

September 2002

Friends of Warrandyte State Park



Newsletter

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

Another Grant Success!

By Pat Coupar

Over the years FOWSP has been very successful in obtaining funding for a wide variety of projects such as nursery renovations, rabbit exclusion fencing, nest boxes, an information trailer, and our just published flora brochures – to name but a few. Recently we were delighted to be informed that under the Parks Victoria 2002/2003 Community Grants Program, we have received a grant of \$3,024 for the monitoring of threatened flora and weeds in Warrandyte State Park.

Surveying for weeds and monitoring threatened species in the Park is nothing new to our group. Every year we have organised impromptu walks in various reserves to look for orchids and other rare flora. As well, we have a number of activities involving the removal of weeds. Now we have entered the technological age of monitoring!

The money from the grant will be used to buy a GPS (Global Positioning System) to accurately record our findings. Information collected will be transferred from the GPS and entered onto the Park's computer which has a special mapping program for this purpose.

A GPS, for those who are not familiar with it, is a satellite navigation system developed by the USA Department of Defence. The receiver determines a position by collecting distance and time

measurements from satellites via an antenna.

In recent years staff at WSP have been concerned by the occurrence of new and emerging weeds. These are species that are just beginning to get a foothold in the Park, but have the potential to become serious invasive weeds. Many of these, like St Peter's Wort for example, are found along the river and creek banks. It has been proved that the best way to search for these plants is by canoe. And the best method is to use two canoes to check both banks at the same time using two GPS's to record the information. The Park already has one GPS which we can borrow for these surveys.

The grant money will cover the cost of buying two new fibreglass canoes, paddles, life jackets and helmets. When not in use for survey work the canoes will be available for members to borrow. The equipment will also be made available for use to other interested groups like the Friends of the Island, Friends of Yarra Valley Parklands and the Bend of Islands Conservation Association.

Locating threatened flora and emerging weeds for future management is an important contribution that our group can make to the preservation of Warrandyte State Park and northern Reserves. Not only that, but it's fun as well.



'Burgan, Bellbirds and Eucalypt Dieback'

A Land for Wildlife Field Day

Report by Pat Coupar

Part Three – 'Managing for a balanced ecosystem'. Speaker - Lincoln Kern from Practical Ecology

Lincoln has been working in bushland management for many years and has had recent experience with managing Burgan on several private properties in the Warrandyte area.

He started out by saying that the general conception is often unclear concerning what Burgan actually is, often it is referred to as simply tea-tree or paperbark. One thing is certain though, many people who have it on their property in dense, impenetrable proportions don't want it.

Lincoln made the point that Burgan was not necessarily a bad thing. It does have some good points. For instance, several species of orchid grow under Burgan, particularly in damp riparian zones. It also provides a suitable habitat for a variety of fungi and mosses. In addition Burgan does keep the weeds down.

However, Lincoln did recommend removal of Burgan for fire management on ridge tops and within 30 metres of a house and planting bird-attracting species like Sweet Bursaria and Tree Violet instead. He advocated taking a strategic view and aiming for balance. He stressed the need to integrate living systems with land management systems.

During Lincoln's talk a discussion arose on the legality of clearing Burgan from private property. As in most legal issues the waters are muddy. Under State legislation under certain conditions, the clearing of Burgan does not require a permit. However, this is not the case in the Shire of Nillumbik and there were at least two instances where land owners has been taken to court or were facing a legal battle following the clearing of Burgan on their own land.

So, if considering any Burgan removal it would be best to speak to the local council first. It could save you a lot of money.

Part Four – 'What is Burgan'. Speaker – David Cameron

Local Botanist, David Cameron, threw a spanner in works with his unscheduled report on the latest Burgan taxonomy.

It seems botanists have had trouble classifying Burgan for a long time. Its taxonomic history has been chequered to say the least, changing from *Kunzea peduncularis* to *Leptospermum phyllicoides* to *Kunzea ericoides* (type New Zealand). But Burgan does not belong comfortably with the *Leptospermum*'s or the *Kunzea*'s having features that do not fit with the true members of either genus. David suggested that Burgan should be in a genus of its own that includes the New Zealand species.

