

President's Report

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Update is edited by

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produced by

Jo Hope

on behalf of FOGL

This will be our last "Update" for our current committee of management. with elections to be held for the executive and general committee representatives in August. . A highlight has been the support from non committee members who attended meetings regularly to make a positive contribution. While the committee has worked together to successfully plan and implement the FOGL program the executive operated without the positions of vice president and treasurer being filled all year. This placed extra demands on the president and secretary who both filled roles as sub-committee conveners as well.

Current Committee

President .David Ellard

Vice-President Unfilled

Secretary Maurice Burns

Treasurer Unfilled (Maurice acting)

Committee Members (minimum of 2 no more than 5)

Annie Marshal Joe Stephens Anne Schmidli, Jenny Dalgleish Peter Johnstone

While retiring members are eligible for re-election all FOGL members are encouraged to consider this level of involvement

It is acknowledged that while FOGL doesn't have a large membership it has achieved a great deal and is recognised as a proactive effective environmental group. Understandably, members may not choose to take on the committee role and when it comes down to numbers positions can be hard to fill. But someone has to do it so please give it some thought.

Currently the full committee meets five times a year. The three sub committees may meet between meetings depending on demand. Each committee member is usually involved in one of the sub committees and is eligible to be the convener.

Note that nominations for positions close prior to the Annual General Meeting with only unfilled positions being open for nomination at the meeting. This means that if you wait until the meeting to be nominated you may miss out! However, what is more likely is that there will be a degree of arm twisting at the AGM to fill positions and if this is unsuccessful a continuation of the process until someone is found (if at all)

So please think about your own role or that of someone whom you think may be worthy of nomination and set about getting the nomination process happening.

Thankyou to all members for their continued support. Hope to see you at the Tree Planting Day on July 27

David Ellard

Sub Committee Reports

Activities Sub Committee Report

Macleod Morass Canoe Paddle Saturday April 19

The 18 participants were on hand for the 7.00am start and all assisted in launching canoes and setting off on a fine calm day. While no experience was necessary you had to maintain a good paddle rate or miss out Joe Stephens informative chat along the way. After 2½ hours the paddlers had quite a sweat up and were pleased to return to shore where a cooked breakfast was provided, prepared by the Paynesville Sea Scouts who donated their services. This was a really great day with thanks to Bill Cotter, Joe Stephens (and other Rangers)

Landcare Activity on the Silt Jetties

The tree planting day similar to the one held last year on the property leased by Hilary Rigg and Chris Walker is planned for July 27.

Nagle College Outdoor and Environmental Studies Unit

FOGL and Parks were able to support the work of the Year 11 students following a request from the school

Thursday 8 May David Ellard visited the school and discussed environmental issues specifically related to the Gippsland Lakes and the catchment. The role FOGL plays and some of the political and community issues which affect environmental management were also raised.

On the following Monday a field trip was organised. The morning session at the McLeod Morass was conducted by Rangers Joe Stephens and Manfred Ratzman. Using their own kayaks students were able to see first hand works that have been undertaken to improve the Morass. They also heard of some of the problems faced in the management of the wetland in relation to private land holders, shooters and inappropriate plant growth

In the afternoon, FOGL member, Trevor Caldwell led the students on a visit to the Silt Jetties. This provided an opportunity for an insight into how the range of visitors differ in their care and respect for this important natural phenomenon. A visit to Hilary Rigg and Chris Walker's property where over 3000 trees were planted last

year provided an example of the effectiveness of voluntary support to provide successful revegetation on the South Jetty.

The link established between Nagle and FOGL has lead to other activities including tree planting planned for Year 9 students and further support with curriculum activities in the future

David Ellard Convener

Projects, Works and Grants Subcommittee Report

Planting Day Saturday 31 May, Silt jetties

Approx. 1200 plants planted, 17 members and friends volunteered. BBQ lunch, beautiful day

Project Burragarra

Extension of project granted by AG Natural Resource Management. Project now to be completed 8 November 2008 and final report will be due on 6 February 2009.

Lune Beeuke signage & park note

Sign and Park note will be available by end of June for final signoff and manufacture/printing.

Maurice Burns Convener



*The Canoe Paddle
L. Breakfast
R. Canoeing on a perfect morning*



No Butts Campaign

Update on No Butts Campaign: Following on from Anne Schmidli's efforts over Easter, which saw a spate of information posters put up around Paynesville and Raymond Island on the environmental effects of cigarette butts ending up in our lakes, the next phase will include some picture posters featuring fish and dolphins emphasizing the message: cigarette butts are toxic; when thrown on the ground get washed into our lakes and rivers and can harm fish and other marine life; please bin your butts/pick up your butts.

