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FROM THE
 PRESIDENT
**Peter
 Crowcroft**

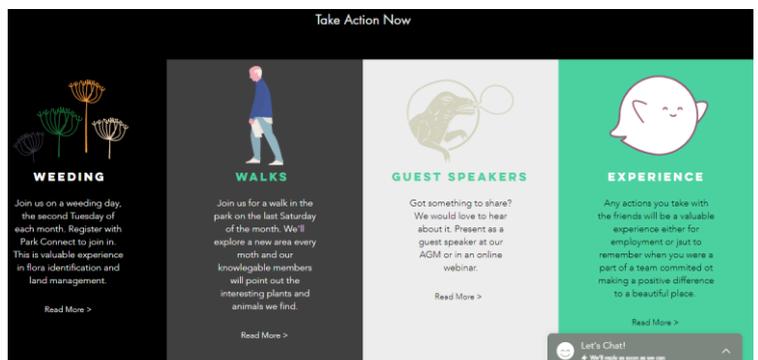
ACTIVITIES CONTINUE IN BUSY FRIENDS' YEAR

Wow, we are already nearly half way through the year! Our upcoming activities such as monthly weeding and walks are all still continuing and are published in this Newsletter and on the ParkConnect website. So if you feel the itch to come along make sure to register your interest in participating. If you plan to volunteer with us, it is now essential to have a Working with Children check (more details page 8).

Our own website is taking shape and is still in 'under construction' status. Feel free to have a look at feo.org.au. I would welcome your feedback or suggestions as to what you would like the website to include! Below are a couple of images from the website.

The Newsletter is filled with the interesting and exciting activities that members have been leading and involved with, such as the really fun night time session in April, and the MacKillop College outdoor education weeding program. Importantly I am proud to announce the successful application for a grant which will allow extensive weeding works in sensitive heathland areas at Moggs Creek. Congratulations to the committee members involved for their time and effort. Cheers Friends, Pete.

Home About Get Involved Gallery Contact Newsletter Blog



SEARCHING FOR 'NURDLES' - STUDENTS LEARN ABOUT BEACH PLASTIC

For the first of the MacKillop College Year 8 Outdoor Education volunteer sessions, I took both classes, around 45 students, onto the beach at the Moggs Creek estuary to talk about marine plastic pollution and invite them to collect any they could find. I wasn't expecting many large finds, in fact, almost everything was in the 'small' range of less than about 2cm long.

We found quite a few 'nurdles' which are the base unit of plastic production. These plastic resin pellets are transported around the globe by the trillions, on route to plastic production factories. They will be melted down and poured into moulds that create the many convenient plastic products we all use each day. This keyboard I am typing on right now is built from nurdles. Easily lost or spilt in transit, they will often end up in the ocean and wash ashore on beaches around the world.



In these environments they accumulate toxins and can be ingested by fish or seabirds. Of course, the plastics that nurdles produce are also a major part of the litter we found, large plastic containers having been broken apart (don't use the term 'break down' - that suggests plastic actually goes away) into small fragments, accessible at various levels of the food chain.

The Blue Shark is a great attention-grabbing mascot that was donated to raise awareness and facilitate environmental education by Jane Smith, a generous patron of the Eagle Nest Gallery at Airey's Inlet. It was sculpted by artist Peter Day from beach cast rope and plastics he has collected from local beaches.

Overall, the MacKillop College students enjoyed being out on the beach, helping to clean the environment while finding a few real treasures too! **Pete Crowcroft.**

NB – see the report of MacKillop College's environmental weeding work at Moggs Creek on page 7.

Left: Peter Day's Blue Shark, made from old rope and plastic.

Lower left: A collection of microplastics found along Moggs Creek beach.

Right: The Pelagic Gooseneck Barnacle Lepas anatifera attached to a plastic bottle.

Far right: Slender Cuttlefish Sepia braggi shells were also washing ashore.





