

February 2005

Friends of Warrandyte State Park



Newsletter

Friends of Warrandyte State Park (FOWSP) Inc. PO Box 220 Warrandyte 3113
ABN 94170156655/ACN A0024890C

Discover Your Park

By Pat Coupar

If you are reading this you are either a member of the Friends of Warrandyte State Park (FOWSP) or interested in becoming one. But how well do you know the Park that you have befriended? Did you know, for instance, that the Park is comprised of several small reserves some linked by a narrow linear strip along the river, while others are separate blocks fragmented by roads, river and private land. The total area of the Park is 656 hectares.

The most popular reserves are Pound Bend and Jumping Creek both of which have canoe ramps, picnic facilities and toilets. But what about the lesser-known, low-key areas like Stane Brae, Yarra Brae, the Koornong and the Common? Where are they? What plants and animals are found in those reserves?

The good news is that all this information and more can be found in the book 'Discover Warrandyte' written and published by the Friends in 1993. The bad news is that there are few, if any, copies of the book remaining. Last year the committee discussed the options of updating and reprinting the book or producing a different publication along similar lines. But, as yet no decision has been made.

However, there are other sources of information on the Park. Most notably there is the Warrandyte State Park Draft Management Plan published in August last year. The plan gives an overview of the Park, its location in a regional context, information on natural values and conservation, as well as management directions.



In addition, there are detailed maps showing the location of the different reserves, access tracks, walking tracks, high conservation zones and recreational facilities.

There are also a number of brochures on various sections of the Park, as well as a bird list and information on pest plants and animals. The Friends have produced a series of colour brochures on the wildflowers, eucalypts and wattles as well as a planting guide. The Management Plan and a large selection of brochures are available from the Ranger's Office at the end of Pound Bend Road.

Warrandyte State Park is a special place. It provides a refuge for many native animals including kangaroos, wallabies, koalas, wombats and the rare Brush-tailed Phascogale. Over 485 indigenous plants have been recorded in the Park, many of which are locally threatened. There is much to see and do. There are tracks that meander through the bushland across wildflower sprinkled slopes, grassy hilltops patrolled by eagles, secluded picnic areas, the remains of an old outdoor stone chapel and relics from the gold era. So much to explore, so much to discover.

Bush Backyard

*Contributions this month from Brooke Burton,
Steve Katsineris and Pat and Mike Coupar*

Rescued Babies

By Brooke Burton

I am a resident of the Bend of Islands, out near Kangaroo Ground, and also a member of FOWSP. A few weeks ago my partner, Art and I were getting dinner ready when I heard a low shrieking. I went to confirm it was not our baby, and came upon something very small in the entrance of our house.

At first glance I thought it was a mouse. Art came over and was able to identify it as a Brush-tail Phascogale. He picked it up in a nappy and wrapped it and we put it in a cloth bag. We then rang our next door neighbour, Trish, who is a carer for injured wildlife. She was very excited but knew she did not have the skills to look after this little critter.

It had to be rung in to the ranger because they were considered endangered in this area. It was funny – the ranger had no idea what we were talking about and gave us a few numbers to ring. After maybe half an hour of ringing around we finally found someone who knew what do with this baby phascogale. They would take it tomorrow to the Healesville Sanctuary to be placed with another baby phascogale found earlier that week.

We took it back next door to Trish who could keep it warm on a heated bed all night. Though it as quite dehydrated, it survived the night and the journey to the Sanctuary. The last we heard it was happily living with the other rescued baby and was doing quite well.

Sadly, a few days later while up cleaning the gutters, I found two more babies of about the same age dead. Good news though, a neighbour found five babies and was able to scout around and find the mother. They were reunited and took off back into the bush.

So maybe this area is becoming a sanctuary of its own to the phascogale and the endangered listing in this area may need reviewing.



An Encounter with an Unusual Lizard Visitor

By Steve Katsineris

As we have a bush garden, we are quite used to the resident wildlife that live in the yard and others that visit regularly and even the more infrequent animal visitors, such as echidnas, snakes and some bird species. But, recently we found a lizard we had never seen in the garden or the Hurstbridge area before.

On Monday November 22, my wife Laurie came into the house to tell me that a large lizard was trapped in the wire near the chicken enclosure. We grabbed the wire cutters and gloves and went to rescue it. While I held the lizard still, my daughter Sian cut the wire from around it. Its body had fitted through the wire, until its back legs had gotten caught. I checked to see if it was hurt and found it was uninjured.

