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## President's Report

### Activities

Since our last newsletter our group has been actively involved with activities for members and the wider community. FoGL organises these experiences as a means of promoting the values and assets



of parks & reserves as well as making others aware of our group. While our members can participate in working bees, and other focused projects, these environmental excursions provide another opportunity for members to become active.

The first of these was a canoe paddle on the McLeod Morass. The feedback from those who attended often expressed appreciation of having had the opportunity to experience up close the amazing environment found along the way. Even those who may have been a little reticent to tackle the canoeing adventure found the flat water of the morass a very pleasant way to enjoy the wildlife. Holding this activity in November allows enough daylight at a time when the Morass is home to thousands of nesting birds.

More recently we held a spotlight walk at Burnt Bridge, Toorloo Arm. Like the canoe paddle this activity provides a unique opportunity to see much of interest in the forest that many do not have the opportunity to witness (see full report from Wendy Parker).

A major contributor to the success of these activities is the expertise of the guides. Over time this input has been

provided by Parks Victoria rangers and local environmentalists. I particularly would like to recognise the continued support of Jim Reside, who has an amazing depth of knowledge and unbridled passion for the local flora & fauna, and gives his time willingly.

Jim and Parks Victoria have been running such events over a long period of time and more recently have worked in cooperation with FoGL to do so. Although it may be a bit much to be at every outing members are encouraged to support them and invite others to enjoy the experience. These events have become so successful that the committee has recommended that they be on the calendar as annual events.

### Environmental Concerns

Many local environmental groups have raised concerns about what has been identified as the continuing loss of biodiversity. Some groups which have met have decided how they may individually become involved in raising awareness of concerns identified. Involvement may include organising public forums media coverage etc. To this end our group is organising material based around our specific areas of interest, including position statements in relation to such topics as feral animals, duck shooting and land use. It should be pointed out that while your committee does not see our group as playing an active political role we do believe that we should have an agreed position on environmental issues based on factual information and in keeping with the purposes of the group.

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## Lower Tambo Landcare Group

We continue our articles about Landcare Groups which operate within the Gippsland Lakes area. Thanks to Rob Irvine (President) who provided information for this article.

The Lower Tambo Landcare Group was formed in 1998 and covers 10,965 hectares, focusing on the Tambo River between Stephenson's bridge and the Tambo River mouth. Membership is approximately 40 families, 25% of which are primary producers, 50% hobby farmers/lifestylers and 25% urban dwellers. Like many small volunteer groups, active members are limited. All the same, Rob outlined an impressive list of achievements and aspirations for the future.

Completed projects include the Rough Road Development Plan, which started in 2009 and was recently completed in conjunction with EG Shire, the CMA and DPI. It covers an area along the eastern bank of the Tambo River, running off Metung Road. Fencing has been installed to restrict vehicle access too close to the river bank, pest plants have been reduced, indigenous species planted and degraded fishing spots renovated. Ongoing maintenance will be carried out by the Group.

An extension of the plan is now proposed; the Lower Tambo Development Plan 2012-2015. A current submission for funding is to be used to extend the work to the silt jetty at the Tambo River mouth. Again the plan is to repair damage caused by riverside fishing, formalise parking spaces, repair fences, erosion and storm damage, remove poplars and plant native species.



The Group is also working to reduce turbidity and nutrient run off into the River, tackling rabbit control along the Tambo Bay Foreshore Reserve and is active in the control of an outbreak of Pampas Lily-of-the-Valley, a noxious weed which has been found along Reynolds Rd.

Members will be active on Clean Up Australia Day, (4th March) along the riverside on Rough Rd.

This year, workshops will be held to help owners of small acreages in management of their land, including whole property planning and weed and rabbit control.

If you wish to know more about the Lower Tambo Landcare Group, check out the East Gippsland Landcare website, email at [lower-tambo-landcare@bigpond.com](mailto:lower-tambo-landcare@bigpond.com) or go along to one of their meetings at Swan Reach Anglican Church Hall, 3rd Wed each month at 7.30pm.

Jenny Dalgleish

### TAKING A STAND

At the last Committee meeting the subject of duck shooting was discussed and it was felt that, as a conservation organisation, we have a responsibility to take an official stand on this issue. Since the meeting, members have received an email from Committee member Trevor Caldwell outlining why the Committee took the position of opposing duck shooting. We welcome feedback from members concerning this issue, but also encourage input from members on a more general concept of 'taking a stand' on controversial issues.

### CAN YOU HELP?

The Volunteer Network Expo is to be held from 26th to the 30th March in Bairnsdale and we need helpers with the FOGL stand on the 30th. A couple of hours of your time would be of great assistance! Please contact Maurice Burns [secretary@fogl.org.au](mailto:secretary@fogl.org.au)

### GIPPSLAND ENVIRONMENT GROUP TO HOLD A COMMUNITY FORUM

It is to be the first in a series on biodiversity loss in East

Gippsland.

