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FROM THE
PRESIDENT
**Patrick
Flanagan**

We can only hope that warmer weather will arrive with spring as there are a number of activities the Friends are associated with that will be even more pleasurable with some fine, warm weather.

We have a busy September in store beginning with the ANGAIR Wildflower Show on the weekend of the 22nd-23rd. As usual, the Friends will have a presence with our display in the usual spot. Come and visit. Even better, if you have some time to help us out by contributing some of your time, please email us at friendsofeasternotways@gmail.com.



Our Vice-President, Peter Crowcroft, wearing his Possum Pete hat, is organising a wildlife survey as part of GORCC's September Biodiversity Month. The survey will run right throughout the month. If you are interested in being part of his citizen science project, further information is enclosed with this newsletter.



Finally, the Anglesea area is being visited early in October by members of the Australian Naturalists Network. Their 2018 Get-together is being co-organised by Geraldine Harris who, with her husband Geoffrey, are members of the Friends. On the weekend of the October 6th & 7th you may see participants out and about in the Anglesea Heath, enjoying our wildflowers and native orchids. Our resident expert, Margaret MacDonald, will be showing off the floral jewels of the Great Otway National Park.



FAREWELL TO A SPECIAL FRIEND - LACHIE RICHARDSON

We were very sad to lose our dear and enthusiastic Friend, Lachie Richardson, on June 1 this year. He was 85.

Although we are not sure exactly when Lachie joined the Friends of Eastern Otways, he was on the Committee in 2004 and elected Treasurer of the group at the Annual General Meeting in 2011. He resigned from this position in February 2014, although he stayed on the Committee until the death of his beloved wife Joan in March 2016. Despite his own deteriorating health, Lachie still joined in all our activities.



Above: Lachie sharing his knowledge of the Otways with Ranger Lindsay Guinane.

He had very good knowledge of the social history of the Otway towns and the railway connections to the timber working sites - of which there is little evidence now with the sites being overgrown. He was very involved in marking the tracks for our *Guide to Walks in Angahook-Lorne State Park*. He helped with weeding projects and was always on hand to ensure that the BBQ was safely in operation for our end of year combined activity with ANGAIR.

Lachie was just one of those people who was always there, and he is sadly missed. We send our thoughts and best wishes to the members of Lachie's family who were so supportive and close to him. **Margaret MacDonald.**

An enthusiastic bushwalker Lachie knew every track, river and creek in the Otways and was only too happy to share that knowledge with others. He took us on many exciting and challenging walks guiding us along barely formed bush tracks to remote waterfalls in the Park, and sometimes to places some of us had never before heard of.

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Above: Former Treasurer Lachie on BBQ duties with current Treasurer Ross Davey.



ENVIRONMENTAL WEEDING

EUMERALLA PROGRAM

The winter program was carried out on the Eumeralla site close to the entrance to the Scout Camp. There was some confusion regarding the management of the site – rangers from the Scout Camp were adamant that it was not their responsibility, but maps for the area identified it as being just west of the Great Otway National Park. However as weeds know no boundaries it was irrelevant who is the land manager responsible, and we swiftly got to work.

Our main target was a dense stand of Red Honey-myrtle *Melaleuca hypericifolia* that we believe was planted many years ago. Sweet Hakea *Hakea drupacea* was also very abundant. Our three sessions saw a huge impact, and we will be working with staff at the Scout Camp and Parks Vic Rangers to ensure the project is completed.

Spring program – Anglesea Heathlands.

Tuesdays September 11, October 9 & November 13
Meet in O'Donohue Rd north of Great Ocean Road at 9.30am.
Contact Margaret MacDonald 0412 652 419

This site is of particular interest to the Friends group as we carried out extensive weeding in the area following a major control burn in 2004. Boneseed was the main target at that stage. Over the years the Friends have coordinated many other environmental, community and school groups to help control the environmental weeds following the burn, and we have been very excited at the restored heathland we helped to create. The site was burnt again in March this year and we are now keen to get in there to work once again to conserve the area.



Above; The weeding group takes a break from making an impact on the weeds at the Eumeralla site.



COMING EVENTS

ANGAIR WILDFLOWER WEEKEND & ART EXHIBITION

Saturday & Sunday September 22 & 23

10am – 4.30pm

Anglesea Hall, McMillan St, Anglesea

Contact: Margaret MacDonald 0412 652 419

Enjoy the show's range of wonderful displays and activities relating to the flora and fauna of the local area.

Learn about the amazing animals and plants that live in the Great Otway National Park and take part in a nature ramble or a guided wildflower walk.

