



DECEMBER 2011

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Upcoming Events

Saturday 10 December

FoBR end of year evening event - BBQ and presentation by guest speaker Marilyn Hewish on "Moths of the Brisbane Ranges"



Sunday 12 February 2012

First FoBR event for the new year - Waterwatch at Sutherlands Creek & Lower Stony Creek reservoir. Plus removal of weed wattles

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FoBR Activities

Waterwatch in the Park

Water quality testing is being undertaken at two sites in the Brisbane Ranges National Park: At Lower Stony Creek dam and at Sutherlands Creek gorge. Monitoring is done for the purpose of providing information about water quality in the upper catchment of the Little River and Moorabool River catchments. This water quality data can be used by the community and river managers to measure change in river health.

FoBR is testing at Sutherlands Creek to establish the baseline water quality parameters sustaining a healthy ecosystem that includes a population of the threatened Yarra Pygmy Perch. Not only are we gathering ecological information, but the community is learning about biodiversity and the protection of these fish populations.

At Lower Stony Creek dam, FoBR is monitoring water quality in the water storage in preparation

The Switch Road Fence

After Waterwatch in the morning, we adjourned to the Stony Creek picnic area for lunch. This gave us the fuel to carry on with removing more of the old fence along the Burchell Trail near the intersection of Switch Rd and McLean's Highway.



for dam wall repairs. We plan to measure sites downstream in Stony Creek over several months as water is released from the dam (one of the risks of releasing dam water is that water quality is not always optimal – it may be colder and the dissolved oxygen levels can be lower than the river or creek receiving the water and this has a negative impact on the stream fauna living there).

Waterwatch testing at the Lower Stony Creek dam on Sunday 14 November began with a pleasant walk from the Stony Creek picnic area. The regular phys-chem tests and an aquatic macro-invertebrate survey provided a good hands-on experience. While there, we learnt from a local about the tasty redfin (an introduced fish) in the dam and in turn, we talked to him about the Waterwatch tests. It was a good morning for learning something new.

Deirdre Murphy

Armed with wire cutters, bolt cutters and enthusiasm, several of us cut the wires from the fence while others rolled it up into neat(ish) bundles ready for picking up by Parks Vic (hint, hint).

Rolling up the old netting fence proved to be the hardest job, as many plants had grown through it over the years since the fire and proved reluctant to let it go. Some dexterity with the wire cutters was required to release some of the more enamoured specimens. When we called it quits for the day, we had cleaned up another large section of the old fenceline and had nearly made it to the point where it turns down the hill towards the reservoir. Combined with the section we removed earlier, we've taken out about 1.2km of fence.

Big pats on the back to everyone involved.

Colin Cook

From the Wildflower Show

Donation to Australian Plant Society members

Friends of Brisbane Ranges recently made a donation of plants to APS members in the Loddon-Murray area who are now beginning gardening again following floods earlier this year. These were some of the propagated plants remaining following our Wildflower Show. Other plants have been sold to the local community.



FoBR History

Our group was created in 1982 and some amazing people have been involved in making the group a success over nearly 30 years. We would like to put together some of the history of the group - if you have anything to contribute - photos, anecdotes, stories, profiles or news from the earlier days please let me know at cazbarth@yahoo.com.au as we are keen to capture all the important and interesting stuff if possible.

If history is something that interests you...

Trove is an online resource provided by the National Library of Australia. It is a free search service with millions of items. You can find books, images, historic newspapers, maps, music, archives and more. Have a look, but be warned, you may lose hours in this treasure trove!
<http://trove.nla.gov.au/>

Steiglitz. Mine Battery foundations.

Date of creation: Nov. 7, 1967

Photograph : gelatin silver ; 8.8 x 12.5 cm. approx.

*J.T. Collins Collection,
La Trobe Picture Collection, State
Library of Victoria*



News for Members

Warm Welcome to New Members

Joanne and Kathryn Walker of Highton, Eleanor Fox of Ballan and Jess Cook of Mount Helen

Rules of Association (Constitution)

On 21 September Consumer Affairs Victoria wrote approving our new Rules which were passed at our AGM. They have pointed out that a Disputes and Mediation clause is deemed to be included. They require that we advise members that the rules are to be read in conjunction with the Model Rules. In accordance with Section 21 (3) of the Act, model rule number 8 is deemed to be included in the rules". We have added the rule as an Appendix - "Disputes and Mediation" to our Rules which you can access on our [website](http://home.vicnet.net.au/~fobr/Constitution.pdf). [\[http://home.vicnet.net.au/~fobr/Constitution.pdf\]](http://home.vicnet.net.au/~fobr/Constitution.pdf) The full Association Model Rules can be downloaded [here](#) from the Consumer Affairs Victoria website.

Caz Bartholomew

For your diary! Join us

- **Saturday 10 December**
FoBR end of year evening event - BBQ and presentation by guest speaker Marilyn Hewish on "Moths of the Brisbane Ranges".
- **Sunday 12 February 2012**
First FoBR event for the new year - Waterwatch at Sutherlands Creek & Lower Stony Creek reservoir. Remove weed wattles.
- **Sunday 18 March**
FoBR activity - remove pine wildings near Lease Road
- **Sunday 15 April**
FoBR activity - Remove suckers along brick aqueduct
- **Sunday 13 May**
FoBR activity - Waterwatch Sutherland's Creek and reservoir. Planting and weed removal at Anakie Gorge
- **Sunday 17 June**
FoBR activity - Remove Clow Street fence and prune/replant fruit trees - Steiglitz
- **Sunday 8 July**
FoBR activity - Koala Survey with Janine Duffy
- **Sunday 12 August**
FoBR AGM and waterwatch survey.

Please Note: These activities are proposed only and are subject to change.