Topic: Gippsland Lakes  
Date: Tuesday 17th April evening

Venue: The Sports and Convention Centre (previously Italian Club)

M.C. Henrie Ellis; (as for previous Lakes meeting in 2008).  
Speakers: Prof Max Finlayson; Ramsar and wetlands, Fiona Warry; Black bream and seagrass, Dr Chris Healey; Water birds (titles to be fine tuned).  
Further details will be forwarded as they come to hand.

## FOGL Working with GEGAC

John Emanuelli joined our Committee Meeting on the 1st Feb to talk about his work with GEGAC and how the two organisations might work together.

John works in the Koori Offenders Support Mentoring Program whereby, through the court system, individuals with minor infringements are given help through a mentoring system. He also has a role in Youth Justice, supporting youths at high risk.

Within this work, GEGAC has 2 properties, Windarra, 470 acres near Buchan and another on Boole Poole. The latter was acquired after the property had been long neglected and the past 18 months have been spent using the free labour from the GEGAC initiatives to bring the place up to standard. The Indigenous Land Council, who provided funding to buy the property, is about to hand over responsibility to GEGAC subject to a number of conditions for its use. The house is now completely restored and the jetty has been replaced, enabling several camps to be held there. These have included two cultural camps, one with American Indian elders and another with Sudanese elders, as well as group of Northern Territorian Aboriginal people who focused on traditional therapies and smoke ceremonies, involving two young members with ancestral

links to Boole Poole. These camps have been filmed for the use in documentaries, which hopefully will be screened on TV. The property is also used for cultural training with members such as Uncle Albert and Gratton Mullett running the courses.

Remaining work includes fencing and planting of hardwood trees. It is also hoped that the property can be used in future as an enterprise to raise funds.

GEGAC has other projects too, including a pilot program carried out over the last twelve months, growing native fish such as Murray Cod, Australian Bass and Silver Perch. The Youth Hostel and Womens Shelter in Bairnsdale are still operated by GEGAC but, with reduced demand by indigenous individuals, are mainly used nowadays by non-aboriginal people.

John is keen to provide assistance to FOGL projects in the form of manpower, but also with equipment and machinery they have on Boole Poole. He did emphasise that predictability and reliability can be a problem at times but was hopeful that the two organisations can work together in a variety of ways, including tree planting.

Maurice also floated the idea of FOGL perhaps holding a function, such as cultural training, at the Boole Poole property. Wouldn't that be great!

Jenny Dalglish

President's Report continued...

### Swan Feeding

FOGL is pleased to acknowledge the efforts of the Friends of Metung who responded to inappropriate behaviour from some members of the general public in relation to black swans. Feeding of the swans has led to them becoming very familiar with humans to the extent that swans approach people who are in boats or on land – and are even seen wandering about the streets of lakeside towns. Notices placed in Metung pointed out all the consequences of this practice from effects on the birds' diet and safety through to the potential risk of attacks on people.

### Member Involvement

We are currently planning with Parks Rangers maintenance work and plantings to be undertaken in places such as the Silt Jetties and McLeod Morass. Once this is finalised we will invite your support. You will have also received information about involvement in the Expo organised by the Volunteer Network and the Gippsland Field Days – Again your support would be welcome. Lastly, please do not hesitate to be in contact regarding any items or concerns – We keep members informed and consult regularly through emailing so please respond - your feedback will be appreciated and help guide our actions.

David Ellard

## Burnt Bridge Night Walk

Fifty people made the trip to Burnt Bridge in the Lake Tyers Forest Park on Friday January 27th for a balmy summer's night spotlight walk. The walk was led by Jim Reside and Rohan Bilney of Wildlife Unlimited with their co-workers Clare and Nathan, assisted by Matt Holland and Katherine Mullett from Parks Victoria. The aim of the walk was to observe active nocturnal animals in the wild.

Jim and Rohan gave an informative and entertaining talk before we set out, and knowledgeable audience members were rewarded with bat stamps for correct answers to their posed questions. We practised being quiet and listening to the sounds around us, as well as learning to identify the calls of some of the animals we might see.



The group was split into two, and walked off into the starry night, with spotlights raking the surrounding trees. We were told that dead trees were very important habitat for the many animals of the forest and that one 10 metre tall tree would have provided living space for 10-15 different animals.

We heard Masked Owls and Southern Boobok, as well as Yellow-bellied Gliders and disturbed from sleep Superb Fairy Wrens. We saw Greater Gliders and best of all by one group, a yellow Bellied Glider moving from one tree to the next. The collective 'oooh' of the impressed observers resounded through the night.

The number of microbats caught in the spotlights after having been 'heard' on the bat detector, was another of the evening's highlights. These animals were catching insects and in order to navigate around and do this, they emit an ultrasonic call through their nostrils. The leaf shape of their nose is thought to focus this sound.



A big thank you to all involved and especially to Jim and Rohan. A special thank you to FoGL President David Ellard for making it all happen and fielding all the calls from people wanting to attend.

Wendy Parker

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 2012):

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