The children were thrilled to see this impressive, strange lizard and with my help, they held it and touched it. While we kept it captive I rang the local Council and described the lizard, they thought it was a Jacky Lizard and told me they are found around the area.

I rang Healesville Sanctuary, but the Reptile Department was unattended, so I left a message. Thinking it must be a Jacky Lizard, a local that has decided to live in our garden I let it go in the yard. I also cut some big holes in the wire so it could come and go in that area without, hopefully, getting caught again.

I looked in the Australian animal books that I have and the descriptions seemed to match that of a Jacky Lizard, but I was unsure, Jacky Lizards grow to 40cm length from head to tail and this lizard I thought was some 20cm longer. I also read that Mountain Dragons are sometimes mistaken for Jacky Lizards, but they only grow to 20cm in overall body length.

The whole family kept an eye out for the lizard, it was seen in various parts of the garden and it especially liked basking in the sun on the rocks near the fishpond and around the logs near the chicken coop.

Once we surprised each other as I walked past the fishpond one day and it jumped onto the fishpond island and then dived into the water and swam around, finally staying submerged on the bottom.

Continued on next page

Bush Backyard continued:

Then, Michael a reptile keeper from Healesville Sanctuary rang and after I described the lizard, its love of our fishpond (though not of eating our fish), the fact that it dives swiftly into the water when startled, as well as the size made him think it was an Eastern Water Dragon. He said that if so, it definitely was not a native of our area, though he said that through either escapes or releases of captive populations a colony of them has established itself on the Yarra at Studley Park (Kew). He asked me if I could catch the lizard and bring it to Healesville, so I said I would.

On Thursday it was very hot so I went to water our vegetable garden. While I was standing there watering and contemplating how to capture the lizard, I noticed it caught again in the same wire fence as last time. While I held it, Laurie cut the wire from around its body.

This time the dragon lizard was not as lively, it didn't look well and I thought maybe it had been there in the heat for a long time. I took it to a tap and put it in a bucket of water for a moment, it seemed better. But, as I was worried about its condition I took it to the local vet and left it to be checked. They rang later to say the lizard was okay. They kept it there overnight.

The next day I collected it and managed to determine its size, it measured 65cm from head to tail. I then took it to Healesville. They told me that they either release the lizard back in the wild or would keep it at the zoo, probably the latter.

So ended a rather eventful week, where we discovered a lot about dragon lizards and eventually got a satisfying and positive outcome. We felt very fortunate to get so close to such a remarkable creature and pleased to be able to help it find a home.

Another Lizard Tail or Two

By Pat and Mike Coupar

On a hot afternoon, just before Christmas, we noticed several skinks writhing around together on top of a low brick wall.

On close inspection they appeared to be attacking a dead or dying skink, latching onto it around the neck with their jaws.

As we watched another skink emerged from a deep crack between the bricks where the mortar had crumbled away. It too joined in the melee.

These normally nervous reptiles were so engrossed in their frenzied attack, they were oblivious to our presence.



After watching the tangle of skinks for a while - and with a bit of gentle probing from us - it became clear that the skink under attack was well and truly alive. And, all the writhing and wrapping of tails was actually an attempt to mate with it. Or at least that was interpretation of events!

More Snippets Please

Keep contributions coming. Don't forget snippets can be about anything of interest in the environment and do not necessarily have to be about Warrandyte.

Contributions can either be dropped into the editor at 143 Brackenbury St, Warrandyte or via email at ian.coupar@vcp.monash.edu.au

Agapanthus

If you still have this South African lily growing in your garden. Please, please cut off those beautiful big blue or white flowerheads before they set seed and take up residence in our bushland



Bush Lament

Steven Katsineris

Weekends and weekdays,
almost every morning they begin to sing,
their dreadful, deafening and mournful song.
The gullies and hills echo to the sound,
of chainsaws, brushcutters and mowers,
a lament of death for wattles, eucalypts,
native shrubs and grasses.

Lost the scrubland where potoroos, wallabies
and bandicoots lived.

