

August 2006

Friends of Warrandyte State Park



Newsletter

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

A New Sign for a Forgotten Place

By Pat Coupar

Last month a large new wooden, not metal, (thank goodness!) Warrandyte State Park sign was erected in a Reserve that has become known as Wombat Gully.



Where is Wombat Gully you may ask. Is it a new addition to the Park? No. Wombat Gully is located in North Warrandyte, where most of the forgotten Reserves of Warrandyte are found. It appears on the map as an oblong of State Park beside Koornong Crescent that abuts the Yarra River, adjacent to Koornong Reserve (Melways ref. 23 J8).

A creek runs through the heart of the gully and flows during winter and intermittently after rain, eventually joining the Yarra just downstream of Koornong Reserve.

Until a few years ago this block of State Park was not an area to be proud of (perhaps that is why there was never a sign acknowledging its ownership!). It was a weedscape of Pines, Prunus, Cotoneaster, Hawthorn, Blackberry and Honeysuckle with a ground cover of Angled Onion, Periwinkle, weedy grasses and thistles.

But the gully has been rescued, not by FOWSP (most of whom would not know of its existence), but by the local North Warrandyte, Osborne Peninsula Landcare group.

With grants of money from various organisations (including the National Heritage Trust), the Landcare group funded the removal of the pines and other woody weeds and more recently control of the grassy weeds etc.

The work has been supported and encouraged by Park Rangers who have helped out where necessary.

There have been several planting days to replace the ground cover in bare areas. These have proved very successful and in just one year, the tussock grasses planted last July have self-seeded.



If you are interested in finding out more about this area of Warrandyte State Park, all Fowspians are invited to join the next planting morning planned for Sunday September 3rd (see ad. in this newsletter).

Bush Backyard

Bowers in Paradise

By Pat Coupar

While in our 'other' backyard at Mallacoota last month, we were entertained by the resident population of Satin Bowerbirds.

In the four years since we bought the house we have only ever seen females and juveniles – never an adult male. I have since learnt that male Bowerbirds do not attain their deep rich, blue-black plumage until they are six or seven years of age. The plumage of the adult females and youngsters is olive-green, - barred on the underside – all rather subtle, but they have startling purple eyes like amythests.

Earlier this year we witnessed our first magnificent male in all his adult glory and last month we saw two of them. They had an entourage of between ten and twenty females and/or juveniles and were getting stuck into our ripe Cumquats.



We would watch from our lounge room window as bird after bird flew out from the safety of the dense shrubs that bordered our property across to the large Cumquat tree. There they would either eat the small orange fruits on site or take them away.

Occasionally squabbles would break out as two birds had a tug of war over the same cumquat. It was all very amusing and inspiring to watch. While Satin Bower Birds occur along most of the south-east coastal areas of Australia, there is no doubt their habitat is diminishing as development takes over.

It is a real privilege to have these birds in our garden and to provide them with beak-sized fruits

that they obviously relish.

The Eastern Pobblebonk Frog

By Steven Katsineris

Not long after we moved into our place in Hurstbridge, I was digging in a sandy hollow area in the back garden to plant some shrubs, when I found a large frog in the moist soil. I had a good look at it and let it go in the undergrowth. After checking some books, I realized the frog was an Eastern Pobblebonk (also known as Eastern Banjo Frog).

Since then the children and I have found other Eastern Pobblebonk

Frogs in the yard when we have been digging in the soil to plant

things. Other times we have discovered them above ground when it is raining or in damper, shadier spots in the yard. As they usually live around still or slow moving water we have also found them in or around our fishpond.

Sometimes we can't catch sight of them, but can hear their calls, especially when it is raining or when we are watering the garden. One day after a long hot spell I was watering the front yard and was stepping over a log when something moved from under the log to the spot where I was about to put my foot. I quickly pull myself back so as to not tread on it. It was another Pobblebonk. I picked it up and brought it to the house to show the children and then returned it to the area where I found it and it buried itself under some leaves.

The Eastern Pobblebonk gets its name from the males distinctive call, which is a short banjo-like 'bonk' or 'plonk' sound. When one frog starts to call usually others in the vicinity then join in repeating the call in rapid succession over and over. Due to the varied pitch of the note from several frogs, they sound rather similar to a musical chorus. These pleasant-sounding calls can be heard throughout the year in our garden.



What's happening in your backyard this month?

