

Newsletter

No.9 Winter 2004



Photo by Sarah Tebbutt

Our Mission: 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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Reserve Officially Opened

Our Reserve was officially opened on April 27 by Victoria's Planning Minister, Mary Delahunty. The day was the culmination of three years hard work by our Friends Group, the local community, the Shire of Yarra Ranges and the Department of Sustainability and Environment. Pictured above are FOGVB President Serg Zaccaria, Streeton Ward Councillor Noel Cliff, Mary Delahunty and James Merlino, MLA for Monbulk.

A Message from our President

Dear Members and Supporters.

As we enter our fourth year it is with great optimism and sense of achievement. To date we have been able to ensure that the land is reserved and will not be sold off or developed. A real possibility only a few years ago.

We now have the land managed under the Shire of Yarra Ranges and they have a program in place to further improve the reserve in the coming years. Some of the improvements that will occur in the next year or two are, fencing for the reserve, upgrades to tracks and an on-going weed reduction program.

The \$100,000 that has been sourced for the reserve has partly been spent on past works, signage and on the reserves management plan. To date the shire has approx \$60,000 left, to spend on the reserve. The fencing of the site will take the bulk of this money (The fencing quotes are in the order \$40,000 to \$50,000) with the rest of the money to be spent on tracks and weed management.

On this note I would like to point out that the friends of group does not manage this money or have it in its possession, the 'Friends of Group' role is to source the funds and to pass these funds directly to the management authority (The Shire Of Yarra Ranges).

The 'Friends of Group' only income is your membership and donations. Current membership and donations amount to an income for the friends of group of less than \$1000 per year.

Today the reserve has far less rubbish dumping, 4-wheel drive and motor bike damage occurring, but it will take a few more years for these activities to cease.

Regular users of the reserve can play a role in this, by talking to the motorbike riders and 4-wheel drivers and pointing out that the land is now reserved and if caught fines will be imposed (Regular police patrols of the area are now occurring and the Police Motorbike Squad is regularly on site).

It is hoped that by using education rather than the 'Big stick' approach, these users will use the area in more sensitive manner.

Illegal rubbish dumpers and other suspicious activities such as stolen vehicles, should **NOT** be approached, but details taken and reported to the police on the emergency number "000".

These achievements could not have occurred without your support and energy. We should all be proud of these achievements. **Public land retained in public hands.**

Thank you and Best Wishes

Serg Zaccaria

President-Friends of Glen Fern Valley Bushlands

Nest Boxes for Wildlife – A Practical Guide

by Alan & Stacey Franks Book Review by Ian Rainbow

This delightful book (Blooming's Books, Melbourne 2003) is a pleasure to read in all respects. The format, choice of colours, quality of the photography and other graphics combine to present the subject matter in a particularly interesting way. Nest box design, customised for many species of bird and mammal, is covered thoroughly and based on success in the field. Practical directions, clear dimensions and very importantly a description of each species varied needs and preferences for particular dimensions of the appropriate nest box are all given, supported by many clear pictures of examples in use by animals.

The book is particularly good in presenting the rationale for providing nest boxes, summarised in the foreword by Ric Natrass "...nest boxes can and do contribute to conservation. When the vegetation is regrowth, and before hollows have had time to form, nest boxes can speed up the re-colonisation of hollow-nesting or hollow-roosting species, providing a vital element in the life cycle of this fauna until natural hollows have had time to form." And further from this the benefits nest boxes can bring in tree plantations as the occupants eat insect pests and fertilise the trees are also made apparent.

The entertaining quotes and poetry scattered through the text add to the charm of this book. Considerable information about the animals, birds and insects for which the nest hollows cater is given in a very readable way. An interesting & informative read in every way, whether or not you build nest boxes. If ever we need to consider nest boxes in Glen Fern Valley Bushlands, here's the definitive guide. Highly recommended.

Coming Events

Working Bees

Our working bee scheduled for the rest of 2004 is

Sunday 15 August at 9.30am - 12.30pm

Saturday 18th September, 9.30am - 12.30pm

Sunday 17th October (Discover Glenfern/Weedbusters Day), 9.30am - 12.30pm

Saturday 20th November, 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 Fire Access gate on Glenfern Rd, Upwey (about ½ way along the land). The site reference is Melways 74G10.

Working bees are held every 3rd alternating Saturday or Sunday morning of the month

Special Event: Monbulk Creek Planting Day

At Southern Dandenong's Community Nursery Inc

When: Sunday 12th September 2004, 9am-12pm

Where: Meet in the main car park of Birdland Reserve in Belgrave Heights (Mel.Ref. 84 B2) and follow the signs.

What to bring: Good footwear, **Gum boots**, gloves, suitably warm clothes and a rain coat.

Planting tools and morning tea will be provided by the Southern Dandenongs Community Nursery.

The planting will take place along Monbulk Creek -make sure to come if you can, everyone is welcome.

The planting is part of the SDCN's long term commitment to helping restore the Monbulk Creek Corridor, linking the Dandenong Ranges National Park and Lysterfield Park which houses one of the largest footprints of native vegetation in Melbourne. The Powerful Owl, Platypus, Native Marsupial Bush and Water Rats, and Yellow-bellied Glider are just a small number of many other fauna species commonly making their homes along this important biological corridor. So far we have planted over 20,000 indigenous plants along the creek environs. Help protect and conserve the environment and come planting with your family. Children receive a Tree Planting certificate.

The Friends of Glen Fern Valley Inc strongly encourage all our members and supporters to attend this planting day to strengthen the ties between our two groups. The SDCN are big supporters of our Discover Glenfern & Weedbusting Event on Sunday October 17, contributing plants, tools and expertise. See you there!! It'll be a great change from ripping weeds out!

Discover Glenfern/Weedbusters Day 17th October

Discover Glenfern/Weed Busters day at Glenfern Bushlands, in conjunction with the Southern Dandenongs Community Nursery, to be held on **Sunday October 17th, 9:30 -12:30, guided tours, weeding, planting, plant give aways and other activities to be announced soon.**

The Eastern Spinebill

photo courtesy birdssa.asn.au



A small honeyeater (13-16 cms in length) with a long thin bill, the Eastern Spinebill is a year long resident of our Reserve. Its call is described as a 'rapid piping'. They can be easily attracted into gardens by planting flowering bushes such a pineapple sage and correas. A beautiful bird by any standard.

Many Thanks

We would like to thank Cr Noel Cliff for his generous donation of a chainsaw to the Friends Group. It has already been put to good use in toppling some of the larger weeds during our working bees such as mature boneseed and pittosporum trees

Membership Drive 2004

Welcome to our new members

Thank you if you have recently joined our group or renewed your membership. We are only as capable as your support. If you have not as yet joined or renewed, please consider joining our group, in this way we will be able to replicate the achievements of the past few years well into the future.

Corporate Sponsors

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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 (3 to 4 editions per year). Newsletter distribution is 200 local households. Let us know if



friends of Glen Fern Valley Bushlands Inc.

we can help you with your business

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 editor Mark Fanthorpe for possible inclusion into future newsletters.

Mark Fanthorpe
Editor