

Friends of Eastern Otways

(Great Otway National Park)
Inc. A0030273B



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From the President

Rachel Faggetter

The Wit and Wisdom of Our Elders



Crosbie Morrison, the great naturalist who inspired so many of my generation, was the first director of the Victorian National Parks Service. In a life of intense activity he also edited 'Wild Life' magazine and broadcast a program of the same name for twenty years on 3DB. My family were committed listeners and we learned a lot, not just facts, but approaches to understanding and appreciating the natural world. Crosbie Morrison had a quiet, reassuring voice, spoke with great knowledge and crafted his talks with flair and imagination. He spoke often of the joys of walking 'along the track', sharing knowledge with others and the camaraderie of being out with nature.

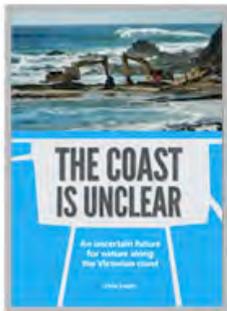
At our recent AGM we remembered the loss of Mike Traynor and Ian Leslie and then the talk turned to fond memories of their comments and sayings along the track. 'You walk with your head, not your feet' was apparently one of Ian's favourites.

These reminiscences bring happy memories of old friends, but they also illuminate the social and intellectual pleasures of being out in the bush with good companions. It is a very ancient tradition in Australia, this culture of walking in the bush and learning things. Think of the film 'Ten Canoes' about Arnhem Land when the canoe makers walked in single file sharing stories and jokes, teaching the country to each other. It was always an oral culture, though illustrated with art and artefacts. Now we have the benefit of the written word and photographs to supplement our memories.

We would love to recall the wit and wisdom of our elders and we invite you to pass your stories on to Margaret and we will collect them, treasure them and publish them as appropriate.

Think of walking (or weeding) with Claire Roberts, Dennis Leavesley, Ian Leslie, Michael Traynor, Evelyn Jones, Pauline Reilly and many other elders who have made or who are continuing to make mighty contributions over the years.

The Coast is Unclear



A new report from the Victorian National Parks Association (VNPA) highlights that climate change, as well as coastal, urban, port and industrial development driven by rapid population growth are eroding what we love about our coasts.

The Friends of Eastern Otways strongly support the VNPA in requesting that the Victorian Government accepts the challenge of developing a new vision and comprehensive coastal policy that protects Victoria's remaining coastal nature and ensures we do not lose our coastline to death.

The coastal heathlands, which are so important to our Friends' group, are vulnerable to pressures such as invasive plants and feral animals. The lack of finance provided to Parks Victoria to enable this organisation to budget to control introduced flora and fauna within the Great Otway National Park is of real concern to us. Not only are environmental weeds threatening the natural vegetation and landforms along the Great Ocean Road, but the once spectacular views as you drove along this magnificent coastline are being negated by the large stands of Coastal/Sallow Wattle that are forever spreading deeper along the roadside.

The rare and threatened fauna that have their habitat along the coast are at risk from foxes and feral cats. A local landowner who has a property along the coastal heathlands recently showed us a photo of a fox with a Southern Brown Bandicoot in its mouth. We are continually asking ourselves will the little Hooded Plovers that have been breeding in the Moggs Creek area this summer adjacent to the Great Otway National Park survive the foxes and feral cats that we know are inhabiting the nearby coastal heathlands.

We can only hope that this VNPA report will put pressure on the Victorian Government to protect this great asset that Victorians and visitors to our area value so greatly.

Results of election of Office Bearers & Committee Members

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| President | Rachel Faggetter |
| Vice-President | Alison Watson |
| Treasurer | Ross Davey |
| Secretary | Margaret MacDonald |
| Assistant Secretary | Kaye Traynor |
| Committee members | Dennis Leaveley, Lachlan Richardson, Evelyn Jones, Ross Murray, ROSS Davey, Deb Del Grosso, Joe Bolza, Patrick Flanagan |

A vote of thanks and appreciation was extended to Di Trewenack who resigned from the Committee. Di's contribution to the Friends, particularly her expertise with setting up cameras for mammal surveys, has been much appreciated.

Lachlan Richardson was also thanked for his contribution as Honorary Treasurer, a position from which he resigned. Lachie will be staying on the Committee as a general member.

Guest Speaker

The Guest Speaker, Dale Appleton, Parks Victoria, was unable to attend the Meeting due to fire fighting commitments. Dale has indicated that he will be prepared to present his topic '*A Tour of Underwater Wilsons Promontory*' at a later date and we will organise a session to enable this to occur.