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

(One of) My Favorite Places (or Eighth Gorge Dreaming)

By Cathy Willis

It was the second day of our walk. We were on the plateau of the southern end of the Arnhem Land escarpment. My favourite camp site was drawing closer, but I didn't know it yet. That day we'd passed through stunning grassy woodlands of Salmon Gums, then Woolybutts (flowering bright orange), then Grevilleas. The understorey changed with the trees, and was harder to identify. Spear grasses with massed mats of seed heads, a smaller grass with purple heads, ones with big fluffy seed heads, and then a lovely fern called *Platyzoma microphyllum*. Getting down on hands and knees to study the wildflowers became a trial with the pack on, but I couldn't resist. I was continually marvelling at the beauty and intricacy of the spiralling Pandanus palms, my signature plant of the trip. They dominated on all the rocky escarpments that surrounded us.

This was the start of June, in Nitmiluk National Park on the Katherine Gorge. Our plan to walk the Jatbula trail was ruled out by the local rangers because of works still being carried out after the late heavy wet and subsequent floods. So we headed for Eighth Gorge instead. We were carrying all our food and gear for 5 days. Luckily water was bountiful and good. The descent to the camp site came in the early afternoon. We descended a rocky dry creek bed full of beautiful large, round stones that made balance hard with the weight on my back. Then on across the high rock platforms and down the scarp with views you need to see to believe.

Just as the pack was becoming my enemy and the temperature upped, we came across a series of beautiful ponds in Jawoyn Creek (no name on maps) – the drainage line out of the Jawoyn Valley to the Katherine River. What an oasis! Sandy base, crystal clear water, waterlilies in flower. It was one of numerous swims along the trail, and one of the most appreciated.

But we couldn't camp here, so it was clothes and packs back on and we continued down the hill. Green ants were eating a cane toad on the path. Cane toads were unknown here 6 years ago. Yet we saw quite a few. Go the ants! The Spinifex was over my head in places and the trail markers not always easy to find. But it was only a short way as it turned out, and to the most magnificent campsite I could dream of. I'd thought the pools above were good! A sandy beach with a large pool and a waterfall at one end. Fringing

Paperbarks and Pandanus. And a 50 metre walk across the rocks away a stunning view of Eighth Gorge downstream and Ninth Gorge upstream. We set up camp then swam and lazed, and sat above the gorge watching a turtle diving way way below. After dinner we lay by the pool trying to see Jupiter's moons until sleepiness set in.

Waking with first light is easy under a mosquito net, and sunrise was a daily reward. We decided to stay another night and spend the day exploring the Jawoyn Valley. These days there are relatively few Jawoyn people left, but their spirit is ever present. What a country to be one with. We walked back up the valley over the scarp. Though seemingly harsh, all the rocky high points had easy ascents and descents once you decided to explore them. The rocks seemed to offer themselves as stepping stones. We moved on through a shady Banksia woodland and back out into the sun at a little creek full of apricot coloured Bladderworts. The colours in the bright sunlight seemed surreal. Now for the galleries.

Where to see the art? Look around and there's an appealing rock overhang – a dry spot in wet weather, shady when hot. Sure enough, someone else had the same idea 7000 years ago. The Jawoyn Valley here has no interpretation boards or walkways, but the paintings tell the story. Here is the turtle in the river, the practising child artist's hand, the barramundi, the hunters, the celebration that followed. What a life and country. Dreaming? Take me back.



Melbourne Water Watch

By Cath Andrew



This is an initiative of the State Government, that aims to educate community groups about maintaining the health of our waterways. Recorded results are added to a statewide data base and hopefully any damage prevented/rectified.

Last Sunday, I attended a Water Watch training session organized by the Manningham Council, with Trish Grant, a Water Watch coordinator for our area. The venue was Currawong Bush Park and Trish was a highly qualified, competent instructor.

Several FOWSP members have already been using a kit provided by Manningham Council to conduct a monthly check of Yarra water at the Pound Bend tunnel. This has been informative and fun, but I felt I needed to have more technical skills and knowledge to be able to participate fully.

The seven hour training included such topics as:

- Monitoring plans and recording results;
- How to select a site (other participants were from Selby, Ruffy Park, Healesville, Jumping Creek, and Mullum Mullum) and safety issues.

Identifying the macro invertebrates, which are useful indicators of water health; how to collect and sort (we used the nearby dam specimens)

- Testing for turbidity, temperature, pH, electrical conductivity, dissolved oxygen, phosphates and ammonium.

Not only was the session informative and we were well instructed, but we had fun with the critters and the chemical testing.

