



FriendsNET

Newsletter of the Victorian Environment Friends Network

Number 76 August 2011

Will your group be represented at the September Conference?



Dr Bill Jackson, CEO of
Parks Victoria

Here are some of the features of the forthcoming 14th VEFN Biennial Conference to be held on September 2–4 at Campaspe Downs (near Kyneton).

- The keynote speaker will be Dr Bill Jackson, CEO of Parks Victoria. You can't afford to miss what he has to say about the future of our parks and Friends Groups.
- A highlight will be the announcement and presentation of the 2011 Best Friend Awards.
- Do you know about the coming changes to regulations affecting the management of all community groups? James Wilson from Volunteering Victoria does, and he'll tell you about them at the Conference.
- What are Conservation Management Networks and how can they help Friends Groups? Find out at the Conference.
- Can Family Nature Days save your group? Hear Karen Alexander talk about Victoria Naturally's ground-breaking research.

- The Goldfields region Friends and Landcare groups have been working hard to organise an excellent bus tour of the area including Forest Creek, Eureka Reef, Vaughan Springs, Pennyweight and the Monster Meeting Site. You don't have to choose – you get to see them all!

All this and so much more – how can you think of missing it! This is a gathering for all Friends – not only Group leaders. Spread the word. Registration forms were sent out with the May FriendsNET, or can be downloaded from the VEFN website: home.vicnet.net.au/~friends. Get your registrations in now.

From the Committee Convener

The special meeting held on 2 July 2011 voted to incorporate the Friends Network. We are now calling for expressions of interest to form the next committee. Contact Maelor Himbury on 9374 1902.

Friends Groups and the Communication Revolution

Emails, Twitter, SMS, Facebook and Skype, are quick, and easy (if you know how) – a boon to those in the know but bewildering to others. Telegrams and Telex are dead, fax and landline telephones linger, mobile phones and iPads are popular and Google can find you an answer to just about everything. It's a new world of communication, and if you are not part of it, you miss out.

Many Friends Groups have a paper-print newsletter – particularly to communicate with their members. *FriendsNET* is distributed by post, email and on our web site, but some magazines and journals are now published only electronically. The Friends of Organ Pipes are doing this with their newsletter. It saves time, and also postage and printing costs. But not everyone is 'on-line'.

For those that are, Facebook is a two-way tool. The Bayside Environment Friends Network (BEFN) now has a Facebook, as Convener Sue Raverty explains.

Why use Facebook rather than email?

The Bayside Environment Friends Network (BEFN) Facebook Page can be viewed by everyone all over the world just by entering our name in a computer search engine. It is a public forum where everyone can see information about us, view upcoming events, comment on issues or view our photos. Facebook is a social network which allows people to communicate with their friends and find new friends with similar interests.

Our Facebook Page works by connecting with the friends of the people who are connected to the BEFN Page and then by connecting to their friends and so on. It is like the old fashioned

chain letter only very fast, efficient and friendly. It is better than using email because you only need to know the email addresses of a handful of friends to start the ball rolling. Before you know it you can have hundreds of new friends.

Look at our Wall not over it

To open our Facebook Page type 'Bayside Environment Friends Network Facebook' into your browser's search engine and click on the Facebook link. You should now be looking at our 'Wall'. Scroll up and down to see what's on our Page. This is as far as you can go if you are not a Facebook user. You can't interact with the Page unless you have a personal Facebook Profile.

Setting up a Profile is free and relatively straightforward. Keep in mind that you can permanently delete an account by submitting a request to Facebook, but I don't know how easy this is.

Want to make sure your mother can't see what you're up to?

You may have heard bad things about Facebook in the media. You should be cautious but not scared of Facebook if you take the precaution of understanding how the account and privacy settings can protect you from unwanted exposure on Facebook.

So the first thing you should do after creating your Facebook Profile is to go through all the settings and 'Customise' them to the highest security level until you are comfortable with how Facebook works. It is time well spent because if you don't do this, every Facebook user, potentially 500 million people, will be able to see your Profile.

The BEFN Page is different from your personal Profile because everything is on public view. So, if you don't want your mother to know what you have been getting up to you need to be careful about 'Liking', 'Commenting' on and 'Posting' on our Page. Everything that goes on our 'Wall' can be seen by 'Everyone'.

Now you're ready to fly solo

Once you're familiar with all this Facebook jargon and the way it functions you are ready to enjoy yourself on Facebook. Our Page is there to keep you informed as well as entertained. Don't be afraid to explore the Page to see how it works. Read the posts on the page to see what interests you. Then the simplest thing to try is to click on 'Like' under a post or a photo and when you are more confident write a 'Comment' about a post on the Wall. You can click on 'Photos' in the menu on the left hand side of the page and view our photos. You can click on the Featured Pages on the left hand side of our Page to see what other Pages have to offer.

