

In This Issue

<i>Waterways</i>	2
<i>Reports</i>	1 & 2
<i>Member Profile</i>	2
<i>Burragurra Returning</i>	3
<i>Brdley Method</i>	4

Date of Next Meeting

8th of April

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President's Report

Welcome to a new year of activity and involvement with our group. Our own members and agencies with whom we interact find themselves directly or indirectly involved in the disastrous fires that have impacted on Victoria throughout February and continue to do so. While we have experienced huge fires which have taken a great toll on private and public land close at hand in recent years, the devastation and loss that has just occurred is beyond comprehension.

Plans are in place for contacts to be established between members of Habitat Network East Gippsland and the Gippsland Lakes Task Force as an outcome of the Gippsland Lakes Forum held last November. It should be understood that HNEG is exactly that which its title suggests – it is a network of environmental groups and except for its coordinator and website manager it has no executive or management structure. Members can use the network to communicate with other like minded groups through a common link. Member groups are diverse in their specific areas of interest and the way they operate. But what happens with HNEG is very much a sum of its parts. It is not appropriate for groups to ask or expect HNEG to initiate action or facilitate. It is up to individual groups to utilise the web site and if necessary make the running and if appropriate seek the interest and support of others.

FOGL has initiated communication to open discussion between HNEG members and the Task Force. the point has been stressed that any deliberations would be open to representatives from all interested HNEG members. This process has been delayed because key personnel have been involved in fire management duties. A reservation that FOGL has recognised in this or similar processes is the limit to our own resources and the extent to which it impinges on our group's main focuses and how we operate to implement our purposes.

The term "political" is often used as a generalisation and so can be misconstrued. So we have "political" decisions, "political" interference, "political" involvement and "political" influence, all of which have a range of unstated inferences. Another is "political" action which could be anything from expressing a view which challenges the action or priorities of any level of government, through to overt protest and in its extreme targeted disruption. As a friends group, FOGL will always be confronted with contentious issues. In looking after our area of interest we link with government agencies to attempt achieve some common ends. However, priorities budgets and resource allocation are areas which we may play a role in exerting influence in order to improve the outcomes around the lakes.

Submissions from FOGL and individual members in relation to the hog deer management plan are good examples of this. Of major concern is that the process of coming up with a management plan has not provided for a balance of input from the outset. The terms of reference and the position taken throughout the plan is to dismiss the fact that there is a range of opinions about the hog deer not only in how they are managed but even as to the viability of the deer as an appropriate species for the natural environment in Victoria. In the interests of maintaining FOGL's position on being objective I will not suggest that any of the "political" terms mentioned above are appropriate

FOGL will continue to maintain its position of being a hands on group that believes in having a direct, practical impact at the local level and will continue to both challenge and support those who share our passion. After all, as environmental groups or environmental agencies we must surely share the same goals and principles...I hope

David Ellard

Project Works & Grants Sub Committee – Maurice Burns

Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs Grant

Friends of the Gippsland Lakes Parks and Reserves Inc has been successful in obtaining a grant of \$1080 to purchase protective, 'branded' clothing for volunteer use on project days, a portable banner for Speaker events, forums, exhibitions etc. and to allay fuel costs associated with project management.

Project Burragarra

FOGL has an ongoing agreement with Parks Vic and Wildlife Unlimited to use the remaining Envirofund monies to assist with eradica-

tion of feral pigs on Boole Poole Peninsula on a

pay per pig basis. This should remove a further 18 feral pigs from Boole Poole Peninsula over the coming months.

No Butts! Grant applications

FOGL were unsuccessful with a grant application to Coast Action/Coastcare.

Ideas for future projects and works now called for.

Thanks to Linda and Anne-Marie at Riveria Nursery, Paynesville, for the donation of heaps of pots to help with the revegetation project on the silt jetties foreshore.

Waterway Action: What's happening Elsewhere in Australia Jenny Dalgleish

Over recent months I have come across a couple of scenarios which make interesting reading, I think, for those of us pondering the future of the Gippsland Lakes.

The first, on the NSW mid-north coast is an interesting model for us to consider. It was a subject of the ABC's 'Landline' program on Sunday 24 August 2008, titled 'Clean and Green.' It shows how a region as a whole can pull together as a large collective to produce positive environmental outcomes.