If you would like to join us at the tunnel at 1.30 pm on the 1st Thursday of the month, please come along. All the necessary equipment required for collecting and identifying insects will be available. If you would like more information, please ring Cath 98441318.

Trish will be conducting another training session on:

Thursday August 24th

Edendale Farm Gastons Rd Eltham

9.30 am-4.00 pm

Ring Trish on 0408 177 917 well ahead for a tentative or confirmed attendance.

This will be the last opportunity this year to get training so close to home.

The more people who are involved in this project, the less time it takes each month and a roster becomes a possibility.

News from the Committee –July 2006

There was no committee meeting in June.

Rangers Report

- Andy Nixon is currently on long-service leave until mid-August. Conrad Annal back in August.
- Team Leaders Jodie/David.
- 2 new positions 1 full time ranger 50/natural values ex Brian Phephley. 1 Field Services Officer position – NEW for Fire works. 2 x 6 mo positions open in summer only.
- Fire Operations planning work. Over 3 years.
- Budget building- Capacity & time monitoring. Slight overall increase 10,000-11,000. Natural Values Management - lower, Visitor Services - increased.
- Kylie Tenace linklands. Warrandyte & Kinglake- stocktake – assets, tracks, houses, signage, tracks, interpretative.
- Open Gate Policy continue till after winter. 1 vandalised table. Hoon activity

minor- otherwise successful. Staff can now concentrate on other work.

Nursery Report:

- Water Watch. Sunday 16th July at Currawong full day bring Lunch pen & paper and Sunday 24th August at Edendale. Call Trisha Grant 0408 177 917
- Greencorps Healesville propagation training day Tuesday 18th July. Templstowe High propagation training day Tuesday 8th August

Upcoming Events:

1. Snake handling demonstration for 10:00 – 11:00 am Sunday 1st October BBQ at 12:00pm.
2. Cathy Willis, Ant Owen, Martyn Hiley – Slideshow of Katherine River for our AGM

Committee Meetings will be held at 7.30pm in the meeting room at the Rangers Office, Pound Bend Rd, Warrandyte on the following dates: August 15th, September 12th, October 10th. The AGM will be held on Sunday November 12th

Note: All committee meetings are open to any member who wishes to come along.

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.

PLEASE NOTE

The nursery is open for plant sales (by donation) every Thursday. Please note new opening times for Thursdays 9.30am to 12.30pm and the first Sunday of each month 2.00pm to 4.00pm.

New Prices

Members 80 cents

Nonmembers \$1.20

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.



Sunday Walks 2006

Held on the first Sunday of each month. Meet at 10.15 am. Bring a water bottle and snack to eat on the walk if you wish. Wear walking shoes and clothing appropriate to the weather. Walks will last approximately 2 hours. Join us after the walk for a BYO lunch (BBQ available) at 'the Folly' at Warrandyte State Park Rangers Depot, Pound Bend. Hot and cold drinks provided.

Walks are FREE. Bookings are ESSENTIAL. For more information contact Jeanette 9840 9129

August 6th. Discover Hillcrest. Cecily Falkingham, Meet at Lisbeth Ave (at Hillcrest sign), Donvale (Mel ref 48 K5)

September 3rd. Wattles and Wildflowers. Glen Jameson. Meet at Park gate, Tunnel St, Warrandyte (Mel ref 35 F2)

October 1st. Reptile Awareness Display. The Snake handler Team. Meet at Rangers depot, Pound Bend Rd, Warrandyte (Mel ref 23 C10)

Thursday Walks 2006

Held on the fourth Thursday of the month at 1.00pm. Meet at the nursery, Pound Bend Rangers depot, Pound Bend Rd, Warrandyte (Melways 23 C10). Walks will last approximately 2 hours.

FOWSP Committee 2006

Joan Broadberry	9846 1218	Treasurer
Pat Coupar	9844 1650	Newsletter Editor
Peter Curry	9844 0958	
Geoff Speedy	9437 0894	
Lee Speedy	9437 0894	Membership Secretary
Mike Coupar	9844 1650	
Karen Reynolds	9712 0797	Minutes Secretary
Martin Hiley	9844 4547	
Artur Muchow	0415383328	
Winsome Coutts		
Michelle Hanslow	0402251577	

