



# Brisbane Ranges Friends News

## Some serious weed removal with help from Conservation Volunteers Australia

Over the last few weeks, we have had some very welcome assistance with eradicating weeds in our park from a number of eager volunteers managed under (CVA). CVA is an Australia wide organisation who manage volunteers of all ages and abilities to "participate in projects that protect or enhance our environment and heritage. See more [www.conservationvolunteers.com.au](http://www.conservationvolunteers.com.au)

Ranger in Charge, Peter Box, was approached by Parks Victoria to nominate activities that would fit within the Park Champions program, a CVA and PV partnership providing opportunities to volunteer within PV's vast estate. Several projects were put up for consideration including the removal of weeds within the BRNP which were not considered noxious and therefore had not received funding. Of course, how could he refuse, especially as there was a number of very willing workers at no cost over 15 days (well except for 5L of Roundup!)

Our group consisted of 6 – 8 adult volunteers supervised by Michael Darcy. Funding originated from a grant from Alcoa and the only requirement was that the weed removal be connected to enhancing and protecting waterways and frog habitat. Well, Stony Creek

area came to mind and the removal of the coastal Sallow Wattle (*Acacia longifolia*) which is fast becoming very invasive within the national park, ie area north of Ballan road as we well know! Most of us have at some stage been involved with the battle of this weedy wattle. Connection to Waterways, well Stony creek is nearby and the sallow wattle was growing in the catchment area.

The Sallow or sometimes called Coastal wattle, which can grow to small trees, were cut then pasted with Roundup. If you need to ID this wattle, the leaves are long and narrow, and the flower shaped like a rod, and not a ball. There are 2 local wattles which have rod shaped flowers, Spike wattle and Prickly Moses but for both species, the leaf is quite sharp and prickly. When next travelling along Ballan road, look for lots of dead brown vegetation on the Stony creek side – you can't miss it!

Our thanks to this very active and effective group of volunteers, maybe FoBR can do some follow up work such as removing new seedlings within their work area and or extend their frontline by further removal of this serious invasive weed.  
*Judy Locke*



Photos: Sallow wattle removal on Ballan Rd

*Sorry we had to cancel our February event due to the weather and Total Fire Ban. We are planning to carry out the clean-up of the garden and surrounds of the Depot at the March event and then enjoy a walk in the park in the afternoon if the weather is appropriate. Everyone welcome.*

### MARCH 2014

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#### Upcoming Events

**Sunday 16 March-** FoBR working bee at Anakie Depot and bush walk in the afternoon

#### FoBR Membership Fees

Annual fees \$11 for single and \$22 for families are due  
Pay straight into FoBR bank account - BSB: 633-000  
A/c No. 115314882

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# Grass Tree Community Monitoring Project

Phytophthora Cinnamomi monitoring in the Brisbane Ranges is again on the agenda for this year after a year off in 2013. The VNPA (Victorian National Parks Association) is planning a number of monitoring events and Friends of Brisbane Ranges will be doing some of these while other volunteers are coming to help monitor the iconic grass trees in our park. The website <http://vnpa.org.au/page/volunteer/naturewatch/grass-tree-community-monitoring-project> has further information.



## April

Sunday 12th April – VNPA volunteers Grass Tree monitoring, Marshalls Rd

Sunday 13th April – FoBR Grass Tree monitoring, Switch Rd

April – Vic Uni group, Geelong-Ballan Rd

## May

8th May – Parks Vic staff Grass Tree monitoring, Lease Rd-Durdiwarrah Rd site and Loggers and Lease Rd site

14th May – VNPA volunteers Grass Tree monitoring, Old Thomson Track and Kangaroo Track

## September

27th September, VNPA volunteers Grass Tree monitoring Marshalls Rd

28th September, VNPA volunteers, Grass Tree monitoring, Old Thomson Track and Kangaroo Track

## October

2nd October, Parks Vic staff, Grass Tree monitoring, Lease Rd-Durdiwarrah Rd site and Loggers and Lease Rd site  
Organise community group to monitor Geelong-Ballan Rd site

## November

November 9th, Friends group Grass Tree monitoring, Switch Rd site

# For your diary! Join us

## Sunday 16 March

Clean up around the Anakie Depot and garden and then enjoy a walk in the park in the afternoon

## Saturday 29 March - Earth Hour [see page 3]

## Sunday 13 April

Phytophthora monitoring of our iconic grass trees at Switch Rd- VNPA Naturewatch and FoBR followed by walk in the park

## Saturday 10 May

For the adventurous a special opportunity to visit the newest part of the park near Little River Gorge [see below] OR Walk in search of wombat evidence - along Anakie Gorge and aqueduct south of Switch Road, enjoy the bush and remove weeds we find along the way! Waterwatch too in the morning.