Our display focuses on the rainforest - birds, mammals, reptiles, invertebrates and fungi, and includes images of wildlife found on our mammal camera surveys.



WILDFLOWER WALK

Saturday October 20

10am – 2.30pm

Meet at ANGAIR 10am

Contact: Margaret 0412 652 419

Location TBA closer to the date depending where we can see the best flowering of our



beautiful indigenous species.

Wear sensible walking clothes, hat and shoes. BYO lunch.

OLD BEECHY RAIL TRAIL

Guided E-bike ride

Saturday November 17

Meet Aireys Inlet Community Centre 9am

Limited numbers

Bookings & pre-payment essential

Contact: Sue Guinness 0407 070 641

Riding on pedal assist E-bikes meander through rolling hills, rich farmland and lush forest, and under magnificent Eucalypts and Blackwoods.

Alternatively you can enjoy a peaceful walk while others ride the rail trail.

Our guide will explain points of interest along the way. 2 hour return ride starting at Gellibrand. BYO drinks and lunch. Electric BBQ's available.

Morning tea snacks provided.

FEO members \$35.00. Non-members \$45.00





FRIENDS' ACTIVITIES SINCE OUR LAST NEWSLETTER

ANNUAL KOALA COUNT - June 16



Although predictions of wet, cold and windy conditions on the day of our annual koala count proved to be true, seven people braved the elements including Patrick's six-year-old grandson, James to undertake our Annual Koala Count.

The starting point for the survey was at the usual place on Grey River Road in the National Park. The walk commenced at 11.00am and we decided to have lunch at the conclusion of the survey. The conditions, and the lack of light made finding koalas difficult, and we walked for quite a long way before we glimpsed our first two koalas, one on each side of the road.

By the time we reached the turning point we had recorded only 15 sightings. The forest was quiet except for some small birds foraging, a White-eared Honeyeater and a few White-throated Treecreepers. We did spot a koala curled up asleep in a tree fork only to be disturbed by a

Grey Shrike Thrush which settled momentarily on the koala's head.

Along the ridge the rain was constant and severely hampered our survey. We arrived back at the car park at 12.30 having recorded our lowest ever number of koalas since we began our annual counts. Our total was only 31.

We have carried out koala counts since 1997. In that year we counted 35 koalas. In following years the numbers increased and in 2008 we counted 144 and that was the highest number of koalas we have seen on our surveys.

We drove back to Wye River where we had lunch at the covered barbeque area on the beach and watched the huge waves crashing onto the shore. **Kaye Traynor**



Top: Despite the adverse weather, hardy members of the Friends of Eastern Otways continued with the Annual Koala Count along Grey River Road.

Left: Patrick Flanagan points out a koala to grandson James.

Right: James watching the waves crashing on the shore at Wye River.





FRIENDS' ACTIVITIES SINCE OUR LAST NEWSLETTER

LEMONADE CREEK TRACK - 30 June

Eight people arrived to participate in the Lemonade Creek Walk, re-scheduled because of unsuitable weather earlier this year. When we met amid heavy rain and leaden skies, we considered once again whether to proceed. Six of us decided to push on to Blanket Leaf picnic ground and attempt the walk to Erskine Falls.

The forest was green and lush after rainfall and Lemonade Creek was running very quickly. There were some splendid forms of fungi along the way.

We heard White-throated Tree-creepers, Eastern Yellow Robins, White-browed Scrubwrens, Brown Thornbills, Superb Fairy Wrens and just before we reached Blanket-leaf picnic ground, observed a

Bassian Thrush foraging amongst the leaf litter.

Our arrival back at the carpark was later than usual, about 3.00pm, but we were pleased to have persevered with the conditions and enjoyed the walk through a very beautiful area of the National Park.



Red-Necked Wallaby rescue...

While travelling along Erskine Falls Road on the way to Lemonade Creek Track, we came across a very young female Red-necked Wallaby struggling in the middle of the road. We stopped to assist the injured animal and move it off the road. Patrick

eventually succeeded in placing his jacket over the animal as it lay on the ground, while Phil and Alison's waterproof blanket seemed to subdue and relax it.

Surf Coast Animal Rescue Service was called and Margaret and Kaye waited for help to arrive.

Eventually the Wallaby was lifted into a hessian bag and taken to a vet to be assessed.

We were later informed it had been taken to Jirrahlinga, but an X-ray had shown that her back was broken and unfortunately she didn't survive.

We are very grateful for the service provided by animal rescue and wildlife carers. There is no doubt that native animals face many dangers in the wild and the dedication shown by animal welfare workers plays a large part in alleviating much of their suffering and distress.