In Dale's absence, Margaret MacDonald and Margaret Lacey put together a presentation which featured the Hooded Plovers at Moggs Creek. Three eggs were discovered in a scrape in the sand on Boxing Day. A fence was erected around the nesting sight and a further buffer with informative posters was placed around the fenced area. The two adults remained steadfast to the task of incubating the eggs through the high tides and days of



extreme temperatures. Three chicks hatched on Wednesday, January 22 but unfortunately one disappeared the first day – perhaps it was just a weak chick. The family of two adults and the two surviving chicks have remained in the area arousing a great deal of interest from both the locals and visitors to the area. Volunteers have monitored the site throughout the week-ends talking to people and encouraging responsible dog ownership. GORCC's telescope has enabled visitors to view the birds without encroaching too much on their territory. The parents have done an excellent job of protecting their young

chicks – Nankeen Kestrels, Silver Gulls, Pacific Gulls, Magpies and Ravens have all been warded off by these brave little birds. Hopefully they will reach the fledgling stage about Monday, February 24.

Excellent quality photography shared in the presentation enabled those present at the Meeting to see the development and progress of the chicks to date. Congratulations to all concerned.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Woodland Environmental Weeding 9.30am – 11.00am Contact: Margaret 5289 6326

Tuesday, March 11, Tuesday, April 8.

Meet in O'Donohue Road near the start of the housing closest to Great Ocean Road on western side of O'Donohue Road.

We have been thrilled with the support our members have been giving us with our environmental weeding projects over the last few years. This year we have decided to move from the heathland for the present time, and move into the more woodland area to the north of the O'Donohue site. ANGAIR initiated this project on Monday, February 10 and the Friends followed up on Tuesday, February 11. We worked higher up in the woodland area in February, but are keen to get into the area where the rare endemic orchid *Caladenia maritima* grows.



Peter Hay, Parks Victoria, is supporting the project by arranging the mulching of the cut vegetation from the site, mainly Coast/Sallow Wattle.

We will still need to return to our Coalmine Road/Camp Road site later in the year to justify our '*Caring for Our Country Community Action Grant*' but at this stage we feel it is more productive to work on the National Park site on O'Donohue Road.

Mammal Surveys *Contact: Kaye 5263 2011*

Mammal surveys using our remote cameras and sometimes hairtubes are usually carried out following Committee meetings on the first Tuesday of each month. We are always pleased to welcome any people interested in our indigenous fauna to participate in these activities. Naturally we are keen to photograph rare and threatened species and a minimum of feral animals, but whatever animals we do locate is adding to the overall picture of the fauna population in the Park. Please make contact to find meeting place and approximate meeting time.

Visit to Cape Otway Ecological Centre and Walk

Contact: Ross Murray 5289 6876

Sat. March 15 8.30am - 4.30pm

**Meet at Aireys Inlet Community Centre
(Bring morning tea and lunch)**

Making the most of daylight saving we have planned a day's activity taking us deep into the Otways. We will be visiting the Cape Otway Ecological Centre and then driving to Bimbi Park from where we plan to do an approx. 1.5 hour walk of easy difficulty in the precinct of the Cape Otway Lighthouse

In April 2012 the Friends visited the Cape Otway Centre where we were delighted to be introduced to the Spotted-tailed Quolls that have been introduced to the Centre as part of a breeding program. We met the



prospective mum brought in from a sanctuary in New South Wales, and the dad from Kyabram Fauna Park. The mating was successful, and in October four beautiful, endangered Tiger Quoll joeys were born. In November of that year Kaye, Mike, Evelyn and Margaret were just so thrilled to see the four youngsters when we made another visit to the Centre.

The joeys are now about 16 months old, and Lizzie and Shayne have agreed to us visiting the Centre once again with our Friends' Group to view these fascinating creatures. The Friends' group has taken the Centre under our wing endeavouring to financially support Lizzie and Shayne with the conservation work they are undertaking especially with the restoration of koala habitat. We hope to also be involved in a planting session scheduled for June 14 & June 15. You will be dismayed at the amount of damage done to the trees by the over population of koalas in the area.

After spending about an hour or an hour and a half at the Centre we will drive further down Cape Otway Road to the Cape Otway Lighthouse where we will leave some cars before driving back to Bimbi Park. From Bimbi Park we will take the walking trail to Cape Otway and walk through sand dunes and swales – 'cups and saucers' as this type of formation is familiarly known. We will then walk a short distance to view the historic cemetery containing 20 graves of early settlers, shipwreck victims and children. Unfortunately most are not marked but there are some headstones of historical interest. We will then walk back along the Great Ocean Walk to the Lightstation Carpark and retrieve our cars. We had hoped to walk to Station Beach returning via the coastal route but on our reconnoitre we felt that this was not possible in the day's time frame. The coastal route gives spectacular views of the coastline and Station Beach.

