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FROM THE  
PRESIDENT  
Peter  
Crowcroft

Hi Friends! Welcome to the Spring 2022 newsletter - another bumper edition! We've got reports from the mammal survey team and our annual koala count. I was very sorry to miss the koala count this year, however, the recent waterfalls walk (report also inside) led by Keith was fantastic. None of us had seen so much water careening over the three different waterfalls we explored. The soggy boots at the end were no dampener to the overall experience!

Once again it isn't just amazing local experiences that have been inspiring my appreciation for biodiversity lately. In July I was fortunate enough to go on yet another trip to survey as many plants and animals as possible. This time it was to two of the richest regions of Western Australia for biodiversity, Kalbarri & Lesueur National Parks.

For 15 days we were getting up with the sunrise (or earlier!) and would stay out all day photographing wildflowers (including some very special orchids!), insects, birds, frogs, shells, and anything that represented an observation of biodiversity. Then, when exhausted, we would come back usually after dark, or perhaps stay out even longer for a night walk or to set up the moth lights.

It was very exciting to have such a variety of completely new moths fly in to have their photo taken. The three of us took over 50,000 photos of WA Biodiversity, I'm really not sure how we could have taken any more! We've been uploading everything to iNaturalist - so far we've uploaded 5,000 observations which have been identified as 1,100 different species. A lot remains to be uploaded, and a lot remains to be identified!

There are some excellent websites available to assist us with ID such as florabase, and the WA iNaturalist users have also been a big help! If you would like to see a selection of the best pictures from this trip come along to the slideshow night on Friday 2 September. Committee member John Lenagan recently had a similar adventure, somewhat further afield, to the cloud forests of Ecuador and Costa Rica - so he has some nice photos to share as well! Hope to see you there, Cheers! **Pete Crowcroft.**



Clockwise from top left: Western Spotted Frog, Carnaby's Black Cockatoo, Yellow Flame Grevillea, Pete photographing Grevillea, endangered orchid Queen of Sheba and a pair of Red-tailed Black Cockatoos.





# ENVIRONMENTAL WEEDING

## FIRES CAUSE WEED ISSUES

The winter weeding program at Forest Road was most successful with the three sessions concentrating on two native species that are endeavouring to invade our valuable heathlands – Silky Hakea *Hakea sericea* and White Kunzea *Kunzea ambigua*. Both of these species, which are not indigenous to Anglesea, have germinated following recent controlled burns in the area and are a real threat to our indigenous vegetation.

Our sincere thanks to our team of weeders who support us each month with our various projects. New volunteers are always welcome. The sessions are most enjoyable and are followed with refreshments at a local coffee shop. **Margaret MacDonald.**



Above from left: the June group searching for Hakea seedlings, Molly working with Mandy, Noni, Lynn and Alison at work. Keith attacks some Kunzea. Left: the July group.



### SPRING WEEDING PROGRAM

TUESDAY 13 SEPTEMBER, 11 OCTOBER, 8 NOVEMBER  
Anglesea Heathlands

Meet in O'Donohue Rd close to Great Ocean Road at 9.30am  
We will be on the alert for South African Weed Orchid and be clearing Coast Tea-tree, Coast Wattle or other invasive weeds. We should have the opportunity to observe some of our terrestrial orchids and other heathland plants. Coffee at Anglesea after the sessions. Contact: Margaret 0412 652 419



## COMING EVENTS



### SPRING SLIDES & PIZZA NIGHT

social evening  
6pm 2nd September  
Anglesea CFA



Join us for a look at some photos from recent adventures in Western Australia and South America from FEO members  
**Pete Crowcroft** and **John Lenagan**  
RSVP Pete - 0412044127

*See you there!*

### ANGAIR WILDFLOWER WEEKEND & ART EXHIBITION

Saturday & Sunday September 17 & 18 10am – 4pm  
Memorial Hall, McMillan St, Anglesea  
Contact: Margaret 0412 652 419

Enjoy the show's wonderful displays and activities relating to the flora and fauna of the local area. Learn about amazing animals and plants that live in the Great Otway National Park, take part in a nature ramble or a guided wildflower walk. Our Friends of Eastern Otways display focusses on 'Birds of the Woodlands' and you will see wildlife images from our mammal camera surveys.

### WILDFLOWER WALK

Saturday 15 October  
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.

### MAMMAL SURVEY & WALK

Saturday 19 November  
Meet at ANGAIR 10am  
Contact: Craig 0428 884 821  
Details TBA closer to the date.