The local shire, Great Lakes Council, and the State Government worked together but it was the Council's commitment and willingness to lead which was crucial to its success. They struck an environmental levy which enabled them to access government funding to pay for the work.

The main actions have been:

- comprehensive mapping of all creeks, rivers and wetlands which flow into the lake system. This identified the main problems as agricultural runoff and acid sulphate pollution.
- Purchase of land in order to rehabilitate affected wetlands
- Establishment of sustainable farming practices in the catchment to reduce pollution into rivers.

The second significant project, in SE Queensland was drawn to my attention by Wendy Parker. Studies in the 1990s showed that Moreton Bay and its 4 major rivers were slowly choking on increasing amounts of sediments, nutrients and toxicants. A comprehensive management strategy was produced in response. The resulting SEQ Regional Water Quality Management Strategy is administered by Moreton Bay Waterways and Catchments Partnership which involves CSIRO, government agencies, universities and other research institutes, industry and community groups.

For details on these projects go to:

www.greatlakes.local-e.nsw.gov.au/environment
www.csiro.au/partnerships

Whilst the problems in our waterways in East Gippsland do not necessarily replicate those on the Great Lakes or in Moreton Bay, the models might well be worth investigating and referring to the Gippsland Lakes and Catchment TaskForce.

Burragarra Returning – Anne Schmidli

BURRAGARRA (RETURNING)

Day 1

The Southern Ark Community Information Day and field trip at Orbost on the 11 & 12th December was a must for John and me, to learn more about our “little creatures” and their problems and who better than Andy Murray to teach us.

About 40 people came, mostly from DSE, Melbourne and hereabouts, plus about 20 senior secondary school students, who asked some good questions at the end of the day.

Morning tea at 10am, very nice too, started the day then Rod Incoll (D.S.E.) welcomed all.

Stephen Henry, Andy’s boss, gave a 15min. background on the Arks Projects. It began 4 years ago with “Southern Ark” which covers 800,000 hectares of State Forest and National Parks and has a \$500,000 budget for 3 years with 7 workers and operating costs. They also receive \$100,000 from N.G.O sponsorships.

Glenelg (Western) Ark and Grampians Ark followed.

Now, they are “moving from setting up and maintaining to expanding and who knows what will happen”.

Andy Murray

The Flora and Fauna Act describes the Long Nosed Potoroo as “threatened and possibly endangered”. Re-establishing and restoring suites of fauna in as large an area of land as possible is necessary. There are 3,500 fox baits on 1 million hectares, and it is impor-



Nervous Mark placing microchip with Andy Hanging on

tant to continue monitoring research and cage trapping.

6 x 20,000 hectare study sites are checked yearly. They use 9 hair tubes per ha. Attractants of pistachio, vanilla and anise essences are used. 5,000 hair tubes cost \$30,000 for analysis.

A new way may be to also use remote cameras. 40 to 50 sand pads per km. across tracks and roads check for foxes.

Alex Diment (Sydney)

The fox costs A\$100,000 a day, \$30 to \$40 million yearly.

In 1900 there were 1000 Rock Wallabies in E. Gippsland, but now there are only 20.



Showing the digging claw

Prof Fredrick Wood- Jones, (1879-1954), an Englishman, said “to the student of Australian fauna, the fox is a calamity.”

A new fox/cat bait is coming (try saying Para-Amino Propiophenone) (P.A.P.P) which is unlike 1080.

‘Fox Off’ has an antidote, effective to near death.

Tony Buckmaster (Sydney) said feral cats take 144 million birds annually and cost \$146 million Australia wide!

After a very nice lunch, **Tim Jessop** (Zoos Victoria) told us how goannas and possums respond to foxes and cats by changing their behaviour.

Rohan Bilney explained how the lack of prey affects the large East Gippsland owls.

Andy then had 15 mins. to ask, ‘Where to next?’

He has had discussions with people in Tasmania who, at the moment, have good healthy populations of Pademelon, Eastern Quoll and Southern Bettong (extinct here

by 1890). It is felt that an expansion of sites where species are located would help in their preservation. An example of this is the attempt to eradicate the Tasmanian Devil’s face tumor problems, by establishing populations in other areas, such as the Healesville Sanctuary.

