

May 2012

Number 2

Narpulungup

NEWS

from the Friends of the Fitzgerald River National Park

www.fitzgeraldfriends.org.au

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING ISSUE

Also in this issue

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FROM THE AGM—PRESIDENT'S REPORT

This has been a very interesting year.

On May 2nd, The Environmental Protection Authority published Report 1396 FRNP, finding the walk-track through the Wilderness area to be unacceptable. We agreed, but were reluctant to support the compromise tracks from Pt Ann to Fitzgerald, and Hamersley inlet to Quoin Head, because even this would take 'Facilities' too near an area which we believe should be quarantined. This belief formed the substance of our appeal which was made with help from and consultation with friends, colleagues and of course the committee

While Minister Marmion considered the report, 'Friends' continued to seek help to persuade him that the Premier's idea was not in the best interest of the FRNP. I am delighted to acknowledge the help we had from several members of the 'Friends' who are also Members of Parliament, both State and Federal. On December 21st Minister Marmion announced that there would be no walk-track through the wilderness area. The 'Bookends' would be acceptable, with strict Dieback prevention conditions.

Four committee members have attended meetings convened by DEC to inform members of the FRNP Project Reference Group of the latest developments. Another meeting was held last week, and it is obvious that we still have to prevent any 'Tweaking' of the conditions. We'll have to copy the late senator Don Chipp, and try to "Keep the bastards honest" We will be reminding DEC of their stated intention of re-convening the FRNP Advisory Committee, and calling for new, representative members. In July, Gil represented 'Friends' in a short debate at the 10th annual Dieback Working Group conference at Murdoch University. Unfortunately, this conference did not attract any attention from the 'West Australian'

Grants.

In July, we were successful in obtaining an Environmental Community Grant for \$30,000-00 towards the Twertup restoration project. This grant acted as a catalyst in finally producing a Memorandum of Understanding



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between Friends of the FRNP and the Department of Environment and Conservation, signed September 9. This enabled us to make a start on the Twertup restoration. See also page 3.

No news about the Royalties for regions 2011 Grant. We were expecting news mid-December.

Activities.

The Ravensthorpe Range Guided Bush walk took place, guided by Andy Chapman.

Raana organised the annual Carnaby's Cockatoo Nesting Survey on the 8th and 9th of October. There are 23 nesting hollows, and John Tucker keeps an eye on them regularly. Gil will tell us about Twertup working Bees, see page 3.

A Network Field Day was held at Dunn's Lake, at which Andy Chapman and John Tucker spoke about hydrology and birds respectively.

Numbats continue to be monitored by DEC and 'Friends' alternately.

Market Days and information.

A Market Day was held in Hopetoun last January, with many thanks to Tracey.

The Twertup information board was in the foyer at the Bremer Bay Community Resource Centre for several months, and was commented on by our Federal Member Tony Crook.

Thanks

I would especially like to thank the outgoing Treasurer Robyn Cail. It wasn't until I read her notes describing what she does as Treasurer, that I appreciated the terrific job she has been doing. Thanks Robyn, have a rest but hang around. Hard-working members are hard to find, and I suspect we can find interesting things for you to do when Twertup is restored. Thanks to Raana who has managed the website and is willing to continue in 2012. Many thanks to the rest of the committee, Gil in particular for the ground work she established last year, and her continued management of the Twertup issue. To everyone else, members who have helped with grant applications, merchandise, and all the other things which help to make this organization unique my sincere thanks.

I will be standing for the position of President again, and look forward to this coming year.

Anne Gadsby. 17th March 2012

FROM THE AGM—GUEST SPEAKER

Dr Nic Dunlop wears many hats as a researcher, consultant and environmental advocate. As our guest speaker he wore his environmental science and policy advisor to the Conservation Council hat, where he heads up the Citizen Science project which was the subject of his address. Citizen Science is 'research or monitoring by individuals or communities in the public interest'. In WA approximately 150 people have participated in the following projects:

- Effects of climate change on flora and fauna at Charles Darwin reserve, the former White Wells Station near Wubin.
- Effects of climate change on white-striped mastiff bats which normally migrate summer south and winter north in WA. Will there be a discernible change to this pattern if temperatures increase?
- Use of Lancelin Island as a marine observatory for effects of climate change on fish and marine birds. Brown Noddys have increased in numbers on the island but Roes Abalones have contracted in range.
- Research on Rat Island food chains shows that terrestrial ecosystems are mediated by the marine environment via nutrient inputs from bird droppings.
- Canola watch—surveys in Esperance indicate fugitive genetically modified canola is present in the town.
- Gondwanalink revegetation project on Chingarup.