Anne has found the EG Shire Council and most shop owners in Paynesville supportive of the campaign and looks forward to the next phase.

Consideration is being given to taking the No Butts campaign to the silt jetties fishing spots, depending on Parks approval. Funding for additional aspects, including butt bins, stormwater drain mesh and possibly advertising in fishing magazines and local papers will be sought from available sources.



Tourism Award to FOGL Member

Peter Johnstone, an active contributor to FOGL, has received a commendation from Tourism Gippsland organisation which covers the whole of Gippsland. Peter received the most points from all entrants in the category "No Butts" for his initiative to provide a marine experience including provision of above and below water observation facilities aboard his purpose built craft

New Holland Mouse Survey

This was our eighth camp at this site, which we have monitored for New Holland mouse since '93. As with the last two camps here we caught only one juvenile female (in 269 trap nights), so numbers remain very low, but at least they are still present. We also caught 12 Agile Antechinus, 2 Eastern Pigmy Possums and as a special surprise, one White-footed Dunnart, Smint-hopsis leucopus. We captured this species once before in 1995, about 300m away.

Spotting found Brushtail possums and Swamp Wallaby, with several Sugar Gliders heard. Batting was sparse with 4 captures involving 3 species: Lesser Long-eared, Goulds Wattle and Large Forest Bats. Daylight sightings included fox, rabbit, Eastern Grey Roo and Echidna diggings.

Overall the bush seemed much healthier than the last 2 visits following good autumn

rains so we hope the New Holland Mouse population will increase again, especially as burns to promote this species are planned this year

Metung Bushland Reserve Management Plan 2007 by Emma Orgill

The work that Forest Tech student Emma Orgill has carried out on the Metung Bushland Reserve has resulted in a detailed and interesting report which provides much food for thought. It could, indeed form a basis of a great project for the community.

The area is a good example of Limestone Box Forest with mature Coastal Grey Box and Blue Box, and there is evidence too of Warm Temperate Rainforest with plants such as Blunt Greenhoods, Spurred Helmet Orchids and Maroonhood. The trees support a large population of birds and there is evidence of echidnas.

It is also an important recreational area for visitors and the people of Metung, espe-

cially the children. It is forms part of our Natural Heritage and implementation of key management strategies would enhance its aesthetic value as well as provide a significant recreational, educational and scientific resource.

Though it is very unlikely that grants would be forthcoming this financial year, it is hoped that interested parties (FOGL, Friends of Metung and Metung Primary School) will provide enough support to get the project rolling.

I strongly suggest FOGL members explore the area for themselves and try to see its potential. There's certainly a lot of work to be done, but it did receive significant support in the FOGL survey carried out towards the end of last year.

What's On

27th July National Tree Day:

Planting at the southern Silt Jetties with Landcare; follow-on from last year's 3000 trees!
Where Crown Land 220 Rivermouth Road Eagle Point. from 10.00am until 3.00 pm
Entry /Parking gate at the beginning of the cleared land

Individuals, families and groups welcome

What to Bring Wear old clothes and sturdy shoes and gloves and bring a shovel

What we supply all trees and planting equipment. tea and coffee

RSVP Leah Newey FLGN 5156
20608 or Hillary Rigg

August?
AGM

Sun 17th August

Joint FOGL -Australian Plant Society trip to Boole Poole Details to come.

September School Holidays

Children's Night Walk on Raymond Island
Details to come

Land & Biodiversity in a Time of Climate Change - Green Paper

This Green Paper is the second phase in the development of the 'Land and biodiversity at a time of climate change' White Paper. It aims to promote discussion on the best ways to respond to the decline of Victoria's land and aquatic ecosystems and the biodiversity that supports them."

"The Green Paper:

- outlines the nature and extent of the ecological problems and the policy issues we are facing
- outlines the role of Government and partners in dealing with the issues
- discusses suggested approaches for feedback that seek to address the issues."

While we might be inclined to think that here is another typical political reaction –

lots of discussion, consultants, glossy reports to tell us what we already knew and then not enough appropriate resourcing to make the objectives a reality

However, the proposed outcomes in the green paper are what is needed to guide planning, management and implementation for the stated fifty year vision:

"Victorians actively conserving and restoring ecosystems to ensure our land, seas and waterways are healthy, resilient and productive."