## FRIENDS' ACTIVITIES

### ANNUAL KOALA COUNT – 18 June

Twenty-seven people, including eight children, turned up eager to participate in the annual survey to find koalas along Grey River Road in the Great Otway National Park.



*Above: The female Elephant Seal resting on the beach at Separation Creek. Photo: Geoff Gates.*

The group left from Aireys Inlet Hall and on the way made a diversion at Separation Creek to view an Elephant Seal which had hauled onto the beach for a rest.

The Elephant Seal, a female, had been tagged as a pup on Macquarie Island in 1998. She is apparently in good condition. An exclusion zone had been established to protect the animal which is an uncommon visitor to our shores.

We continued on to Kennett River for morning tea. The weather conditions were perfect for koala spotting.

Our enthusiastic observers had recorded 12 koalas by the time we reached the turning point. We then climbed on to the ridge and had lunch overlooking the ocean and Grey River township. We saw another five on the way back, finishing up with a total of 17 koalas.

Based on records over the years, it would indicate that koala numbers are declining. We noted however the forest trees and koalas we did see appeared to be in very good condition. We had a most enjoyable day. It is always a pleasure to spend time in the National Park and appreciate all it has to offer.

**Kaye Traynor**



*Above: Scanning the trees for a sighting.*

*Below: Success! The koala count team spot one high in the trees above Grey River Road. By day's end the tally was 17 koalas.*



*Above & top right: The koalas kept a close eye on the counters too. Koala photos: Chrissy Freestone.*

*Below: Lunch while enjoying the view of the ocean and Grey River township.*





## FRIENDS' ACTIVITIES



*Above left: Ranger Matt explains the selection of plants and advises how to plant them.*

*Above right: Friends and volunteers unpack the plants.*

*Right: Getting down to work.*



### URQUHART BLUFF TREE PLANTING DAY

On 16 July, on a cool but still and sunny morning, a small enthusiastic team planted 180 plants at Urquhart Bluff.

Some participants had seen our activity on Park Connect and others from our Newsletter.

We planted a range of indigenous species to fill in the space where invasive weedy species had been removed.

The overall wet La Nina conditions are great for young plants starting off, and I'm sure it won't take them long to establish.

These seedlings will one day provide habitat for the small mammals that we want to encourage back to the site.

Nice waves at the nearby surf break meant there were many surfers checking out our efforts, including the Lorne Parks Ranger, Peter Hay. He is heading off to manage a base in Antarctica for 18 months and we wish him well on his new adventure!

**Pete Crowcroft.**

### VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

FEO needs volunteers for the Rapid Ascent Surf Coast Century trail run event - no, we don't need you to run the 100km to represent us! But we need helpers to point runners in the right direction, put up and take down trail markers or take registrations on the day.

Why are we helping? Rapid Ascent decided that instead of buying each participant a t-shirt, they would give that proportion of their funds to a local environmental organisation. So, as thanks for this very large and generous donation, we will provide some volunteers to make sure the event runs smoothly. We'll also provide some educational materials for the runners as they travel so far through some very special environments. The catch is it is on the same Saturday as the ANGAIR wildflower show. If you can help, contact Pete 0412 044 127.

### WALK BOOK UPDATE

As per our Winter Newsletter the Friends are utilising our \$10,000 grant from the Geelong Foundation to update our *Guide to Walks in the Great Otway National Park* and to create an accessible digital version.

We have decided to add 10 walks in areas that were not part of the Great Otway National Park when the book was reprinted in February 2010. These include walks in the former Anglesea Heath and the Anglesea Flora Reserves that are now incorporated into the Park.

Additional walks are in the Ironbark Basin and the Heathland Hillside at Moggs Creek. We have been checking the walks included in the last edition to ensure all information is relevant and will take new photographs for each walk.

*Right: Phantom Falls in all its glory, located on Walk 19 Allenvale to Phantom Falls.*





## FRIENDS' ACTIVITIES



Above: Phantom Falls cascade over the 13-metre drop.

Below: The scenery in The Canyon never disappoints.



### WATERFALL WALK - 20 August

Throughout our Waterfall Walk I was reminded of the words of an old Flanders and Swan song:

*Mud, mud glorious mud  
Nothing quite like it for cooling the blood  
So follow me, follow  
Down to the hollow  
And there we can wallow in glorious mud*

It was certainly a wet and muddy walk but isn't that just part of the rainforest and waterfall experience?

After a few wet weeks and 30mm of rain recorded in Lorne in the previous 24 hours, nine hardy souls set out on our hike to three iconic Otway Falls.

