



Friends of Morwell National Park Inc.

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OCTOBER NEWSLETTER

Dear Friends,

Thanks to those people who turned up for the various activities since the last newsletter -the last treeplanting of the season went off without a hitch. An excellent team effort did the 100 or so trees in a flash, leaving time for a well deserved lunchtime BBQ. Rob as usual was well organised, including signs and a board to cross the creek. The weather was kind to the planters with a warm sun coming through occasionally, but the arrival of gale-force winds was enough to persuade the group to abandon ideas of having a weed-pulling session.

For the Koala count on the 19th September there was a good response despite the weather not looking too promising. A few "outsiders" came, having heard of the activity on the radio, or read it in the *Latrobe Valley Express*. Small groups set off along different routes as usual, and 7 koalas were sighted, with one carrying a young. This is quite a few more than the first count in 1992.

Thanks to Joanna for her notes on the above activities in my absence overseas.

Enclosed is a comprehensive report from Ken on the Friends Conference held in March at Rawson Village. Any questions, contact Ken!

Due to widespread flooding in the Sale Wetlands area (the boardwalk is underwater) the Sale Friends Group has had to call off our intended visit on 17th October .

However, Rob reports there has been considerable damage to our plantings along the creek flats by the recent floods -many tubes have been swept flat and filled with silt. These need to be rescued as soon as possible, therefore a working bee will take place instead of our Sale visit. An all out effort needs to be made if we are to save many of the young trees. **PLEASE BE THERE IF AT ALL POSSIBLE.** Usual meeting place and time, 1.30 pm at the end of Braniff's Road, on 17th October. Rob will explain what needs to be done but bring any tools etc. which you think may be useful for this task.

The propagation of our seedlings has in the past been done at Won Wron Prison Farm, but due to reorganisation this will no longer be possible. Therefore the Committee is investigating the possibility of having our own small propagation house at the Park. On the 28th November there will be an open day about propagation at Warrandyte National Park, and it is proposed that a number of people from here will go down to see Warrandyte's propagation houses and exchange ideas with other groups. If you are interested mark this down in your diary -we will probably carpool. More details later.

Bye for now,


WENDY NICKSON
Newsletter Editor

**6th Biennial Conference of Friends of National Parks
Rawson Village, 7th - 9th March 1993**

Saturday 7th March

Registration commenced at 12.00 pm and lunch was provided at 12.30.

2.20 pm, Conference Opening

The conference was opened on Saturday 7th March at 2:20 pm when Marion Taylor, from Coolart, welcomed us and introduced Ian Harris, Director of National Parks and Public Land, who gave the opening address.

He discussed why people give up their own time to attend such a conference and why they give up their own time to weed and plant and clear tracks in our Parks. He stressed how much community support was fundamental first to the creation of the Parks and now to their ongoing welfare. National and State Parks are now accepted as part of our heritage.

He spoke of the history of the development of Parks in Victoria, starting from the two oldest parks, Wilson's Promontory and Mt. Buffalo, both of which are celebrating their centenaries. He explained how the LCC came into being as a direct result of public pressure to see more protection afforded to the environment.

The modern trend is towards increasing tourist pressure on our Parks, which is leading to increasing commercialisation in or adjacent to Parks.

He spoke of the threats posed to parks by weeds, vermin and fire, all introduced as a result of European settlement. Friends groups are seen as a major force in combating these problems.

He spoke of the need for park rangers to have a sense of ownership of the parks that they manage and suggested that they should be **dedicated custodians** of their parks.

When questioned regarding exploitation of resources locked up in parks, he stated that there was no question of mining being allowed in parks, by either of the main political parties. He also stated that the only logging allowed in parks, would remain that already authorised and some of that will be phased out in time.

Presentations

Best Friend Awards were presented to

Barry Kemp of the Organ Pipes (who was not present to receive the award)

and Bill Golding of Friends of the Great South-West Walk

for their many years of service to their Parks.