Kaye Traynor



Above: Kaye Traynor with Grant from Surf Coast Animal Rescue Service.



ERSKINE FALLS DONATION BOX SIGN

The Friends are in the process of having a new sign and donation box installed at Erskine Falls. Over the years a considerable amount has been received from public donations. These funds have enabled the Friends to implement important projects within the National Park.

In July the new sign was printed and delivered. It features some local flora and fauna beautifully drawn by Kaye Traynor, as well as a message in Mandarin which reads: 'Donate your warm heart and share the beauty'.

In due course it will be attached to a re-vamped donation box which is presently being designed. We are hopeful that it will all be completed in time for the Christmas holidays.

Left: Kaye Traynor and Margaret MacDonal with the new sign for the Erskine Falls donation box.



FRIENDS' ACTIVITIES SINCE OUR LAST NEWSLETTER

PT ADDIS & IRONBARK BASIN - July 21

Fourteen people gathered at the Ironbark Basin carpark and in perfect walking weather set off for our planned walk. Having cleaned our shoes at the *Phytophthora cinnamomi* (Dieback) check stations we walked along the small track adjacent to the Great Ocean Rd towards Hurst Rd and Eumeralla.

We discovered some out-of-control Bluebell Creeper dominating the local plant species. Continuing through to Eumeralla the sun appeared and we were pleased to see a male Scarlet Robin.

We were not so pleased to find many deer tracks. Hugh and Ollie were excited to feast on the nectar from the Honeypots flowers that were in full bloom. The heath and Myrtle Wattle were flowering well and there was moss, lichen and some samples of fungi.

The birds seemed to be flocking and feeding together so we stopped for morning tea to observe the sittellas, numerous Eastern Spinebills, Pardelotes, treecreepers and honeyeaters. Along Hurst Rd we found a little patch of Mosquito Orchids *Acianthus pusillus* and some Tall Greenhoods *Pterostylis melagramma* in bud, and a patch of Dwarf Greenhoods *Pterostylis nana* just coming out.

We had beautiful views of the ocean but did not see any whales. At the lookout we stopped for lunch noting the earlier high tide had cut into the dune. Fortunately we had low tide and plenty of sand to walk on. Some of us finished the walk with a visit to nearby Bowside Café, while others continued through the Koori walk and the nature trail back to the cars. There were few birds in Ironbark Basin, and most of the Ironbarks seemed to have finished flowering. Nodding and Tall Greenhoods were seen on the Koori trail. The birdlist for the walk totalled 22. **Alison Watson.**



Top: On a beautiful July day our walkers on the Pt Addis & Ironbark Basin Walk stopped to enjoy the view at the lookout.

Left: A brief stop for a photo opportunity.

Below left: Hugh and Ollie enjoying the nectar from the Honeypots.

Below: Margaret MacDonald and Kaye Traynor on the beach heading towards Pt Addis.





FRIENDS' ACTIVITIES SINCE OUR LAST NEWSLETTER

HARRISON TRACK NORTH - August 18

Despite the forecast of rain, hail and thunder, 10 of us walked on the former Anglesea Heath in the newly declared section of the Great Otway National Park. For the most part we had blue skies, although we kept a watchful eye on the darkening skies to the west.

Early signs of spring were apparent as we walked the area – the wattles were in flower, Sweet Wattle, Golden Wattle and Myrtle Wattle all lighting up the landscape.

Dusty Miller was in full bloom, a great patch of the rose-red flowers as the Prickly Cryptandra flowers were ageing, Leafless Bitter-pea showed its apricot-coloured flowers, Rosy Baeckia was scattered along the track, Spike Beard Heath was just coming into flower in one of the damper areas, yellow guinea flowers caught our eyes, and we even found a few Early Nancy flowers on the edge of Shiney Eye Track.

In a few months the river valley will be covered with the yellow flowers of the Scented Paperbark. For most of the walk White-throated Treecreepers and White-eared Honeyeaters could be heard and we were treated to the sight of a Wedge-tailed Eagle soaring overhead.

The vastness of the Anglesea river valley has to be experienced to be believed and we had it to ourselves. Due to damage by 4WD vehicles to the river crossing we can no longer walk the length of Harrison Track – it has to be done now on two different walks – Harrison Track North and Harrison Track South. However both walks are certainly worth completing. **Margaret MacDonald.**



Above: Kaye Traynor enjoys the view of the Anglesea River valley.

Below left & right: Walkers take a break amid the wattles in full flower.

Bottom: Although weather threatened, the group enjoyed mostly blue skies.





'KIDS THRIVE' FOR OUR CAMERAS



During the last few months Friends of Eastern Otways have been community partners with a small group of students from Northern Bay College in Corio as they have participated in a Kids Thrive program.

