

President's Report

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It is now five years since the inaugural meeting at which the Friends of the Gippsland Lakes Parks and Reserves was officially formed. The group had begun this process late in 2004 on the initiative of Parks Victoria Ranger Joe Stephens. Joe had held the view for sometime that there were many of the parks and reserves around the Gippsland Lakes which did not have a community group directly involved even though there may have been individual "friends" groups with interests in specific areas.

Although FOGL is independent of Parks Victoria, by virtue of our focus on the parks and reserves a close liaison has continued between the two parties. There are times, as FOGL works to implement its purposes, that some conflict can occur. Parks Victoria is a state wide government authority which has objectives similar to our own. However, it is recognised that it has to operate within its priorities (and government direction and policy) and thus may not support the endeavours of every single, well meaning environmental group across the state.

Notwithstanding, it is pleasing to report on the good working relationship which continues locally with Parks Victoria. With the departure of Joe Stephens, while the style of some direct contact changed, the arrangements currently in place are working well. By way of comparison in the last twelve months I

have met with the new Chief Ranger, Will McCutcheon, to discuss our role, plans and position on our areas of interest. Our quarterly meetings with Ranger in Charge, Yasmin Aly, have continued to build understanding of how the two bodies can work cooperatively. Prior to this I had never met the Chief Ranger at all and the Ranger in Charge incidentally on two occasions!

Of the many community groups that have involvement with Parks officers, FOGL is the only one for which such an ongoing relationship exists in this area. To ensure that this arrangement continues irrespective of changes in FOGL office bearers or Parks staff, this cooperative process has been documented in a memorandum which is intended to:

- establish a framework for communication, cooperation and partnership to assist one another in areas of mutual interest and concern;
- provide FOGL with opportunities for consultation and input prior to relevant local management strategy decisions by Parks Victoria which may materially impact upon FOGL's stated interests and purposes;
- provide Parks Victoria with opportunities for consultation and input prior to policy decisions by FOGL which may materially impact upon Parks Victoria's stated interests and purposes;
- provide opportunities for future cooperative projects between parties.

This Memorandum of Cooperation in no way restricts the parties from participating with other public or private agencies, organisations, and individuals on similar agreements.

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Update: Around the Edge with FOGL

Saturday May 1st sees the opening of the art exhibition 'Around the Edge with FOGL' at the East Gippsland Art Gallery.

This exhibition, a collaborative venture with the Gallery, is a group exhibition of works in a range of media by local East Gippsland artists.

The artists will be responding to various environments around the Lakes, in areas of interest to FOGL.

As well as a gallery based exhibition, this project includes 3 site installations.

The key outcomes from this exhibition are:

- To demonstrate the effectiveness of collaboration through an arts project to engage with the community
- To foster professional development, networking opportunities, sharing of skills and knowledge between the artists
- To present the community with an alternative vision of the Gippsland Lakes Parks and Reserves, to

challenge their established understanding and perceptions

- To increase community awareness of the Gippsland Lakes and the issues confronting the Lakes
- To increase community pride and identity in the region
- To create a vehicle for the promotion of east Gippsland.

As described in the Summer newsletter, the artists have been introduced, with the help of local 'experts', to differing parts of the Lakes edge, and have learnt about the formation of the Lakes and their surrounds. They have also learnt about the challenges of managing this significant environment. Their insights into the complexity and subtlety of the interaction between lake and shore will provide a new dimension to the work of FOGL.

FOGL has been supported in this venture by a grant from Parks Victoria which will be used for transport costs, speakers' expenses and publicity material.

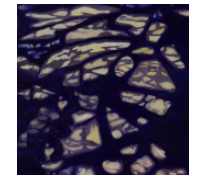
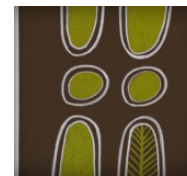
Since this exhibition was conceived, the Victorian

Government launched its White paper 'Securing our Natural Future – a white paper for land and biodiversity at a time of climate change'. This document has as its vision "Victorians acting together to ensure that our land, water and biodiversity are healthy, resilient and productive".

In this publication, the Gippsland Lakes have been made a flagship area, presumably ensuring that resources are to be directed towards their ongoing health.

The FOGL committee hope you will support what is shaping up to be a wonderful event.