WEEDING AT MAGICAL MOGGS CREEK

The Autumn weeding program at Moggs Creek was very successful and also most enjoyable. Who could not be impressed working on the hillside with that magnificent coastal view in the background?

Our first session on March 9 saw us concentrating on the Bluebell Creeper *Billardiera heterophylla* growing along the sides of the road leading to the hang glider site. There were some very large bushes intertwining with other vegetation, and many smaller ones growing on the edge of the road were also attacked. It seemed they had been slashed before but not treated with herbicide. The species was in flower so easy to identify.

On April 13 we moved further down the road and into the heathland hillside where both the Friends of Eastern Otways and the Friends of Moggs Creek have worked over the years removing so much Coast Wattle *Lepidosperma laevigatum*. It was disappointing to see many bushes still flourishing, but we made great inroads in clearing some of them especially along the walking track. We also eliminated a large stand of Hedge Wattle *Acacia paradoxa* that was crowding out the heathland plants. This was a mighty effort from Patrick and Graham who wielded the saws.

We planned to attack more of them on May 11, but unfortunately we woke up to strong winds and heavy rainfall, and as a result the weeding session was called off. Discussions will be held with Surf Coast Shire to see if contractors can be employed later in the year to help remove some of the environmental weeds from the area as the Shire is responsible for this section of the hillside. **Margaret MacDonald.**

Top: The March 9 weeding group at the hang glider site at Moggs Creek. Above: a worksite with a magical view. Below right: Patrick with his saw searching for more Hedge Wattle. Below right: Grace was determined to win the battle against the Bluebell Creeper.



WINTER PROGRAM

Tuesday June 8 O'Donohue Heathland Meet at start of houses in O'Donohue Road as you come up from Great Ocean Road at 9.30am.

Tuesday July 13 Meet in Harvey St near intersection of Noble St at 9.30am.

Tuesday August 10 Meet in Camp Rd opposite Parks Vic/DELWP at 9.30am.

Contact Margaret 0412 652 419. Registration required.



SPECIAL BONESEED SESSION WITH GEN U

On Thursday May 6, Kaye and Margaret had great fun working with Gen U, with our visitors with disabilities showing they too can help control Boneseed in the Anglesea area. Thanks to Geoff, Andrew and Maddie for sharing their group as part of their Adventure Program. It's not often we welcome finding Boneseed seedlings but this is an ideal activity for Gen U and we will keep our eyes open for easily accessible areas the group could help us with.

Left: Geoff and Andrew with Gerald, Frances and Michael watching Margaret pull out Boneseed. Right: Kaye and Frances at work.





FRIENDS' ACTIVITIES

ANNUAL KOALA COUNT

Saturday June 19

Meet Aireys Inlet Hall 9.30 am

Contact Kaye 0408 551 667



Our annual Koala Count is a fun day out on Grey River Road at Kennett River as we search high in the trees, plenty of opportunity for bird watching too. BYO everything for morning tea and lunch, sturdy footwear and wet weather gear. And your binoculars.



COMING EVENTS

Registration required all events

WILDLIFE WONDERS VISIT

Saturday July 17

Meet Aireys Inlet Hall 9.30 am

Contact Patrick 0437 561 702

Special price: \$10 per head

Walk on the wild side at the new Apollo Bay conservation park. 75-minute guided walk showcasing the biodiversity of the Otways, in a unique setting. Morning tea and lunch available at the park café.



SHEOAK FALLS WALK

Saturday August 21

Meet Aireys Inlet Hall 9.30 am

Contact Margaret 0412 652 419

Walk from Sheoak Picnic Ground exploring the wonders of this area, dependent on tracks that are open. BYO everything.



LEMONADE CREEK/ERSKINE FALLS WALK - March 20

A small group of eight people attended the Walk. We organised vehicles to drive to Erskine Falls then back to Blanket Leaf Picnic ground for morning tea prior to the commencement of our walk at approximately 10.30. Weather conditions were overcast and cool but quite pleasant for bushwalking. The forest throughout was very green and lush and the large fern fronds were growing across the track almost creating a barrier in some places.

