



Brisbane Ranges Friends News



JULY 2014

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Upcoming Events

Sunday 13 July
Removing burnt fence and more along Triggs Track.
Meet at Anakie Depot at 10am

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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Rock'n'Col

What a wonderful day we all had on Sunday 15th June checking out the geology around Fairlies Track with Colin Smithyman. Drizzle stopped as we got started and Col welcomed us and explained his down to earth non-scientist approach.

His extensive knowledge grew from his interest in the gold mines around his home in Steiglitz and his passion for learning and experiencing it. With a live-in Geology student and visiting Professors he began his geology education

He explained what had happened over millions of years from early to mid Ordovician age (505 million years ago), when the area was well under water, the extensive faulting when the Rowsley, Hanover and Meredith Faults uplifted the Brisbane Ranges above the plains to the east, and the effects of the live volcanos. See our website for more information on our geological

history <http://fobr.org.au/park-history/geological-history>.

Col knows the area so well and his enthusiasm is infectious. He helped us appreciate the amazing formations we were looking at. We all enjoyed the walk! Thank you Col.



Photos:
 The subject of geology is best explained and explored in the field



Wurdi Youang

People from Little River and beyond put their hands up to help with a morning of tree planting on Sat 14 June at Wurdi Youang, the Little River farm managed by the Wathaurong Aboriginal Co-operative. But that was only the beginning of a superb day. The revegetation program at the site aims to right the balance between weeds like Chilean needle grass, and the very diverse species of the Victorian Volcanic Plain (VVP). Following the planting, participants were treated to a lunch that included tastings of eel fished from the local Little River. A didgeridoo played as we talked and learned much more

about the site – such as the development of a yam daisy (Murnong) patch on a site of fertile ground at the farm. Our group was then given a tour of the nearby stone relics. The stones indicate the setting positions of the Sun at the equinoxes and solstices. The Wurdi Youang stone arrangement was built by the Wathaurong people before European settlement, but all records of its use have now disappeared. On our return walk, Reg Abrahams picked up and showed us stone tools from the ground that would have been part of everyday life of the Aboriginal people prior to European settlement. The day was informative and showed us some aspects of the cultural use of this important landscape.

Upcoming AGM

AGM Guest Speakers - Mark Trengove & Trish Edwards

Mark and Trish live "on the hill" up above Little River Gorge and are active in Landcare and members of FoBR. They have recently handed over an extra 20ha to the BRNP and we hope to check it out after the AGM.

Mark used to have the Geelong Indigenous Nursery and is an Ecologist with more than 20 years experience. He specialises in the indigenous flora of central and south-west Victoria and is very familiar with this area. He has a particular interest in grassy ecosystems, environmental weeds and plant identification.

Trish is an artist and describes herself as looking after "the hill" where they live and also makes time to volunteer at Mt Rothwell.

FoBR next year!

Another year has begun and we will soon have our AGM. Next month we will send out our annual report/newsletter.

PLEASE come along to the AGM. It is hard to believe that some people actually avoid AGMs thinking they will end up with a job and not be able to get out of it! Well - not with FoBR! We do want YOU to volunteer but the roles are not difficult or long term and we try to keep formalities and red-tape to a minimum.

What do we need and how can YOU help!

As an Incorporated Association we need to elect a **President, Secretary and Treasurer** as a minimum and it is great if we can also elect a couple of committee members as well to make a good working team.

Seriously, there is not normally much work to be done and there is plenty of support so please do not hesitate to volunteer, or talk with me to find out more.

What do they do?

President - Spokesperson for the group. Ensures that any association or government requirements are met. Leads the committee and planning.

Secretary - association annual form, AGM and any other meeting minutes, letters to new members

Treasurer - receipts and payments, lodges annual BAS and produces financial reports for AGM, maintains financial member records and asset register.

Two committee members could include -

Newsletter editor - produces monthly newsletter in Publisher with copy provided by executive and members.