'Kids Thrive' is an out of school project aimed at developing children's ability to lead local change. All the Year 6 students had discussed ways in which they could become involved with the community through creative and collaborative projects.

Each group was challenged to provide some financial support for their group and the groups' interests were wide and varied. Our group of five girls was keen to be involved with caring for animals and latched on to the great idea of providing a set of batteries for our new camera - \$75.00!

They concentrated on Rare and Threatened species - in particular the Southern Brown Bandicoot, but were also keen to see photographs of other animals found in the Anglesea area. Members of the Friends visited the school on several occasions to share with the girls how we use remote cameras to capture images of local fauna and also how we keep environmental weeds under control to improve fauna habitat.

Highlights of the program have included 'The Pitch' on July 23 when each group had to present their project to a panel of 'distinguished' people convincing them that their project should be funded. This was done through a drama re-enaction. Unfortunately only two of our team were brave enough to turn up on that day – perhaps it was rather a daunting experience for Year 6 students!

The second highlight was their Community Action Day when the team visited Anglesea to present the Friends with the set of rechargeable batteries. After showing the children some of the ANGAIR fauna specimens and talking about their characteristics, we ventured out to our Eumeralla site where we placed their camera and carried out some environmental weeding. It was an enjoyable experience both for the three kids who turned up and for the Friends members who joined in the activity. It was great that Ranger Claire was able to participate. The third highlight will be 'Kids Thrive' showcase when the groups present their community actions at the Geelong Performing Arts Centre on September 17.

It is a most worthwhile program and it is exciting to see the personal skills that have developed in the two girls who have been regular participants. The program is ongoing for the next few years, and the school will fine tune so that it can be implemented more smoothly. **Margaret MacDonald**

Top: Four members of the Northern Bay College 'Kids Thrive' team. Above: Kaye Traynor talks about some of the animals found in the National Park. Below: Friends members with the students and 'Kids Thrive' leader Kim. Below right: Fitting the batteries.





Above: Students from the 'Kids Thrive' program carrying out activities on their Community Action Day, the highlight was installing the camera for which they had provided the funds to purchase the batteries.

CAMERA MONITORING REPORT

Recently we submitted a final report to the Norman Wettenhall Environment Trust regarding the Grant we received last year to buy three new cameras and ancillary equipment for camera monitoring. We reported that in the 9 months since, we had completed over 580 camera days of monitoring over five monitoring sites around Anglesea and the Eastern Otways with multiple cameras at each site. During the monitoring, the cameras were triggered hundreds of times by animals and resulted in over 12,000 individual frames. From these records we identified the following fauna, both native and feral:

Native Species list: Black-tailed Wallaby (*Wallabia bicolor*); Red-necked Wallaby (*Macropus rufogriseus*); Eastern Grey Kangaroo (*Macropus giganteus*); Common Brush-tailed Possum (*Trichosurus vulpecula*); Eastern Ring-tailed Possum (*Pseudocheirus peregrinus*); Short-beaked Echidna (*Tachyglossus aculeatus*); Koala (*Phascolarctos cinereus*); Crimson Rosella (*Platycercus elegans*); Bassian Thrush (*Zoothra lunulata*); Rufous Bristlebird (*Dasyornis broadbenti*); Grey Shrike-thrush (*Colluricincla harmonica*); Satin Bowerbird (*Ptilonorhynchus violaceus*); Grey Currawong (*Strepera versicolor*)

Feral Species list: Red Fox (*Vulpes vulpes*); Domestic Cat (*Felis catus*); Common Blackbird (*Turdus merula*); Fallow Deer (*Cervus dama*); Black Rat (*Rattus rattus*)

We selected sites partly on the basis that the monitored site was public land adjacent to areas that may be rezoned residential



following the closure of the Anglesea power station and handback of the surrounding Alcoa leasehold land into the Great Otway National Park.

We reported we were pleasantly surprised by the number and variety of native fauna found in the area. We also reported there are two unpleasant findings that also surprised us: The number of feral animals captured on our cameras, and, second, the absence of evidence of small native animals that should be found in the area, such as, dunnarts, bandicoots and other small native rodents including Antechinus and native mice.

We also undertook to continue our monitoring using the cameras purchased from the grant. We have recently held discussions with Dr Barbara Wilson of Deakin University, a noted researcher into native mammals in the Eastern Otways area including Anglesea and the Anglesea Heath. We intend to work with her to use her expertise, knowledge and background to target more systematically native fauna that have evaded our cameras. We have also had discussions with Parks Victoria staff working on the Otway Ark Project to coordinate our efforts with their ongoing larger-scale monitoring activities.

