welcomed by Parks Victoria.

We urge you to write to Garry French, Planning/Program Manager Parks Victoria, P.O. Box 568, Templestowe 3106.

We were told that the next plan will be a much slimmer document!

Members of the FOWSP Committee were invited to meet Robin Crocker on Wednesday February 28th to raise issues for consideration for the management plan update. Mike Coupar, Josh Revell, Geoff Speedy and Flora Anderson were the FOWSP representatives.

We offered the following points:-

- Environmental weed invasion is still a major problem.
- Threatened species as identified in the 'Flora of Warrandyte' to be managed.
- Native fauna survey to be carried out to identify currently threatened species.
- Management plan to be implemented.

- Wittons Reserve, one of the entrances to Mt Lofty, is suffering from little or no management from the responsible authority Manningham City Council, while negotiations with Parks Victoria have stalled. One volunteer in particular battles against vandalism and illegal entry.
- We questioned the wisdom of sealed car parks.
- Earthmoving works to be undertaken with caution. Avoid using introduced soils, rocks etc.
- Damage to tracks by horses and trail bikes. Signs could give alternate routes where horse riding is prohibited.
- Research needed on die-back of eucalypts in certain areas of the Park.
- Walking tracks giving access to parks north of the river.
- As fragmentation of the Park is a serious drawback, opportunities to create a contiguous Park should be taken as they arise.
- Limited resources still a problem. Park staff and budgets across Victoria were cut by half in the Kennett era and we have not seen this corrected yet by the present government.

It is our concern that we will not see effective implementation of a management plan no matter how well it is updated, until adequate funding is made available for Park management in Victoria.

Lofty to Wittons

Reort By Pat Coupar

This year's canoe trip on Saturday February 23rd attracted 12 Fowspians. Canoes and kayaks were hired from Adventure Canoeing, who not only supplied the crafts, helmets and life jackets, but brought them to the drop off point at the end of Lower Homestead Road and picked them up again at Wittons Reserve.

This section of the Yarra has some dramatic scenery, taking in the very start of the Warrandyte Gorge. The river at first flows placidly around long sweeping bends, but picks up pace as several rapids are encountered.

The rapids, which included the infamous 'Bob's Rock', were negotiated by the group with varying degrees of good judgement, good luck, bad luck or simply portaged.

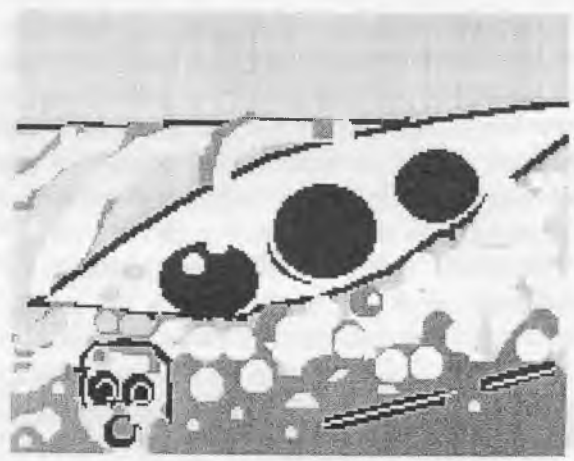
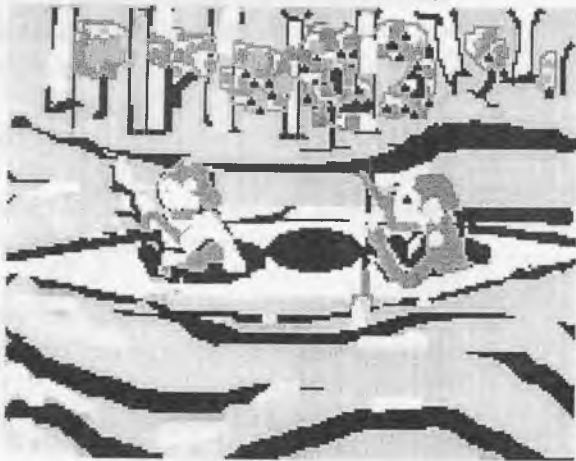
Seeing the land from the river rather than the river from the land gives an

entirely different perspective to one of the Park's newer additions – Mount Lofty. Burgan embalmed cliffs and the associated eucalypt dieback were particularly noticeable from the water. The riverbank, though, was revegetating well since the removal of the willows over recent years.

