

To conserve and enhance the diversity of native flora and fauna of the Glen Fern Valley Bushlands while preserving community access and encouraging education and compatible uses for the enjoyment of current and future generations.

The Glenfern

The Official Newsletter of The Friends of Glenfern Valley Bushlands Inc.
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THE FENCE GOES UP!

friends of Glen Fern Valley Bushlands Inc. 



Over the last month or so you have probably noticed the steady progress in the erection of a perimeter fence around Glenfern Valley Bushlands. This certainly has been a major advance in the continuing rehabilitation of our Reserve as it well and truly announces to the community and beyond that no longer can our Reserve be perceived as 'derelict' ground acceptably open to the abuse of rubbish dumping and environmental damage by trail bikes and 4WDs.

Hearty congratulations must go to Serg Zaccaria and Sarah Tebbutt whose lobbying of the State Government and the Shire of Yarra Ranges (SYR) helped produce the significant grant which has funded the fence's construction and to Emily Cattermole of the SYR Asset Management Group who, with help from Serg, has done most of the organisational work needed to get the fence underway.

SHIRE SPONSORS BUSHLAND MANAGEMENT COURSE

Three members of our Friends Group have recently been attending a (6 x 1/2 day) bushland restoration and revegetation management course, sponsored by the SYR. The course focus is on the protection and restoration of remnant native bush, starting with areas that have the most biodiversity, as these are virtually impossible to recreate when gone. Using a local Montrose reserve as an outdoor classroom the course has passed on basic but important skills in plant and weed identification and weed control. It has also developed an understanding of how flora changes with terrain, and the cause and effect of various weed infestations. This will aid us in learning how to strategise and plan a project that will have the best possible environmental return for the available resources.

President's Message Winter 2005

Dear Members and Supporters,

The last 3 months have seen great advances in the Glen Fern Valley Bushlands as several long-term projects come to fruition. Many people were involved but I especially want to express our gratitude for the support our efforts have received from Sophie Akers, Emily Cattermole and Marga Wennersten of the Environment and Asset Management departments of the Shire of Yarra Ranges. The news items in this issue show just how important their involvement has been.

Whenever I visit the reserve these days I often see people walking their dogs, jogging, exploring, bike riding and exchange a few words. They are invariably pleased with the Friends work to improve the environment and secure the reserve for safe public use. It is very satisfying to know that the community as a whole is increasingly seeing the reserve as a place to visit and enjoy.

Ian Rainbow

President, Friends of Glen Fern Valley Bushlands

The Big Burnoff



May 22 saw the safe burning of several unsightly rubbish heaps left from previous clearance works on the land. We are particularly grateful to the Upwey CFA under the guidance of Peter Marke for undertaking the operation and removing these fire hazards from the Reserve. Although some habitat for small birds will be temporarily removed as a result, we expect significant indigenous regrowth from the burnt patches, as we have seen from previous examples. Thanks also to all the 'civilian' volunteers who came on the day to assist the CFA through raking of embers and the monitoring of the individual blazes.

Keep Australia Beautiful Nomination

The Environment Department of the Shire of Yarra Ranges very kindly nominated our Reserve for the Keep Australia Beautiful Awards Protection of the Environment Award for 2005 and Marga Wennersten of the Shire helped guide the application prepared by Richard Hamersham and Ian Rainbow, and a guided inspection of the site with Ian, Richard, Marilyn Thomas and Dianne Rainbow of the Friends Group. A particular effort was made by about a dozen Friends on the previous working bee to tidy up the most visible areas to create the best possible impression. Marilyn accepted the Shire's invitation to represent us at the Award night held on May 27th.

This award nomination would not have been possible without the continuous efforts of the members and supporters of the Friends of Glen Fern Valley Bushlands over the past 4 years who have pitched in to help remove weeds and rubbish, plant, distribute brochures, lobby politicians, attend stalls, and a myriad of other necessary duties. We should all be proud of this wonderful community effort. Congratulations to the eventual winners of the Protection of the Environment Award - Friends of the Helmeted Honeyeater.

NEW GRANTS ACHIEVED

A really great result in recent weeks has been the successful grant application to the National Heritage Trust made by Serg Zaccaria with help from Emily Cattermole at SYR. The grant for \$13,000, topped up by the Shire with another \$3,000 will be used for contractor work eradicating weeds. In addition many thanks must also go again to Councillor Noel Cliff for another grant that we have put towards some machetes and herbicide applicators.

Tree Planting Day 17 July

We will be celebrating Tree Planting day on Sunday 17th July by planting 400 trees, shrubs and grasses. These will all be of local provenance provided from the Southern Dandenongs' Community Nursery at Bird's Land. The Shire of Yarra Ranges donated half of the plants and 300 guards, weed mats and sets of stakes. The other half was paid from the subscription dues of the Friends of Glen Fern Valley Bushlands.

We urge our members and supporters to come along and enjoy the satisfaction of planting for the future and also to see the results of past labours and recent achievements.

