

Friends of Eastern Otways

(Great Otway National Park)

Inc. A0030273B

February 2016



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FROM THE PRESIDENT – ALISON WATSON



We have another exciting year ahead and my plan for this year is to enjoy it - being out in the Park exploring, observing and learning. Lily Zhuang-Griffin's presentation at the AGM highlighting some stunning discoveries of Swamp Antechinus, White-footed Dunnarts and Bandicoots should inspire us to continue our own surveys to support her work, and add to our knowledge. We need to continue long term monitoring and research of rare and threatened plants including our *Grevillea infecunda* and *Caladenia maritima*. Keeping records and watching long term trends is becoming more important now.

The Victorian National Parks Association '10 things we can all do to help nature adapt to a new climate' is well worth a look. The website is www.vicnature2050.org. Make sure too, that you check out the new signs celebrating the Friends 25 years of service to the Great Otway National Park. They are located at the Distillery Creek and Moggs Creek picnic grounds.



Finally we should ensure we simply enjoy our walks and other activities, perhaps bringing along a friend, children or grandchildren to experience the Park with us. We should continue to celebrate our successes.

HOODIE SUCCESS AT GUVVO'S BEACH ONCE AGAIN



After their success at this site in the Great Otway National Park in April 2015, when they raised one chick to fledgling stage, the two banded birds, Mum (NS) and Dad (MR), returned to Guvvo's Beach again in January this year.

They were very secretive for their choice of nest site, which is usually a scrape on the sandy shore. However, this time these two clever little birds chose a site at the top of the dune, and their nest was able to stay intact whilst other nests in the district were washed out with high tides in December. Indeed the nest was not

discovered until New Year's Day, when the birds were observed high on the dune. Then, on January 2 one tiny chick was observed with its parents down on the wet sand. We are not sure of the date the chick was born or, if other eggs were laid, what happened to the eggs or the other chicks as Hooded Plovers usually lay 2 or 3 eggs.

Since the chick hatched, volunteers with the BirdLife Australia Beach Nesting Birds Project, which manages the Hooded Plover recovery program in conjunction with Parks Victoria, have talked with beach visitors sharing information about Hooded Plovers and the threats they face. They have encouraged people to walk close to the water's edge and requested dog owners to keep their dogs on leads when within approximately 100m of the birds. It was not an easy task as this beach is a very popular dog-walking beach and the little family was roaming far and wide to find sufficient food and stay safe from predators. The signage that was placed along the beach alerted visitors to the needs of these vulnerable little birds.

Late in January the chick was observed learning to fly and strengthening its wings, We are now thrilled to report that on February 5, 35 days after hatching, it was assessed as no longer being a chick but indeed a juvenile bird that is now able to fly confidently with its parents.



This is very exciting for all the volunteers who have given their time so freely. The people who used the beach over this time are to be congratulated and thanked for their cooperation and interest in the antics of the family.

Thanks to Marg Lacey for these lovely photos of the happy family at Guvvo's Beach in January.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING – SUNDAY 14 FEBRUARY 2016

Election of office bearers

As there were just the required nominations for the vacant positions the following members were appointed:

President: Alison Watson

Vice-President: Patrick Flanagan

Treasurer: Ross Davey

Secretary: Margaret MacDonald

Assistant Secretary: Kaye Traynor

Committee members: Evelyn Jones, Ross Murray, Jane Shennan, Sue Guinness. Kaye Traynor will continue in the position of Public Officer. The President's annual report is printed on pages 9-10.

Resignations

Lachlan Richardson and Rachel Faggetter tendered their resignations from the committee. Lachie was thanked for his excellent contribution, especially for leading the group's walks. Rachel will continue to attend meetings when she is available. It is hoped Dennis Leavesley will continue in his former role as mentor to the group. Deb Delgrosso is on long term leave of absence from the committee.

Increased annual membership fee

The meeting confirmed that the annual membership of Friends of Eastern Otways should be increased from \$10 to \$15.

Life membership to Kaye Traynor

Kaye is one of the longest term members of the Friends group, having joined in 1992, just one year after it was formed. In the early days she acted as treasurer and also sent out notices of events, so in reality was also acting as Secretary.

She took on the formal position of Assistant Secretary in 2007, compiling the minutes for committee meetings. She has also been Public Officer for the group since Ian Leslie relinquished that position. Kaye has helped so much with mammal surveys while her ID of the camera photos is invaluable – no-one else has the knowledge of the native fauna that Kaye has.

Her advice with displays and her willingness to produce illustrations often at short notice is just so appreciated. During her illness last year Kaye was greatly missed and the group was just so pleased when she was once again well enough to join in their activities. The Friends thank her for the contribution she has made and certainly look forward to her continued involvement in the years to come.