Website - I am volunteering to continue with the website role and as immediate past President to assist and be a mentor if required as a committee member.

All executive committee - can contribute newsletter items, welcome everyone at events, and provide input on any FoBR decisions required.

Wildflower Show if we decide we are going to hold an WFS next year we need -

Wildflower Show Co-ordinator - to lead the committee and manage the event. Templates and project plans from previous shows can be used and Helena Lindorff will provide assistance if required.

Committee member portfolios have previously been - Wildflower Sales & Displays, Merchandise & Workshops, Publicity and Bus Tours or if you have a special talent you would like to use please let us know.

This level of support plus everyone volunteering to help in the few days before the event is needed to make it a success!
Caz Bartholomew

9th Annual Grow West Tree Planting

930am-430pm Sunday 20 Jul 2014 Friends of Werribee Gorge & Long Forest Mallee and Port Phillip & Westernport CMA. Grow West was created to restore badly eroded landscapes in the Bacchus Marsh area. Help plant 6,000 native seedlings on Yaloak Estate in the Rowsley Valley as part of the large landscape change project. It's a great day out. Victorian Mobile Landcare Group will provide transportation around the site. Registrations open <http://www.growwest.com.au> helena.lindorff@ppwcma.vic.gov.au or phone Helena 0437 195 511



National Tree Day Sunday 27 July
Schools Tree Day Friday 25 July...
or any day you like!

<http://treeday.planetark.org/>

For your diary! Join us

Sunday 13 July

Possibly removing burnt fence and more along Triggs Track. Meet at Anakie Depot at 10am.

Sunday 10 August – AGM, speakers & walk
Invited speakers Mark Trengove and Trish Edwards following Annual General Meeting. Waterwatch and weed removal or special walk to see new Little River Gorge part of the park.

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 talk with Cathy Powers tbc ... and 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

Landcare Crowdfunding

In celebration of World Environment Day and the 25 year anniversary of Landcare, Pozible and Landcare are thrilled to announce the launch of a new global crowdfunding partnership: The Landcare & Environment Collection.

If your organisation has an environmental project that you are interested in crowdfunding, you can register for a workshop in your city and check out how the partnership can support you. <http://www.pozible.com/landcare>

Your articles: We would love to publish your stories of bushwalking in the Brissies.

Send in your contributions to friends_br@yahoo.com.au



Geoff Hannon Award

One of our earlier FoBR members Geoff Hannon was recently recognised as part of the 30 year history of Friends of Kalimna Park Castlemaine. Geoff is holding the certificate above (courtesy Friends of Box Ironbark Forests).

Owls and Sugargliders

A mystery with one clue – a soft furry tail at the foot of a tree. The tail is grey near its base, black towards the tip and has black tips on the grey hairs in the middle. Too small for a brushtail possum, and too furry for a ringtail possum and lacking a white tip. What else lives around here?

A few evenings ago, I saw a sugar glider near where the tail was found. It was a still night, and I heard rustling in the top of a eucalypt. Silhouetted against the sky was a small possum, bouncing lightly between branches, stopping regularly and briefly to groom. Then it glided to a neighbouring tree. It ran up branches, higher into the tree and glided again. On the third glide it was above me and off to one side, so I had a clear view of its body with the skin stretched between front and back legs. I lost sight of it in the next tree. Did the tail belong to it or another member of its group?

I looked in a book of Australian mammals. The tail was right for a sugar glider. So how was it left on the ground? What nocturnal predator can catch a sugar glider, neatly cut off its tail without damaging it, and eat the rest of the animal? Among the native mammalian predators, antechinus are too small. Brush-tailed phascogales are a similar size to sugar gliders, and may eat one given the opportunity, but probably wouldn't leave a neatly removed tail on the ground. A feral cat would find them difficult to catch, so perhaps an owl? I know of two species of owls living here - the southern boobook with its familiar mopoke call, and Australia's largest owl, the powerful owl. What do they eat?