Some bird calls were heard along the way, including Spotted Pardalote, White-browed Scrubwrens, Yellow Robins and Grey Fantails, but sightings were few because of the dense vegetation. Some of the group observed a Bassian Thrush foraging in the forest litter deep in a fern gully. We were also able to spend time examining some of the less familiar, wet forest plants along the way, such as Rough Coprosma *Coprosma hirtella* with its large red berries, Stinkwood *Ziera arborescens* in flower, Banyalla *Pittosporum bicolor* with large red fruit capsules and White Elderberry *Sambucus gaudichaudiana* with a cluster of berries. Further along we had a clear view of a koala sitting on an exposed eucalypt branch some 50 metres from the track.

We also came across specimens of fungi growing in some of the damper areas including a particularly unusual basket fungus. It could have been Garden fungus *Colus pusillis* - very attractive bright yellow colour and an unusual shape.

We arrived at Erskine Falls carpark at 12.30 where we had lunch. Ross Davey joined the group and we headed to the Donation box. A ribbon was draped around, then cut, as the donation box and sign were declared 'Officially Opened'. It was a belated event but we enjoyed the occasion. After viewing the Falls, we made our way home. **Kaye Traynor.**



Above: Ready to go! Below: Ross congratulates Kaye on her beautifully illustrated sign beside the 'officially opened' donation box. Walkers dwarfed by magnificent tree ferns.





CREATURES OF THE NIGHT – Moggs Creek April 17

Part 1 - Calls of the night

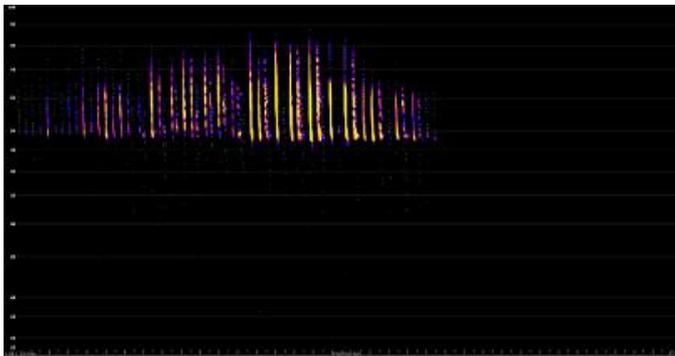
We were pleased to have 24 people sign in for our event at Moggs Creek on the evening of Saturday April 17. Quite a few came along having seen our events publicised on ParkConnect. It is great to see this technology working. Some people had come from as far away as Geelong, thanks so much for making the trip!

At 6pm it started to get dark, and the initial games of 'Bat and Moth' were fun with the younger kids (think Marco Polo with a biology theme). As we played, the calls of Yellow-bellied Gliders *Petaurus australis* echoed throughout the picnic ground - they were right there! The call of these gliders is one of the amazing auditory treats of the Australian bush. Although it is one of our most vocal marsupials very few people have even heard it. Lots of calling continued as we went on a short walk to look for them, both around the picnic ground and along the creek loop track, but the gliders were playing hard to spot.

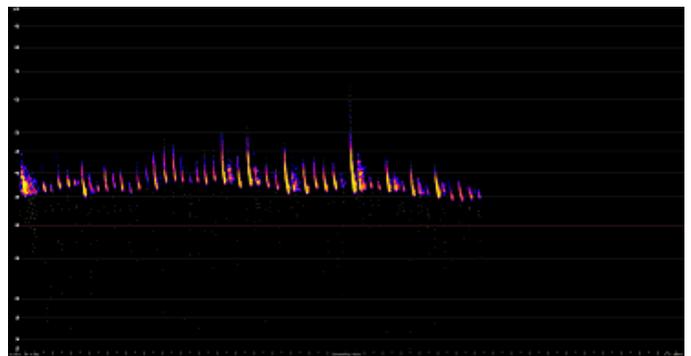
We heard them calling, taking off and landing, but were not able to spot them high in the canopies of the Blue Gums *Eucalyptus globulus* and Manna Gums *Eucalyptus viminalis* on such a dark night. Pete mimicked a Boobook Owl *Ninox boobook* and the local Moggs Creek resident boobooks began their incessant hoots which didn't let up for the rest of the evening. This totally added to the atmosphere, and also the theme of not being able to spot animals that sounded as if they were right on top of us!