Departing from Allenvale Car Park we walked alongside the St George River, which was in full flow, and climbed to Phantom Falls. A

torrent of water cascaded over the 13-metre drop making for a magnificent view as the sky cleared to blue overhead. After a brief stop and team photograph, we walked further uphill and turned off to enter The Canyon.

It never disappoints and the magnificent tree ferns, majestic mountain ash and rock faces with dripping ferns, mosses and liverworts, were truly splendid. Walking along the muddy paths of the temperate rainforest, birds were to be heard rather than seen but we did observe sulphur and yellow-tailed black cockatoos, fantails and thornbills and many bristlebirds were heard in the drier parts of the forest. Several patches of orange/red bracket fungi brought colour to the greens of the forest.

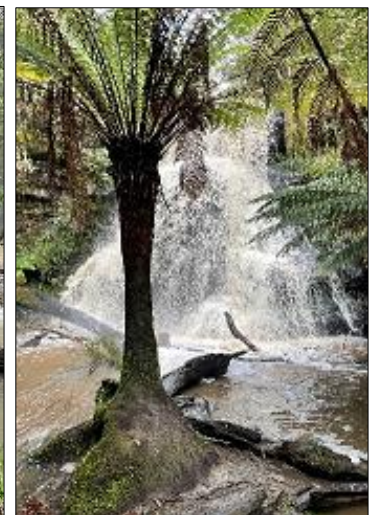
Before we could take the path to Henderson Falls, we had to cross the Henderson Creek which involved some seriously wet feet. Henderson Falls were in full flow and no one remembered them running with quite the intensity that we encountered.

Stopping briefly to view Won Wondah Falls we walked on through somewhat drier forest and saw the early flowers of the Bootlace Bush *Pimelea axiflora*, and the Balm Mint Bush *Prostanthera melissifolia* and the fading flowers of the Common Heath *Epacris impressa*. We finished the 8km walk with a quick lunch at Sheoak Picnic Ground.

A beautiful day wallowing in the mud on a very impressive and iconic Otway walk. **Keith McLean.**



Below from left: seriously wet feet negotiating Henderson Creek: the intrepid (and very wet and muddy) team; Henderson Falls in full flow were quite a sight.





## FRIENDS' ACTIVITIES

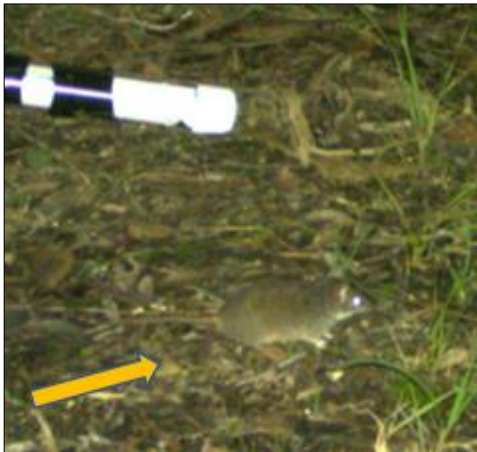
### CAMERA MONITORING – FLAXBOURNES ROAD

During June and July Craig and Gretel placed trail cameras in a patch of the Great Otway National Park bounded by Flaxbournes, Forest and Portreath Roads. Twenty-one locations were surveyed for 14 days. The patch consists of Lowland Forest (EVC16) and Heathy Woodland (EVC48).

The data collected will be used to support the study of small ground mammals in the Otways lead by Barbara Wilson from Deakin University.

The good news - Echidna, Eastern Grey Kangaroo and Swamp Wallaby were commonly recorded across the site and at least two small dasyurids (possible Antechinus and Dunnart species) were also recorded. Red-necked Wallaby and Ringtail Possum also found the bait tantalising!

The bad news - deer was frequently recorded and many signs of deer (e.g. tracks, scat) were noted when placing the cameras. A crafty fox also occasionally posed for the camera. **Craig Graham.**



Top right: the flash catches a Swamp Wallaby. Above left: an oblivious Echidna waddles by and (right) a Ringtail Possum forages around the bait. Below from left: Antechinus sp, Dunnart sp and a Red-necked wallaby.



Left: A group of Eastern Grey Kangaroos make an appearance.



Right: One of the many deer recorded.



### **MACKILLOP COLLEGE COASTAL ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAM**

Apart from our regular Tuesday weeding sessions during winter, the Friends carried out additional conservation activities at Moggs Creek with Year 8 students and teachers from MacKillop College.