According to David, who had recently been on a field trip with some Burgan experts to look at the species in Victoria, Burgan is not just a single species. It appears there are at least six distinct species of Burgan in our State and Warrandyte has two of them. The two, yet to be named formally, which we will call for the moment species one and species two have distinct characteristics and behave differently. The two species also formed hybrids.

Species one tends to grow in riparian habitats and is generally a single-trunked tree. It's leaves are dark green and pendulous and it has larger flowers and fruit than species two. Smell and oil content of the leaves was also different. While this species is widespread in Victoria, it is the less common of the two in Warrandyte. Species two is often multi-trunked, has lighter, less pendulous green leaves and occupies a drier habitat. In

Warrandyte this is the species causing problems. It is possibly endemic to the Yarra Valley area and for that reason, David said with an ironic, apologetic smile, he would have to give it VROT (Victorian Rare or Threatened) status.

This was followed by the understatement of the day when he said "I don't think we are in danger of losing it from Warrandyte!"

Next Month: Dieback



Why is it so?

By Joan MacMahon

I just love putting local plants in the ground. Why is it I'm always late for planting activities then? Beats me! Any opportunity to help improve life for our native birds and animals should be grabbed!

On the 18th of July having had a busy morning I got down to the nursery around 11.30am, looked around, saw virtually no-one and realized I'd missed out again! This time the Whipstick Gully planting. Ah well.

A week later, I spent a pleasant morning pricking out some Sweet Bursaria seedlings, chatting with a mix of visitors and fellow workers, borrowing some books from our library and removing mosses and liverworts from lots of tubes.

Heading back home I drove along Yarra Street and noticed the Whipstick Gully sign (Melway 23 E12). A rapid change of plans, a U-turn opposite the pub, and a minute later I drove into the well-vegetated carpark.

Pleasantly surprised to see some interpretation signs, even a shelter with some information and lovely photos (provided by Pat and Mike Coupar) of a butterfly with the intriguing scientific name *Delias aganippe*.

Had my lunch sitting at one of the picnic tables. Very peaceful. I tried to picture the noise and activity of the goldmining days and then took myself even further back to see a family group of Aboriginal people passing through the gully on their way to camp by Anderson's Creek.

Pushing daydreams aside I took a look at the week-old plantings; grasses, old faithful Hop Goodenia, Christmas Bush, Snowy Daisy-bush, Spiny-headed Mat-rush and, that not so dreadfully prickly, Prickly Moses. All still looking healthy.

Unfortunately I have a good eye for weeds and looking around I realized once again what an

enormous, no, monumental task this habitat restoration work is. The gully has heaps of weeds - years, decades, perhaps centuries of work here. Particularly since the weed control is currently done in isolation. What do I mean? Look at your Melway and see how many neighbours our Park has - there's all the private house blocks, the bits still labelled as belonging to the crown, the roadside reserves supposedly cared for by local councils (actually mostly allowed to degenerate for many, many decades). All of these are weed incubators and until the level of weed control in these other 'jurisdictions' matches that in our Park we will always be chasing our tails. Oh for the return of our ParkCare officer Fay, she did a great job in the time she had. Then the axe fell and she and a whole lot of other good people and ideas were "Jeffed."

Casting aside these rather gloomy ponderings I went over to a cascade of flowering Small-leaf Clematis in a Sweet Bursaria. As I did the sun shone a little stronger, so the creamy, silken sheen of the four petals was even more obvious. I love this clematis, it is a survivor, hanging in when more delicate plants have bowed out.

Time gets by and it's now three weeks since that planting. I'm determined not to miss today's (written in bold in my diary). Shouldn't be too difficult - it's all of 200 metres from my front door. Although that didn't stop me being very

late last time we had a planting in Norman Reserve. Better luck this time!



Victorian Christmas Bush
(*Prostanthera lasianthos*)

Fowspians Wanted!

The Phascogale nest box program at WSP now has enough nest boxes for the purposes of monitoring Brush-tail Phascogale (Tuan) numbers. We are delighted to report that some of the FOWSP-constructed nest boxes became homes to Phascogales and Sugar Gliders within 2 weeks of being placed.