If there are any people who do not want the extended day's activity they could return following the visit to the Ecological Centre and perhaps do the short walk at Maits Rest on the way back.

Visit to Bat Cave near Cumberland River and walk in Kennet River area *Contact: Alison 5266 1087* **Saturday, April 19 9.00am-4.00pm** **Meet at Aireys Inlet Hall (Bring morning tea and lunch)**

A circuit walk on private land surrounded by National Park, to see beautiful old Mountain Ash, tree-ferns and Satin Bowerbirds.

On our way to Kennet River we will stop at the Bat Cave near Cumberland River. It is a bit of a rock scramble but worth the effort. This site is a roosting cave for the Common Bent-wing Bat, a rare and threatened species, that is an insectivorous cave dwelling creature. The population is centred around the Naracoorte Bat Cave in South Australia which is the key maternity cave for the subspecies.



Our cave is one of the overwintering caves where the bats hibernate during the winter months, usually arriving in April. The cave is kept locked by Parks Victoria to prevent vandalism or injury to the bats. We have not visited the cave for many years so are uncertain as to just what we might find on our visit.

INFORMATION REGARDING FRIENDS' ACTIVITIES SINCE OUR LAST NEWSLETTER

November 16 Mammal Survey and Walk to Kelsall's Rock

We were pleased to welcome 10 people to our mammal survey and walk in the Grassy Creek area on November 16. After the spring rainfall everything was looking fresh and green in the morning light.

Our first task was to place four remote cameras and baiting stations in locations close to the creek just past the St Bernard's camp site and also at the start of the uphill climb. We were keen to try out our new remote camera – a white light Reconnyx model which by giving colour pictures at night time will make fauna identification easier. The habitat looked good, but when we collected the cameras on December 3 we had to be content with photographs of echidna, brushtail possum, black wallaby, black rat and a raven. We were pleased with the new camera that took great images of the echidna, brushtail possum and feral black rat.



After a brief morning tea we followed the narrow walking track on an uphill



climb to Kelsall's Rock. It was a steep climb but not difficult and there was some interesting vegetation to admire on the way including the Tall Daisy *Brachyscome diversifolia* that is not common in our area.

When we reached the Rock there were just magnificent views across the Otways. It was as though the world belonged to us and there was no one else in it.

Having had lunch in this magnificent spot we then made the descent back along the same track as we had come up as we felt we really did not have sufficient time to complete the extended walk that we had considered via Big Hill Track. We will save this walk for another time.

December 14 End of Year Celebration Friends of Eastern Otways/ANGAIR

Thirty-two members (Friends of Eastern Otways and ANGAIR – most wearing both hats) and eight Parks Vic rangers participated in this function that was held at Moggs Creek Picnic Ground on Saturday, December 14. The weather was kind and those who came along appeared to enjoy themselves.

The walking group met at 10am and had morning tea and then before setting off on the circuit track that follows the Moggs Creek gully, the group attacked an area of flat weed that was growing near the noticeboard and was in full flower. The weeds soon disappeared.

You can never tire walking along this pleasant track as there is always plenty of vegetation to admire, and birds to hear with their calls echoing through the gully. A male king parrot flew down and displayed his beautiful colours against the background of green vegetation. The spring rainfall had certainly kept the grasses, flowers, trees and other plants in good condition and we were able to greet the familiar plants and flowers that we see at this time each year. The ferns were at their peak, and we did manage to find one Cinnamon Bell *Gastrodia sesamoides* standing erect in amongst the other vegetation. The Pale Vanilla Lily, Blue Pincushions and Cut-leaf Daisy were greatly admired and buds of Hyacinth Orchids were appearing in large numbers. The white Victorian Christmas Bush, *Prostranthera lasianthos*, was just coming into flower.

Once we reached the Picnic Ground, the remainder of the group had come along and were enjoying chatting to each other. Frank and Lachie had the BBQ lunch ready right on 12 noon and people collected their food and spread out under the tall eucalypts to eat their lunch



Before we left, thank-yous were expressed by Chris Morrissey (ANGAIR) Rachel Faggetter (Friends) and

Frank Gleeson and Carlie Bronk (Parks Vic).



