

President's Report

Hog Deer Research

On Tuesday 15 March members of the group involved in the Hog Deer research project visited the western end of Boole



Poole in the Gippsland Lakes Park. The main area of interest was the proposed controlled burn planned for this April where

possible sites for the erection of enclosure fencing were identified.

Also in the group was Cameron Fleet the Parks Officer who is responsible for flora monitoring in planned burn areas across East Gippsland. This monitoring is part of the management of public land so that effective burning is undertaken and adapted to provide for the recovery and regeneration of vegetation. The protocols used legitimately view browsing that may occur as a normal part of the recovery process. We were able to visit areas already identified under this process, and to align our proposed plots without overlapping. Our study undertakes to examine what additional regeneration occurs if browsers are excluded. It is planned to continue to liaise with Cameron in relation to findings and regeneration needs in the area.

Given the various difficulties of burning on Boole Poole there remains the possibility that the planned burn may not eventuate. We are investigating alternative strategies so that we can study recovery & regeneration and how it is impacted upon in an objective manner.

The project continues on the understanding that funding decisions will be made prior to any further major work undertaken. The original source of funding is still a possibility but the project group has spent a number of hours

developing an application as an alternative so we are hopeful of a positive outcome. FOGL will now be the lead agent and if the latter application is successful, will take responsibility for implementation.

Eradication of Feral Species

FOGL is continuing discussions with Parks Victoria to revive the program to get rid of wild pigs on Boole Poole. It is accepted that it is a difficult exercise given the access, terrain and expense nevertheless funding to track down pigs and take appropriate action to get rid of them is being pursued.

One plus has been Parks funding of two people to undertake the farm chemical training and also to be qualified in the use of poison for pigs and foxes. This will allow private landholders to work in cooperation with Parks in this process. Anne Schmidli and the president have been nominated to undertake the training.

Silt Jetties Road Closure

In August last year a letter was written to the Chief Ranger, Will McCutcheon, on behalf of FOGL regarding the possibility of the permanent closure of the last kilometre of the Silt Jetties road. The view expressed was that this action would allow for more equitable access for the variety of users and support the preservation of natural features found there. At the time that section of the road was closed for repairs. The road has now been reopened and again provides full access for vehicles.

Our letter pointed out there were ongoing issues with this situation in relation to pedestrian safety and wheelchair and bicycle access.

David Ellard

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McLeod's Morass Reference Group Update

Two reports were presented at the last meeting of the Reference Group, the first from Rory McKeown from East Gippsland Water.

He has been looking at the impact of pharmaceuticals and personal care products on the quality of water passing through the treatment plant. Samples were taken from a number of locations on 2 days, one in summer and one in winter. Tests were carried out to determine the presence of 29 compounds most likely to be found in our area.

Even in very small quantities, these can have a very negative effect on water quality and on human health, so it was very encouraging that there was very little evidence of these compounds at the end of the treatment process, despite techniques used at the plant being quite old. It seems the constructed wetlands are doing a very good job of stripping nutrients from the water being released into the broad morass. No evidence

of the compounds tested could be found in Klopper's Paddock.

The fact that this kind of research is very expensive may account for the fact that the project did not investigate further.

The second report was presented by Ian Bate from East Gippsland Shire Council. He has been involved in the Urban Waterways Development project carried out in a number of areas including Magee's Gully in Bairnsdale and Merrangbaur near Lakes Entrance. (There are 4 sites the Shire is trying to revegetate in the Bairnsdale area and one at Nicholson.)

There is no set budget allocation for this kind of work which possibly reduces the efficiency of works undertaken.

Magee's Gully drains about a third of the town of Bairnsdale and is therefore of significance in any conservation project.

Work along Magee's Gully has involved the removal of willows and ash trees and over ten thousand plants and

grasses have been planted along the watercourse. This slows the flow and has the effect of stripping nutrients from the water.

It is hoped that the number of sites can be increased and that they could form the basis for activities promoting community education. Ian was asked if there is a possibility of a track being constructed from the highway through to the Morass, but one major obstacle is the railway line.

From FOGL's point of view it was pleasing to hear that one of the primary objectives of these activities is to improve the quality of the water entering into the lakes.