(photograph opposite: one of the many Silver Wattles planted late last year and now flourishing)



Message in a Bottle

Have you ever been disgusted by the number of cans and bottles seen in the bush, along the roadside or washed up along a river? Peter Cook of Clematis has and is trying to do something about it, initiating a campaign called 'Message in a Bottle'. The object is to lobby the State Government to introduce a deposit/refund system on drink containers, the same as works successfully in South Australia.

The case for a deposit / refund system is compelling. In Australia, 5 billion drink containers are tossed out annually. We produce more than 2.2 billion PET bottles annually. In Victoria only 35.3% of PET is recycled, but nearly 80% is recycled in South Australia. Added to this, South Australia has 50% less litter than other states and territories, according to Clean Up Australia statistics.

If you are concerned about this problem, visit Peter's website www.wildcoast.net.au and click on 'Message in a Bottle'. There are sample letters and E-mails that you can adapt to send to your state MP, local councillor and Mr. Thwaites, Minister for the Environment.

Also, Peter has started AFROCAB [Australians for Refunds on Cans and Bottles]. Please register your name as an AFROCAB supporter, so Peter can show government that Container Deposit Legislation does have wide public support. E-mail Peter at pcook@wildcoast.net.au with your name and contact details.

The need for the community action is urgent because our problem with beverage litter is cumulative. Every year billions more bottles and cans are added to those that are already taking up finite landfill space or degrading our environment.

Mystery Flower No More

In our last edition we highlighted a mystery flower discovered in our Reserve. Our thanks go to Lorraine Marshall of the Department of Sustainability and Environment who narrowed it down to *Tricoryne elatior* or *Hypoxis glabella*.

Interesting Flower Found in Reserve



Bracteantha viscosa is commonly known as **Sticky Everlasting**.

This is a daisy flower and the centre, which is made up of many crowded individual flowers, makes a good landing platform for pollinators. Butterflies (especially Painted Ladies) are often seen visiting these flowers. Ants are commonly found there too, although their role and whether they are involved in pollination is not known.

Timelines (March – June)

- Many Sweet Pittosporum trees bearing fruit throughout the Reserve.
- A flock of Gang Gang Cockatoos continued to frequent the Reserve during Autumn right up to the last week of May

Help reduce damage by 4WD vehicles and trail bikes and dumping of rubbish within the Reserve by reporting illegal activities to the **Shire of Yarra Ranges Ranger** on **1300 368 333** 24hours/7 days a week.

Our Reserve Birds

The Brown Falcon *falco berigora*

Drive along Glenfern Road and you may catch a glimpse of this magnificent bird resting from hunting on the dead branch of a tree. With barred underwings, a rounded tail and long legs, the brown falcon has a vocal repertoire of raucous cackles and screeches. Avoiding close forests it has been seen over the Reserve grasslands where it preys upon smaller birds and mammals such as rabbits and a variety of rodents.



Working Bees

Working bees are held every 3rd alternating Saturday or Sunday morning of the month. Members, Committee and interested supporters meet on-site to take part in weeding, rubbish removal and inspections of previously weeded areas. Everyone is welcome.

Entry for cars is via the Parks Victoria (Fire Access) gate on Glenfern Rd, Upwey (about ½ way along the land) The site reference is Melways 74G10. Please bring gloves, hand tools, water, and, depending on the weather, a hat or wet weather gear. In the event of inclement weather the working bee will be cancelled.

Next working bee is scheduled for Sunday 17 July 2005 (Tree Planting Day - see feature article in this issue) at 9.30am - 12.30pm

Upcoming working bee days: Saturday 20 August and Sunday 18 September.

First Aid Requirements at Working Bees

Due to changes in the laws covering occupational health and safety after the 1st of July 2005, a Level 2 First Aider must be at all working bees and all volunteers must first read a set of conditions before signing the attendance sheet. **This is very much in the interests of all to ensure you are covered by accident insurance.** We have been working with the Shire to clarify the paperwork requirements and also to find training courses for committee members. It is likely that the Shire will provide courses to ensure community groups are covered. Meanwhile at least 2 members will soon start courses to ensure we are covered in the longer term.

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Thank you Wormhole Books

Sandy has been a corporate sponsor of the Friends group since its inception and was generous enough to collect membership dues and to display our event advertisements. We are extremely grateful for this support and assistance and wish Sandy all the best in her new venture in Belgrave Heights.

Wormhole Books are now focused on marketing books over the internet and so why not visit them at www.wormhole.com.au to browse the catalogue of this excellent bookstore with its wide array of fiction and non-fiction (and an extensive natural history section too!). Of course, you can still visit the bookshop as well!

With Wormhole Books moving we have made arrangements for convenient collection of dues at the Shire of Yarra Ranges Branch Office in Main Street Upwey. Anyone wishing to pay membership fees can now simply walk into the office, pay the fee and collect a receipt.