

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



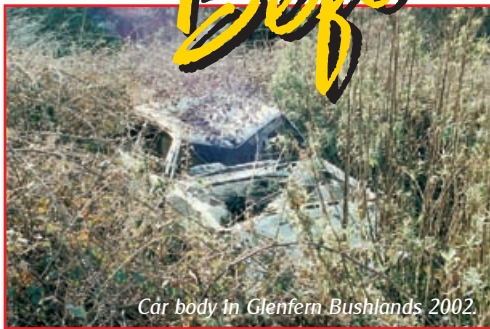
The Glenfern

The Official Newsletter of The Friends of Glenfern Valley Bushlands Inc.
Edition No. 28 Spring/Summer 2011

Glenfern Valley Bushlands 10th Birthday



Before



After



In mid-2001 two Upwey locals recognised the value of a neglected 40-hectare parcel of land on the south-western edge of the Shire of Yarra Ranges. Under the leadership of Serg Zaccaria and Sarah Tebbutt a public campaign was launched to form an action group. Soon afterwards, the land was formally reserved and The Friends of Glenfern Valley Bushlands was formed so that rehabilitation of the heavily weed infested area surrounding a former quarry site could begin.

The reserve includes a range of habitats including Riparian Forest, Herb Rich Foothills Forest and the rare Valley Grassy Forest which attract more than eighty species of birds; many are seasonal migrants and include significant species such as the Rufous Fantail. The plant list exceeds two hundred indigenous species with many of regional significance such as the Yellow Star. It forms a vital part of the wildlife corridor linking Ferntree Gully and Lysterfield National Parks. Recognition of the worth of these natural values has motivated the Friends in their activities.

Over the past ten years many people have come together to achieve the fantastic results you can see on your visits to this wonderful reserve today. Government, both State and Federal have seen fit to give grants for fencing, weed removal and tree planting. The Yarra Ranges Council have been behind us every step of the way with assistance from contractors and the Environment Dept and Bush Crew, not to mention Councillor Noel Cliff who is one of our most ardent supporters.

The local community and people from further afield have lent their support and a huge number of volunteer hours clearing rubbish, weeding, removing thousands of boneseed and sweet pittosporum, which still keep appearing from seed stored in the soil.

Many of our volunteers have attended training sessions and short courses to learn more about the natural environment which has enabled us to maximise progress while minimizing impact on the indigenous vegetation.

Contractors have been employed using grant monies to remove larger infestations of woody weeds; the results of this work can be seen in the eastern end of the reserve. Tree planting has been carried out recently to help restore indigenous plants which have been lost due to the dominance of introduced weeds.

In celebrating 10 years of progress at Glenfern Valley Bushlands, the Friends Group would like to invite the community and all of our past, current (and future!) members to visit the reserve on Sunday 16th October. Planning is well under way for a fantastic celebration and to thank you for so much hard work.



friends of Glenfern Valley Bushlands Inc.

Wild Tobacco Tree *Solanum mauritianum*.

A small tree up to 4 metres. Leaves are sage green, up to 30cm x 15cm. Hairs on both sides of the leaves. This species invades coastal vegetation, grassland, grassy woodland, damp to wet sclerophyll forest, riparian vegetation, rainforest margins, plantation forests, pasture and disturbed areas including roadsides.

Its common names include Woolly Nightshade, Ear-leaved Nightshade, Flannel Weed, Bugweed, Tobacco Weed, Tobacco Bush, Wild Tobacco and Kerosene Plant. (Not to be confused with "Tobacco tree" in South Australia – *Nicotiana glauca* which has yellow tubular flowers.)

Wild Tobacco is poisonous and handling the plants can cause irritation and nausea. The dust from the plant can cause respiratory problems if exposure is prolonged. All parts of the *Solanum mauritianum* plant are poisonous to humans, especially the berries, which can be fatal if consumed.

This is ranked No. 14 most invasive environmental weed in Yarra Ranges.

Some suitable replacement plants in your garden or bushland are Musk Daisy Bush (*Olearia agrophylla*) or Kangaroo Apple (*Solanum aviculare*). Local Indigenous plants are available from Southern Dandenong Community Nursery at Birdland or Knox Environment Society, beside Ferntree Gully Library.



Planet ARK Tree Planting Day

On the 31st of July we were joined by over 40 people – some from outside our Shire – to plant 300 trees and shrubs in an area previously cleared of woody weeds.

It was a long walk from the carpark, and very hard work planting amongst the existing grasses and shrubs.

We would like to thank all of those who supported this day and enabled us to achieve so much.



Cr Noel Cliff with Outdoor and Environmental Students replanting along Serg's Track



Fairhills High School Planting Day / Caring for Our Country Planting on Serg's Track

Although it looks like a war zone (as one of our members was heard to mutter – "A war on Pittos!") at the moment, it is always surprising how fast Mother Nature works. The regeneration of native species will, in a very short time, cover the disrupted ground. Without the Federal Government Grant, it would have been impossible for the Friends to have tackled this project. It is a great step forward to regain an area of the reserve so severely degraded by woody weeks.

On Friday the 18th of September, twenty senior year students from Fairhills High School arrived to help plant trees in the area once overrun by Pittosporum. The Outdoor and Environmental Studies students swapped their classroom for the bush to gain direct experience of a community driven environmental project.

Although there will be natural regeneration, we are giving this area a helping hand by planting indigenous species to rapidly achieve a diversity of vegetation, and to create habitat for our birds and animals.