Importantly though, other animals were also calling that our ears couldn't even hear. Craig brought along his ultrasonic sound detector which revealed the many bat calls from at least six different species, flying all around us as they echolocated to find their meals and navigate through the trees.

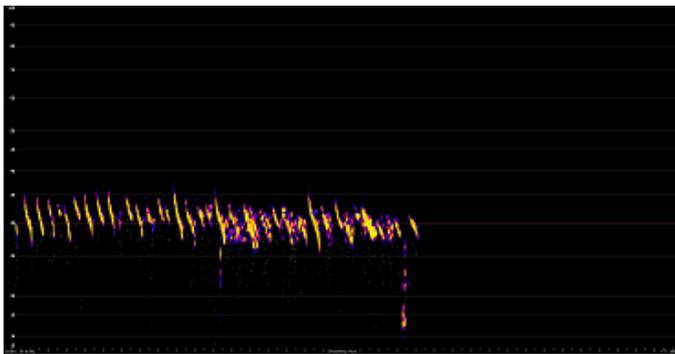
These are the bats detected on the night - Large Forest Bat *Vespadelus darlingtonia*, Little Forest Bat *Vespadelus vulturnus*, Gould's Wattle Bat *Chalinolobus gouldii*, Chocolate Wattle Bat *Chalinolobus morio*, Long-eared Bat *Nyctophilus* sp (either Gould's Long-eared or Lesser Long-eared, cannot discriminate using call analysis) and Eastern False Pipistrelle *Falsistrellus tasmaniensis*. Below are examples of their characteristic soundwaves, known as a sonograms. Look closely and you will spot the differences. **Pete Crowcroft.**



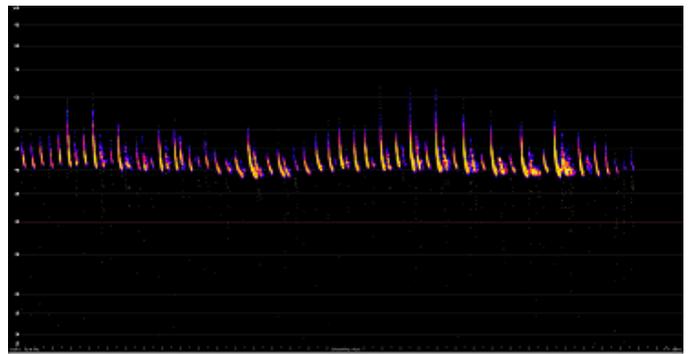
Chocolate Wattle Bat *Chalinolobus morio*



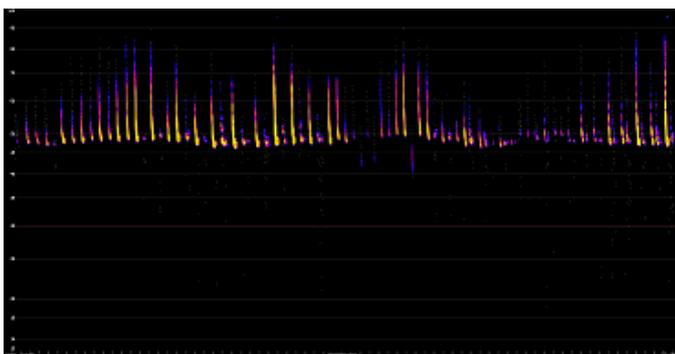
Eastern False Pipistrelle *Falsistrellus tasmaniensis*