FOWSP now have 15 leftover nest box "kits". We are seeking talented Fowspians with suitable locations to construct and place these boxes in their own backyards. By talented, we mean being



able to screw together, paint and erect the nest box on a tree. By suitable location for Phascogales, we mean a site on a rocky ridge, with plenty of middle storey shrubs & fallen timber on the ground, for cover and to support their food supply of spiders & centipedes.

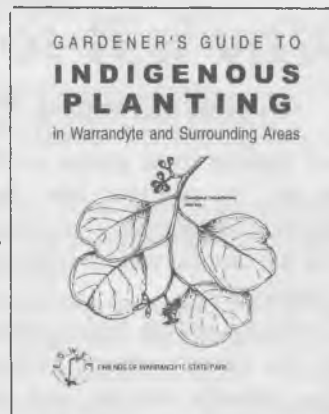
Please call Geoff Speedy on 9437 0894 if you are interested and think that you fit the bill!!

Have You Seen This?

FOWSP's new indigenous planting guide has just been published. It contains a list of all common species grown at the nursery as well as some less common, harder to grow, species. The plants are divided into various groups such as trees, shrubs, wildflowers, creepers and climbers, ferns and aquatics with category headings of soil type, position and uses.

In addition there are planting tips and hints planting on bird and butterfly attracting species and creating a wetland habitat.

The indigenous planting guide is available from the nursery and market trailer at a cost of \$1.



Or This?

FOWSP new wattle brochure featuring all the common wattles found in Warrandyte



Or This?

FOWSP new eucalypts brochure featuring all nine species found in Warrandyte



Or This?

FOWSP new wildflower brochure featuring twelve of the most common and colourful wildflowers found in Warrandyte



The brochures are also available from the nursery and market trailer.

Interstate

The Cape

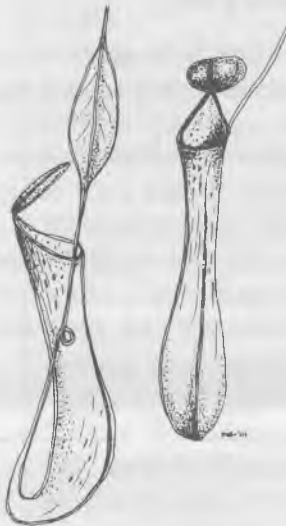
By Pat Coupar

Nothing we had seen, heard or read about Cape York had quite prepared us for the real thing. For us it was not just the quest to 'make it to The Top' although I admit that was a challenge, it was the journey not the goal that was most fulfilling. And yes it is still an adventure.

The Cape York experience cannot easily be expressed in words and even photographs cannot convey the feeling of being there. So I have chosen instead to list, in random order, our own personal 10 bests and 10 worsts of our June 2002 trip to The Cape.

Ten Best

1. Hearing and seeing a male Magnificent Rifle Bird calling from a vine in an opening in the rainforest canopy of the Iron Range National Park.
2. Hearing, seeing, catching and photographing *Rana daemeli* the Wood or Water Frog – Australia's only true frog.



3. Coming across huge swathes of Pitcher Plants (*Nepenthes mirabilis*) climbing up trees and shrubs, growing in pure white sand beside the Eliot Creek.

4. Listening to the waves at night camped at Somerset at the edge of a beautiful beach, less than 50 metres from the overgrown grave of Frank Jardine.

5. Reaching The Top of Australia. Surprised by the lush rainforest

fringing Frangipani Beach and its rocky promontory - The Tip.

6. Iron Range National Park. Camping in the rainforest listening to strange unidentified animal noises at night.
7. Lakefield National Park. Waterlily covered lagoons. Camping with the crocs at Catfish

Waterhole. Hearing them in the night dragging themselves up the banks and seeing evidence of fresh slide and scrape marks in the morning.

8. Swimming in the crystal clear 26°C water of Fruit Bat Falls in Heathlands Resource Reserve.
9. Sitting on the white sand banks of the mighty Jardine River against a backdrop of a brilliant blue sky.
10. Walking through the Lockerbie Scrub rainforest (near The Tip) along a self-guided Aboriginal interpretation trail.