We saw several interesting bird species along the way including an Azure Kingfisher and a silent, solitary Nankeen Night Heron. While Mount Lofty's own pair of Wedge-tail Eagles graced us with their circling presence.

The group pulled out just before Wittons Reserve for a bbq and a 'dry off' at a secluded picnic area. There we were met by Ranger David 'Frankie' Farrar who had got the fire going. After refreshments we paddled the short distance to Wittons to complete the journey.

The trip was made possible by Josh and Cathy who planned the day and made the arrangements. Thanks also to Cathy and Frankie for organising the bbq.



Forests Forever

The annual "Forests Forever" Ecology Camp is being held in East Gippsland from the 29th March to 1st April (Easter). Camp by the Brodribb River, meet like-minded people, immerse yourself in the remote wilderness, spotlight for nocturnal wildlife and be guided through the forests by expert ecologists. Our local wonder, David Cameron, will walk and talk and talk, describing the lush rainforest vegetation as you go. For further details phone Liz Ingham 9315 3333 or email croeg@bigpond.com.

Pomaderris Study Group

FOWSP was contacted recently by Natalie Peake from the Pomaderris Study Group. She was interested in obtaining specimens of all of Warrandyte's Pomaderris species, especially *Pomaderris vacciniifolia* (Round-leaf Pomaderris), which is considered to be a vulnerable species Statewide.

Five species of Pomaderris are recorded for Warrandyte State Park and another in the local area.

All specimens have been taken back to Canberra for detailed study.

A Lamentable Gap

By Flora Anderson

Flora, fauna and fungi have been well documented in Warrandyte State Park, but there is a lamentable gap.

A survey of bryophytes has never been attempted.

FOWSP has decided to remedy this situation by funding such a survey and we are indeed fortunate that the eminent Bruce Fuhrer has agreed to conduct it. Bruce is at present talking to Park staff to determine the most useful, people-friendly form in which the findings should be presented.

One of the hoped-for outcomes will be a management technique to best conserve this important component of the Warrandyte State

Park ecology.

The role of mosses and other bryophytes as early colonists of barren sites and the power to bind soil against erosion is of recognised ecological and economic importance.



Bryophyte: a multicellular, photosynthetic, non-vascular or partially vascular plant, mostly terrestrial with habit prostrate and thalloid..... and so on in language only a botanist would understand. (see *The Language of Botany*. C. Debenham)

Its classification embraces three classes, hornworts, liverworts and mosses.

Bruce tells us that Tarra-Bulga National Park boasts that they are the only Victorian Park with a list of mosses.

So, here is our chance to grab the

limelight. We could be the only Victorian Park boasting a list of not only fungi, flora and fauna but bryophytes as well.



Fauna facts

The Common Wombat

The Common Wombat is just that - common, but only throughout the Eastern Highlands, Snowfields and East Gippsland areas. The Common Wombat also occurs in the Gippsland Highlands, Wilsons Promontory and parts of the Gippsland Plain.

Wombats like to live amongst sub-alpine heath, subalpine woodland, wet forest, dry forest, woodland, coast scrub and wet heath and are likely to be found in areas with burrows close to suitable food which is mainly coarse, high fibre tussock grasses, such as *Poa*, *Danthonia* and *Themeda*, rushes and sedges. The Common Wombat has a small home range and can live for over 10 years. They are solitary and nocturnal.

The main threats to Common Wombats are loss of habitat and food source through land clearing and competitive grazing.

What You Can Do.

Maintain native grasses, rushes and sedges. Slow down when driving at night as wombats may be using the road too. Keep dogs under control - they can hassle wombats and can also catch wombat mange.

How Do I Know If I Have Wombats Living on my property?

Keep a look out for traces of wombats such as burrows, a V shaped marking on the ground near scats, evidence of cropped tussocks, well worn pathways, hair on rubbing posts and logs, and the characteristic rectangular shaped scat in prominent places such as on top of rocks and logs.

