

JULY 2010

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Upcoming Event

Monthly Activity

Sunday 11 July

Assist the Geelong Botanical Gardens staff plant out the Brisbane Ranges display bed in the 21st Century garden area.

10.00am sharp - Meet at the Anakie community depot Ballan Road Anakie OR meet at 10.45am at the Geelong Botanical gardens carpark located to the left of the front entrance.

What to bring: nibbles/lunch/ water/gloves and wet weather gear.

After lunch join in tour of gardens and "behind the scenes" nursery area. **3 pm** leave for home

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WaterWatch at Sutherland Creek

Despite the wet beginning to the day, several hardy souls came along to the FoBR June activity to experience WaterWatch for the first time in the Brisbane Ranges.

Deirdre from Corangamite WaterWatch gave us a basic rundown on why water quality monitoring is important before taking us out to the field to show us how it was done.

Judy and Colin ferried us as far as they could down the management track from the Courthouse, with Judy returning for a second car load. Those of us left to wait had time to thoroughly explore the area, pull out some weeds, wonder where Judy was, pick up some litter, wonder where Judy was, find some



cool fungi and wonder where Judy was. She finally arrived after a couple of mechanical mishaps: a flat tyre (Judy's) and a set of keys locked in a car (Peter Stokie's).

At last, we continued on foot to some permanent waterholes in Sutherlands Creek. Having run through a JSA and agreed that wet, slippery rocks were our greatest hazards, a number of us scrambled **carefully** over the wet, slippery rocks to one of the downstream pools to collect our water samples. The Cook kids helped Deirdre rinse the bucket (three times) and collect water for physical and chemical testing. Then Deirdre, Colin and the kids used the sweep net to collect macroinvertebrates from several spots around the waterhole.

A cooperative effort saw the bucket of water and net full of bugs arrive safely back at the spot where we had set up our equipment (and where the less (fool)hardy souls were waiting for us).

Physical and chemical testing of the water was done first. These included temperature, pH, turbidity and electrical conductivity. The water quality was found to be excellent. Next came an

examination of the macroinvertebrates we had caught. Although there was not a great diversity of species captured, there were some interesting critters, including two fish (not invertebrates, and not the goal of our sampling, but important finds).

As well as a Southern Pygmy Perch there was



also a Yarra Pygmy Perch *Nannoperca obscura*, (above) which is listed as threatened under the Victorian *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act* and vulnerable under the Australian *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act*. This species was known to be in the area in the past, and it was quite exciting to confirm its continued presence. We also caught Diving Beetles, Backswimmers, Water Boatmen, water treaders, snails and Caddisfly Larvae. Winter is not a great time for waterbugs, so we are looking forward to returning to the site in spring.

Phys/chem monitoring will take place quarterly, with macroinvertebrate sampling in spring and autumn. The plan is also for WaterWatch testing to take place in the reservoir once the Barwon Water land is handed over. Anyone who is interested in becoming part of the WaterWatch team please let Judy know.

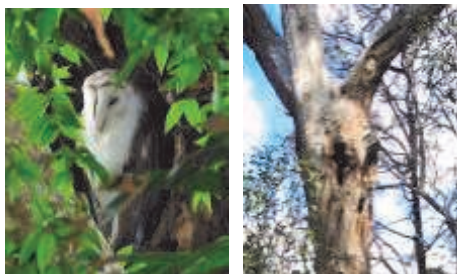
And the rain held off until we were heading back to the cars. On return to the Courthouse for lunch, Ann Stokie was kept amused by the antics of the men of the party as they attempted to rescue Peter's keys from his car. At one stage four blokes, one at each window, were each using their own tried and trusted method to break into the car. We hope they do not feel too disheartened, as even the nice young RACV man required a substantial effort to pry open the door,

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Cathy's Column

The month of July may be our mid-winter month but I always feel better when this month is started because it means we are having longer days. Have you noticed? I must confess that I have been watching the news most evenings only to see that Cairns (where I was a month ago) still has daytime temperatures around 28 degrees. As that is twice what ours has been recently, I can understand why our resident Ringtail Possum is looking for a place to sleep in our garage.

Perhaps it is only searching for a safe haven from the local barn owl. We often see these beautiful owls sitting on top of the wooden fence posts along the Bacchus Marsh/Balliang Road. *Tyto alba* listens for its prey while sitting on the fence post, then it glides or drops on to the victim which can be rodents, small birds and even night flying insects. Barn owls live alone or in pairs and roost quietly by day in places such as tree hollows and even buildings such as barns (hence the common name).



