

Friends of Brisbane Ranges

Incorporated

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December
2006

*Grevillea
steiglitziana*

Next Meeting

Sunday 10th December

Meet at;

10am at the Stony Creek Picnic Ground.

Activities;

Christmas break-up.
Blind mans bluff.
Pin the tail on the donkey, twister and maybe even a walk or just a general chat.
All welcome, incl. Friends of Lerderderg, Friends of Werribee Gorge/Long Forest and Geelong Field Naturalists Club

What to bring;

BYO meat and drinks, sun protection etc, and don't forget the usuals.
Parks will supply salads and some drinks.

Next Month

January;

In keeping with previous years we have planned absolutely nothing!

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Up Coming Events

"Out of the Ashes"

A fun and informative day in the BRNP looking and learning about regeneration after the bushfires.

Contact Ralph Cotter on 52 264 833 for bookings and further information

Presidents Report

Colin Cook

Our last meeting was graced with a visit from Dean Ingwerson of Birds Australia. After meeting and car pooling at the Anakie depot, we headed off to Furze Track for a sort of walk, talk and gawk. Dean proved most adept at identifying and locating birds by sound and then spotting with binoculars. The strong winds of the day kept many birds out of sight and sound. Lunch was held at the Bert Boardman Reserve, followed by another walk along the adjacent tracks.

Also along for the day was Prue Simmons from the VNPA. Prue has been the coordinator for the Park Mates program and has been developing the program to include environmental monitoring. FoBR will be one of the first groups to be involved with this development and we'll keep you posted with what's happening. Prue is off to Japan for a year and her replacement will catch up with us soon.

Another monitoring program soon to take off is one aimed at the Brush-tailed Phascogale. As part of a Geelong Field Naturalists Club and Gordon Institute project, in co-operation with PV & DSE, we are helping to gather records of Brush-tailed Phascogale around the Geelong region, not just in parks and reserves. There is an information sheet and record form available for download from the Friends website or you can contact me directly if you need a copy mailed to you. If you have seen a Brush-tailed Phascogale, either recently or a while ago, please take the time to fill out and return the survey form to help guide future monitoring studies.

One study that is currently underway is the result of the visit and fungi survey earlier this year by Tom May and is looking at punks in the Brisbane Ranges. Before this brings visions of "Oi, what you doing in this park then mate!", it's actually looking at white punk fungi, or *Laetiporus portentosus*. This fungus produces large white fruiting bodies, with pores on the underside, on the sides of trees, usually several metres up. When the fungi are young, they may be light brown on top and yellow underneath. As they age the white becomes dirty, especially on top, and may be grey or brown. Wendy noticed them on a few of the burnt trees, and asked Tom if there was any data on the appearance of punk fungi after bushfires, and the response was "Don't know, would you like to find out?" What a silly question! Wendy is now studying trees that have visible punk fungi and taking some basic measurements. These trees will be revisited on a regular basis to determine the long term fate of the tree and whether the fruiting bodies appear on a regular basis. Also of interest is whether nearby trees are also likely to contain punk fungi, or whether they become infected with it. So far, Wendy has located 4 trees with punk fungi growing on them, and would be interested in knowing about any others that people might see.



"Bird, what bird, looks like a tree to me"

President

Colin Cook

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Secretary

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House Keeping

Please note;

FoBR activities that fall on **Days of Total Fire Ban** will be cancelled. This is not only due to increased work loads for Park Staff and the increased chance of a fire occurring, but also the safety of members due to working in or being exposed to high temperatures.

Please do not feel obliged to attend any activity if you have concerns about being in the Park or working on days of high temperature, even if it is not declared as a total fire ban.

"In and Around" the Park

Ok, so if you read the last instalment then you are well aware that all of the BRNP is now open. Even so, work is still continuing on fire rehabilitation related projects.

As of last week, Friday 1st December, all known dozed control lines within the Park had been rehabilitated. So where does that leave us you may ask, well I am going to tell you even if you didn't. It leaves us with only some directional and interpretive signage to be completed, so all in all it is business as usual.

Pest Plant.

This season several species were targeted for death and destruction, these are as follows; Furze (Gorse), Serrated Tussock and the various broadleaf species that seemed to have arisen out of the ashes post fire.

To date all known serrated tussock and furze infestations have been treated with chemical application.

The broadleaf weeds seem to be making the most of the lack of competition from native species as every time they have been treated a new crop seems to appear, but eventually we will gain the upper hand, I hope.

Steiglitz

Those of you that have travelled through Steiglitz recently may have noticed some improvement on the areas we manage. Stuart has been busy beautifying the area with most of the "rubbish" within the township having been relocated to a more suitable area (the tip).

Peppercorn Place has begun operating under new management and by all accounts the sustenance provided is of a high level.

Meredith Education Area

This area has seen a dramatic upsurge in the amount of visitors/campers over the past twelve months. The reason for this is unknown but the positive is the reduction in pressure on areas such as Boar Gully and illegal camping within other areas of the park.

"In and Around" the Park cont.

Park Staff

Rick Hay. After approx. 18 months with us Rick was successful in gaining a position with DSE in Ballarat, his home town.

Since then we have gained the services of two new Field Staff personnel, Wayne Chiang and Gary Walker, welcome guys.

Currently steps are being undertaken to fill a fourth FSO position.

A Summer Ranger position, to be shared between Moorabool and Macedon has recently been filled with the successful applicant due to commence on the 18th December.

Project Fire Fighters have also begun another season with us, based out of the Bacchus Marsh and Serendip Work centres. Some works have already been carried out on clearing management tracks within the BRNP.

Brush-tailed Phascogale

The Brush-tailed Phascogale (*Phascogale tapoatafa*), also known as the Tuan, is a small, nocturnal, arboreal, carnivorous marsupial about the size of a rat. It is a uniform deep grey on the head, back and flanks, light grey to pale cream underneath with large naked ears and a conspicuous, black 'brushy' tail. The Brush-tailed Phascogale is now recognized as a rare, vulnerable and/or threatened species on a State and National level.

A predominantly carnivorous species, its diet consists largely of invertebrates which it gathers by using its claws to tear away and search under tree bark (most commonly rough-barked eucalypts). These include cockroaches, beetles, bull ants, spiders and centipedes. They are also known at times to predate upon small vertebrates, and given the opportunity they will attack domestic poultry. Indeed, there have been numerous recordings of chicken snatching behaviour throughout the Geelong region in recent times. Nectar also plays an important part in their diet, with flowering eucalypts, particularly boxes and ironbarks, providing a bountiful resource in the right season. Brush-tailed Phascogale in turn assist in pollinating the trees.



"Brush-tailed Phascogale"

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