The importance of taking effective action for now and the future has prompted FOGL to make a response to the Green Paper. Lead by Wendy Parker a group has been working together to discuss and formulate a response. Specific concerns and recommendations

have been made to the following sections of the Paper

Managing aquatic ecosystems.
Building ecological connectivity

Better systems to share knowledge
Understanding the impact of our actions

Landcare and volunteer organisations
People near the coasts and sea

Members will receive an email of the final draft of FOGL's response for a one week comment period prior to the closing date for submissions at the end of June.

Quotations are from the Green Paper which is available on the DSE website or in hard copy form DSE Bairnsdale

To Burn or not to Burn

To burn, not to burn and how to burn seems to be the subject of regular discussion and dispute all around the country each year during autumn time. A holiday in April through NE Victoria and over the High Country led to much discussion again amongst family and friends after we had experienced day after day of unbreathable air and smoke filled valleys. The same has applied throughout areas of Gippsland and naturally has impact on the area of the Gippsland Lakes. There are members of FOGL who have grave concerns too about how prescribed burns are being executed this year and, in my research, I came across 'Comments on draft Fire Operation Plans 2007 - 2010' prepared by Jenny Barnett on behalf of the Victorian National Parks Association. Below are extracts from this significant document. I hope you find it interesting and if you would like to read more, please contact me and I will email it in full. I also encourage and welcome your personal comments for our next newsletter. It is obviously too late to do anything this year, but maybe it will impact in the stance we take in the future.

Jenny Dalgleish
jennydalgleish@netspace.net.au

Victorian National Parks Association Inc.

Comments on draft Fire Operation Plans 2007-2010 Prepared by Jenny Barnett August 2007

This is the first time that the VNPA has felt the need to comment to any extent on draft Fire Operations Plans (FOPs). The development and review of the Code of Practice for Fire Management on Public Land has meant compliance with these principles gives reasonable protection to the environment whilst improving fire protection. However, now FOPs are failing to follow the key principles in the code and are often in direct conflict with the Regional Fire Protection Plans and with National Park management plans.

We are horrified by many of the proposals in these FOPs because:

1. In some areas, especially in East Gippsland, because extremely large contiguous areas are planned to be burnt within 3-7 years of each other (including recent wildfires and prescribed burns) thus severely compromising flora and fauna conservation. Many fauna species, even those dependant on fire, require unburnt refuge areas from which to recolonise at the right post-fire stage, and these areas appear grossly inadequate in these plans. The ecological problems of large-scale landscape fire experienced in the recent wildfires are being replicated in these plans for some areas.
2. Seven Reference Areas are to be prescribed burnt which appears to breach the Land Conservation Council recommendations as accepted by parliament that "these areas must not be tampered with, and natural processes must be able to continue undisturbed".
3. Thirteen of the 20 Wilderness Areas under the National Parks Act are to be burnt. While this can be justified to some extent in the Mallee, due to the large size of these areas, the extent of burning in the remainder (largely in East Gippsland) is unwarranted in terms of their ecology or strategic position.
4. A number of sizable burns are planned within the 2003 fire area. Most if not all of these will seriously compromise the ecology of the areas affected. Few appear to be strategic for asset protection with most being on very remote areas.
5. Some of these areas to be reburnt are in National Parks and also include four Wilderness areas and a Reference Area. This will severely damage the parks' and wilderness areas' values contrary to the National Parks Act and the ability to use the Reference Area as a 'reference'.
6. Zone 5 areas (Prescribed Burning Exclusion Zone) are included in proposed prescribed burns in several regions including East Gippsland.

The above concerns breach the Code of Practice

Comments on individual areas East Gippsland

As a result of the 2003 and 2006-7 fires, about 70% of the largest contiguous forested area in the State, on and around the Great Diving Range, has been burnt - much of it severely, and is still in an early stage of recovery. Therefore the ecological health of the remaining forest, mainly found at either end in the Central Highlands and East Gippsland, is of greatly increased importance for the survival of many species. Much concern has been expressed about the recent landscape sized wildfires and their impact on flora and fauna - especially fauna that are dependant on particular age classes of vegetation. In spite of this concern, the proposed prescribed burning in East Gippsland is effectively landscape in extent, compounding the impact of recent fires and endangering some specialist species within the region and reducing the populations of many others.

Areas excessively covered by proposed burns include:

The Croajingolong National Park, Cape Conran Coastal Park and adjoining state forest south of Princes Highway between Cann River and Genoa.

*Coopracambra National park
Snowy river National Park
Cobberas - Tingaringay sections of the Alpine National Park
Other areas in East Gippsland*

There are other large areas in East Gippsland which are liberally peppered with proposed and recent burns such as the areas between Orbost and Lakes Entrance and forests to the north of this. We question the need for all these which should be rationalized.

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 2007):

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.