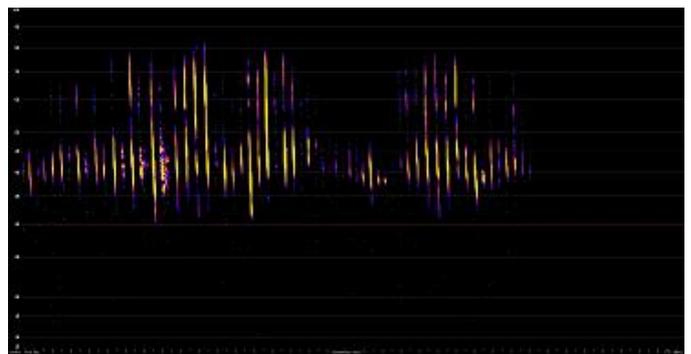
Gould's Wattle Bat *Chalinolobus gouldii*



Large Forest Bat *Vespadelus darlingtonia*



Little Forest Bat *Vespadelus vulturnus*



Long-eared Bat *Nyctophilus* sp (either Goulds or Lesser Long-eared)



Above: Setting up the mothing sheets at Moggs Creek Picnic Ground for the 'Creatures of the Night' activity on April 17.

CREATURES OF THE NIGHT – Moggs Creek April 17

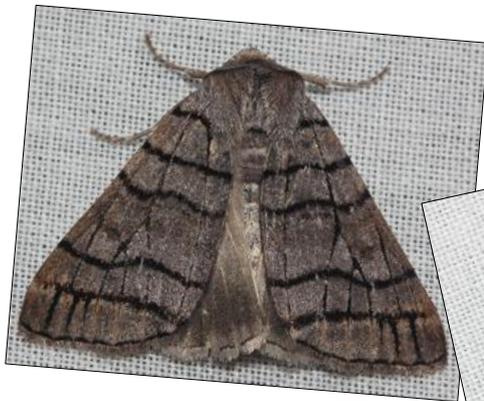
Part 2 – Insects of the night

At our recent Moggs Creek night outing we set up two mothing sheets to see what insects were around and may come into the sheets. To our delight, even though it was a relatively cool night, 42 species of insect and moths came in. While there were the normal Geometrids and Tortricids, there were a couple of the rarer moths that did visit which was a delight. They included two *Liometopa rectilinear* with their distinct horizontal bars, a delicate *Lulops argocrana*, a *Phaeophlebosia furcifera* or Forked Footman, a *Mictodoca toxauta* or Long-nosed Geometrid and numerous Tiger Moths *Spilosoma glatignyi* among many others seen that night. It is always fun sharing the diversity and fascination of these nightly visitors with our younger naturalists, and seeing their enthusiasm and delight in finding some of the different species at Moggs Creek. **John Lenagan**



Right: *Lulops argocrana* - Geometridae

Below: Long-nosed Geometrid *Mictodoca toxauta*



Above: *Liometopa rectilinea* - Geometridae.

Below: Forked Footman *Phaeophlebosia furcifera*



Right and above right – two views of a Tiger Moth *Spilosoma glatignyi*





JAMIESON CREEK WALK - May 15

Nine people met at Aireys Inlet and checking the radar it seemed there would be little rain despite the downpours overnight. We made our way to Wye River and after a quick morning tea we started the walk from Separation Creek. A series of steep steps led to a lookout back over the ocean and township.

It wasn't far along the track before we started noticing freshly emerging fungi of all types. This slowed us down as we tried to identify them. About 25 species were observed. About half-way along the track, at the Boggaley Creek crossing which is normally crossed easily, the recent rain had made it impossible to continue. The fast-flowing water had flooded the area and the stepping stones, and the first steps on the other side were well under water. There was no other choice but to return the way we had come. It was a pleasant walk back and we drove back to Jamieson camp where we enjoyed a late lunch and the view and explored the as yet unopened campground. We hope it will open soon and the amazing facilities used. It would make a good base for a Friends campout.