Source: *Land for Wildlife supplement* vol. 4, no. 6



Worth Repeating

Review could spell end for the Tiger Quoll

By Claire Miller
Environment Reporter

Measures to save Victoria's Spot-tailed Quolls have been weakened in a review of the 1992 plan of action, despite these cat-like marsupials sliding further towards extinction.

Quolls, the largest marsupial carnivores surviving on the mainland, have been upgraded from vulnerable to endangered in Victoria, but conservation measures have been downgraded in a draft review of the 1992 action statement under the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act.

The draft identifies the main threats as clear-fell logging; 1080 poison baiting for rabbits, foxes, feral dogs and cats; and competition from introduced predators. It says the threats are largely within the Department of Natural Resources and Environment's power to control.

It cites a leading quoll expert, biologist Chris Belcher, who says the marsupials, also known as Tiger Quolls, will become extinct in the short to medium-term if current practices continue. Victoria is the species' mainland stronghold.

However, the draft has dropped the major conservation objective in 1992 to maintain a minimum viable state population of 3000 adults, including 300 in south-west Victoria, where numbers have crashed. About 30 Quolls are left in the Otways, a former stronghold.

It makes a stronger link between logging and declining Quoll numbers than in 1992, but stops short recommending a land management review.

The draft calls for surveys in south Gippsland and north-east Victoria where populations, if confirmed, are thought to be critically small. Surveys are not recommended for East Gippsland, the species stronghold, where experts believe logging and baiting are taking a heavy toll.



All mention of pre-logging flora and fauna surveys by biologists and botanists has also been dropped. These surveys of timber blocks stopped in Victoria after the Kennett

government won office, but continued in New South Wales.

A spokesman for Conservation and Environment Minister Sherryl Garbutt said the draft was "a work in progress" that would be subject to consultation before being finalised.

Amanda Nixon of the Threatened Species Network, said she would expect tighter land management measures in the final document, given it was clear the measures in the 1992 statement were inadequate to halt the decline of the species.

Jill Redwood of the Concerned Residents of East Gippsland, said no more time should be wasted researching what was already known when now was the time for action. "We're seeing the Victorian version of the Tasmanian Tiger going under fast, yet we can't claim ignorance this time." She said.

Source: *The Age* 7/7/01

Sunday Propagation Report

The First of the new FOWSP volunteer sessions in the "Sunday after the Market" timeslot was a success, with 4 volunteers and 5 boxes of plants propagated. These sessions have been started due to demand from new FOWSPian's and existing members who can't make Thursday mornings. If you're interested in learning plant propagation and helping out the Warrandyte environment, join us at the Ranger's Office on Sunday April 7th and Sunday May 5th, from 2.00pm to 4.30pm. You can also stock up on local native plants and advice from the Nursery Manager.



A New Favourite Place

By Pat Coupar

I have found another favourite road – or to be more exact – section of road. It is known as the Wadbilliga Trail, but changes its name to Bourkes Road as it turns from 4WD to 2WD.

Located east of Cooma and west of Narooma, in southern New South Wales, the road bisects the rugged Wadbilliga National Park and forms the boundary to the Brogo wilderness.

Access to the western end is from a good gravel road (Tuross Road) that links the small town of Nimmitabel and the non-existent town – just one or two farms – of Countegany. There is an air of neglect about these undulating tablelands. We saw no cars on the road, nor any sign of life apart from a few cows. Just a couple of old stone chimneys standing as monuments to some more prosperous time.

It came as a surprise to see the altimeter reading over 1000 metres. We must have climbed steadily from the coastal forests of East Gippsland along the Cann Valley Highway.

The first few kilometres of the Wadbilliga Trail are through private land. After opening and closing four farm gates and traversing a shallow river crossing, we finally came to a sign (a tasteful wooden NSW variety, not the shiny metal Victorian type) announcing Wadbilliga National Park.

The track meandered at first through open forest and woodland before emerging onto an exposed plateau of snow gums and sub-alpine heathland. As we descended, the track became narrower. Changes in the vegetation were sudden and spectacular as we twisted and turned with the aspect. In a couple of places the track disappeared unnervingly as it took a sharp turn through a tunnel of overhanging tree ferns before emerging again into the light.