This is a co-educational secondary school based at Werribee with a high intake of students from many cultural backgrounds. They worked on a shared project with the Friends of Moggs Creek and Parks Victoria. Our interaction with the College has been on-going for several years now.

This year the students' involvement was extremely valuable to our Friends group as these enthusiastic youngsters helped to implement our program funded through the Australian Government's Wild Otways Initiative to control weed invasions in the valuable coastal heathlands.

Our program took place on Friday mornings for about two hours ranging over a period of six weeks with 12 different groups and involving approximately 250 students. The children formed magnificent teams dragging up vegetation cut by contractors on the steep hillside and stacking it in areas for mulching. We certainly would not have been able to complete this task without them and the students can be proud of their achievements.



*Above: In an iconic location the 'Blue Team' hard at work, and below, the 'Red Team' too.*



We were once again so impressed with the enthusiasm of the children and the co-operative relationships that they extended to the volunteers and to the Parks Vic staff.

Most students were experiencing this type of hard work for the first time and we endeavoured to ensure they realised the value and the impact that their teams made by working hard together. They did seem to enjoy their involvement, and the spectacular view over the heathlands and ocean.

We would like to congratulate the students on their efforts and the staff who gave of their time to ensure the outdoor education program provided exciting activities.

We are hopeful that this combined environmental program with MacKillop College will continue in 2023. The Friends of Eastern Otways and the Friends of Moggs Creek would also like to thank the Parks Vic Rangers who have been so supportive of the program giving valuable assistance at each session. **Margaret MacDonald**

*Left and below, the MacKillop College students dragged out the vegetation cut by contractors and stacked it ready for mulching.*





## TWO ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

### Track from Old Coach Road to Moggs Creek/Fairhaven Ridge Track

For many years the Friends of Eastern Otways and the Friends of Moggs Creek have expressed concern about the damage being done by horse riders to this once beautiful heathland track.

Continued efforts by Parks Victoria to conserve the heathland vegetation have been futile and we have watched in dismay as the track has become wider with the indigenous vegetation on the side of the track being destroyed by horses.

With the closure of Blazing Saddles Horse Riding School and the discontinuation of trail rides in the area, the Friends of Eastern Otways have asked to meet with Dale Antonysen, District Manager West Coast, Parks Vic, to discuss the closure of the track to horse riding and the possibility of a joint project with Parks Victoria and Friends of Moggs Creek to carry out track restoration.

### Great Ocean Road Coastal Trail

With the recently released "State of the Environment" report identifying the many and varied challenges facing our unique Australian environment and threatened species, the Friends of Eastern Otways would like to express our concern for the Victorian Government's decision to budget for millions of dollars to be spent on the creation of the Great Ocean Road Coastal Trail.

It seems that this decision is purely based on tourism with no consideration being given to the critical needs of the environment in the Otway area.

The devastation of the natural environment with the loss of habitat for our native animals appears to be ignored in favour of this expensive creation of an artificial walkway for tourists.

Residents of the Otways and volunteers who have given so much of their time over the years to protect the environment are very aware of the critical needs of the existing infrastructure – including eroding tracks, invasion of environmental weeds and spread of *Phytophthora cinnamoni*.

We find it difficult to accept that the Victorian Government can justify the necessary expenditure when our National Parks, Crown land and reserves are in such a critical state. The lack of staff and funding within Parks Victoria and DELWP is so obvious, and we



*The map showing the proposed track from Fairhaven to Skenes Creek. You can take a virtual walk along the trail – see website details at the of this article.*

wonder just how the existing agencies will be able to cope with the additional demands that this venture will create such as maintenance of tracks, unattended fires and illegal camping.

There are plenty of existing tracks and walks that can be explored in the Otways without creating new tracks that will cause loss of habitat. If the Coastal Trail project is to succeed the two aspects – conservation and tourism – need to be considered at the same time, with the needs of conservation taking prior place. Surely conservation is more important than tourism.

The Final Draft Master Plan is available to view on the EV website: <https://engage.vic.gov.au/trail-design>





Hello Friends,

I am sure that everyone in the Friends is ready for another wonderful year in the Anglesea Heath, and if last spring was any indication, spring 2022 will be a wonderful season for wildflowers. My suggestion for suitable places for spring wildflowers this year would be the Yan Wurring Mirr loop.

### LOW INTENSITY WINTER BURNING

Parks Victoria and DELWP over the last few years have been committed to low intensity winter burning, and this year is the perfect time to see a true mosaic in the Heath plant community with many different ages of vegetation, plus the birds are fantastic along the track.