Bill Cotter

FoGL MM Planting Spring 2011

FoGL have received funding from Coast Action Coastcare to plant 1500 mixed species at McLeod's Morass.

Sat 3rd September prep day.

Sat 8 October (week after Grand Final) planting day.

News

Cancelled Canoe trip

The Committee had planned a canoe trip at McLeod's Morass for this autumn but unfortunately it had to be cancelled as this year's duck shooting season has commenced, preventing us from holding the event. Instead, a guided night walk will be held at Burnt Bridge

which we hope will be well supported. Details Page 4.

Coming Up

It is anticipated that the winter activity will be a visit to Rotamah Island and in Spring there will a planting project at McLeod's Morass.

Pig Scat Analysis

In an attempt to understand why feral pigs disturb such

large areas of vegetation Anne Schmidli collected pig scat and sent it to Barbara Trigg for analysis.

Unfortunately the analysis was inconclusive with the scats containing 'coarse plant material', offering no real further understanding of why the pigs turn over the ground so vigorously.

Ideas anyone?

Rotamah Island Bird Observatory

Following a visit to Rotamah Island by two members earlier this year the FOGL committee has expressed an interest in the future of the island and observatory. Birds Australia had maintained and run the facilities for more than twenty years. However, they did not renew the lease when it expired some ten years ago.

A Sale based committee (Rotamah Island Bird Observatory Incorporated) have for several years been endeavouring to lease the site and re-establish the facilities as a bird observatory. It is understood that after lengthy negotiations Parks Victoria have recently signed a lease agreement with the Sale based committee who are intending to upgrade facilities and re-open the observatory to the public.

The FOGL committee has written to the Sale based committee expressing an interest in the island and observatory, requesting to be kept informed of progress and offering to consider providing practical support in the work required to re-establish the observatory.



Mitchell River Silt Jetties road closure update

Following a report in the last newsletter on the temporary closure of the last section of the silt jetties road and the Committee's request to Parks Victoria that the road be permanently closed it is reported that the road has now been re-opened. It appears that FOGL's request fell on deaf ears!



Whilst the road was closed the copious amounts of rubbish left behind by visitors (mainly fisher people) diminished, there were no fires lit and thus no remnant vegetation removed for firewood. Since the road has re-opened it has been observed that rubbish is again prolific, there is evidence of many fires and removal of vegetation for firewood. This is indeed disappointing as the degradation of this iconic area is now continuing unabated.

Trevor Caldwell

Preliminary recommendation for potential listing of feral horses as a threatening process

Following this preliminary recommendation, the public can make submissions till April 22, when those submissions will be reviewed and a final recommendation made to the Minister who will decide whether or not to accept the recommendation.

go to Habitat Network East Gippsland to learn more: <http://hneg.org.au>

Update: Gippsland Lakes Taskforce

Julie Sargent has been appointed as the Gippsland Lakes Taskforce secretariat now that Chris Barry has moved on to a new role in DSE. Julie recently updated FOGl on the current situation of the Taskforce.

Since the election of the new Victorian Government, the proposed amalgamation of the Taskforce, the East and West Gippsland CMAs and the Gippsland Coastal Board is not going ahead.

The Taskforce was promised \$10million as a pre-election promise, but as yet there is no indication if this money is coming through, what the new 'entity' will be called and which department, if any, it will be answerable to.

The current Taskforce is still working on a 'legacy' document to take them through till 30/6/11. Seagrass monitoring is still an ongoing project, as is keeping up the media profile of the organisation.

Julie commented, "we proceed under the old rules until someone gives us the new ones".

Burnt Bridge Night Walk

For Members, their guests and interested members of the public, Wildlife Unlimited will be guiding a walk through the forest at Lake Tyers.

We may be lucky enough to see gliders, possums, owls as well as other night creatures.

When?: Thursday 14th April, BYO picnic tea, 17.30 to 18.15. Walk: 1815-1930. Bring a powerful torch and 'quiet' but warm clothing.

Travel approximately 9kms east from Lakes Entrance on the Princes Highway and look for turnoff on right to picnic area and Burnt Bridge. Map available at www.parkweb.vic.gov.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 2011):

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