We continued slowly on down, the driver concentrating hard on the road ahead as it hugged the side of the mountain, while the passenger exclaimed in nervous wonder at the sheer drop down to a ravine below. For a while there were tantalising views through the trees of the Wadbilliga River and across to massive granite tors rising from dense unfathomable chasms. And, in the gullies that ran up between the folds of the mountains, dark green pockets of rainforest. It was so rugged, so untracked, so inaccessible, we

were in no doubt that we were witnessing wilderness in the truest sense.

As we went down in metres, the temperature rose by degrees. When we finally reached the crossing, where the river flows over the track on a causeway, we had descended more than 900 metres. At the crossing we stopped for a cooling swim in one of the deep tannin-coloured pools.

The forest is much drier and uniform at these lower levels with open stands of stringybark and she-oaks. In a sheltered gully we found several of the granite boulders covered with dozens of giant epiphytic – or rather lithophytic – Rock Orchids (*Dendrobium speciosum*).

A few kilometres beyond the crossing is Lake Creek camping area – a small grassy clearing with basic facilities. There were no signs of recent use and I doubt if it would ever be crowded. We had our lunch at the campsite picnic table before taking a walk upstream and finding another delightful swimming hole.

The road continues and improves as it does so, finally emerging at Cobago and from there onto the coast at Bermagui, but, after a relaxing couple of hours, we decided to return back up the way we had come. This time with a change of drivers.





Rangers Report

February 2002

By Andy Nixon Ranger in Charge

NATURAL VALUES MANAGEMENT

Rabbit management - work is recommencing on the \$26,000 recurrent projects (x5) targeted towards seasonal management works for control of this pest species. Cooperative management with the wider community through integrated management continues to be a focus.

Interagency co-operative projects - two pest plant management projects continue in co-operation with:

- 1) Melbourne Water - Willows in the Warrandyte gorge/Mt Lofty and Warrandyte township precinct \$4000
- 2) NRE - various species in the Andersons creek WSP and Crown land blocks \$17000. Both projects are managed by Warrandyte work centre staff.

Conservation Objectives - this project, constructing a 'mini' Environmental Action Plan for the Warrandyte sub-district is progressing further with agreement reached on format and objectives. (This was originally discussed with FOWSP input at the Wilsons Promontory trip in May 2000. The project was held up for one year because of other competing priorities)

Planting the plants - the FOWSP nursery is once again bulging with nubile young natives ready to get into the terra firma! And its more good news that we once again have a Green Corp team of ten young people who will undertake the planting, plus other projects, over the next six months. Fowspians may like to join the Green Corps folk for a celebratory planting

WORK CENTRE

OH&S 1 Public risk - Agreed works for the majority of identified issues in the recent OH&S audit have now been completed. Expenditure to meet actions required was approximately \$6500. Fowspians may notice a new fuel shed; air conditioners in the park office (finally!); signage; asbestos sheeting removal; electrical upgrades;

VISITOR SERVICES

Interpretations - A summer ranger led interpretations program was run at WSP over the summer holiday period. Ten activities were provided with only about half attracting reasonable patronage. Marketing the program appears not to have been successful and is likely to be the cause for the poor level of participation. A review of the marketing practices will take place before provision of next year's program.

We will also be saying goodbye to our summer ranger, Sally Kelly, at the end of this week. Sally was a key participant in the delivery of the interpretations program over the holiday period. She also was involved in review of our nature trails; the mines closure communication strategy (see below); review of land tenure classification; plus the other 101 activities that rangers seem to get caught up in each week. We wish Sally luck with her continuing post-graduate studies at Charles Sturt University.

Vandalism - a nasty spate of vandalism has again plagued the park. Extensive damage has continued to occur to signs and more particularly our notice boards and interpretations facilities. As such it continues to cost the parks a considerable repair bill. We intend to review our full delivery of static interpretation so as to present less opportunity for this to occur.