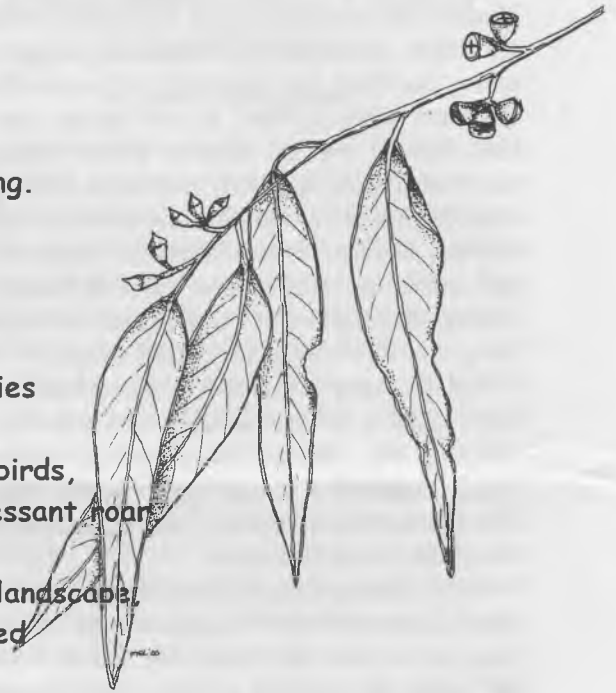
Where once we listened to the chorus of birds,
more often we now hear the machines incessant roar.
Even where trees are spared,
they stand as remnants among a denuded landscape,
where once a diversity of habitat flourished
beneath their branches.

Old hollow trees are seen only as firewood
to be cut down, yet they are the most useful trees,
providing food, shelter and homes for a variety of native animals.
Too few young indigenous trees are left when areas are cleared
for pasture and gardens and fewer native trees are replanted.

Our land clearing and lifestyles
are destroying our native animals and plants.
What small animals survive in the ever declining
pockets of bush, struggle on contending with
cats, foxes, dogs, rabbits and cars.

Where once was unique Australian bush is giving way to
exotic plants and weeds with thirsty needs
and the sameness of other foreign lands.

Unless we wake up and redress the balance,
an ancient special place on earth
in a short time, will be no more.



River Red Gum *Eucalyptus camaldulensis*

Botanical Meanings

camaldulensis

From a now abandoned monastery of the Camalduli Order in the district of Camalduli in Tuscany, Italy. It is said that a tree cultivated in the gardens was used in the first botanical description of the species



By B.G

Weird Warning

The author of this feature now has a dual hearing-aid with power steering, A/C etc – but no cup holders. I can now hear dry leaves crackling, the sap rising in the trees, brittle items clattering, my own voice (how terrifying) and even evil thoughts (by others). So no rumour will be unheard.

Persistent People

The first nursery day this year saw a small band of regular helpers working. Other helpers were Ian and Anne Penrose (North Warrandyte) – Ian is on the committee of the Yarra Riverkeepers Association. Another helper was Michael Dikman from Friends of Yarra Valley Parkland (includes our nearest neighbour Westerfolds). Michael is studying for a Diploma of Conservation and Land Management at RMIT.

Extra Effort

Melanie Lange and Kyen are two people assisting Josh at the nursery. They also come on days other than Thursdays to assist in seed collecting and sorting.

Damage Done

The Pound Bend Tunnel swimming area is closed due to flood damage.

Meat Matter

A kilogram of beef may use more than 13 times the amount of water to produce the same weight of cereal. *“a persons diet, not how long they spend in the shower is the main determining factor in per capita water consumption”*

Source: International Water expert, Professor Frank Rijsberman – Ecos Nov/Dec 2004.

Project People

The Project Fire Fighters (PFF) are located at the depot again. They are: Nicky Howey, Ben Stewart. Ian Harris, Heidi Venton and Con Cosmos (crew leader).

Grampian (Girwenda) Group

On 13th January two of the PFF's and two rangers were at the West Grampians area assisting with fire operations.

January Jottings

The nursery area was a hive of activity on the 13th January with many helpers. Linda Rogan was there (Linda has previously put in 400 plants on their property at Greensborough). Also Leon Grinszpen (from Warrandyte) who helps whenever he's able. And Nicholas Lyell (9 years old, grade 4) from Great Ryrie Primary School was working with Alwynne. Amy Symons (Park Orchards) was busy preparing the urn for a morning 'cuppa' for all. And many of the usual helpers were there.

Fencing Facts

Ray Kruger and Ken Crook have been putting in a substantial effort rebuilding the post and wire 'net' fence around the hardening off area behind the small hot houses.

New Computer and Camera

Last year we were informed by the Federal Minister for Menzies, Kevin Andrews, that our group had been successful in our application for funding from the Federal Government Department of Family Services under its 'Small Equipment Grants 2004 (Round 2)'. The grant of \$4,382 we received was to purchase a new computer for producing our monthly newsletter and a digital camera.

