

Friends of Eastern Otways

(Great Otway National Park)
Inc. A0030273B



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From the President

Rachel Faggetter



Rural Switzerland and France in high summer! Thick green woods, intensely cultivated fields of wheat and other crops, productive orchards and meadows full of wild flowers. Red poppies, blue cornflowers, yellow golden rod and white Queen Anne's Lace, and there I run out of names. I was thrilled with the thick green density of it all. Even the ancient stone walls grow flowers, and shelter lizards and interesting insects. People were out enjoying the outdoor life, camping and hiking in parks and reserves. We saw notices about managing for biodiversity, and caring for the national fauna and flora by practising careful husbandry of their precious roadsides, especially for local government mowing regimes which need to balance visibility for road users with conserving 'la richesse

naturelle'. There is also much discussion about changes in the weather, the weakening of the Gulf Stream and the errant jet stream above Europe where the sky is always traced with vapour trails.

TWO SPECIAL DAYS

World Environment Day June 5, 2012



About 50 people joined with the Friends of Eastern Otways to celebrate World Environment Day on the Anglesea Heath at Camp Road. The Friends have a Caring for our Country Community Action Grant to remove environmental weeds from the area, and to generally improve flora and fauna biodiversity.

We were thrilled that so many accepted the invitation from Alcoa and the Friends to participate in celebrating this special day: ANGAIR, Parks Vic, D.S.E, CVA and the Otways Community Conservation Network were all represented. We were especially pleased to welcome the Year 2 students from Anglesea Primary School who were very excited to participate. Vicki from YMCA provided a great barbecue lunch funded by the Otway Network.



National Tree Day July 27, 2012

The Year 2 students returned to the Camp Road site where they had removed large Coast Wattles on World Environment Day site to plant, stake, mulch, water and name their own tree. Manna Gum and Swamp Gum seedlings were soon in the ground, and the children were very keen to write their names on a stake at their own tree that they will hopefully nurture over the years.

The activity was then extended into a celebration for National Tree Day - talking about environmental weeds and why we 'attacked' the Coast Wattle, the importance of trees in the environment, Australia's large numbers of Eucalypts and Wattles and how to tell the difference between some of them.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Environmental Weeding Contact: Margaret 5289 6326

Tuesday, August 14 Tuesday, September 11 Tuesday, October 9 9.30am-11.00am Contact Margaret 52896326



Over the last few months we have been weeding Plot 6 and Plot 7 near Great Ocean Road where Parks Vic is carrying out research into the control of Coast Wattle that grew in the area following the 2007 fuel reduction burn. With the help of ANGAIR and Conservation Volunteers Australia (CVA) we have completed this task. There is still a huge amount of Coast Wattle, flowering at the present time, in most of the other plots and also around the perimeter of the survey area. The two plots that were mulched are seeing growth of some indigenous species. We are still awaiting information as to how Parks Victoria intends saving this important heathland.

We have therefore decided that for the remainder of this year we will work on our 'Caring for Our Country Community Action Grant' site on the Anglesea River concentrating on the removal of Boneseed and Coast Wattle.

Meet at corner of Bingley Pde & Wilkins St, Anglesea.

Currawong Falls Track Walk (Lachie Richardson) Contact Lachie: 5289 7029

Saturday, August 18 9.30am – 3.00pm approx.10 km long with some steady climbs
Meet at Aireys Inlet Hall (Bring morning tea and lunch)

On the Friends walk on the 18th August we will celebrate the reopening of the track to Currawong falls which has been closed for some years. A DSE burn destroyed the track foot bridge and got into the Melaleuca Swamp near the falls and the peat burnt for over a year. The trees and tree ferns growing in the peat collapsed when the peat burnt to a fine powdery orange ash.



Starting our walk from the Distillery Creek Picnic Ground (North Side) the narrow tree lined track follows along the side of Distillery creek before reaching Melaleuca Swamp. Negotiating a new bridge and a slight track divergence we come to the falls themselves which only flow after sustained heavy rains. The track then climbs to the Trig Point on Loves Track before descending past the edge of Iron Bark gorge back to the picnic ground. For those wanting a shorter walk of 8 km without the climb, arrangements can be made to go along the mainly level track with the main party to the falls for lunch and return back along the same route.