Wendy Parker



News

Boobook Declaration

FoGL is pleased to have become a signatory to the Boobook Declaration which aims to influence the Federal Government to;

1. Acknowledge the critical importance of safeguarding biodiversity as part of Australia's climate change response and commit to correspondingly urgent action to address the systemic drivers of biodiversity loss.
2. Increase investment in

- biodiversity and ecosystem protection, restoration and management to at least \$9 billion over the three years to 2012 and establish an independent consultative process into future funding and stewardship of Australia's terrestrial, aquatic and marine biodiversity.
- 3. Restore and increase publicly funded research capacity.
- 4. Develop education and training programs for all sectors of the community.

Spotlight Walk, Easter Saturday

For members and friends.

Your Guides: Peter Johnstone and Matt Holland.

Meet at the Nyerimilang Heritage Park car park, Nyerimilang Rd. (via Kalimna West Rd) at 6.45pm..

Min age 4. 5 Km return walk.

BYO drink, long sleeved shirt, insect repel, walking shoes etc.

Bairnsdale Urban Landcare Group

Bill Cotter has written about the Urban Landcare Group, as part of our series of articles about the Landcare Groups bordering and in the catchment of the Gippsland Lakes.

The Urban Landcare Group has existed for a number of years now and has worked to revegetate the area of the Mitchell River between the 2 bridges. The area was divided into a number of plots, each about 100 metres in length. Individuals and

groups were offered the chance to take over one of these and there are about 20 'working' plots now. The poplars have been cleared along the northern side to make way for indigenous species. On the town side of the river, many of the poplars have been removed and extensive planting has begun there as well. At the last meeting of the group, also attended by CMA staff, the Shire and Parks Victoria, a decision was

made to ask plot holders not to mow the plots but rather to plant shrubs and smaller plants that will act as an understorey. The CMA adopts this policy as part of its 'healthy river' vision. Apparently this approach has been very successful along the Snowy. The group will endeavour to control the weed growth through a number of working bees. FOGL members who would like to attend are most welcome.

MacLeod Morass Working Party

This was an advisory committee set up by East Gippsland Water and the EPA. Its brief, basically, was to look at the water released by the treatment plant and to establish whether the group thought this an advantage or disadvantage to the health of the wetland. Representatives from many interested groups were invited and the attendance at meetings was usually very good.

Duncan Malcolm, who is very experienced in running meetings of this kind, was the chairperson and, predictably, there were many different viewpoints expressed. However, the overall view was clearly that the water was of benefit, particularly since the morass is a RAMSAR site, thereby meriting sound preservation. It is worth noting that over 150 bird species have been seen at various times there.

The group also felt that there had been considerable improvement in the general health of the wetlands, by the construction of the 'ponds' by East Gippsland Water. The water passes through the filtration facilities of the plant and is then released out through the 'ponds' where the reed beds strip out many of the remaining nutrients. Finally the water can be directed to various areas within

the morass. This allows for a wet and drying cycle which is seen as important for wetlands.

However, it was generally agreed that either an upgrade of the existing facility or a new plant will be necessary. It seems also that EGW itself intends to make significant improvements. It is already committed to delivering a certain amount of water to Parks Victoria, the actual managers of Macleod Morass and Jones Bay.

Discussions ranged over many issues. The educational and recreational potential was stressed and all agreed that the area could be developed more as a natural, but 'user friendly' environment.

It was also recommended that a committee be set up to monitor work that will be undertaken by the EPA and EGW. This will essentially be a community based group representing those with a particular interest in Macleod Morass.

It hardly needs stressing that the morass drains into the Mitchell River and finally the water flows out into the lakes.

Bill Cotter

Silvershot Planting

The planting on Silvershot (opp. Metung) will take place on a Friday in early June.

Scattered-tree style of planting (eucalypts, acacias), 200 plants, high guards to be used and possible use of browsing

deterrent agent.

Expressions of interest from interested members sought.

Contact Maurice:
info@fogl.org.au or 03
51562008

Hog Deer on Boole Poole

Andrea Brumley, Game Officer with DSE will present a briefing on the recently released Hog Deer Management Strategy at a June 2 Meeting for all members.

Metung Bushland reserve Update

Parks/working bee activities in cooperation with Friends of Metung should include some of the following:

- * installation of minor entry and possibly directional signage
- * excavation/levelling of 'picnic' area near tank
- * rubbish removal
- * installation of wilderness gates
- * installation of bollards/rocks for track blockage and designation of 'picnic' area

Plants will be ready for a late Autumn/early Winter planting.

for more information and contact details got to the Metung Bushland reserve Community Portal at <http://metungbushlandreserve.org.au/>



Membership Application

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

.....(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 2010):

Adult \$20, Family \$35, Organisation \$10, 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