This is the first newsletter using the new Compaq computer – no more cutting and pasting! We hope you are impressed with our colour insert of Warrandyte wildflowers (and the camera). These are among the first photos taken on FOWSP's new digital camera.

The camera is a Nikon Coolpix, a SLR-like camera with a large focusing range. It is very easy to use, even if you are not familiar with digital cameras. The camera will be kept in a locked cupboard at the ranger's office, but will be available for loan. We would like members to take the opportunity to photograph any FOWSP events or activities so that they can be used with or without an accompanying article in the newsletter.

Manningham City Council Environment Seminars 2005



2 nd February	Lynda McLaughlin – “Climate Change and Melbourne”
2 nd March	Neville Rosengren – “Geomorphology of the Yarra Catchment”
6 th April	Mike Harper – “Urban Fauna”
4 th May	Authur Stubbs – “Pasture Management”
1 st June	Andrew Pritchard – “Threatened Flora Species Recovery”
6 th July	Kate Whitehouse – “The Long Yarra Walk”
3 rd August	Melanie Birtchnell – “Tree Decline in Jumping Creek Reserve”
7 th September	Glen Jameson – “Recoverability of Landscapes”
5 th October	Heath Butler – “Growling Grass Frog”
2 nd November	Scott Watson – “Indigenous Garden Design”
7 th December	Paul Barnard – “Wildfire Behaviour and Community Safety”

Please Note: The seminars are now on WEDNESDAY nights

The seminars are free and no bookings are required.

Supper provided.

Time: 7:30pm

Venue: The Function Room Grand Hotel

120 Yarra Street, Warrandyte. (Melways Ref. 23 E11)

To join us for dinner at the pub before the seminars, book a seat in the Bistro on 9844 1199.

For further information contact:

Cynthia Danby 9840 9129

FOWSP THURSDAY PROGRAM

We meet for propagation and other nursery activities every Thursday morning at 10.00am at the Warrandyte State Park depot, Pound Bend Road, Warrandyte (Melway 23 C10), unless otherwise stated below. When there is no scheduled afternoon activity we often go on a spontaneously organised walk. Propagation takes place from 10.00am to 12 midday followed by lunch. No prior experience necessary - there is always someone available to show you the ropes.



The nursery is open for plant sales (by donation) every Thursday 10.00am to 12md and the first Sunday of each month 2.00pm to 400pm.

Important Notice

Please note the nursery is only open for plant sales during the above times. Some members and non-members have been turning up for plants (and advice) outside these hours without prior arrangement. If you find it impossible to come during official opening times please contact the nursery manager first.

FOWSP Committee 2005

Pat Coupar	9844 1650	Newsletter Editor
Dick Thomson	9850 9867	Treasurer
Peter Curry	9844 0958	Secretary
Geoff Speedy	9437 0894	
Lee Speedy	9437 0894	Membership Secretary
Mike Coupar	9844 1650	
Karen Reynolds	9712 0797	Minutes Secretary
Michelle Hanslow	0402251577	

Wildlife Rescue
Julie Pryor 9722 1117

Market
Marie Krause 9712 0498
Assistant Treasurer
Ray Clarke 9841 8507
Nursery Manager
0408317327

Park Office 9844 2659

Deadline for March Newsletter is February 27th

Subscriptions for 2005 are due 01/01/05

To renew your membership to FOWSP for next year please fill in the form below and send it to the secretary FOWSP, PO Box 220, Warrandyte 3113

Membership entitles you to one free plant a month from the market stall, 11 newsletters per year and the opportunity to take part in a wide range of activities including slide nights and excursions throughout the year.

Thank you for your support.



Name

Address

..... Tel. no.

Family/Joint/Individual	\$20
Concession	\$10



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Dragonfly

Order Odonata



These fast-flying insects are commonly seen on warm summer days hovering over water waiting to grab small aquatic insects. Dragonflies have huge compound eyes for excellent vision and strong biting mouthparts. Their long elongated abdomens are often brightly coloured.

The early stage of their life is spent in water as nymphs that breathe through gills and feed on aquatic insects. The nymphs are called 'mudeyes' and are used as bait by fishermen.

FOWSP Membership Form

Name

Address

.....

Tel. no.

Membership \$20
Concession \$10

Send to: FOWSP PO Box 220, Warrandyte 3113