

Ranger Report early October 2015

Staff Movements

- Aaron Ledden has now joined the Western Victoria Regional Operations team as the Fire Ecology Planning Officer. In this key role, Aaron will be responsible for planning and guiding implementation of the fire ecology function in Western Victoria, collaborating with PV and DELWP to improve park and fire management outcomes.
- Peter Hay will be acting in the Lorne Team Leader role until the position is advertised and filled.
- Frank Gleeson will be on annual leave from 9 October to 9 November. While he is away, Katrina Lovett will be acting as Area Chief Ranger.
- Carlie Bronk will be returning to her Ranger role in mid-November. She will be working 2 days a week to begin with. I have been successful in obtaining an ongoing Team Leader job share position in the Western Otways and will finish up in Anglesea on 30th October and head over to Apollo Bay.

Out and about in the Park

The spring pulse of the fox control program within the Anglesea Heath/GONP will be occurring from 28 September to 23 November. During the winter pulse we placed remote cameras on the fox bait stations to ensure there were no off-target species digging up the baits. It was interesting to see the variety of species that wandered, hopped and flew past the site – cat, fox, currawong, white-footed dunnart, kangaroo, blue wren, Ring and Brush-tailed possums, echidnas, swamp wallabies, fallow deer, crimson rosella – as well as people, dirt bikers and horse riders. It was also very reassuring to see that only foxes were digging up and consuming baits.



Echidna



White footed dunnart



Fox



Fallow deer

Field staff are currently undertaking maintenance along the Eumerella boundary track, adjacent to the Great Ocean Road. They have commenced the arduous task of filling all the big pot holes and 4WD-made swamps along the track, improving the condition to a suitable standard. A car park area has now been defined at the entrance to the Eumerella area, with fencing and bollards installed to stop vehicles encroaching on the surrounding vegetation.

Over the last month, staff from Anglesea and Lorne have been deployed to various planned burns across the state. One fuel reduction burn has been conducted locally, a small block of Otway Forest Park near Bambra. It is incredible how quickly focus can shift, with a string of very hot days and a Total Fire Ban day in early October. There was a bushfire on private land in Wensleydale which spotted into the Otway Forest Park. The spread of the fire was slowed and stopped in an area that had recently been treated with a fuel reduction burn and the bushfire was contained to 12 hectares. Fire modelling suggested that the fire could have easily burnt up to 800

hectares. This is a very good example of how fuel reduction burns can lower bushfire intensity to a manageable level and prevent larger scale destruction.

Other news

Barwon Water has advised that construction has commenced on the Anglesea to Aireys Inlet water pipeline. Road closures will be in place on Gilbert Street, No 2 Road and Distillery Road until December 2.

DELWP staff spent the last two weeks of September assessing the health of koalas at Cape Otway. They captured and assessed a total of 395 koalas. Of these, 341 were released back into the wild, 166 healthy females were treated with fertility control hormone implants, and 37 were translocated to a new location. Unfortunately 54 koalas were too sick to survive release and were humanely euthanased to prevent further suffering.

DELWP have translocated the 37 healthy koalas into an area of the GONP near the Bambra Road – Ironbark Spur intersection. This area was chosen as it contains a habitat of mixed Eucalyptus species such as manna, swamp and southern blue gum. The females have been treated with a fertility control hormone implant. All of the koalas have been fitted with a radio tracking collar and their movement and health will be carefully monitored to see how the translocated koalas survive and adapt to a mixed Eucalypt forest. Arthur Rylah Institute is working with a number of research partners including the Cape Otway Conservation Ecology Centre and Western Sydney University to monitor the koalas and collect scats to analyse gut flora. The degree to which the koalas can successfully adapt to a mixed eucalypt diet will help to inform the possibility of larger scale translocations in the future. For more detail visit <http://delwp.vic.gov.au/environment-and-wildlife/wildlife/koalas>

The process of getting the FoEO Moggs Creek and Distillery Creek signage produced is under way. I am hoping to receive the ‘final draft’ shortly, which I will circulate to the Friends group for comment before the signs get printed. Fingers crossed we can get these in by the end of October, however if that’s not the case I will have to try and make it back for the day!

It has been a real pleasure to meet and work alongside the Friends of Eastern Otways over the last 12 months. Thank you for sharing all your wonderful stories and knowledge with me. It’s great to see such a dedicated and enthusiastic group involved in caring for and enjoying the park and all that it entails. I hope to see you all out and about in times to come!

Take care, keep safe and thank you!
Cathy Longmore

Thank-you and Best Wishes to Cathy Longmore

We would like to take this opportunity to thank Cathy for the positive contribution she has made to the Friends’ Group since taking over as our Liaison Ranger in 2014. She was always there to answer questions, offer support and provide encouragement.

Cathy will be sharing the position of Team Leader in the Western Otways based at Apollo Bay. We wish her every success in this new position. We look forward to welcoming Carlie Bronk back as our liaison ranger in November.

*Friends of Eastern Otways wish you and your family
a safe and happy holiday season.*

*We thank you for your help in 2015 and
look forward to your continued support
in 2016.*



*We hope to see you at the Moggs Creek Picnic Ground
on December 12*