On 10 August the Anglesea Parks and DELWP team worked with Traditional Owners from the Wadawurrung community, where they spent the day



talking, walking and allowing fire to move freely within the Anglesea Heath.

The objective of this day was to create a rich and complex fire mosaic. This slows the fire process down to create better connections to country for both our staff and the Wadawurrung community. I hope that this is the new way moving forward.



Above: This spring watch out for Eastern Mantis Orchid *Caladenia tentaculata*, and Rush-leaf Sun Orchid *Thelymitra juncifolia* in the background.

### PROTECTING PT ADDIS SITES

The Anglesea Rangers have also been working with the Wadawurrung community to protect significant sites at Point Addis. This includes changing walking experiences to focus on caring for country, use traditional language and reflect more on the 6 seasons of the land. Wadawurrung members and the Anglesea Rangers have also undertaken work to protect midden sites with physical structures. This work is unfortunately needed in order to slow weathering processes which are sadly getting faster due to climatic changes.

### 20<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF MARINE NATIONAL PARK

At this year's ANGAIR Wildflower and Art Weekend, Parks Victoria staff will be celebrating Marine National Parks. On November 16 2022, the Marine National Park system turns 20. It is a perfect opportunity for us to reflect on what this has meant to our community and for marine conservation in our part of the world. The Marine National Park system was established in Victoria in 2002 to protect areas of Victoria's unique and diverse marine environment in the same way that our beloved national parks protect some of the best natural areas of our state.



Did you know that our Marine National Parks were among the world's first representative system of fully protected marine protected areas and were integrated through a single piece of legislation? This was the culmination of more than ten years of community-led campaigning. Just like national parks on land all extractive activities including fishing and collecting are prohibited, which makes these special places that cover just over 5% of Victoria's coastal waters, important refuges for our incredible marine life.

Since their establishment Parks Victoria staff, community groups, partner agencies, researchers, and many others, have worked hard to ensure the rich natural and cultural values of these areas are better understood. Also thank you to the Friends of Point Addis who do a wonderful job looking after our local Marine National Park, keep up the good work.

### WEED WORKS

Once again, I would like to thank everyone who came down to the tree planting day at Urquhart Bluff (at left). We were able to get many plants in the ground. These seedlings will breathe a new bit of life into this long-neglected patch of weeds, and will one day provide habitat for the small mammals that we want to encourage back to the site.



I have recently been using the team from Naturelinks Landscape Management to remove a very old stand of Sweet Hakea which has proliferated at this site. As you can see from the photos above this weed has truly taken over, to the point that nothing is living under the dense canopy, and it was time for an intervention. Sweet Hakea *Hakea drupacea* is a plant native to the southwestern corner of Western Australia. As is the case for many of our West Australian weeds on the Surf Coast, it enjoys our conditions a little too much! Our team hopes to slowly change this site over the next few years and enrich the habitat value. I hope we will have more planting opportunities for Friends of the Eastern Otways members.



**SOUTH AFRICAN WEED ORCHID**

I feel that this should be a standing agenda item for the spring Ranger Report as, once again, I remind everyone to look out for South African Weed Orchid.

As most of you are aware the Friends and I have been battling South African Weed Orchid at a few sites across the Surf Coast. It is a highly prolific weed and has spread throughout Victoria. Unfortunately, it enjoys the same conditions as our special orchids and we all should make sure we keep it out of our favourite orchid spots.

South African Weed Orchid produces millions of a dust like seed from each plant. As I can tell you from personal experience, this seed will stay on your boots. Three years ago, I noticed several South African Weed Orchid juveniles were growing in the Lorne work centre at the spot I remove my herbicide spraying personal protective equipment. So make sure that you clean your boots if you have been in a bad infestation, especially if you are visiting wildflower hotspots.



This spring the Friends are planning to hold 3 weeding days in the O'Donohue block to protect our famous Orchids. So far, we have been largely successful in keeping these weeds out of the location. Spring weeding activities with the Friends of Eastern Otways is one of the best ways to learn about the wonderful flowers in the Anglesea Heath with many knowledgeable members participating and willing to share their knowledge.

**'OTHERWORLDLY' FUNGI**

At right is a photo of fungi that I came across in the Great Otway National Park. If there is an expert out there who could name this wonderful, 'otherworldly' fungi, please email me.

Thank you once again to everybody for helping us look after the Great Otway National Park. Matt Russell, Ranger, Lorne. [Matthew.russell@parks.vic.gov.au](mailto:Matthew.russell@parks.vic.gov.au)