Now is your opportunity to tell everyone what you think

When you are ready you can start another topic by writing in the 'What's on your mind?' section at the top of the Page and sharing it. Have you done something interesting? Have you enjoyed an event? Do you need some help at a working bee? Have you seen an unusual bird or animal? Write something interesting here to help keep the Page exciting and up to date.

A warning ...

If you get bitten by the Facebook bug it can be very addictive. I should know!

Sue Raverty 9589 2103

Maelor Himbury comments on using Twitter and Facebook to attract new members

The best advice I've been able to find is that if nobody in your group uses Twitter or Facebook then they are probably not the mediums that are going to help you build up your membership. Similarly, if you don't know what Facebook and Twitter are, they are probably not for you.

Attracting new members involves communication and so you should be using the forms of communication that suit you and your target audience – whether that be telephone, word-of-mouth, newspaper ads, newsletters, posters, email or social networking sites.

Research in the US has found that groups have noticed an improvement in numbers at events by advertising through Facebook (see

www.idealware.org/facebook_survey) but you need to post on a regular basis to maintain interest.

Jayne Cravens, who is an internationally recognised expert in online volunteering, has these two blogs which provide advice on using social networking:

Using microblogging (Twitter) with volunteers: <http://www.coyotecomunications.com/culture/microblog.shtml>

Using Facebook, Twitter and other online social networking in general: <http://www.coyotecomunications.com/outreach/osn.html>

Maelor Himbury 9374 1902

Share your experience with the new world of communication in our next (November) issue. Deadline is 15 October.

Groups in Action

Friends of the Maribyrnong Valley

This group has just celebrated its 25th birthday. Convener Maclor Himbury outlines the group's story.

It's a misty moisty morning down along the Maribyrnong and all is quiet except for the panting of the occasional jogger. Suddenly the silence is broken by the roar of an engine as a battered old Kingswood appears along the track and out steps Ian Wheeler, VEFN Best Friend Award recipient 2010, dressed in overalls ready for a good few hours of weed whacking. About the same time Bron and Lorraine drop down from the escarpment, gloves, tools and morning tea in hand. Friends of the Maribyrnong Valley are go!

Formed in April 1986, the Friends of the Maribyrnong Valley have spent the past 25 years assisting in the conservation of the Maribyrnong Valley, the river, its catchment areas and its flora and fauna.

When Councils want advice on environmental issues along the river – they ask FMV.

When developers are making plans for new estates along the river – FMV is there.

When local residents want support in opposing proposals which will affect their use of the river environment – they come to FMV.

When governments are unaware of the impact of 200 years of European habitation on the land surrounding the river – FMV has a wealth of oral and documentary information to enlighten them.

Part of the tranquil Maribyrnong River



FMV President Peter Somerville runs tours along the river (see www.blackbirdcruises.com.au) and is a highly sought after expert on all things to do with the river.

Committee member John Upsher has been working on compiling an updated list of birds and animals found along the Maribyrnong and has been tireless in his pursuit of an environmentally sensitive solution to the problem of developing a large highly contaminated Defence Department site located next to the river.

FMV Grants Coordinator Judy Ingram is a jewel – she doggedly pursues every opportunity to attract funds with the result that FMV is remarkably well resourced and all things are managed according to the requirements of the grant providers.

Significant contributions during our 25 years include:

- Birds of the Maribyrnong Valley – a beginners guide to local birds and their habitat
- 'The Other River' – a 24 minute video describing the river and its history
- Heritage signs – historical markers along the river
- The Charles Grimes Bicentennial Celebration in 2003
- Various plantings in Maribyrnong, Moonee Valley and Brimbank

FMV meets monthly at Pipemakers Park Maribyrnong at 7 pm on the first Wednesday.

A work team operates every Wednesday morning – usually near the Tea Gardens just downstream of Canning Reserve. The group has a website at www.fmvonline.com.

FMV members take a break (Photos by FMV)



New Parks Victoria Website

Parks Victoria is currently developing and building its new website – HPH Online. New web tools and functionality incorporated into www.parks.vic.gov.au will allow for registration, personalisation, content contribution, voting, tagging, blogs, forum and wiki contributions and user-generated content across the site as well as interactive mapping. Friends Groups can still list their organisational and activity details but the new website will enable Friends to submit their events directly into Parks Victoria's events calendar and utilise many of the new web facilities.