This makes our older trees so important. They provide homes for various birds and animals. This, of course, includes bats. If anyone is interested in that subject, the Australian Plants Society Melton & Bacchus Marsh group has Lindy Lumsden presenting information on bats at our 25th August meeting (held in Melton).

Ron and I went for a walk earlier this week to see what might be in flower at present.

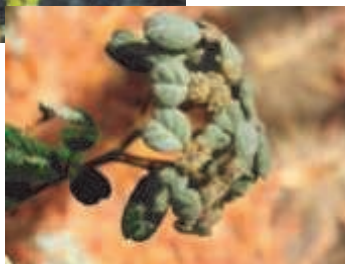
What a pleasant surprise to find a number of plants with flowers but there were two standout plants -



the *Grevillea chrysophaea* which

had many flowers as well as buds

and in stark contrast the *Spyridium parvifolium*.



We also came upon a small colony of *Dipodium (Pterostylis) striatum* with many plants in full flower.

I really enjoy photographing the *Drosera* species and right now the *Drosera whittakerii* is just starting to show some flower buds. There are about 90 species of Sundews in the world and about 50 of them are found in Australia. All species have hairs that exude a sticky substance.



It is this fluid that, in the rays of the sun, gives the impression of dew formation – hence its common name.

Come on SUN! and warmer days.

Cathy Powers

WaterWatch

wedge it and manoeuvre his way into unlocking it. After lunch and adventures with motor vehicles, Judy, the Cook family and myself went for a short walk at Bert Boardman Reserve. We had a lovely time spotting various fungi, including vivid Yellow Navel mushrooms, bright orange Bracket Fungus and a just-opening Basket Fungus, as well as Small Mosquito Orchids *Acianthus pusillus* and just-opened Greenhoods *Pterostylis* sp.

And I must thank everyone for a lovely day for my first official outing as a Friend.

Carolyn Edwards

Ed note - welcome to your first official event Carolyn and thank you for a great report.

PS - the next FoBR/WaterWatch monitoring day is planned for Sunday 5 September - more details later.

2011 Wildflower Show planning underway

The Wildflower Show Committee met late last month at their favourite meeting room, The Depot. A healthy discussion was had about extending the Wildflower Show for an extra day, including the Saturday.

After a few heart palpitations from the coordinator and an hour of discussing the pros and cons of such a move, we all finally decided that last year's one day event was very successful and there was no need to change the current format for now.

We'll carry on with the same format as last year with a few changes to the schedule. I'll keep you updated as things progress.

Helena Lindorff

(Wildflower Show Coordinator)

Park News or Boxy's Bull Dust?

I was told in no uncertain terms by THE BOSS (Judy for the uninitiated) that the newsletter needs some of my bull, sorry highly intelligant and edgamakated rytings, not that there is anything wrong with it as it is, it just needs it. Or is it that Judy just wanted to put me on the spot by telling the editor I would or likes giving me orders!

Ok where do we start, I guess the question everyone wants the answer to, when is the Barwon Water land coming into our fold???? I can now answer that without hesitation.

Works on the walking track from the Stony Creek Picnic Ground to the concrete dam are progressing well, four new/upgraded crossings have been completed and the planning to install a metal pedestrian bridge on the fifth crossing is well underway. Material has been stock piled in the picnic ground ready to resurface the track once all the crossing/bridge works are completed.

New track signage has been ordered to signify the Burchell Trail realignment via the reservoir once the area is handed over.

On the subject of the Burchell Trail, the new section of trail between the Crossing Picnic Ground and Fridays Camping Ground has been completed. Once the signage (on order) is installed the trail will have a vehicle based camping facility at either end.

I should also mention we have a Conservation Volunteers Australia team (was known as Green Corps) based at Bacchus Marsh for approx. six months, and what will they be doing you may ask. You may well ask, but will you get an answer? Ok then I will tell you, track maintenance and construction, signage installation. These works will be spread over the Bacchus Marsh district and include works associated with the Burchell Trail realignment and Barwon Water land. The group will also spend some time in the Macedon area

working on the Great Dividing Trail.

Now for something completely different, on a recent stroll through the Little River area several staff members came across a group of park visitors who did not seem to have the best interests of our beautiful park in mind. On careful observation of their activities it would appear they had been camping in the area and caused untold damage to the native flora. Even though they were outnumbered, the staff members did their best to educate the rather scruffy looking group in proper park etiquette, which I must say was ignored. Even to the point of you can "shove it" This to and fro went on for a period of time, and upon the settling of dust six of the unwelcome visitors lay deceased on the ground. Another successful day in the life of a Ranger. I guess that's it for now, so have a good one. A good one what? Well that's entirely up to you!

Boxy (Peter Box of course)