The Esperance lead contamination scandal was given as a particularly good example for the role of Citizen Science as neither DEC nor the Health Department were able to conduct follow up surveys for contamination of private residential properties. A Citizen Science survey was able to demonstrate that residual contamination was still present when the official position was that lead had all been removed.

'Friends' are very grateful to Nic for his most thought provoking address and leading an excursion to 'Chingarup' where he is monitoring faunal recolonisation of revegetation on the former farm.



Nic Dunlop (right) explaining mist netting for birds on 'Chingarup'.

FROM THE AGM—YOUR NEW COMMITTEE

President—Anne Gadsby
 Vice president—Alison Lullfitz
 Secretary—Steve Janicke
 Treasurer—Vicky Bilney
 Newsletter Editor—Andy Chapman
 Twertup Coordinator—Gil Craig
 Committee members—Ellen Hickman, Geraldine Janicke and Nathan McQuoid

Twertup sub committee—Ric Pepper and Keven Giles

TWO NEW RANGERS FOR THE FITZ.

'Friends' extend a warm welcome to both **Geoff Young** and **Carol Ebbett**, recently appointed as rangers under dieback management funding. Geoff is well known to us and has worked for DEC and its forebears from Esperance to Kununurra and places in between. He is currently located at Murray Road ranger station. Carol come from Walpole where she worked for DEC and is now located in Hopetoun. We wish them well for the duration of their time in the Fitzzy community.

TWERTUP UPDATE

The "wheelbarrow of concrete" campaign has raised \$4,482.50 (112 barrows) of our 300 barrow target. Many thanks to those who've made contributions, both big and small. The Perth herbarium has been a wonderful source of contributors, so a huge thanks to those who have waved the flag for us up there!

We were unsuccessful in obtaining a *2011 Regional Development Council's Action Agenda Funding Scheme* grant. Lately, there has been a surge of grant rounds opened, so we've been applying for more funds to progress the rebuilding effort. Pity that every application form is different.

Another working bee was held on 25-26th February to put steel plates and a few barrows of concrete in the bottom of the 28 holes that had been dug in January for the framework and verandah posts. Ric Pepper, Rob Wright, Geoff Young and Maurice Miller sweated over the holes, but now have everything ready for the steel frame. According to CPC Engineering (Ravensthorpe) there's been a hold-up in fabricating the purlins, which had to be done in Perth where there's a big queue for any job. Hopefully, it will all be delivered and erected in the next few weeks. The steel framework is funded by our *2011 Environmental Community Grant* and a *Great Southern Royalties for Regions Small Grant*. CPC Engineering is donating their time and crane to assist with the erection of the framework – a most welcome contribution!

Discussions are in progress with 'Men in Sheds – Hopetoun' for them to renovate the windows and doors that Keven Giles has gathered for us. Hopetoun has attracted a fair number of retired carpenters and other 'tradies' to its lovely shores. "Twertup" is gradually getting better known as a community project in action, so if you want to take part, please contact Ric Pepper or Gil Craig on 9838 1071 or ripicasa@wn.com.au



Mixing concrete for the steel plate insertion points for the steel frame. Photo Grantly Morton



Department of
Environment and Conservation

Our environment, our future 

In Our Backyard

- *NOTES FROM THE RANGERS AT FITZGERALD RIVER NATIONAL PARK --*

Staff

Grantly Morton is now a permanent Ranger at Jacup, having taken over from Peter Van Schoubroeck who is now an Environmental Officer Warren Region working from the Albany Office. Geoff Young has joined us again as a Dieback Ranger. Geoff will be stationed at the Gardner River Ranger Station. Carol Ebbett has commenced work as a Dieback Ranger and will be working from Hopetoun. Carol is from DEC Frankland District, Walpole.