Ten Worst

1. Feral pigs. Occur throughout The Cape and churn up the ground especially near water. We saw them on several occasions.
2. Feral Cattle. Mostly seen in the southern half of The Cape.
3. Rubbish. Poorly constructed rubbish dumps in National Parks and elsewhere. Also windblown rubbish all along Chili Beach and in the streets of Lockhart River Aboriginal Community.
4. Unnecessary track abuse by 4Wdrivers – notably at creek crossings along the Old Telegraph Rd.
5. Lack of printed information and signage, and lack of ranger presence in National Parks with the exception of the Iron Range.
6. Convoys. Groups of 4WD's travelling together (often too close and too fast) – panicking when separated by a vehicle that is not part of their convoy!
7. South-east trade winds that blow almost continually at places like Chili Beach.
8. The roads. Dips, deep sand, washaways, bull dust and corrugations - after several hours it becomes a little wearing on certain parts of the body.

Note: It was difficult to decide on which list to put this last one. Improvement in road conditions would open up The Cape to more tourists, diminish the Cape York experience and take away the adventure. But as we couldn't think of anymore worsts and the bests list was full to overflowing it was included here.

If I had to sum up Cape York in just one word it would be – diverse. Cape York is not a been there done that sort of place. If you go once you will almost certainly want to return. For me a trip to The Cape confirmed what I already knew – Australia is a truly amazing place.

Strength in Numbers

By Joan MacMahon

Two more great organizations to think about joining. Even if you know you are unlikely to have time to go to any meetings, there is definitely strength in numbers. Also the organizers will be buoyed by your support.

The Victorian National Parks Association (VNPA)

This excellent organization celebrates its 50th birthday this year. It has a lot to be proud of. Many of our nature reserves, large and small, have come into existence through the persistent lobbying and dedication of its members. More information next month on how to join. In the meantime they ask for our help urgently in the long-running campaign to preserve the remnants of our box-ironbark forests. The forests are located in north-east and central Victoria.



It is dreadful but true that only 17% remains of these gifts of nature. Despite this scarcity they are still being damaged by 'extractive industries' ie logging for firewood, clearing for mines etc. Recent analysis shows a large number of plants and animals (350) in these forests are threatened with you guessed it, extinction. One of these you may be familiar with is the elusive Regent Honeyeater.

After twelve years of campaigning by VNPA and other groups we have our greatest ever chance to protect these forests. A number of new National, and State Parks have been recommended and will be debated early in the spring session of parliament (Oct). If you would like to receive updates on the campaign please send a short message to Jason Doyle, the Box-Ironbark campaigner, at jasond@vnpa.org.au.

The only way to ensure the Park legislation is passed is for all supporters to write to their parliamentary representatives. It need only be a simple letter – just a few lines. Hand written or typed is better than an e-mail. Jason suggests as well as writing to your local member, send copies to Premier Steve Bracks and Opposition Leader Robert Doyle (both care of Parliament House, Spring St. Melbourne 3000).

A New Friends Group in North Warrandyte

Do you know the small remnant of bush at the junction of Blooms and Hawkes Rds? It is in danger of being overwhelmed by Cape Broom and grassy weeds. Some of the people who live nearby want to stop the degradation and help it back to a healthier state.

This is great news! This precious gem/island while pretty titchy has a wonderful mix of wildflowers, native grasses, shrubs and trees allowing us to visualize how this part of Warrandyte looked prior to the clearing and chopping up of last century.

Get togethers are currently once a month on the last Sunday, from 11am to 1pm. We meet at 21 Blooms Rd, the home of Julie and Mark Simpson. Phone them on 9844 0213 or phone Joan on 9844 3213 for more information. We would love you to give a hand - none of the tasks will be too strenuous. Please don't feel this is only for the locals - any interested people will be welcomed with open arms!

Meanwhile can you think of a name to give this reserve?

Dear readers

We have decided to start a new segment that we hope will become a regular feature— it's for snippets of information about flora and fauna. They do **not** have to be the absolute in spectacularity. Sightings can be from your garden, your neighbour's garden, roadside remnants, our Park, holiday trips etc. etc.