4.00 pm Group Introductions

After a break for tea, each group represented was given two minutes to give a brief run down on their activities. 35 different groups were introduced and a few more were represented by late arrivals, not present in time for this session.

1. Friends of Bogong. The group is currently low in membership and is keen to obtain new members. Members need to be prepared to camp and to back-pack to move about in the park. Meetings are about 5 a year. 3 weekends before May and two more at the end of the year.
2. Friends of Braeside. 300 ha divided into four areas, recreation, red-gum woodland, wetland and heathland. The group have their own propagation unit and have propagated some 65000 plants in the last 5 years for planting in the park. They also have a bird group and are looking at developing special walks for the disabled.
3. Friends of Buckley Falls. Have a big task revegetating around steep cliffs. Gave a useful tip for protecting native plants while burning surrounding weeds. Cover the remnant plants with carpet underfelt and thoroughly soak it before burning.
4. Friends of Churchill Island. Historic Island off Phillip Island, discovered in 1801. Purchased by Victorian Conservation Trust in 1976. Many activities on the island such as 4 festivals each year, bush dance, tree planting, group of spinners. The island has ample bird-life.
5. Friends of Coastal Reserve (Airey's Inlet). Began by quoting "the Walrus and the Carpenter" by Lewis Carol, the message being one of tenacity. The tenacity of flax-leaved broom, at first seeming unbeatable, may eventually be beaten by the tenacity of the friends group. Group is 3 years old, has an annual weed week. Proposed the motto "Let Local Lovelies Live".

6. Friends of Coolart. Old homestead and gardens. Bird-banding group. Regular bird-surveys. Increased wetland areas and new wader bird area. Recent new dam. Victorian Wetlands Trust.
7. Friends of French Island. Island is in Westernport Bay, with access by ferry. The park is about 2/3 of the island. Coastal heathland, wetlands and remnant woodlands. Friend meet twice a month, mainly for weed eradication. Other activities are a clean-up of a fairy tern nesting colony, an orange-bellied parrot count and a survey day based on quadrats set out throughout the park.
8. Friends of Gellibrand Hill. NE side of Tullamarine. Friends help with the eastern barred bandicoot breeding program, tree-planting using plants from their nursery. Friends also act as guides to the old homestead.
9. Friends of the Grampians (Gariwerd). Main role is as an information provider. 6 activities per year. They run educational activities, resource evaluations, and assess visitor impact. Undertake a small milkwort plant survey. Develop a walk for the disabled.
10. Friends of the Great South-West Walk. Pool of 70 people prepared to work on maintaining the 250 km of the walk. Track maintenance work is carried out every weekend and mid-week as well. The group also print maps etc. to advertise the walk.
11. Friends of Harbury Reserve. A 21 ha reserve South of Gembrook, owned by the Victorian Conservation Trust. 78 members. 2 working bees/year. Reserve contains a fern gully and mountain grey-gum, stringybark and peppermint woodland.
12. Friends of the Helmeted Honeyeater. Formed in 1989, now has 3-400 members. They mainly look after a site at Yellingbo, which is the last refuge of the honeyeater, one of Victoria's faunal emblems. The reserve is managed by DCNR and contains about 23 breeding pairs in a population of only 85 birds. The species has been endangered by the drainage and clearing of the swamplands in which they live. 7 hectares have now been revegetated. Monthly working groups.
13. Friends of Inverleigh Common. One of the few surviving remnants of grassy woodlands in the area, containing manna, red and swamp gums. Lots of birds, including wedgetails and barking owls. Contains a colony of a very rare **ptilotus sp.** Group meets monthly.
14. Friends of Karwarra Native Garden. Garden of native flora, open to visitors. Friends act as guides.
15. Friends of Langwarrin. main activity is weeding.
16. Friends of Meander. Park is a linear reserve along Menzies Creek. Group is 2.5 years old. Group mainly concerned with weed problems. Has built 7 bridges and planted native flora.
17. Friends of Morwell National Park. Park protects colony of Gunn's or butterfly orchid (*sarcochilus australis*). Friends involved in extensive weeding and revegetation of new area of park (Billys Creek). Annual koala count and butterfly orchid survey. Visits to other friends groups..
18. Friends of the Organ Pipes. In 1972 Organ Pipes was a devastated wasteland. Main focus has been revegetation and the destruction of 27 major weed species. The project has been a major success. Revegetation with tree and shrubs is practically complete and the group is now working on restoring the native grasses to the area. Working sessions are monthly and a Visitor Centre is staffed on Sunday afternoons. The group has been unable to attract any women to it and is at present an entirely male group!!!
19. Friends of Royal Park West. A 2 ha reserve with 50 native plants, in red gum woodland. Main tasks are weeds and propagation. They have obtained a grant for revegetation work and for a fauna survey.
20. Friends of Seaford Foreshore. This is the longest dune system around Port Phillip Bay, being 6 kms of dunes. The group performs hand-weeding monthly and a flora survey.
21. Friends of Sherbrook Forest. 13 years old group has major problems with weeds, particularly ivy, holly and pittosporum. Carrying out detailed plant survey which is now complete for half the forest. Producing a book on native plants.
22. Friends of Southern Right Whale. **No Weeding** was the first claim, which was then refuted. They run a whale-watching platform at Warrnambool and do some weeding around the platform. The oil-industry explorations in the area are causing considerable concern for the welfare of the whales.