Birds seen included Yellow Robin, Red-browed Finches, Bristlebird, Eastern Spinebill, Grey Shrike-thrush, White-browed and Brown Thornbills, Grey Fantail, Crimson Rosella, Superb Fairywren, New Holland Honeyeater and some strange behaviour from a male Satin Bowerbird which seemed to be chasing a persistent Red Wattlebird away from a tree. Despite not completing the whole track it was an enjoyable day out and perhaps we will return in spring when the wattles are in flower. **Alison Watson.**



Top left: Paul and Gretel at the flooded creek crossing.

Top right: Group at the start of the walk.

Above: Lunch at the lookout.

Fabulous fungi, above left: Gilled fungi, and left: Slender Parasol. Right: Mycena.



MACKILLOP COLLEGE COASTAL WEEDING PROGRAM

In 2019 Friends of Eastern Otways carried out environmental weeding 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. This was a shared project with Great Ocean Road Coast Committee, Parks Victoria and Friends of Moggs Creek, with the Friends of Eastern Otways taking on the leadership role. They worked on the coastal heathlands and also in an area of the Great Otway National Park on the eastern edge of Moggs Creek removing a great quantity of environmental weeds. Approximately 300 students participated in the project.

The program was to be continued in 2020, but due to the pandemic these activities were not able to go ahead. We are pleased to say that with the lifting of restrictions, the College was keen to once again involve the students in helping to protect the Moggs Creek environment where they have been bringing their Year 8 students camping for a number of years. The program is presently being implemented.

At the time of writing this report we will have shared two activities with the students – the first: a ‘beach clean-up’ on Thursday May 6 as shared on the front page of our Newsletter, and the second activity: removal of environmental weeds on the coastal heathlands where Friends of Eastern Otways, Friends of Moggs Creek and Parks Vic rangers worked with approximately 40 students. By the time you receive your Newsletter we will be down to the last 4 sessions: Friday, June 4, Friday, June 11, Friday June 18 and Friday June 25. There are 2 sessions each morning 9.30am - 10.30 am and 10.45am - 11.45 am. It involves working as leaders with 3 or 4 students working on the selected site. It would be great if we had some more helpers. It is an enjoyable experience working with very co-operative children. If you are free and would like to share in the activity please contact Margaret on 0412 652 419. **Margaret MacDonald.**



Above and below: Working in one of the world's most scenic classrooms, students from MacKillop College help clear environmental weeds from the Great Otway National Park at Moggs Creek.





CAMERAS BACK IN THE BUSH

It was great being able to set up the remote sensing cameras again in March after more than a year of wondering whether the small mammals we observed in 2019 are still in the Anglesea Valley.

We put the cameras near Harrison Track North for three weeks, where we had previously seen the vulnerable White-footed Dunnart *Smiththopsis leucopus* and Agile antechinus *Antechinus agilis*. Unfortunately, we did not observe them in March. However, the ever-photogenic Swamp Wallaby *Wallabia bicolor* was frequently seen as well as a Bassian Thrush *Zoothera lunulata* (can you spot it?) and a Common Ringtail Possum *Pseudocheirus peregrinus*. We hope that we just looked in the wrong places and that the less common marsupials are still there. The good news is that we did not observe any cats or foxes. But that doesn't mean they are not there! **Gretel Lamont.**



Above: a photogenic Swamp Wallaby, perfectly camouflaged Bassian Thrush and ubiquitous Common Ringtail Possum.

WILD OTWAY INITIATIVE GRANT

The Australian Government's Wild Otway Initiative is investing \$6 million in environmental restoration projects throughout the Otway region. As part of this, the Corangamite Catchment Management Authority (CCMA) is distributing grants for community projects. We are happy to announce that the Friends of Eastern Otways have received funding as part of this grants program.