Another year had ended, and we were all looking forward to a well-earned break and another successful year in 2014

GENERAL INFORMATION

PROPOSED PROGRAM OF EVENTS 2014 FEO



Friends of Eastern Otways

| <u>Date:</u> | <u>Event:</u> |
|----------------------------|--|
| Saturday, March 15 | Visit to Cape Otway Ecological Centre & Coastal Walk |
| Saturday, April 19 | Kennet River Walk/Bat Cave |
| Saturday, May 17 | Reedy Creek – Mammal Survey and walk |
| Saturday, June 21 | Koala Count Grey River |
| Saturday, July 19 | Visit to Museum |
| Saturday, August 16 | Waterfall Walk |
| Sat. Sept 20/Sun. Sept. 21 | ANGAIR Show |
| Saturday, October 18 | Wildflower Walk- local reserves |
| Saturday, November 15 | Mammal Survey & Walk Forrest area |
| Saturday, December 13 | Combined Barbecue with ANGAIR Inc. |

Environmental Weeding will continue on the second Tuesday of each month. Venues to be selected

Mammal surveys are usually carried out on the first Tuesday of each month following our Committee meetings. If interested in coming along, please make contact to find meeting place.

Please note that this is a proposed program and is subject to change. Make sure you read Forthcoming Events in current Newsletters. Additional activities may also be advertised through the Newsletters.

REMINDER ABOUT MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS

Thank you to those members who have renewed your membership subscription for 2014. As we have stated in many previous Newsletters we do value your membership.

The Friends of Eastern Otways from time to time make submissions to both the State and Federal Governments concerning important issues that we believe are important to the conservation of national parks in general and to our Great Otway National Park in particular.

At the present time we are drafting a submission to the Victorian Government's Department of Environment and Primary industries telling them why the trial to return cattle grazing in the Alpine National Park is detrimental to the flora and fauna of this National Heritage listed national park. These comments will also be sent to the Australian Government.

The message in these submissions is strengthened by the number of members we feel would be supporting us.

Thank-you

Ranger Report Feb 2014

Carlie Bronk



Staff Movements

Katrina Lovett: Currently on maternity leave for 12 months. Her position was recently advertised so should be replaced over the next month or two.

Felix Marshall: Our summer ranger has been extended for 3 months

Dani Rizzo: Our Marine Summer ranger will finish up next Thursday 20th February. Dani has done an amazing job over the last 3 months educating the public and schools about marine protected areas. She will certainly be missed by the Anglesea team

Fire

We currently have some very large fires burning around the state including East Gippsland and the Mallee. Many of the Otways staff are currently on continual rotation between attending these fires and rest days.

Hooded Plovers In the Great Otway National Park

We have two regular nesting areas for **Hooded** Plovers within the Eastern Otways, Hutt Gully and Pt Addis/ Red Rocks. The plovers at Hutt Gully nested further up the beach towards The Gulch but have not had any success with chicks so far. The Pt Addis/ Red Rock hoodies are currently sitting on 3 eggs. These are due to hatch sometime over the next week. Carlie has developed a hoodie checking roster with local volunteers to ensure someone checks the hoodies on a daily basis. Compliance/ education is also regularly undertaken in this area to ensure dog walkers have their dogs on leash

Otway Eden Summary

Some of the larger jobs completed over the last year include:

O'Donohue Heathlands

Coast wattle Trial Plots:

Coast Wattle Control Trial completed and results presented.

Trial plots mulched using contract forest mulcher.

Contract and volunteer works removing Coast wattle from perimeter of trial plots and in previously mulched area. Follow-up of newly mulched area is planned for later in the year.

Block 1 (O'Donohue Rd to trial plots):

Volunteer works removing Coast wattle

GOR roadside:

Roadside works removing Coast Wattle/Boneseed/Coast Tea-tree and chipping completed.

Urquharts East and North

Removal of Coast Tea-tree in the block to the east of Lynch property.

Removal of Coast Wattle and Boneseed in the block between Shultz and Lynch properties.

Teds Ridge Block

Removal of Coast Wattle

Anglesea Heath Roadsides

Removal of Coast Wattle

Raven Tk/ Alcoa Boundary Tk/Coalmine Rd/PipelineTk/

Removal of Coast Wattle/Boneseed

MessmateTk

Removal of Coast Wattle

Compliance

There has been an increased and sharper focus on targeted compliance operations in both GONP and Anglesea Heath, focussing on the following issues: Trail bike and other off road vehicle use, illegal camping, illegal fires, rubbish dumping, anti-social behaviour, firewood collection. Part of this focus has seen the trialling of a broader spread of hours for patrolling over the busy summer period. Victoria Police and DEPI have also been invited and involved in multi-agency efforts. Early signs are that the different techniques are having an effect, especially in trail bike use and fire non-compliance. Of note is the substantial increase in infringement notice penalties introduced with the updated *National Parks Regulations 2013*. (eg. Fine for fire in NP now \$722). Unfortunately quite a number of these were issued over the last two months in the peak of our fire season.