23. Friends of The Briars. A farm of 230 ha and historical farmhouse with black angus cattle. Activities are birdwatching, woodland walks, stargazing. Site includes wetlands and koalas.
24. Friends of the Maribyrnong Valley. Valley runs some 100 kms from Mt Macedon to the Yarra. Problems with erosion and sanitation. Group well established and is now consulted by developers. They have rehabilitated quarry areas, produced a book on the birds of the Maribyrnong Valley and have a scheme for installing heritage signs.
25. Friends of the Yarra. 8 year old group. Main focus is Galatea Point, Kew. Weed problems. Weekly workings.
26. Friends of Warrandyte. Thriving group of 300 families (lots of young females). Main interest is fauna, flora and community relations. Their plant nursery is the focus of the group. Wildflower study group has small groups each looking after their own home patch. Now have a publishing arm. Proud of their environmentally friendly nursery.
27. Friends of Williamstown Rifle Range. Foreshore opened up to housing development. Problems with weeds, dogs and people. Run their own nursery. 350 members.
28. Friends of Wilsons Prom. Started 1979, and now meet 5 times a year. 60 members, Melbourne based. Weeding. Viewing platform for the disabled. Vereker Track.
29. Friends of Wonnangatta Valley. Old homestead + 445 ha. Formed 1991, 90 members. Restoration work on old cemetery. Camps twice a year.
30. Friends of Wonnangatta Moroka. Formed 1983. Early tasks were removing rubbish. One exercise removed 30 tons of rubbish. Rubbish now much less. Hunting 10 months of the year. Group numbers are declining. Meetings are twice a year. Group is trying to reform and expand.
31. Friends of Wyperfeld. 40-50 members meeting once a year. Weeding of horehound and tree-planting. Rabbit fumigation.
32. Friend of the You-Yangs. Formed 1985 after a bad bush-fire. Recovered a lot since. 20 members. Have a building for propagation. Tree-planting. Gravel extraction has been stopped. Firewood extraction is being cut back.
33. Friends of the Koala. Formed 1990, focuses on Phillip Island koala population.
34. Friends of Johnsons Reserve. Island of bush in a cleared area. Next to a field and game area. Seed collection for propagation.
35. Friends of Sassafras Creek. A linear park. Built a rotunda. Track work. Huge weed problem.
36. Friends of Mt. Brisbane National Park. Revitalised by new group.