Warrandyte mines closure - as reported previously this project is involved with the closure and protection (for visitor safety) of identified mines in the Black Flat/Fourth Hill precincts of the park. An extensive communication plan is about to be instigated next month, allowing for a good consultation process with stakeholders, visitors, and the local community.

OTHER

Warrandyte State Park - Management Plan review This review is now underway with a consultant Robin Crocker & Associates undertaking the preparation of a draft Management Plan. It is emphasised that the plan is a review of the old document, and not creation of a new plan. Consultation in this draft stage will be limited to key stakeholders (inc. FOWSP)

Cont'd on next page



Rangers Report cont'd.

Melbourne Water Land Transfer - this action moves very slowly. The work centre is still trying to ascertain exactly what land will be coming across to PV for management action. The four broad categories are:

1. Full management transfer MW to PV
2. Crown Land NRE to PV
3. Dual management MW/PV
4. Currently managed by.... PV

Staffing news - We welcome two new, albeit temporary staffs, to the park. Peter Lawler hails from Plenty Gorge Parklands and will be filling

Colin Bromley's shoes for the next 11 months. He will have a key role in delivering and managing a variety of visitor service projects. Peter carried out a similar role at PGP

Cam Beardsell whom many of you will know, is to take up the two day a week vacancy created by David Van Bockel's return to a three day week (The rest of the harder working week being spent assisting at home with his young family). Cam will be a real bonus to the team with his vast biological knowledge.

We welcome them both.

Amazing the things you see down by the riverside.

By Joan MacMahon

I had been heading back to the house but a loud shout from Daniel made me run to join him.

Picture our location. We're on the Nillumbik side, about 60 metres downstream of the place where Anderson's Creek joins the Yarra, standing on the track that leads to the carpark at the end of Bradleys Lane. We are surrounded by manna gums, Christmas bush, burgan, goodenia, pomaderris, and spiny-headed mat-rush with maiden-hair fern peeking through it's strappy leaves.

Daniel points to a log below us. Wow - I see my first dinosaur! Long narrow tail, thick scaly skin, serrated ridges on back and head, sharp claws and eyes that give a definite 'don't mess



with me' message. After a few seconds of amazed staring it occurs to me that at about 70cms this is the world's smallest

dinosaur.

I also remember that a few months ago our friend and neighbour Filiz, who is a reptophile, inadvertently let one of her pet gippsland water dragons run away. And it's less than a kilometre from her place to here.

Darn, I thought I was on to something really newsworthy.

Interesting Snippet

Here's an interesting snippet from the East Gippsland environment newsletter POTOROO review (no. 166).

It's taken from David Yenken's recent book 'Resetting the Compass' and introduces the rather radical concept of dematerialism. It's a concept we need to see being widely discussed.

Here's the quote. "There's a term called dematerialism and it's applied to the economy. Targets regularly proposed, and already adopted by some European countries, are the need to achieve a factor 4 (75%) reduction in fossil

energy and a factor 10 (90%) reduction in material use per head of population in this century. Hence the growing emphasis around the world on very large reductions in material and energy use, the aim being to provide a similar or better human service with a vastly reduced energy and material input.

The dematerialism debate barely exists in Australia. It needs to be given real prominence. In other words we need to do more than just recycle"

Check out your local library, it's an important book- if they don't have a copy ask them to buy one in!



Surface
Mail
only

Postage
Paid

REGISTRATION BY AUSTRALIA POST

PP 346802 / 0005

If undeliverable please return to
Friends of Warrandyte State Park Inc.
P.O. Box 220
Warrandyte, 3113



Dragonfly

Dragonflies, along with their more delicate-looking relatives the damselflies, belong to the Odonata order of insects. Both species have long, slender, often brightly-coloured abdomens. They are fast fliers capturing their prey on the wing. The larvae of both groups are aquatic and include 'mud-eyes' used by fishermen as bait.

On warm days watch out for these colourful insects hovering over still or fast flowing water.

FOWSP Membership Form

Name

Address

.....

Tel. no.

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

Send to: FOWSP PO Box 220, Warrandyte 3113

Special Membership Offer

Receive a discount if you renew your membership for three years

Single: \$40.00

Family: \$50.00