This hopefully is the future..BURRAGARRA.

Day 2 Field trip

It was well worth the early start on the 5.30am Raymond Is. Ferry for the field day.

We arrived at Cape Conran Park at 7.15am for an 8am start and met about 20 enthusiastic people from different groups, all eager to hear and see what Andy had in store.

We divided into 2 groups to check the traps, an easy walk around the tracks, which were mostly empty, unfortunately, except at about No. 6, BINGO! A well endowed, very upset male Brush Tailed Possum. Mark Doyle (Melbourne DSE) was invited to do the honours of nervously inserting the I.D. micro-chip, after weighing the hissing, squirming, ball of fur and claws. Andy had his work cut out just holding the angry fella. Most undignified! When released, he took off like a rocket and Andy remarked that it was interesting that he ran quite a long way on the ground before climbing a tree. They only do that if foxes haven’t been around for a while.

Several more empty traps before we finally had a little tagged female Potoroo. She was weighed and checked. Andy showed us the long claw and only 2 pads on the back foot, while she kept her head in the bag.

Several of us had our cameras at the ready to snap the little as she was released, but her name should be “Greased Lightning”..... around in a circle and gone! Still, we did see one. The other group saw two, I think.

A nice walk back to the car park, a cup of tea and more discussion, we then reluctantly departed.

A very interesting and informative two days. Thank you all.

Now we have to be patient until the red tape is over and we start our own “Returning”

The Bradley Method of Weed Control

Another photo from Burragurra

In the last edition of our newsletter, Heather Oke wrote about the work being carried out at Nungurner Jetty Rainforest Project. There was reference to the 'Bradley' method of weed control and for those of you who queried what this involved, here is some information.

Bradley method of bush regeneration

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

The Bradley Method of Bush Regeneration is a method of weed control in natural areas of bushland, developed by sisters Joan and Eileen Bradley, in Sydney, Australia in the mid 1960s.

The Bradley method makes practical use of well known ecological principles. The method consists of hand weeding, without replanting, of selected small areas of vegetation in such a manner that after weeding, each area will be promptly re-inhabited and stabilized by the regeneration of native plants. Importantly the method calls for the weeding of less disturbed areas first and then working towards more problematic areas. The method is different from conventional bush regeneration methods in that it doesn't use herbicides.

If the weeding is approached as a conventional gardening operation, in which large areas are cleared and burned or the debris carted away, the effort will fail because large exposed and disturbed areas will become re-colonized by new weeds. The Bradley method urges a naturalistic approach by encouraging the native vegetation to self-reestablish. The Bradleys used their method to successfully rid a 16 hectare (40 acres) woodland reserve near Ashton Park. The process demonstrated that subsequent maintenance was needed only once or twice a year, mainly in vulnerable spots such as creek banks, roadsides, and clearings, to be maintained weed-free.

The Bradley sisters have since applied the method to other types of terrain including gullies and hills.



Angry, bisping well endowed male possum

Update on Sea Grasses Jenny Dalgleish

At present, many of DSE personnel are deployed on fire duties and recent information on the state of the seagrass beds is just anecdotal. Several such reports do indicate improved water quality and some areas of seagrass regrowth which is encouraging. I have seen, personally fresh seagrass washed up on the Lake King beach at Metung

However Jeremy Hindell's report from the end of 2008 is available from

<http://www.gippslandlakes taskforce.vic.gov.au> and he will undertake the follow up survey in March/April.

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP OF FRIENDS OF GIPPSLAND LAKES PARKS & RESERVES INC.

I.....(name of Applicant(s)) of(address)

Ph. Mb. E-mail(s) desire to become a (state category of membership - see below) member of the Friends of the Gippsland Lakes Parks and Reserves Inc.

In the event of my admission as a member, I agree to be bound by the rules of the Association for the time being in force (can be viewed at <http://fogl.org.au/forms/rules.pdf>).

.....Signature of Applicant Date

Membership fees (to 30 June 2009):

Adult \$20, Family \$35, Organisation \$100, Concession \$10 (Healthcare, Pension, Student)

Please complete Membership Form and enclose membership fee (cheque or money order only) then post to:

The Secretary, Friends of the Gippsland Lakes Parks and Reserves Inc.

P.O. Box 354 Metung VIC 3904