6.00 pm, Dinner

7.30 pm, Talk on Frogs by Murray Littlejohn and Gerry Marantelli

Ian Harris, the director of National Parks and Public Land requested that each friends group send a copy of their news letter directly to him at

1st Floor
240 Victoria Parade
East Melbourne, 3002

Murray Littlejohn and Gerry Marantelli gave an interesting talk on frogs. Gerry rears them from the egg and described their life cycles. Murray specialises in their calls. They both emphasised the importance of learning frog calls to make effective surveys of the frogs in an area. They described world-wide concern at the decline in frog numbers (probably an important pointer to an environment increasingly out of balance). They introduced their book and a tape of frog calls and the Frogwatch Scheme, currently running, to plot and monitor the distribution and population changes of frogs.

9.00 pm, Frog Search

After the talk, we donned boots and warm clothes and went looking for frogs at the nearby waterhole. Once the early disturbance of 50+ people walking to the water's edge had subsided, frogs could be heard further out in the dam, but only two frogs were found. These were both specimens of the Eastern froglet, *ranidella signifera*. They were taken up to the hall to allow delegates to try their hands at identification. Both frogs were subsequently returned to the water.

Sunday 8th March

9.15 am, Talk by Tony Lee on Evaluation and Monitoring of Parks

There is a need in all parks for an inventory of flora, fauna, geological sites etc, to form a geographic database. A time record enables assessment of the success of management strategies.

Any monitoring program set up, should be referred to National Parks, as it may need a permit.

Regular surveying of koalas in Brisbane Ranges show local declines, but this may be part of a natural succession. Young move into an empty area, but once established may stay for 10 to 20 years.

The cinnamon fungus, *phytophthora cinnamoni* can be monitored by transect lines across affected and unaffected areas.

Feral bees are creating a crisis for some tree-hollow nesters. Monitor what is using each hollow.

Track erosion is monitored by photographs, using a marked pole to show heights of vegetation.

Quadrating involves setting out 10m by 10m quadrats and assessing every plant in each quadrat. Very valuable if repeated on the same plots to monitor changes.

Surveying small animals by pit-fall traps. Set traps in a line at 10m intervals with fence between traps over 100m. Get animals used to fence first, with traps covered, so that they move through the gaps where traps are placed.

Make 3 copies of all observations, sending one each to regional and central offices of Parks Department.

Koala Surveys

- Be consistent in number of observers
- Set walk in set time, with set number of observers (about 5)
- If extra people send extra parties separately over same walks
- Ideally same observers each time
- Useful to repeat on successive weekends or days

Wombats - survey burrows, no spider-webs or sticks if nest is occupied. Place stick in burrow entrance and see if it is knocked aside next day.

Echidnas can be monitored by scratchings.

Monitoring as a regular (annual) commitment is important.

10.20 am, Tea Break

10.55 am, Talk on The Grants Maze by Sandra Dickinson

(See handout)

11.35 am, Panel Discussion on Seeking Grants

The Panel consisted of

- Sandra Dickinson (Greening Australia)
- Lincoln Kern (Friends of Royal Park West)
- Di Ward (Dept of Conservation and Natural Resources)
- Andrew Shannon (Parks and Waterways Program)

12.00 am, Lunch

2.00 pm, Historical Slides of Mt Bawbaw Plateau

2.30 pm, Various outings

Most went on walks on either Mt. Erica or Mt. St Gwinnear

6.00 pm, Dinner

7.30 pm, Talk on Conservation Genetics by Adrian Daniell

Hunting for the snark - Genetics, conservation and uncertainty

Monday 9th March

9.30 am, Discussion

1. Bill Golding (Friends of Great South West Walk)
Bill spoke of great success at working with people on work-orders etc from Dept of Corrective Services. He nominated 9 golden rules:
 - i Individual relationship, not big groups
 - ii Must bring food for the day with them
 - iii Mixture of conscripts and volunteers
 - iv Organised day to the last detail
 - v Drive people hard
 - vi No more than 4 people in one place
 - vii Watch like a hawk for something done right (and praise it)
 - viii For poorly motivated, give job that moves them
 - ix Tangible projects (eg construction)
 - x Involve them in decisions

2. Fay Valcanis (Park Care and DCNR) and Di Ward (Friends of Williamstown Rifle Range)

There are not enough people from non-English speaking backgrounds in Friends Groups.