People used to camp under the overhanging cliff at the side of the falls and I remember going to the falls in my youth by going up Loves Track to a blaze on a tree and then going across country down the spur to the falls. The fern gully was very peaceful with only the sound of noisy currawongs. At the base of the falls is a square well hewn out of the rock which may have been involved in the illegal distillery from which the creek got its name.

ANGAIR Wildflower Show

Saturday, September 22 & Sunday, September 23 10.00 am – 4.00 pm
Anglesea Hall McMillan St Anglesea

As members of the Friends' Group are also deeply committed to this annual event, we are requesting that as many as possible help with the preparation of the Show on Thursday, September 20 and Friday, September 21, and also with the running of the Show during the week-end. Our Friends' display will be focusing on the Spot-tail Quoll and also on other features of our Great Otway National Park

If you feel you have some spare time on any of these days, please contact Margaret 5289 6326

Wildflower Walk Contact: Margaret 5289 6326

Saturday, October 20
10.00 am – 2.00 pm
Meet at ANGAIR Natural History Centre at 10.00 am
Bring lunch

This is a good time to be out in the heathlands as the spring flowers should be most attractive. We will decide where to go for the walk closer to the time of the activity when we can see which flowers are in bloom. Last year we walked in the recently burnt area in Harvey St Anglesea where the display of wildflowers was very spectacular.



Mammal Survey Contact: Mike/Kaye 5263 2011

Saturday, November 17

9.30 am – 2 pm

Meet at Aireys Inlet Hall at 9.30 am (Bring lunch) We have not chosen the site at this stage, but will endeavour to find somewhere that we believe may provide good habitat for our smaller mammals. We will be using three cameras and hope for good results.

End of Year Celebrations

Saturday, December 8 Combined activity with ANGAIR Inc.

Early diary entry – details in next Newsletter

INFORMATION REGARDING FRIENDS' ACTIVITIES SINCE OUR LAST NEWSLETTER

Spot-tail Quoll Survey

Exciting news that a Spot-tail Quoll had been sighted near Lorne in late April spurred us into action, and our three remote cameras were quickly set in the area with the hope that we might be fortunate enough to obtain a photo of this elusive creature. Unfortunately we were not successful – in fact we did not record any wildlife at all in the area. It is interesting to note that the site was very close to where the Friends had two positive records of Spot-tail Quolls when we used the hairtube method of detection in 2002 and 2003. A further record has been supplied from near Blanket Bay further down in the Otways

Painkalac Dam Walk

With this track having been closed for several years to enable Barwon Water to carry out infrastructure works on the Painkalac Dam and spillway, the group of 15 was keen to once again walk this favourite track linking the two picnic grounds – Distillery Creek and Moggs Creek on May 19.

The Blackwoods and the Blue Gums were in great condition and Chris and Penne were amazed at the length of some of the Blue Gum leaves. It was interesting to see the works on the dam wall and spillway that Barwon Water has just completed. We had morning tea overlooking the dam – no sign of a resident platypus but we did see an Australasian Grebe diving in the water. It was very pleasant sitting in the sunshine.



How long do you think it is?

We walked through stands of understory indigenous vegetation until we reached the gateway leading to Gentle Annie Track. From there it was just a pleasant downhill walk along the narrow track to the Moggs Creek Picnic Ground where we had lunch. As we walked this track views of the ocean could be gained through the trees.

It was a good feeling to have this track once again open for people to use.

Koala Survey Grey River Road (Kaye Traynor)

Thirteen people participated in this year's Koala Count on June 16. We started our walk along Grey River Road about 11.00 am. The weather conditions were fine, although overcast, with some heavy clouds threatening.



The trees appeared to be in a generally good condition with no obvious signs of over-browsing. Koalas seemed to favour the Blue Gums *Eucalyptus globulus* and Peppermints *E. radiata*. They also looked healthy with no apparent problems. However one koala was observed with ticks on its face, just under the eye. The first part of the survey takes us along the road for about one kilometre. Checking both sides of the road, we managed to spot 57 koalas.