In January, a non FoBR event is being hosted by Friends of Geelong Botanic Gardens on Thursday 26 January at 2pm. Plants for Australia Day - Plants, history, uses, planting techniques and maintenance. For more information, go to www.friendsgbg.org.au

**To all Friends,
Enjoy your Christmas celebrations**



And have a wonderful New Year

Cathy's Column

Losses Unnoticed

As a leader of a not-for-profit group, I realize that many of our members are in the aging population category (me included). Occasionally I am notified when a member passes away and this is a sad loss to our Society as it would be to any group.

The same goes for what happens in our environment. Many times it occurs and goes unnoticed. Recently I took a walk in the northern part of the Ranges and was saddened to see the effects of what most certainly is our worst sinister invader – *Phytophthora cinnamomi*!



It is a stark reminder that we have little or no control of what nature does. We can assist it in some ways but I think the large rainfall event we had in late summer caused havoc in ways we have yet to see. As I write this, we have received over 100mm of rain in the past 24 hours.

One of the more unusual sites was this lone sentry – perhaps keeping guard but not able to have much effect.



On a happier note, I also took a walk in the area of our swamps. It is the first time I have ever seen standing water in the little swamp and there is certainly lots of water in the large swamp. It could be a great year for the *Spiranthes australis* (last year was a bumper crop) and the little Fairies' Aprons were in their glory; some plants standing in 20cm of water and the flowers were another 20cm above that. The other thing that stood out was the number of Chocolate Lilies, in close proximity, and the delicious aroma that accompanies their presence.



Utricularia dichotoma



Arthropodium strictum

I have to admit that I went to these areas in pursuit of some specific sun orchids. What I found was interesting– not as many flowering plants as last year but a surprise that always makes me feel the effort of wading in mid-calf high water through the reeds (watching for Red-bellied Black Snakes) worth the resultant tired legs.



This is most likely a natural hybrid between *Thelymitra holmesii* and *Thelymitra ixioides*. There were at least five plants so obviously the little sun orchids have been promiscuous.

The nice thing about this time of the year is there are not too many flies making their way about and annoying the ardent photographer. There are, however, many other insects worth looking out for and one such actually posed nicely for this picture.



Zygaenidae *Pollanisus virid*

I am sure that the time spent with Marilyn Hewish looking at moths will be rewarding and educational. Her presentation to our local APS group inspired me to take the time and photograph moths as I encounter them. One was easily identifiable and the other I am still working on.



Termessia nivosa



Hmmm??

If I don't catch up with you before the end of the year, I wish you all a happy and restful festive season. There is still plenty to see and enjoy in our precious area – some even looking like Christmas.



See ya in the new year – 2012!

Cathy

From the Rangers

Scott Nicholson – Ranger



I would like to introduce to you to Ranger Scotty, who has recently taken over the responsibility for the management of the Brisbane ranges NP.

Scott is a proud Tasmanian having moved to Victoria during the mid 1990s (we suspect pushed by his folks as he will always identify himself as a Taswegian). Following a period of study, he began work with DSE as a Seasonal Firefighter during 2000 and completed his on ground fire training at Bacchus Marsh workcentre.

During 2006, Scott became a fulltime Field Services Officer with PV, employed under the Public Land Fire Initiative (PLFI), established by the Victorian government (2003) to address recommendations arising from major investigations into the management of wildfire in Victoria.

Whilst Scott became proficient in fire fighting and field based tasks, his interest was leaning towards a ranger role and was encouraged to apply for secondments. As a result, he became a ranger within the Bellarine parks, the You Yangs and Bacchus Marsh where he further developed his skills in project and people management. Scott has excellent people skills and is often recommended, as well as being specifically asked by the public, for visitor talks; what should be a 15 minute talk quite often becomes an hour as he charms the public, talking about his passion - the natural environment!

Currently Scott is Ranger - Team Leader where he has the responsibility of leading and managing operational tasks for 7 Field service officers and 6 Project Firefighters. This is additional to his role of managing the natural values of Brisbane Ranges NP.

Scott has inherited excellent "green" credentials; his folks have attended many protest rallies in Tasmania, the most recent objecting to the Tamar Valley Pulp Mill and for protection of the Tarkine wilderness. Scott



Scott Nicholson and his mother

has followed his parents by developing a real passion for all things within the natural environment, thus ensuring our own national park will be well looked after!

And finally, we cannot ignore his love for his big tuff dog called Nelson or Nels (with apologies to Kelly his partner who is fully aware she takes second best to his dog!) Nels is a working dog breed who was rescued from a pound and now resides in the lap of luxury (ie he has his own doona!) in Belmont. Scott recently proved his love for his dog by carrying him over the gently flowing Sutherlands creek, Nels not liking his feet wet!



You will all get to meet Scott sometime soon as he intends to call in whenever the FoBR activity coincides with his weekend Ranger duty. Please make him welcome and feel free to contact him anytime Mobile 0408 105 668 or Scott.Nicholson@parks.vic.gov.au

Monitoring Activities

Early next year, Barwon Water will start releasing water out of the Lower Stony Creek reservoir. Water will be released at a slow rate down through the Anakie gorge until all water has been removed from the reservoir allowing easy access to the release structures located at the base of the wall. Once Barwon Water have completed some much needed maintenance to the water release valves, they will refill the reservoir from Upper stony Creek reservoirs.

Prior to the water release, Deirdre Murphy and Judy Locke will be carrying out some Waterwatch monitoring both in the reservoir and below the wall in a number of the ponds along Anakie gorge.

The first monitoring exercise will be next Wednesday.....any help would be very much appreciated so if you have the time and would like to join us.....

Meet next Wednesday 7th December at 9am at the Anakie Shop (in time for a coffee)

FoBR will be kept informed when future monitoring sessions occur so that you can join in when you can.

