

Newsletter

No.5 Autumn 2003



Photo by Roger Vize

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.

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What's been happening?

With the commitment of funding from the Shire of Yarra Ranges and the Department of Sustainability and Environment, the recently formed Committee of Management has now held several meetings. Following a meeting on site with representatives from each department it has been agreed that the following initial works will be undertaken as soon as possible:

Two large signs with the name of the reserve will be erected on Glenfern Road. In addition prohibition signs will be put up around the site to discourage 4X4 vehicles, motorbikes and illegal dumping of cars and rubbish. Physical barriers to stop illegal access and final removal of the existing dumped cars and rubbish will reinforce this.

There will be re-modelling of the New Road, Glenfern Road corner to allow a limited space for a carpark and create a pedestrian entrance on to the site.

Furthermore, greater maintenance of the Glenfern Road grass strip and the adjacent fire break within the reserve will show the community that the site is being cared for.

Within the reserve, to help protect the flora and fauna, a number of smaller tracks will be closed and other tracks created directed away from fragile areas.

Come See What's Out There

It's quite amazing what's living on our doorstep down at Glen Fern Valley Bushlands. Our Fauna Survey Team of Ian, Laurie and Mark have conducted over 60 surveys since our Friends Of Group was established in late 2001. So far we have sighted 86 bird species and 20 mammal and reptile species within the Reserve. When you add a further 28 bird species sighted over adjoining Lysterfield Valley and at Gilmour Park the bird species count is well over the ton...and it's still growing by the month!

During the summer months Glenfern Valley is visited by species including the Sacred Kingfisher, Rufous Whistlers and Rufous Fantails. Presently we are seeing good numbers of Gang-gang Cockatoos passing through on their annual autumn migration and several sighting of the beautiful Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo.

As we move towards Winter we expect to catch up again with several Robin species. Eastern Yellow Robins are permanent residents but the winter months have in the past brought Scarlet and Rose Robins into the area. Based on last year's observations we should also begin to hear Fan-tailed Cuckoos again then, to be followed in Spring by other cuckoo species sighted here, the Pallid, Horsefields-bronze, Shining-bronze and the Brush.

And there's always the buzz of catching a glimpse of a koala, swamp wallaby or echidna. Just be mindful we have snakes as well.

So come and have a look at the treasures we have here. You'll see parrots and honeyeaters and maybe even a Brown Goshawk sending the bush birds into a frenzy of alarm calls or an Wedge-tailed or Little Eagle soaring high overhead. It's amazing what's out there.

Who we are.....

We think its time to introduce the founders of the Friends of Glen Fern Valley Bushlands, Sarah Tebbutt and Serg Zaccaria, for without their initial vision and dedication, you wouldn't receive this newsletter.

Sarah and Serg live in Upwey and have offered endless time, energy and resources to the project, which has been an excellent example of how 2 people's vision can give birth to a reality.

Sarah and Serg frequented the bushlands on their weekly walks. One day whilst

visiting the park Serg spotted a koala, sleeping soundly in one of the trees. At that moment he was struck with the idea to try and find out the status of the land and to protect it from development. That was in August 2001. In September 2001 after canvassing Upwey and the surrounding areas a public meeting was called at the DRCCC with over 100 members of the community coming together.

One and a half years on, a strong committee, over 65 memberships from the local community and funding from the Shire of Yarra Ranges and Department of Natural Resources has enabled this project to become the vision that the committee established at the very beginning. A big cheer for Sarah and Serg and their great efforts!

A note to members

There is always room for some new faces on the committee and we would welcome any contribution members can make to the running of the group. If you have a particular interest in flora or fauna, this is the group for you. If you would like to help out, please contact Serg Zaccaria or Sarah Tebbutt on the number given above.

The local/state Government is behind our group and recognises the valuable contribution we are making to the cause of local environmental conservation. This recognition has only been won because we are a very active group and because we represent the voice of the community. This requires a healthy database of members and your active participation.

- *Working bees.* Every 3rd Sunday of the month (except for April) Members, Committee and interested supporters meet on-site to take part in a working bee. To date about 8 acres of weeds are under control and natural regeneration is occurring. It is amazing to see what a small group of people can achieve in such a short period of time. The work on the site will be on going for many years and as the saying goes “many hands make light work”. At our March working bee we cleared half an acre of bushland of Boneseed and Pittosporum and temporarily blocked two access points along Glenfern Road to deter illegal vehicle access.
- *Flora and Fauna Surveys.* Our Fauna and Flora groups regularly carry out survey work. If you are interested in attending a survey, please contact the group.
- *Committee meetings.* The committee meets once a month and we welcome the attendance of Members. Please contact us using the details above if you'd like to attend.

Coming up

Working Bee: Sunday 13th April 2003, 9.30am - 12.30pm.

Please bring gloves, hand tools, water, and, depending on the weather, a hat or wet weather gear. 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.

Next committee meeting: Wednesday 9th April 2003 at Ruby's 7.30 p.m.

Website

Our website is now up and running, so please check it out for breaking news and other information (local weeds etc). We hope to have other information on the site, such as photos and archived newsletters in the near future. A big thanks to Roger Vize for his work on this site. <http://glenfermbushlands.tripod.com>

Newsletter Contributions/Feedback:

Do you have any ideas or feedback for our newsletter, it's your newsletter. Would you like to share some of your knowledge, experiences, with our group? If so drop a line to our editors Linda and Mark for possible inclusion into future newsletters.

Corporate Sponsors

Ruby's Café, Burwood Highway, Belgrave. Phone 9754 7445 for bookings.

Upwey and District Community Bank, 30-32 Main St., Upwey. Phone 9754 1200 for all your banking needs.

Pig & Whistle Tavern, 1429 Mt Dandenong Tourist Road, Mt Dandenong. Phone 9751-2366

Dandenong Ranges Pest control- Contact Glenn Dawson on 0405 605 888 for environmentally friendly and traditional pest control.

Naturally, any other businesses out there that can assist us would also be sure to receive a mention in our newsletter!

As a business you can sponsor our newsletter for as little as \$50 per edition (4 per year). Newsletter distribution is 200 local households.

Let us know if we can help you with your business.



Hope you all have a safe and happy Easter from the new editors Linda and Mark,
and the rest of the Committee.