Nursery Manager 0408317327

Park Office 9844 2659

Wildlife Rescue

Julie Pryor 9722 1117

Market

Marie Krause 9712 0498

Manningham City Council Environment Seminars 2006

The seminars are FREE

Held on the 1st Wednesday of the month, no bookings required

Time: at 7.30pm



Please Note: NEW VENUE: South Warrandyte Hall, 66-68 Hall Rd, Sth Warrandyte (Mel ref. 35 J8)

August 2 nd	'Bell Miner and eucalypt dieback'
September 6 th	'Wetlands of the Yarra Catchment'
October 4 th	'Koorie landscapes'
November 1 st	'Indigenous Story'
December 6 th	'Bush Heritage Fund'

Amanda Dare
Dylan Osler
Beth Gott
Mick Woiwod
Paul Foreman

Thursday Activity Group (TAG)

The activities will take place on the first Thursday of the month from 10.00am to 12md. Either meet at the depot or on site.

So if you are interested in learning some vegetation management skills and helping improve some special sites in the Park just tag along with the Thursday Activity Group (TAG).

Thursday September 7th **Planting at Whipstick Gully.** Meet at the depot at 10.00am

Thursday October 5th **Planting at Pound Bend.** Meet at the depot at 10.00am

Deadline for September newsletter is September 3rd

Australian Garden – Royal Botanic Gardens, Cranbourne

By Cath Andrew

The FOWSP nursery manager, Josh, suggested and arranged for about 15 of the Thursday morning planters, to visit the Botanic Gardens in Cranbourne.

After coffee in the car park or in the beautiful little café, we paid our \$6.50 (group) to visit the newly opened Australian Garden.

The Cranbourne gardens were established in 1970 on ancestral land of the Boonerurrung people. The land has also been used for sand mining, timber, grazing and military operations.

Heathy woodland and wetlands are the dominant cover, with great birdlife. Bandicoots and bush rats sniffed around our packs in the car park. Apart from the low roar of highway traffic, we could have been on any bush walking track. From the Trigpoint lookout we could see Westernport and Port Phillip bays.

The highlight of the day was a stroll, with “oohs” and “aahs”, of the Australian Garden (stage 1). We were in awe of the planning and creativity displayed, to enable visitors to see the connections between people, plants and landscape. The huge red sand garden sculpture as the centrepiece will eventually display seasonal wildflowers. The rock waterway, (with its sign

“parents- please supervise your children between the flags” – and they were – in gumboots!) flanked a 90 metre long wall sculpture, inspired by central Australia’s canyons and escarpments.

Around the periphery are several exhibition gardens. They show how soil, climate and water effect the vegetation in a diversity of Australian environments, from the Tasmanian highlands to the Sturt Desert. There is a “water-saving garden”, garden of the “future” (with genetically modified of hybridised native plants) and a “home” garden, with examples of front gardens throughout history – and how native plants can replace exotics.

Some of the eucalypts are well established in a variety of bush landscapes – Stringybarks, Peppermints, Bloodwoods, Ironbark and Box and lots of Grass trees.

The Arid garden and dry river bed show how plants have adapted to dry conditions and how the water, or lack of it, shapes the land.

The second stage of 10 hectares is due to commence in 2007 and will take 3 years to complete. The Botanic Gardens also have an extensive program of guided tours, demonstrations and talks throughout the year. 03 5990 2245.

Thanks Josh and everyone (and the bandicoots) for the great day.



Market Volunteers

A big thank you to the following people who volunteered their time on the FOWSP trailer at the July Warrandyte market: Marion Thomson, Cath Andrew, Sue Sheherd, Ken and Joan MacMahon, Marie Krause and Peter Curry. The trailer was delivered by Geoff Speedy and returned by Peter Curry.

Anyone who would like to be rostered on to help with the trailer, even for just one hour, can contact Marie Krause on 9712 0498. New members especially welcome - no previous experience necessary.

Sad News

It is with great sadness that we report the recent death of Elsa Arden and Bill Roxburgh. Both Elsa and Bill were long time members of FOWSP and regular participants at the weekly Thursday propagation mornings. Bill was also our staunch seed sorter. We will miss them both. Our sincere condolences to their families.

Planting Morning at Wombat Gully (adjacent to Koornong Reserve)

Date: Sunday September 3rd

Time: from 10.00 am until midday

Place: Lower car park Koornong, Koornong Crescent, North Warrandyte (Melways ref 23 J8)
Bring gloves



Worth Repeating

Chores, no stores

Here's another TV memory: *Green Acres*. And doing a fair impersonation are former Melbourne restaurateur **Karen Ramsland** and engineer **Willi von Muller**, who have largely disappeared from the local social circuit, traveling weekends to a holiday house north of Ballarat. "We just bought 150 Agapanthus," an excited Willi told Diary yesterday. Keep Manhattan, just give 'em that countryside!