## Sunday 15 June

Slate quarries with geological expert Gold mining history walk and walk trails off South Steiglitz Road looking for heritage remnants

## Sunday 13 July

Combine with Back to Steiglitz to replant orchard with heritage fruit trees.

## Sunday 10 August – AGM

Annual General Meeting, Waterwatch and weed removal or special event.

## Sunday 14 September

Watsonia removal at Ballan Road firebreak and a check for early wildflowers

## Sunday 12 October

FoBR stall at Back to Steiglitz Festival and wildflower Walk

## Sunday 9 November

Phytophthora monitoring of our iconic grass trees at Switch Rd- VNPA Naturewatch and FoBR followed by Waterwatch

## Saturday 6 or 13 December

evening end of year event venue tba

# Protection of Native Bushland

Right now Australian bushland and plant life is under serious threat from State government policy changes that are significantly watering down protection of our native bushland.

Victoria remains Australia's most cleared state, and yet the State Government is making it a whole lot easier to remove native plants.

Destructive policy changes will:

- \* Make clearing native vegetation easier and quicker (as opposed to the current situation where clearance is a last resort).
- \* Remove the need for professional on-site botanical assessments before clearing. How will we know what precious plants are there if nobody looks?
- \* Create a 'cash for clearing' system, which means the bulk of vegetation removal applications will simply require a fee to be paid before clearing.

See VNPA website for more information- <http://vnpa.org.au/page/nature-conservation/biodiversity/native-vegetation>

*Caz Bartholomew*

# What else is On?

## 5th Victorian Weeds Conference -

Invasive Plants and Animals – Contrasts and Connections

Tuesday-Thursday 13-15 May 2014 at

Mercure Hotel, Geelong. [http://](http://www.wsvic.org.au/node/97)

[www.wsvic.org.au/node/97](http://www.wsvic.org.au/node/97)

## WMCN birding events –

1 Apr Tue 8:30am - 3:30pm [Birding at Western Treatment Plant \(Car Pool\)](#)

20 Apr Sun 9:15am - 3:00pm [Bird Survey at Mt Rothwell](#)

6 May Tue 8:30am - 3:00pm [Birding at Brisbane Ranges](#)

18 May Sun 9:15am - 3:15pm [Bird Survey Pinkerton and Eynesbury](#)

## Autumn Plant Sale - Geelong Australian Plant Society

9am-5pm Saturday & 9am-1pm Sunday 5th & 6th April 2014

This Australian Native Plant Sale attracts growers from all over Victoria selling a wide range of native plants. From tube-stock to mature trees, grasses to grevilleas, boronias to banksias, you name it and they may have it for sale. BBQ, tea, coffee and refreshments, book sales, children's activities and a great selection of native plants. Growers are happy to offer advice on native plants.

Sale is held at 'Wirrawilla', 40 Lovely Banks Rd, Lovely Banks (Melway 431D6) and is located west of the Geelong Ring Road. There is plenty of off-street parking. Entry is \$2.00 per adult or \$5.00 per car, with children free. Information: <http://www.apsgeelong.org/sale.html>

# Special opportunity! Saturday 10 May

An invitation for FoBRs to check out our newest bit of the the Brissies thanks to Trish Edwards and Mark Trengove.

You can join us to see this new section of the park that is otherwise difficult to access - note the terrain is a bit challenging including parts with no tracks.

Approx 20 hectares backing on to the Little River Gorge has been given to the BRNP and this will be the a great opportunity for us to access it through private land.

## Bushwalking Out and about in December

On a cool sunny day in late December, Vicky Grosser and I went for a bushwalk in the northern part of the Brisbane Ranges National Park. The start of our walk, along Island Track, went through an area that has had several control burns in recent years. We could see how slowly the shrubs grow back, due to the poor soil. Beside the track we found an old pair of boots, which although left as rubbish, had become part of the environment. The soles had fallen off, lichens were growing on the leather, and they looked as if they could provide useful shelter for small animals such as lizards and beetles.