The absence of small native mammals in our camera monitoring results is disturbingly consistent with the results of wider-scale monitoring by Barb Wilson, Parks Victoria and DELWP, and summarised by Kaye Traynor in the latest ANGAIR Newsletter. All the monitoring programs found that these smaller mammals are either not present at the sites or only present in very reduced numbers at what may be refuge sites. It is becoming clear we need to coordinate our camera monitoring so we complement this wider-scale monitoring by Dr Wilson, Parks and DELWP. **Patrick Flanagan**

Hello everyone,

I hope you are all staying out of the wild weather the Surf Coast has been experiencing in recent weeks, and if you have been out in the wind that you have a warm coat. While winter is usually our quiet time at Parks Victoria I have a few items to report which I hope you will enjoy.

AMERICAN FIRE FIGHTING

Three of our local staff have flown to America to help with the firefighting effort in California. Pete Hay, Lachlan Davis and Dale Antonysen received the call to head over to the United States.

It's a reminder that while we are getting our fair share of winter rain and cold winds, we are not alone in southern Australia when facing the problems that are associated with increased wildfire in a changing climate.

We hope that Pete, Lachie and Dale learn from the experience and stay safe while fighting the fires in the US.



SEASONAL RANGERS & PROJECT FIREFIGHTER

Parks Victoria has commenced Seasonal Rangers recruiting for the coming summer. With a big expansion of the program there will be 100 positions across Victoria, including several in the Otways. Furthermore, Project Firefighter applications are open once again. So, if anyone is interested or has a friend or family member who would be interested, have a look at our website and follow the links. It is worth mentioning that whenever we talk to TAFE or university students they always ask how to get a job with Parks Victoria. These are two avenues that most Parks Victoria staff have been through.

CLOSURE OF SECTION OF SURF COAST WALK

Parks Victoria has closed a section of the Surf Coast Walk, and re-aligned the track until a new section is built. This has been after engineering consultants studied the area and have deemed the section as unsafe. The closed section, pictured below, runs from Demons Bluff to the new boardwalk recently completed by GORCC. We are sorry for the inconvenience but there is now a new route which you can follow to complete the walk. This closure, and the damage to Cumberland beach, are reminders of the highly unstable nature of our coastal environment.



CUMBERLAND STAIRS

Unfortunately the main stairs at the Cumberland Beach access are closed due to damage caused by the large winter ocean swell. Waves have washed away a lot of sand from the beach and collapsed the front of the dunes, which has left our stairs and the viewing platform very exposed.



WIND DAMAGE

The Surf Coast continues to be hit with high winds which means that there has been a lot of fallen trees damaging our walking tracks and visitor facilities. The Upper Kalimna viewing platform is still closed due to damage caused by a falling tree, but we are working towards fixing it soon. However, if anyone is keen to head out to look at some great waterfalls, Lower Kalimna Falls (*at left*) is still open and very beautiful at the moment.

DIRT BIKE COMPLIANCE

Recently Parks Victoria held a number of compliance weekends where we targeted off-road motorbike behaviour. Our team targeted riders who were using illegal tracks and the tracks that are closed to the public. Also, we were educating riders on the correct use of motorbikes in the National Park. For these compliance weekends we had assistance of the Police and our DELWP colleagues. Hopefully these weekends will get the message across about the correct way to ride a motorbike in the National Park, and that we will not tolerate the illegal use of tracks.

OTWAY ARK CAMERAS

Our Otway Ark Ranger, Claire Miller, has again been busy collecting and placing cameras for the Otway Ark project. For those of you who haven't heard about the Otway Ark Project, it is a Landscape approach to controlling introduced predators across the Otways. Part of this project is to study effectiveness and collect data on which 'critters' share the Otways with us.



The Otway Ark cameras project is a real highlight in the year for all of us at Parks Victoria, because we get to visit remote areas of the Great Otway National Park that we don't visit often, and we get to find out who or what is out there.

At left is a picture that has popped up on our cameras, and we hope it gives you as much joy as it gave us. Please excuse the bad/great pun that the Lorne office were so proud of.

This lot will have to duck down pretty low to evade our cameras.

Also, for those of you who enjoy puns as much as us at Parks Victoria, Claire has had the great idea of giving everybody in the Friends of the Eastern Otways a chance to join in. So, we have included another great photo that has been captured recently, and I hope you enjoy creating your own caption.

The bird hitching a lift is a White-eared Honeyeater.



Thank you once again to everybody for helping us look after the Great Otway National Park,

Matt Russell, Ranger, Lorne

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