We stopped for lunch on the ridge, which overlooks the coast and the Grey River settlement. After lunch we walked back along the powerline track where we saw a further 43 koalas. The final count when we arrived back at the carpark totalled 100 koalas. This compares with 98 last year. We were also fortunate while on the walk to see two Black Wallabies, a White-faced Heron, and three Wedge-tailed Eagles. We also heard a Rufous Bristlebird calling. It was a very successful and enjoyable day.

Visit to Friends of Buckley Falls (Ross Murray)

On Sunday 15th July five Friends of Eastern Otways left Anglesea at 9.30 for an excursion to Geelong. We were to meet up with the Friends of Buckley Falls on the Barwon river. It had been decided because of wet weather and the walking tracks in the Otways being in bad shape that this excursion would be an interesting alternative, and would widen our knowledge of work being done by another similar group of Friends.



The Friends of Buckley Falls are a small but dedicated group ably led by Tony Woodford for over thirty years, reclaiming the steep river valley and banks badly neglected, overgrazed and abused for 150 years, infested by Boxthorn, Briar Rose and numerous atrocious groundcover weeds - ideal home for rabbits.

Initially this reclaiming work had been done on the northern side of the Barwon approx. from the ring road to the old paper mill at the falls. This area is a huge success and well worth a visit. So work in recent years on the south side, the area from the ring road at Scenic Rd. Highton down to the old Flour Mill site, has been a much harder challenge indeed.

Our group joined the morning work planting and then following lunch we were led on a descriptive tour of work done so far.

Species planted were River Red Gum for tall with understory of Hopbush *Dodonaea viscosa*, Treeviolet *Hymenanthrea dentata*, Kangaroo Apple *Solanum vescum*, Small-leaved Clematis *Clematis microphylla*, Golden Spray *Viminaria juncea*, Prickly Moses *Acacia verticillata*, Black Wattle *A. mearnsii*, Silver Wattle *A. dealbata*, Drooping Sheoak *Allocasuarina verticillata*, Common Correa *Correa reflexa* and grasses *Poa* sp. amongst others.

The work this group has done over the years is quite astonishing and should be shouted from the rooftops. It goes to show by chipping away at a large problem great results can be achieved by a few dedicated people that no one thought possible. It would be good to visit again and possibly invite Friends of Buckley Falls to visit one of our projects and return their hospitality. A truly memorable day.

RANGER'S REPORT



Ranger Katrina

Eastern Otways staff have been working with Parks Victoria's Strategic Planning team to develop traffic management plans for two sites within Great Otway National Park – Pt Addis and Urquhart Bluff. Both sites have been identified as requiring site planning due to a number of management issues such as ineffective site layout and site capacity. Work will continue on the site planning with input from local stakeholders such as Surf Coast Shire, Ambulance Victoria, Victoria Police and Surf Life Saving Victoria.

A Junior Ranger program was undertaken at a number of locations within the Eastern Otways during the winter school holidays. A variety of sites were chosen to maximise exposure to the park: Addiscot Beach, Pt Danger, Urquhart Bluff and the Ironbark Basin. The program was funded through a Junior Ranger Program Grant, with the funding used to employ Casual Ranger staff to deliver the activities. The activities involved beachcombing, environmental games, guided walks, animal and bird watching, scavenger hunts and some general indigenous interpretation. The program was considered a great success with 64 children and their families participating in the program over five separate activities.

Wet weather has slowed a project in the East Otways to replace six pedestrian bridges along three walking tracks in Great Otway National Park. The bridges are on the Sheoak, Kalimna and Henderson walking tracks and will replace old and storm damaged bridges no longer considered safe for visitors. Following discussions between the contractor (Contek Constructions), Capital Infrastructure Branch and local staff it was determined that the safety considerations for the contractors and the impacts to the walking track surface meant that works on the project would need to be scaled back until weather conditions improve. Some works will continue on tracks that have not been as severely impacted by the works.

The northern section of the Currawong Falls walking track is almost ready to be re-opened! Remaining works include some track drainage, extra gravel on some sections and installation of a handrail by the contractor on one of the bridges. The Friends of Eastern Otways will be one of the first to know when we have an exact date for re-opening so you can see first-hand some of the great work our fire team staff have done re-installing the damaged boardwalk. We have just had confirmation that we'll be opening the track on Monday, August 13 so just in time for your walk.