FRIENDS OF GLENFERN VALLEY BUSHLANDS

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Thursday 20th October 7.30pm Upwey Township Hall

All welcome to attend. Come and hear what we have been doing and what we are planning for the future

President's Report – Spring 2011

They say that you should be careful what you wish for. The drought-breaking rains of the past two seasons have pumped incredible energy into the Reserve. If you take a walk along any of the tracks now, you can feel the power of nature, and one is reminded of one's place in the scheme of things. I'm reminded too of how lucky we are to have saved the reserve those short ten years ago, but I digress ...

Unfortunately for us, the surge of growth is not restricted to our indigenous (local) plants. The weed species love the conditions too, and we know that even as strong as we are as a Friends Group, our work will be cut out for us in the next few years to maintain today's standard of vegetation.

We also wished that we could secure more funding to assist us with some larger scale works. We've frankly been overwhelmed by the support we've received from the Federal Government's

Caring for Our Country scheme (two successful grant applications), Melbourne Water's stream-side protection scheme (four consecutive annual grants) and Yarra Ranges Council assistance with capital works (generous funding for entrance and track works). In pursuit of our goal to involve community, we also have been successful in our application for a Cultural Grant to recognise the significance of the Indigenous People, and we're excited where this may lead.

With these successes come the prospect of more hard work, but we're not frightened of that – the rewards are great. However, this leads me nicely into a sales pitch to encourage you, dear reader, to think about giving us a hand. There are all sorts of things to be involved in, and at the level that you decide. We promise that we won't overwhelm you, that we're friendly, welcoming and we thoroughly enjoy what we're doing. Why not give us a ring now – you won't regret it!

One thing we wish for now is to wave a magic wand so that the Green Wedge land, neighbouring Glenfern Valley Bushlands, will be saved from development. Despite 1100 signatures opposing the development, and rejection by Knox Council, the proposal was heard by VCAT recently. We stood beside Knox Council and the Save the Green Wedge Group at VCAT to object to the plan. In our view, it is under-valued as an important aesthetic and environmental buffer and we're hoping that long-term Community interests will prevail over short term financial benefit to few.

I don't think you should be too careful about what you wish for. Dreams provide the best incentives and surprising twists. Our ten year journey to date has been full of adventure and learning and I can't wait to see how the story unfolds from here.

See you soon

Andrew

Friends of Glenfern Valley Bushlands

10th BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

Sunday 16th October

Displays, Food, Guided Walks. Catch up with old friends and make new ones.

Everyone is welcome to come and celebrate all the hard work which has gone into 10 years of:

- ✔ Encouraging community involvement;
- ✔ Having this wonderful area reserved for public use;
- ✔ Clearing rubbish, weeding, planting, planning;
- ✔ Applying for grants, learning about the environment and animals;
- ✔ Making new friends and learning new skills.



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WORKING BEE DIARY 2011

- ✳ Saturday 17th September *Serg's Track East to Depot Track* Follow up Caring for Country Grant work. Expand grassy patches. Work above and around depot
- ✳ Sunday 17th October **DISCOVERY DAY and OUR 10th BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION (10.00 till 2.00)**
- ✳ Sunday 20th November (Please note date change) *Riparian Area between Wildflower and Sarah's Tracks*
- ✳ Saturday 10th December *Picnic in the park to celebrate a fantastic year!* From 5.30pm BYO picnic dinner

9.30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. (Morning Tea 11-ish)
Central car park, Glenfern Road, Upwey
Melway Map 74 G10

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, planting and talks about indigenous plants, animals and weed ID.

Everyone is welcome!

Entry for cars is via the Parks Victoria (Fire Access) gate on Glenfern Road, Upwey (about ½ way along the reserve) Site reference is Melways 74 G10.

Bring a water bottle and depending on the weather, a hat or wet weather gear. In the event of a Fire Ban or inclement weather the working bee will be cancelled.

By being a financial member of Friends of Glenfern Valley Bushlands, you enable the group to gain valuable Funding Grants to help us with works in the reserve.

If you would like to become a financial member, please download the membership form from our website at: www.glenfernvalleybushlands.org.au

Membership is only: \$5 Concession, \$10 Individual, \$15 Family or \$50 for a business sponsor.

What's On?

Weed Trade Day

Hazel Vale Valley Tecoma Melways 75 D11
Sausage sizzle (including veggie burgers)
DATE: Sunday October 23rd TIME: 11-4pm
Exchange weeds from your garden for indigenous plants from Southern Dandenongs Community Nursery
CONTACT:
Anne Elizabeth aneliz@hotmail.net.au Ph: 9754 5997

Bat Workshop

with Ian Kitchen from Field Naturalists Bat Group
19th November (Evening – Walk & Talk)
CONTACT:
Belgrave South Community House Ph: 9754 2274

Corporate Sponsor:

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Call 9543 7677 for all your printing needs.

Thank you to **Fiskars Australia**
for the donation of two pairs of Loppers

Thank you to **Hazard Solutions**
for the donation of our new gate!

Sometimes people's kindnesses take you totally by surprise. When Graham Smith told us he was donating this awesome gate, we were blown away. Not only did it give our Group a huge boost of morale, it also allows us to apply the money, which we worked hard to raise, towards another project.

Brilliant Graham! Thank you!



Report rubbish dumping to:
Shire of Yarra Ranges
Ph: 1300 368 333

Friends of Glenfern Valley Bushlands Inc.

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- www.glenfernvalleybushlands.org.au



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