Wildflower shows

Kooyoora Wildflower Show – 17/18 September.
Rheola Hall, Inglewood–Rheola Rd Rheola.
Entry: \$5 Adult, \$10 Family.
www.kooyoorafriends.com.au; 5494 3650

Angair Annual Wildflower Weekend & Art Show – 24/25 September, Memorial Hall, McMillan Street, Anglesea.

Grampians 73rd Annual Wildflower Show – 29 September – 2 October, Halls Gap Hall.

Friends of Brisbane Ranges Biennial Wildflower Show – Sunday 9 October, Anakie Hall.

Share your questions, experiences or ideas – contact a Committee member (see page 4)

How to contact us ...

By post:

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By e-mail:

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Convener:

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Group Grapevine

Friends of Wyperfeld have put their book 'Wyperfeld: Australia's first Mallee National Park' on the VNPA Web site – www.vnpa.org.au

Friends of the Lerderderg have published 'The Lerderderg: yesterday and today' – a field guide and history. It has track notes of 17 walks in the Lerderderg State Park. Available from the VNPA and Parks Victoria office, Main Street, Bacchus Marsh for \$15.00.

The Victorian High Country Huts Association reports the completion of the reconstruction of both Westons Hut and King River Hut.

Annual **Friends of Terrick Terrick NP Open Weekend** Friday 30 September (4 pm) to Sunday 2 October (2 pm). As has been the case for the past five years, this year's open weekend will be held on those dates, even though this year's AFL grand final is to now to be played on that weekend. Great opportunity to see local grasslands flora and fauna with expert interpretation, to assist with some park maintenance, hear great speakers and to enjoy great company. Information: Keith Stockwell stocky@mcmedia.com.au or 5480 9254

Friends of the Prom are participating in a massive recovery program following the March deluge under the banner 'Hands on the Prom'. In consultation with the Rangers, Friends of the Prom have offered to act as 'co-ordinators' of voluntary work. Groups or individuals are invited to participate on four weekends – but must inform FOP Secretary Deborah Henry in advance 0409 338 182 info@friendsoftheprom.org.au

August 13–14 Work on 'cleaning' Lily Pilly Gully boardwalk. If numbers permit – some planting in Tidal River Campground.

September 10–11 Planting out mature nursery stock in Tidal River, work on the Picnic Bay access tracks and also the link track from Picnic to Squeaky Beach.

October 22–23 Loo Ern Track – from Tidal Block to the bridge – pruning and drainage.

November 19–20 Hooded Plover monitoring. Work on the 'northern circuit' tracks, in conjunction with Bushwalking Victoria. This is for the fit and energetic – you will have to walk to the site(s) and probably camp out.

Tidal River is closed but camping is available to volunteers at Stockyards camp site at the park entrance. A Parks Victoria bus will transport volunteers from here departing 8.30 am. If these dates do not suit, contact Ranger Emily Seymour regarding other volunteer opportunities 0447 564 022 <eseymour@parks.vic.gov.au>

And we welcome

Friends of Hazel Vale Valley

This small group is working to restore and enhance a creek sandwiched between McNicol and Hazel Vale Roads, Melways Map 75:C12, managed by Parks Victoria. Project Days on the 4th Sunday of the month except December. Anne Elizabeth 9754 5997

Friends of Baden Powell Bushland Reserve

This Frankston group seeks to re-establish the indigenous vegetation of the Baden Powell Bushland Reserve and provide a site for the application of the 10th Scout Law – 'A Scout cares for the environment'. Coralie Davies 0425 763 521

From Parks Victoria

Suzanne Hughes has replaced Sjaan Field as Parks Victoria Volunteer and Community Programs Coordinator. Suzanne's email address is suzanne.hughes@parks.vic.gov.au

Vale

Frank Sharp of Friends of South Surrey Park has died, aged 90. Over about a decade of active involvement with the Friends, Frank was a great inspiration, source of essential information about local botany and ecology, and a keen Sunday and Wednesday worker.

John Reid of Friends of Woodlands Historic Park has died just short of his 82nd birthday. Since 1994 he was a stalwart on Project Days and individually removed weeds and rubbish in huge quantities from the hospital dam area.

Stan Douglas of Friends of the Werribee Gorge & Long Forest Mallee and of Friends of Wyperfeld has died suddenly, aged 62. He joined the FOWG&LFM in 1984 and was a selfless contributor to the community through Friends Groups, SES and Lions.

**Deadline for
November issue:
15 October 2011**

If undelivered, return to:
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