The Dieback Rangers will focus on dieback hygiene and security, public education and general Ranger duties as required. Jeremy Plowman has taken over from Bill Blakers as Conservation Employee at the DEC Ravensthorpe Work Centre. Jeremy has previously been a seasonal Park Ranger in the Esperance District and Pilbara Region.

Cindy Miller, a Ravensthorpe local is filling in for Dan Biddulph until October while he is away on unpaid leave.

FRNP Improvement Project

Recreation Sites: Landscape works are continuing at Four Mile Beach, Four Mile Campsite, Barrens Beach, Culham Inlet Entry station and East Mt Barren. Construction of the new toilets is complete. Landscape works are continuing with concrete paths, artwork, shelters, signs and tables are being installed.

Road works: The car parks at Four Mile Beach, Four Mile campsite, Barrens Beach, Barrens Lookout, East Mt Barren and the East Mt Barren Ranger station have been bitumen sealed. Works are continuing along Hamersley Drive including the Cave Point and West Beach roads, the East Mylies Beach and Mylies Beach roads are now bitumen sealed.

Road works has now been completed on the western side of the park, with upgrades to Pabelup Drive and the Point Ann Road to improve sec-

tions of gravel road surface and improve drainage to allow the running surface to dry out quicker and avoid pooling of water, this should assist with reducing the length of road closure periods due to rain events.

Walk trail: Flora and fauna surveys are continuing along the walk trail route between Hamersley Beach and Cave Point, animals recorded include Honey Possum, Pygmy Possum, Dunnart, Bush Rat, Brush Tail Possum and Crowned Snake.

Road closures: The Hamersley Inlet Rd will be closed after Easter until the end of May as road works continue at the Hamersley Drive/Hamersley Inlet Rd intersection. Hamersley Drive is now closed between Culham Inlet and Sepulchralis Hill. Access to Quoin Head remains open during dry conditions.

Fire management

Five hand burns and 2 aircraft burns are proposed for autumn 2012. These prescribed burns are strategic protection burns, aiming to break up old large scale fire scars and reduce the likelihood of large bushfires.

Firebreaks around the Hopetoun and Ravensthorpe townsites have been slashed and new firebreaks have been constructed around the Pallinup River Estate.

Western Shield/Predator Management

85000 cat baits and 30000 fox baits have been dropped over FRNP during March, as part of the continuing Western Shield Program and Integrated Predator management trials. Fauna monitoring is being conducted along the Western Shield trap lines at Twertup and Moir Track.

Dieback Management

New gates are being installed on parks roads and tracks to prevent illegal access during wet weather road closures. Sites for new gates include Hamersley Drive, Pabelup Drive, Quiss Rd, Moir Track, Quoin Head Track, Drummond track, and the No Tree Hill firebreak.

New road closure advisory signs have been installed on Moir Road and John Forrest Road.

Aerial dieback surveys have been conducted over the park by DEC specialist staff.

Fitzgerald Inlet Track will remain closed due to the dieback infection within the Sussetta River.

In Our backyard (continued)

For Park information please contact Park staff:
 Paul Cory (East Mt Barren) 9838 3060
 Grantly Morton (Jacup) 9835 5043
 Geoff Young (Gairdner) 9837 1022
 Carol Ebbett (Hopetoun) 9838 3973
 DEC Ravensthorpe 9838 1967

A MID WINTER ACTIVITY WEEKEND FOR YOU...

'Friends' are organising a range of activities to be held over the weekend of 7 & 8 July based out of Quaalup Wilderness Retreat. These will include:

- Field activity - aquatic invertebrates of saline rivers led by Geraldine Janicke.
- Preview of the video 'Salt Rivers of the South Coast of WA' by S. & G. Janicke.
- Hooded Plovers and shorebirds of Gordon Inlet, led by Anne Gadsby.

Less structured activities could include:

- Whale watching at Point Anne.
- Bush walk on West Mt Barren.
- Canoeing/Kayaking on Gairdner River.