We arrived at a small dam, its water black



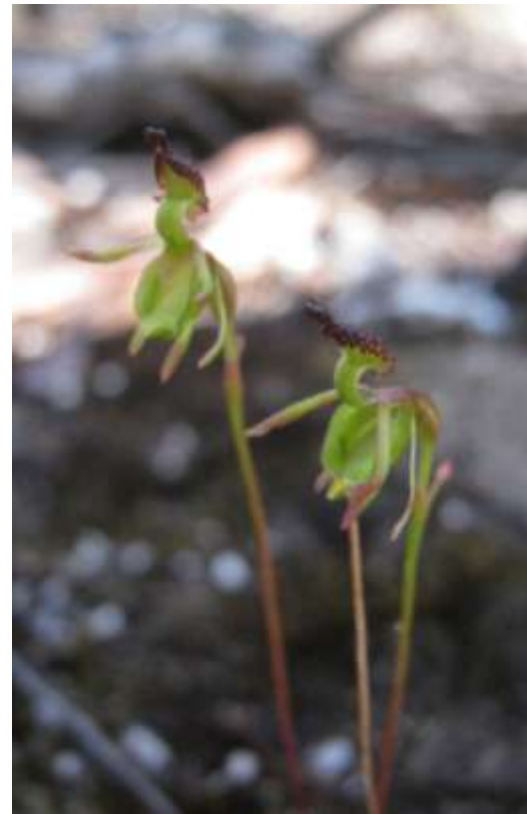
from decaying leaves. It was surrounded by eucalypts and had shoulder high reeds around its edges. Dragonflies flew over the water and among the reeds, which were fresh and bright green, with small tufts of brown flowers towards their tops. Although it was not obvious to us, the insects knew that these flowers were in full bloom. Some brown butterflies rested in groups near the

dam, while others fed on the flowers. I saw one sitting on a reed with its long tongue deep in a flower. A small shiny fly and many beetles of different colours, shapes and sizes were feeding at other flowers. All this insect life attracted small spiders. They ignored us as we admired their carefully woven webs. The spiders were beautiful, of different shapes and colours with amazing patterns of spots and stripes on their abdomens.

We walked to the edge of the flat plateau that forms a large part of the north of the park. As we approached the edge, we left the dark-trunked rough-barked stringybarks and ironbarks, and entered an area of gum trees with smooth pale grey bark. I sat on a large fallen trunk and looked from the rocky hilltop down to the green valley far below, and at the steep slope across Spring Creek. I listened to cicadas and watched birds and beetles fly between the trees. On the steep rocky slope below me, Vicky explored and found a track made by wallabies hopping along the valley.

Our track followed the edge of the plateau for a while, with views into valleys below. We walked along a shallow gully, lined with purple daisies. We investigated a small cave above the track which appeared to be a regular shelter for wallabies. We could see the prints of their tails in the dust at the wide cave entrance. The second entrance, too small for their use, was covered in leaf litter.

We walked along Loop Track across the plateau, seeing some summer flowers, including small shrubs of Mitchell's wattle with pale yellow flowers, and a patch of rarely



seen small duck orchids, their tiny flowers looking like black-headed ducks flying on the tops of their stalks. We followed Wattle Track, a steep path down the side of the plateau, noting the continuing changes in the plants around us, as the soil and slope changed. The end of our walk was beside a deep dry creek bed, surrounded by bushes of yellow and white daisy flowers, finishing with lunch in the shade of box trees beside the creek at Sapling Gully Picnic Ground.

*Colin Cook*

### Earth Hour

Saturday 29 March  
8.30pm

**Calling all residents of Planet Earth...It's Lights Out for the Reef**

Earth Hour was founded by WWF in Sydney in 2007 and has now been embraced by 7001 cities and 152 nations across the globe.

And in 2014, Earth Hour will focus attention on one of the world's most iconic and threatened places: Australia's Great Barrier Reef.

Get involved!

See more - <http://earthhour.org.au/>



This tree, just off Grahams Creek Road, was struck by lightning around same time as the Lease Road fire mid January 2014. Fortunately it hit the ground and put itself out. There were bits of stringy bark all around on the ground and hanging within lower shrubby vegetation.

*Judy Locke*