For our daydream to become a reality we **need your contributions**. So now you'll need to make sure you have a pen and paper handy at all times, whether you're walking the dog or driving to work or putting out the rubbish!

Rangers are very very welcome to contribute – they have many wonderful experiences we would all love to know about. We suppose they get a bit blasé and busy (all in a days work!).

Our interim title is the highly imaginative (!) "**INTERESTING SNIPPETS**". But we are sure there's a better name out there so when it comes to you please let us know. Thanks!

Please either e-mail Joan at joanmacmahon@hotmail.com, post to PO Box 220, Warrandyte 3113 or drop your jottings in Pat's letterbox (143 Brackenbury St, Warrandyte.).

The Field Naturalists Club of Victoria (FNVC) presents Biodiversity Day at Warrandyte SP Sunday September 22nd 2002

A series of guided walks led by experienced naturalists and Parks Victoria rangers celebrating the fantastic biodiversity of Warrandyte.

Warrandyte is a great place to celebrate Biodiversity Month. The area marks a transition zone between urban and rural communities and the township has a unique blend of historical, environmental and cultural history, all drawn together by the town's lifeblood, the Yarra River. A significant area for the Wurundjeri for millennia, Warrandyte is now a haven for indigenous flora and fauna in an increasingly developed city.

The Program

Warrandyte Community Centre

Throughout September, Biodiversity Month, a display highlighting the local biodiversity can be viewed in the foyer of the Warrandyte Community Centre.

1.00pm. The accapella community choir the Green Singers will start our Biodiversity Day with beautiful harmony. Singing funny and serious songs about the environment. Performing in the foyer of the Warrandyte Community Centre, Yarra Rd. Mel 23F11

Jumping Creek Reserve

Meet at Sandy Bay picnic area. Mel 24A9

2.00pm. Cecily Falkingham, *Blue Tongue Bend Walk*

Cecily will share her intimate knowledge of the flora and fauna of this area. Some steep sections. 2.5hrs.

3.00pm. Cam Beardsell, Parks Victoria Ranger – *Life along the Yarra Past and Present*

Cam will share his knowledge of the history and ecology of the area. 1.5hrs.

4.00pm. Alan Yen, *Invertebrates along the Yarra.*

An introduction to the diverse and often hidden world of insects. 1hr.

Whipstick Gully/Fourth Hill

2.00pm. Ted Rotherham, *History of Warrandyte*

A talk at the Warrandyte Historical Society, 111 Yarra Rd, Warrandyte. Opposite Whipstick Gully Rd. Mel 23F12. 1/2hr

3.00pm. Noel Schleiger, *Whipstick Gully Geology and Geomorphology of Warrandyte*

Study of quartz reef and visit to the mines. Meet at the end of Whipstick Gully Rd. Mel 23F12. 1.5hrs.

3.30pm. Pat Coupar, *Wildflowers of Fourth Hill*

This walk will focus on the Spring wildflowers, insects and their association with the local plants.

Meet at the end of Tunnel St, Warrandyte. Mel 35F1. 2hrs.

Pound Bend

Meet at the Rangers depot at the end of Pound Bend Rd, Warrandyte. Mel 23C10

5.30pm onwards. Evening BBQ (BYO)

7.00pm. Spotlight of nocturnal critters.

Walk along the Yarra River. 1.5hrs.

Cost: For insurance purposes \$2 per individual and \$4 per family is requested from non-members of the Field Naturalists Club of Victoria.

Bookings appreciated, but not necessary. Phone FNCV 9877 9860



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Imperial White Butterfly

(Delias harpalyce)

An attractive butterfly with dramatic splashes of red, yellow and black on the underside of the wings, while the upper surface is greyish-white with a band of black around the edge.

Caterpillars feed exclusively on mistletoe and pupate together on a silken sheet spun amongst the leaves. As the weather warms up look out for this butterfly around clumps of mistletoe that hang from eucalypt trees, it may be searching for a place to lay its eggs.

FOWSP Membership Form

Name

Address

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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

This newsletter is printed on recycled paper