Southern boobooks mostly eat insects and small mammals, such as mice and bats. I found mention of them catching sugar gliders by pushing them downwards as they glide, but no mention of tail removal.

Powerful owls mainly prey on ringtail possums, brushtail possums and sugar gliders. They swoop silently among trees and catch them in their talons. They may snip off and drop the tails of animals they have caught. It seems likely that this was how the tail came to be on the ground. Occasionally, powerful owls can be seen during the day, roosting on a branch holding their prey with one foot. It may be partly eaten and ready for the owl's next meal. The owl has a sharp curved beak, designed for gripping, cutting and tearing. It eats everything, including fur and bones. It cannot digest these, and regurgitates them as pellets, which may be found on the ground.

Powerful owls nest in large tree hollows, and eat two or three large possums each week, or more animals if they are smaller, like sugar gliders. They have a large home range of at least 1000 hectares, which they need to keep them supplied with food. It is likely that we have one pair in the area, dining on the local possums.

A few nights later, I heard a sugar glider's yapping alarm call. The sugar gliders were out of their small tree hollow home, feeding on sap, wattle gum and invertebrates, and watching out for hungry owls.

Wendy Cook

Powerful Owl (*Ninox strenua*.)

This photo by Russell Best was selected from the images in the Natureshare website accessed through the FoBR website



Golden Grevillea Research

(*Grevillea chrysophaea*)

ongoing in the Brisbane Ranges

Julie Atkinson, PhD candidate (and FoBR member), Department of Botany, La Trobe University has sent us her research information which we have now included on our website. Thank you Julie.

We would be pleased to hear about some of the other research which has happened or is still happening in our park.

"Most of you will be familiar with the Golden Grevillea (*Grevillea chrysophaea*) that occurs in the Brisbane Ranges – especially in the Steiglitz area. From a biogeographic perspective, this species has a fascinating distribution. In addition to the Brisbane Ranges, it is also found in central Gippsland (south-west of Sale) and in the foothills of the Alps (up near Heyfield and Licola)."

[Read more](#)

The Friends of Brisbane Ranges donated to Julie two *G. chrysophaea* plants which were propagated and



nurtured by Judy Locke and these plants will be used in cross-pollination experiments.

If interested in Julie's research – you can help!

She is not able to get out 'in the field' as often as she would like and so can always use some 'eyes on the ground'. In particular, she is interested in:

- * Phenology – If you commonly encounter a population of Golden Grevillea you can let Julie know when they start flowering, when their flowering is at its peak, and when the last few flowers die off (stop flowering). Please include their approximate location and photos of a plant and a flower would also be beneficial, but not necessary
- * Pollinator Observations – If you observe an animal visiting a *G. chrysophaea* flower, she would like to know the identity of all potential pollinators. The name of the bird, insect or mammal would be useful but a photo, video or even a specimen (for insects) would be very valuable!
- * Population locations – Julie is only aware of decent sized populations of *G. chrysophaea* near Steiglitz. If you know of any, or discover any, decent sized populations (>30 individuals) away from Steiglitz (in the Brisbane Ranges proper, or in the You Yangs etc.) please let her know.

Email address is: J.Atkinson@latrobe.edu.au [More information](#)

Platypus found in Werribee River

An untagged male platypus was recorded in the Werribee River (lower) on 5 June with a band around his neck. The band was removed, luckily there was no serious damage and it was quickly released. Josh Griffiths, Cesar Australia, commented:

"It's disappointing that we have caught a number of entangled animals around Melbourne over the past 12-18 months. With numbers so low in Werribee, the loss of even one animal can have dramatic impact on the population."

Josh and Stefanie Wabnik are asking for ideas on how to try to stop these preventable deaths.

Contact Stefanie Wabnik, River Health Officer for the Werribee and Little River Catchments

Stefanie.Wabnik@melbournewater.com.au