Our project involves environmental weed control at Moggs Creek (see map below). Our aim is to help control environmental weeds such as Bluebell Creeper, Coast Tea-tree and Boneseed, within areas that are difficult or unsafe for volunteers to access. Volunteers from the Friends of Eastern Otways, the Friends of Moggs Creek and school students from McKillop College have been working hard over several years to help control environmental weeds in the area. The environmental values are high in this area providing ideal habitat for many fauna species such as the Rufous Bristlebird, Southern Brown Bandicoot, White-footed Dunnart and possibly Swamp Antechinus, as well as a rich variety of heathland plants including Blotched Sun Orchids, other sun orchids and Southern Bearded Greenhoods.



In locations that are difficult or unsafe for volunteers to work the grant will enable the engagement of contractors to carry out some of the work. The Friends' volunteers and McKillop College students will continue their effective weed removal to help maintain the area.

As we know, many weeds enter the Park as garden escapees, so there is provision within the grant to carry out some community engagement for the residents of Moggs Creek to raise awareness about environmental weeds and the role they can play to help in their gardening.

We'll keep FEO members informed of our progress with this project over the next 2 years, keep an eye out for any opportunities to help us deliver the project as we are always keen to facilitate new volunteers! **Ellen Doxey.**

NEW VOLUNTEER RULES FOR WORKING WITH CHILDREN

Parks Victoria have introduced a new requirement that all volunteers working within the Parks Victoria Estate must hold a Working with Children Check (WWCC). This is part of Parks Victoria's, and more broadly, the Victorian Governments Child Safe Standards and commitment to ensuring safety of children.

This means that if you volunteer with Friends of Eastern Otways, whether this is once off or in an ongoing capacity, you are required to hold a Working with Children Check. For volunteers the WWCC is free. To apply for the WWCC go to the website

<https://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au/>.

To ensure you are not charged for the check, when applying select the *Volunteer* option and use these Parks Victoria details: Parks Victoria, Level 10, 535 Bourke Street, Melbourne VIC 3000. Phone 131 963

For further information regarding this new requirement by Parks Victoria visit this website and see the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) <https://www.parks.vic.gov.au/get-into-nature/volunteering>, or contact the Parks Victoria Volunteer Team volunteer@parks.vic.gov.au

Hello everyone,

For this ranger report we thought we'd do something a little different and give you a more detailed insight into one of Parks Victoria's key pest plant projects in the Otways – *Biodiversity Response Planning (BRP)*. With the project wrapping up on June 30, we thought it was an opportune time to tell you what the project has been up to over the past year and a half. But before we jump into the project details, a very quick hello and introduction to those of you I haven't met yet – I'm Ruby Wicks, the BRP ranger based out of Lorne.



Above: Ruby removing Sallow Wattle at Fairhaven.

Campbell. I've been responsible for the Surf Coast section of the project with Parks Victoria staff managing BRP in the other locations. BRP has focused on treating five key woody weed species that create monocultures if left untreated. These species are Sweet Pittosporum *Pittosporum undulatum*, Sallow Wattle *Acacia longifolia*, Coast Tea Tree *Leptospermum laevigatum*, Boneseed *Chrysanthemoides monilifera* and Bluebell Creeper *Billardiera fusiformis*.

Highlights of BRP

On the Surf Coast, there have been two key aspects to BRP – engaging contractors to undertake the weed works and treating weeds myself with a lot of help from other Parks Victoria staff and volunteers.

Areas with high biodiversity values were selected for contractors to work in based on local knowledge and information from the biodiversity database, NatureKit Victoria.

<https://www.environment.vic.gov.au/biodiversity/naturekit>

Key focal areas that contractors have worked on include:

- Gherang – Tanners Road
- Anglesea – Coalmine Road and Messmate Track
- Aireys Inlet – Bambra Road, Distillery Creek Road and Gilbert Street
- Moggs Creek – Ridge Road and Spion Kop
- Eastern View – Golf Links Road
- Lorne – Cumberland & Henderson Tracks, Deans Marsh Road, Phantom Falls and private properties
- Kennett River – Grey River Road

Inhouse works undertaken by Parks Victoria staff and volunteers have focused on:

- Expanding the areas contractors have covered
- Completing follow up treatment to ensure infestations are well managed



Working in areas that are not easily accessible and haven't been assessed or treated before.