Friends of Buckley Falls have an annual Bahai group tree-planting

Sherbrook Forest have a grant for a project that involves young middle-eastern adults in work (weeding) in the park.

Taking vietnamese parties bushwalking.

Barriers are:

- Language
- Concept of what is a weed
- What plants/animals belong
- Nature Education
- Apprehension of sharing cultures
- Cultural differences
- Making first contact

Future Activities suggested were:

- Involve groups in growing plants
- Youth training programs

10.05 am, Tea Break

10.35 am, Biannual General Meeting

Committee report was presented by Marion Taylor (enclosure)

5th conference proceedings are still missing but will be available soon.

Future role and duties of Friends Network Committee.

Discussion on holding conference later in the year, but motion was carried that conference continues biennially on Labour Day Weekend.

- One day seminar next year to go ahead,
- Newsletter to continue
- Committee to investigate why some groups don't attend the conference

The following written motions were passed by the conference:

1. "That this conference draws to the attention of the Minister for Conservation, its concern at the inadequacy of resources for on-ground management of Victoria's Parks and Conservation Reserves", proposed by Geoff Durham
2. "That this conference representing Friends Groups of Victoria, urges the minister to ensure that
 1. Each park or group of small parks has a ranger in charge (or senior ranger) with full budgetary and management responsibility for the Park.
 2. Each region has a manager for Parks and Conservation Reserves.

3. The statutory director of National Parks has line responsibility for all parks that are under the schedules of the National Parks.
4. The director of National Parks be responsible for ensuring there are sound state-wide park policies and that each park has a good management plan developed from both central and local perspectives.",
proposed by Wayne Woods.
3. "That this conference writes to the state government and asks the VNPA to write to the state government, about mounting a large-scale anti-litter campaign along the lines of the successful anti-cancer and drink-driving campaigns. The cost of such promotion could be offset against revenue raised through fines by enforcement of already existing legislation",
proposed by Gay Harris.
4. "To the Minister - If contractors are introduced into parks for control of environmental weeds, they must have undergone an appropriate training course and be registered contractors with the National Parks Service. All contractors be required to maintain the conservation values of the area", proposed by Clive Gordes.
5. "That the VNPA be asked to work with the Diversity Coalition, Victorian Environmental Education Council and the Victorian Association of Environmental Education to foster environmental learning of people from non-English speaking backgrounds", proposed by Fay Valcanis.
6. "That the Friends Network publicise and promote successful activities that involve people from non-English speaking background in nature conservation", proposed by Fay Valcanis.
7. "Draw the minister's attention to the urgent need for increased effort to reduce the impact of feral animals in Victoria's Parks and Reserves", proposed by Ken Harris.
8. "The Friends Network urges the Minister to support the inclusion of the registration of domestic cats in the companion animals legislation. This will enable the identification of unowned and feral cats", proposed by Di Ward.

Other Business:

Jack Brooks (Friends of Mt Worth State Park) spoke on the conflict between conservation and exploitation in the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources.

James Ross (VNPA) spoke on current publicity opportunities (mainly in the Melbourne area) - What's on in Melbourne.

Election of New Committee:

The following were elected:

Margaret Graham	Gellibrand Hill
Marion Taylor	Coolart
Faye Gordes	French Island
Wayne Woods	Organ Pipes
Geoff Durham (VNPA)	Brisbane Ranges, Wyperfeld
Tony Woolford	Buckley Falls
James Ross	V.N.P.A.

12.25 pm, Closing Summary by Stephen Johnson

Stephen drew the following conclusions from the conference:

- Friends Groups are going to need to raise their own money for future projects
- Sponsorship is a good way of raising money, sponsorship in kind usually better than request for money
- Take before and after photographs of all projects
- Friends of What's Left (FOWL)
- Need for communication
- Invite local politicians to see what we do

12.50 pm, The Conference Closed