Special Excursion

To visit the Friends of the Helmeted Honeyeater

Meet the Friends for a walk and slide show.

Date: Thursday August 31st

Time: 1.00 pm

Meet at the depot to car pool

"I SPY"

By B.G



Ada in Autumn

On the last days of autumn this year a group of thirteen Friends (including Margaret Clarke from Shepparton) parked at a picnic area (Starling Gap Rd). One hour was spent walking 1.4km through a wonderland of ferns, mosses, fungi, beautiful tall trees and lush shrubbery alongside, and crossing a pristine stream. Much of the walk was through Myrtle Beech forest.

The Ada Tree has a magnificent huge trunk and buttressed base. It used to be the tallest flowering tree in the world, but it has now lost one third of its height.

This Mountain Ash (*Eucalyptus regnans*) is a well known feature for many walking groups. The whole visit took three hours including indulgence in hamburgers and a light lunch.

Many thanks to Josh for organising such a great activity, and to Bruce Fuhrer for identifying fungi.

Spic and Span

Mid July it was reported that Ken Crook cleared out the Friends Folly building at the depot. It was really neat and tidy and hygienic! Windows and floors too. Why was this done? See further on.

Kinder Coup

Sue Macintyre (of Research) was at the depot obtaining a box of grasses and hoping to order some *Poa labillardierei*. Sue has been involved in a team leading four year old kinder children 'planting indigenous' at the Yarra Warra pre-school.

Away with DNA

Late July a dead phascogale was found on Jumping Creek Road. A portion (a snippet of ear) was sent to Monash University for DNA testing.

Helping with Helichrysum

Anne Penrose was seen, in the sun, helping to weed the many tubes of Helichrysum.

Beaut Brochures

In spite of snow in the Alps, floods in the State of New York and light drizzle at Jumping Creek, 40 people including children were present when Geoff Speedy introduced the new 'Fungi' and 'Mosses and Liverworts' brochures produced by

the Friends. The event started at Sandy Bay car park.

Walk and Talk

Subsequently Bruce Fuhrer led an explanatory walk along a nearby track. "Mosses form very thick carpets and help prevent water erosion. They also provide protection for those food items that many birds eat (worms and other invertebrates)."

An introduced moss is providing a problem. It grows along tracks and then used by birds for nests. This means the moss penetrates the further most parts of our environment.

Paper Pieces

On the walk Bruce was placing small pieces of paper on the ground – with the name of the feature on it, so that as the crowd moved on those who were especially interested could write down the name, egg. *Hypnum cuppresiforme* var. *tectorum* etc. Someone was photographing the paper pieces.

Numerous Naturalists

A group of people present were from the Ringwood Field Naturalists. If you are interested in the group contact Lynn Smith, secretary on 9876 6746.

The 'Parkies' etc.

The Rangers have started a mixed volley ball team called the 'Parkies'. Their first game was mid-July at the Croydon Leisure Centre. Ranger Kylie said "Look out for big things from this team (the next Olympics are in China!)"
Footnote: They lost the first game.

Seen Striding along a track in the Blue-Tongue-Bend area was a walker wearing a back pack, a beanie, a pair of boots and nothing else!

According to Kay a Park Rangers team won the trivia night at a hostelry in Eltham. They beat the Eltham community team. Did you know that the thickest snake in the world is not the same as the longest. One Ranger did.

Perfect Preparation

Some days after the Friends Folly clean up, Ken Crook was seen leading a group of VNPA walkers around Pound Bend, the 'southern loop walk' and then a two hour walk downstream. According to Helen Buckley, Ken had put hours



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Cootamundra Wattle (*Acacia baileyana*)

Cootamundra Wattles have been flowering for weeks now. How could you miss the bold yellow blooms of this introduced wattle. It's everywhere – along the roadsides, in gardens and in the bush.

Originally from a small area in NSW near Wagga Wagga, this Australian native has been cultivated and sown in nurseries for years. Unfortunately, because it is fast growing and seeds readily it has become a troublesome environmental weed in Victoria.

FOWSP Membership Form

Name

Address

.....

Tel. no.

Membership \$20
Concession \$10

Send to: FOWSP PO Box 220, Warrandyte 3113