Of these, only the aquatic invertebrates and the video preview are 'locked in' at present. The former will commence at 9.00 AM on Saturday and the latter is scheduled for Saturday evening. The other options will be determined by the weather and the interests of participants.

Participants will need to make their own booking arrangements with Quaalup management; visit the website www.whalesandwildflowers.com.au or ring 98374124 (noting that Karen and Karsten will be unavailable from 26 May to 1 July but internet bookings can be made). 'Friends' have booked the cabin accommodation for general use for Friday and Saturday nights. Self contained facilities (except toilet) are available for seven people (1 double and 5 singles) for \$22 per person per night, assuming full occupation, with bed linen provided. If you wish to use the cabin option, or for further information, please contact Steve Janicke 0428414468 or steve@janicke.com.au. Participants will need to provide their own food. Best access to Quaalup is via Devils Creek Road off South Coast Highway; follow the signs, but do not rely on your GPS to find Quaalup. We are advised there is a glitch in the system that will lead you astray!

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

'Friends' welcome the following new members and wish them an enduring and enjoyable association within the group. Stephen Doyle, Jason Hick, Justin Jonson, Linda Parker, Graham & Liz Richardson, Glen & June Spurge, Debbie Sullivan, Cate Tauss, Cathy Taylor, Giz Watson and Karen & Karsten Richelmann.

PHOTO GALLERY FROM AGM WEEK-END...



In a blaze of colour the canoeists enter the water at Wellstead Bridge to paddle down the Pallinup River. Photo Geraldine Janicke



At journey's end Steve and Geraldine pause for a break to discuss some aspect of the science of the river.

TEN YEARS AGO....

The 'Friends' held a weekend excursion to Mt Madden, Woodenup Pool and Calyerup Rocks. Here is an excerpt from a report written by Rosie Jasper. It is very evocative of the weekend and captures much of the mystery and wonder of granite landscapes.

"The weekend started at Mt Madden, north of Ravensthorpe. About 18 of us explored this magnificent monolith under Dr Stephen Hopper's expert guidance.

There is a particular quality to granite rocks—one aspect of which is the scale. From looking at the tall sheoaks surrounding the rock you quickly find your focus moving to the minute—the lichens, the moss, the ferns. Suddenly the small becomes the norm and it is essential to slow down and really look. Steve was able to describe and interpret what we were looking at and thereby helped us really see all sorts of things. One of his first comments was to draw our attention to the way granite rocks afford several very contrasting habitats for plants: from the bare rock where only cyanobacteria and the hardiest of lichens can survive the extreme conditions, to the very wet sites where water is channelled and water loving plants can grow.

We were fortunate that there had been rain just before our visit so the mosses and Borya were 'alive' and the pools at the top were full, emphasising the potential of different habitats.

After lunch we went to Woodenup Pool to see granite outcrops along Woodenup Creek.

It featured a very contrasting habitat to Mt Madden. The creek was running strongly, the pools were full and annual plants were growing. It was an exciting time to be there. Steve avidly explored all the nooks and crannies that the place offered while Andy Chapman investigated the fish species in the pool and managed to net both Spotted Minnow and Blue Spot Goby.

At the end of the day we drove to Jacup and were made welcome by Nathan McQuoid at his property where we had tea, talked and slept the night. On Sunday we were unable to visit George's Gorge because it had rained and our entry permit was for dry weather access only. Instead we went to Calyerup Rocks which proved very rewarding.

We explored the main rock and also an outcropping to the south. The latter was fascinating because of the plant species growing around the edge of the rock (ones more usually seen further to the west in higher rainfall areas) and signs that this was a significant site for Aboriginal people. It is also the site of a recently described eucalypt species.

About 25 people took part in one or both of the days. It was nice to have visitors, members from both sides of the park and a range of ages including exuberant children. Of course it was great to have such a personable, knowledgeable leader in Steve Hopper. Thank you Steve.

*The eucalypt mentioned above was named *Eucalyptus calyerup* by Nathan and Steve in 2002. It is a priority 1 species only known from Calyerup and a site near Katanning. Editor.*

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