Mapping infestations has also been a key focus of BRP, allowing us to gain a better understanding of how pest plants are distributed across the Otways.

Other highlights of BRP included engaging with the local community via a stall at the Aireys Inlet Community Market in 2020 and 2021, as pictured at left. The stall allowed us to help raise awareness around pest plants in the area and encourage landowners to treat weeds on their own properties.

We have been working closely with the Friends of Eastern Otways and ANGAIR to treat a variety of weeds across Great Otway National Park (GONP) and on Crown Land, particularly tackling the seemingly endless wall of Sallow Wattle in the Coalmine Road block with ANGAIR. We have also been:

So, what is BRP?

Simply put, BRP started with the 2019/20 financial year and has been tackling woody weeds across the Otway landscape ever since.

In a more technical sense, BRP is an area-based planning approach for on-ground biodiversity action and conservation in Victoria. It's through BRP that the Victorian Government is implementing the plan *Protecting Victoria's Environment – Biodiversity 2037* which aims to stop the decline of and improve the overall biodiversity of Victoria by 2037.

In 2018, scientific data was combined with on-ground knowledge from stakeholders to identify areas across Victoria where undertaking specific actions would give the greatest benefit to biodiversity. The Otways were identified as a significant area that was under threat from pest plants and this recognition resulted in funding for the BRP project *Otway Landscape Pest Plant Management*.

BRP in the Otways

This BRP project has three focal areas across the landscape: Surf Coast (Anglesea to Kennett River), Cape Otway and Port



Above: A sea of dead Sweet Pittosporum near Cumberland Track.



Above: Assessing work at the Canyon near Lorne.

- Assisting private landowners whose properties directly join GONP to treat and reduce the spread of weeds across private land and national park boundaries.
- Weeding alongside the Working for Victoria crew in areas FEO and ANGAIR have been chipping away at for some time or hadn't been able to work in previously.
- Collating a list of important orchid locations with Marg MacDonald to help guide park management.
- Working with Tim Miller, a Native Vegetation Improvement Project Officer from DELWP, to align both Parks Victoria and DELWP's local pest plant projects to ensure the greatest benefit to the Otways.
- Planned burns benefitting previous weed management efforts around Lorne, Aireys Inlet, Fairhaven and Anglesea. The burns in these areas all acted as either follow up treatment where new weeds are emerging from the seed bank following initial treatment, or where large individuals were treated and small individuals were purposefully left to be treated by the burn.
- Finding many, many orchids while out weeding and knowing the work was helping to protect such a variety of other indigenous species was certainly a personal highlight of BRP for me. A special thanks to Marg MacDonald for sharing what seems like a smidgen of your limitless orchid knowledge.

Finally, a big thank you to all the Friends who have been involved with BRP in one way or another. It's been a pleasure meeting and working with many of



you and seeing such an inspired and enthusiastic group of volunteers dedicating time to the park all for the love of it.
Report & photos by Ruby Wicks.

Left: Double-trunked old growth Sweet Pittosporum cut down in the Canyon Lorne. Right: Matt surveying Sallow Wattle cleared by contractors near Anglesea.



Below left: Clearing Sallow Wattle in a beautiful heathland setting at Aireys Inlet. Below right: A winter burn in July 2020 on the Anglesea heath removing emerging Sallow Wattle seedlings from the previously treated area.



Above: Treated Sallow Wattle at Eastern View where Blotched Sun Orchids *Thelymitra benthamiana* (left below) were found nearby. Also found in the region were Small Duck Orchid *Paracaleana minor*, Flying Duck Orchid *Caleana major*, Hare Orchid *Leptoceras menziesii*, Spiral Sun Orchid *Thelymitra matthewsii*, and Fringed Hare Orchid *Leporella fimbriata*.