Below: Kaye was presented with her award by Frank Gleeson, former Area Chief Ranger Surf Coast, Parks Victoria.



Guest speaker

The Guest Speaker was *Lily Zhuang-Griffin*, a Bachelor of Biological Science (Hons) Graduate and Casual Research Assistant at Deakin University. In 2015 she undertook an Honours project investigating the current status of *Antechinus minimus* (Swamp Antechinus) in habitat around Aireys Inlet and Anglesea.

Lily's presentation provided an overview of the trapping results obtained from 15 sites where *Antechinus minimus* had previously been recorded within the Eastern Otways, and people were interested to hear Lily's stories from her field work experience.



Above: Lily Zhuang-Griffin at the AGM and an Antechinus minimus identified at Lily's Urquhart Bluff research site.

THANK YOU TO FRANK GLEESON

Frank arrived as the new Ranger in Charge of the Eastern Otways in 2008 from Cairns, where he had worked for Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service as a senior ranger. He will be remembered for the many improvements he has made to the Great Otway National Park including the upgrade of the Surf Coast Walk, installation of new steps to Addiscot Beach, new steps at Erskine Falls, the Hammonds Campground development and walking track upgrades.

But the Friends remember Frank for many other reasons. He was always there to listen to our requests, to share his knowledge, and to support us in all our activities. He was there at our annual end of year celebrations where he always cooked the BBQ, he came to our Annual General Meetings and presented Life Memberships and talked informally to us sharing so much about his experiences, his role and park achievements.

We will never forget the wonderful talk he gave us about Raine Island National Park shortly after he arrived in the Surf Coast. He was always the friendly voice on the other end of the telephone. It was obvious that he appreciated our group and was



keen to be involved with us.

Our last involvement with Frank as Area Chief Ranger Surf Coast was at Distillery Creek Picnic Ground on December 16 when he helped to unveil our new interpretative display board and it was there that he dropped the bombshell that he was stepping down from his position.

Frank has left us to take on the role as Regional Program Coordinator. His focus will be on visitor asset projects across the west region but in the short term on the implementation of improvements at the 12 Apostles National Park. We wish him well in this new position. Below is the letter from Frank letting us know about his new plans:



Margaret,

As of today I am no longer the Area Chief Ranger for the Surf Coast. I have taken on a Regional position of Project Coordinator. In the short to medium term I will be focusing on projects to improve visitor facilities at the 12 Apostles. I would like to extend my sincere thanks to yourself and all of ANGAIR and the Friends of East Otways for your dedication and hard work. Since I arrived in 2008, I have been consistently impressed by the commitment, dedication and enthusiasm shown by the Friends. Your efforts in weeding, monitoring the hoodies etc, certainly go a long way to improving the values of the park. But they do a lot more than that. The Friends and volunteers are a source of inspiration for myself and the other staff. As resources and budgets continue to shrink, and general public criticism is increasing, seeing how a group of unpaid, mainly retired individuals are willing to work so hard to protect what they think is important goes a long way in improving staff morale. I will continue to work from the Lorne office, so I am sure we will cross paths on a regular basis.

Kindest regards, Frank Gleeson, Area Chief Ranger Surf Coast

Membership subscriptions

Thank you to everyone who has renewed their membership for 2016. As we have stated in many previous newsletters we value your membership. The subscription has increased to \$15 but if you paid prior to the 2016 AGM you have a \$5 bonus.

The Friends of Eastern Otways from time to time make submissions to both the State and Federal Governments concerning important issues that we believe are important to the conservation of National Parks in general and to our Great Otway National Park in particular. The message in these submissions is strengthened by the number of members we feel would be supporting us.

If you receive your newsletter as a hard copy through the post, the mail label on the envelope shows the year your membership is current for. (i.e. '16' for 2016). If you haven't renewed your membership, a membership form will be enclosed with the newsletter. If you receive the newsletter electronically, and our records show that you haven't renewed your membership, there will be an electronic copy of the membership form and details of how to make payment attached to the same email as your newsletter. We encourage members to receive newsletters electronically as this helps our finances and saves the time. Thankyou.

PROPOSED ANNUAL PROGRAM

March 19 - Ironbark Gorge Walk
April 16 – Waterfalls - Little Aire and Triplet Falls
May 21 - Coastal Walk - Marengo to Shelly Beach
June 18 - Koala Count – Grey River
July 16 - Fungi Walk - TBA
August 20 – Walk in National Park - TBA
September 17-18 - Angair Show - Anglesea
October 23 (Sunday) - Wildflower walk
November 19 – Mammal survey and walk
December 10 – End of year BBQ – Moggs Creek

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Environmental Weeding

Tuesday, March 8

Tuesday, April 12

Tuesday, May 10

9.30-11.00 am

Contact: Margaret 0412 652 419

Meet at water tank on corner of Old Coach Road, Moggs Creek.

In January and February we have been helped by the Green Army to remove Coast Tea-tree from the hillside at Moggs Creek. We will be continuing on this site for the next few months as our efforts are making a real difference. Views over the ocean make this a very pleasant working area. Coffee at Skinny Legs Café Aireys Inlet after the activity.

Mammal Surveys

Contact: Patrick Flanagan 0437 561 702

Mammal surveys using our remote cameras are usually carried out following committee meetings on the first Tuesday of each month. We are always pleased to welcome any people interested in our indigenous fauna to participate in these activities. Naturally we are keen to photograph rare and threatened species and a minimum of feral animals, but whatever animals we do locate are adding to the overall picture of the fauna population in the Park. Please make contact to find meeting place and approximate meeting time.

Walk in the Park – Ironbark Gorge

Easy to medium 4.5km circuit

Saturday, March 19 9.30 am – 1.30 pm

Meet at Aireys Inlet Community Centre at 9.30 am (Bring morning tea and lunch)

Contact: Ross Murray 0408 875 535

This popular walk takes you into a gorge with a small creek running through it. As the name implies, the tall Ironbark trees are a feature. An interesting walk at any time of the year, it is particularly beautiful in spring when the variety of wattles and heathland plants provide a colorful understory to the tall eucalypts. Bird calls are usually abundant as it is a perfect habitat for many indigenous species.



Waterfall Walk – Little Aire & Triplet Falls

Easy to medium 6.5 km return.

Large number of steps

Saturday, April 16 9.30 am – 3.30 pm

Meet at Aireys Inlet Community Centre at 9.30 am (Bring morning tea and lunch)

Contact: Patrick Flanagan 0437 561 702

As well as visiting two of the best waterfalls in the Otways, this walk features the area's logging history. Walkers follow a winch line, pass a steam boiler and visit a recreated logging train at an old mill site. Tall forests and fern-filled gullies are another feature of this walk.

Coastal Walk – Marengo to Elliott River

Medium 8km return

Saturday, May 21 9.30 am – 3.30 pm

Meet at Aireys Inlet Community Centre at 9.30 am (Bring morning tea and lunch)

Contact: Alison & Phil Watson 0400 570 229

This walk is along the most easterly section of the Great Ocean Walk and features coastal beaches, rock platforms and coastal bushland. Cars will be left at Elliott River before we commence the walk.



FRIENDS' ACTIVITIES SINCE OUR LAST NEWSLETTER

Environmental Weeding

Our last environmental weeding activity for 2015 was a combined activity with the Green Army on Powerline Track near Coalmine Road, Anglesea where, helped by the Green Army, we removed a large amount of Boneseed.

Our first effort for 2016 concentrated on the heathland hillside at Moggs Creek removing invasive Coast Tea-tree. The Friends of Moggs Creek and the Green Army worked cooperatively together. The Surf Coast Shire came to our aid with the removal of the cut vegetation, and we thank them for this service. We also thank the members of the Green Army who worked tirelessly during the day. Thanks are due all around!

We visited the same venue for our February activity and as a result the hillside now looks great. We thank the Green Army for their involvement with the Friends Group and wish them all the best for their future employment.

Walk and Mammal Survey – Reedy Creek and Kelsall's Rock - Saturday November 21

With a feeling of anticipation we set off for our mammal survey at the top of Reedy Creek Track as this is the area where we have had positive results regarding Spot-tailed Quoll analysis from hair tubes and possibly Smoky Mouse.

The 14 people who took part in the survey on November 21 drove to Benwerrin and then along Big Hill Track to Reedy Creek Track. We were pleased to have Alan, Patrick's friend from Ireland, Harvey from the Green Army, and also Paddy Day, a young student from St Joseph's College, who was keen to do some conservation work with the Friends' Group. Paddy's father, Greg, and his younger brother, James, also joined in the activity.

Unfortunately our results did not indicate any Quoll presence, and Paddy had to be content with kangaroos, wallabies and an inquisitive fox.



The Walk to Kelsall's Rock

Having driven back east along Big Hill Track we parked the cars where Lachie had marked the overgrown walking track leading to Kelsall's Rock Lookout. We had lunch about halfway up the track overlooking the gully – a pleasant spot. The steep climb up to the rock lookout was certainly worth the effort – the view across Grassy Creek valley was magnificent and we were entertained by two Peregrine Falcons soaring through the valley – a great experience. Thanks to Lachie for planning and leading the walks.