

# Narputungup News

May 2015

No. 2

from the Friends of the Fitzgerald River National Park

[www.fitzgeraldfriends.org.au](http://www.fitzgeraldfriends.org.au)



## IN THIS ISSUE: REPORTS FROM THE AGM and SOME FORTHCOMING ACTIVITIES

### PRESIDENT'S REPORT

I took over as President from Anne Gadsby in October last year, as agreed at the last AGM. Thanks to Anne for doing that extra 6 months as President and for continuing to assist and advise as the Vice-President. I appreciate the support you have given me and the committee.

#### **Twertup Field Studies Centre Restoration project**

The restoration of Twertup Field Studies Centre has again been the main focus of this year's activity and as you are probably all aware we have achieved the significant milestone of having completed the spongolite walls of the building. This was achieved through the efforts of many people: the building sub-committee; the many volunteers who assisted as required; and the stonemason Paul Young, who was the perfect person for the job. We are very grateful for the work he has done and hope that he will maintain a connection to the organisation to experience the value that Twertup Field Studies Centre will provide.

I would like to reiterate that the restoration of Twertup has been a challenging project and I want to acknowledge the steady determination and focus that Gil Craig, Ric Pepper, Steve & Geraldine Janicke in particular, have applied to it. We have more work to do to complete the project and I encourage everyone to assist where they are able. As you can see from the Agenda, Steve & Gil will report in more detail, and we also have this as an item for General Business today.

#### **Community projects relating to endangered flora or fauna (SCNRM funded)**

Friends of the Fitzgerald received a grant of \$4500 as part of the South Coast NRM program 'Protecting South Coast ecosystems: Recovery, threat abatement and connectivity actions for EPBC listed species.' We undertook to conduct 3 projects and Leonie McMahon took responsibility for organising these. The projects were: 'Turtles and marine debris'; 'A Noongar workshop with Larry Blight'; and 'Jerramungup District High School Herbarium project'. The first two projects have been completed, the first being, a workshop and art activity on the impact of plastics on marine life which involved the senior students at Bremer Bay and Gairdner Primary Schools. The second project, the Noongar workshop, was a summer activity, open to the public and held at Bremer Bay in January where Larry Blight, a Menang man from Albany, led a workshop about Noongar culture and knowledge. Both these events were very successful. The third project is still in process and it involves the establishment of a herbarium by the junior high school classes at Jerramungup school. Friends' involvement in that project will be completed by the end of April. These projects have been well received and a positive contribution to the environmental education of particularly young people in this community. Reports of the two completed projects are available here today if you would like more detail about them. Leonie has done an excellent job in organising these

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projects. Thank you, Leonie.

### **Stall/ Market days**

We traditionally have a stall at the Hopetoun, Paddy's Market day in January, and this year as part of that, we organised a competition entitled 'What scat is that?'. We have reproduced the exhibit here, for your interest. As you can see, we compiled an impressive collection and many people were keen to have a go at identifying them. It was an educational display and funnily enough, a good way to promote our organisation. Department of Parks & Wildlife donated prizes of Park passes and Landscape calendars, which were most appreciated.

Last week at Bremer, members at the western end of the Park, organised a stall as part of the Easter markets. The basic theme was marine detritus, and the artwork from the 'Turtles and marine debris' project was on display.

**Website & Facebook** Our website has been revamped and most significantly the website is now being hosted through WIX and is much easier to work with. As part of this make-over, we now have a Friends email address: [admin@fitzgeraldfriends.org.au](mailto:admin@fitzgeraldfriends.org.au) which means that personal email addresses have been removed from the website. Geraldine Janicke has guided us through the intricacies of websites and organised the final changeover with the assistance of her son-in-law; and Leonie McMahon and Geraldine coordinated the wording of the website. Thank you to Geraldine, Leonie and Sam.

Friends also have a Facebook page which Geraldine has managed. This offers a more dynamic presence than the website but it does require more regular input of photos and stories to make it worthwhile so any members who are interested are encouraged to contribute to this page.

### **Committee**

This year we have had 4 Committee meetings (in April, July, October and February). Two of those were held by phone.

### **The Fitzgerald River National Park Improvement Project**

After many years of work, the major upgrade of facilities and infrastructure in the Park was officially opened by the Premier, Colin Barnett, in June 2014. Gil Craig & I attended, representing Friends of the Fitzgerald. It was a formal occasion which was attended by members of the local community and a handful of politicians. If noth-

-ing else it was an opportunity for those politicians to see at least one section of the park and to have been briefed on its significance.

### **Memberships**

As an organisation, we continue to hold membership of the Conservation Council of WA and the Environmental Defenders Office. We were also invited to renew our membership of Gondwana Link Limited, which we have done. Gondwana Link is a significant conservation force in our region and it makes sense to continue to be part of that, particularly as the Fitzgerald River National Park is one of the major blocks of bush between the forests of the south west and the Great Western Woodlands.

### **Activities for Members**

The Committee is aware that we have not organised activities or projects specifically for members other than those relating to restoring Twertup Field Studies Centre this year. I am conscious that unless the group is active on a wider front, it is very difficult to retain membership, and indeed the organisation. At our committee meeting in February, we discussed possible activities for the coming year and we have compiled a list of suggestions. This is here for you all to look at, and add to. This is the main item on the agenda for this afternoon's Committee meeting and I encourage you all to talk about this while we are here together this weekend. So while restoration of Twertup continues, we intend also to arrange some more activities this year. If that encourages you to become part of the Committee to assist with that – so much the better.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, thank you for the support you have given me, particularly the work that all on the Committee have undertaken. Several of Committee will not be seeking re-nomination and so we will be looking for new members, please consider contributing if you can. It is an organisation with a long, colourful and proud history and it is a pleasure to have been President for the last 6 months.

Thank you, Rosemary Jasper, President, 11 April 2015.

## THE NEW COMMITTEE

President	Rosemary Jasper
Vice President	Andrew Chapman
Secretary	Vicky Bilney
Treasurer	Liz Utting
Newsletter Editor	Andrew Chapman
Twertup business	Gil Craig
Committee members	Louise Lodge
	Donna Higgins
	Tracey Ross
Twertup building sub-committee	Ric Pepper
	Bill Thompson
	Keven Giles
	Peter Masters (DPaW)

## RANGERS' REPORT TO AGM

### Visitation

Park visitation has been increasing steadily since the completion of the Parks Improvement Project:

2012-13: 48,203 visitors

2013-14: 63,407 visitors

2014-15: 56,058 visitors as of March 2015.

Sixty six percent of visitors are entering the park via Hamersley Drive from Hopetoun.

### Works Program

Ravensthorpe Work Centre staff and Rangers maintain park infrastructure and have completed upgrades to the staff office at East Mt Barren Ranger Station. Works at the Whalebone Creek camping hut have been completed, including re-plumbing the rainwater tanks and installing flashings.

### Fire management

There were no fires in FRNP during the 2014-15 fire season. Prescribed burns planned for FRNP during autumn 2015 include: Culham Inlet 255 ha, Telegraph Track 25,580 ha, Point Ann 190 ha. The southern fireline between Hamersley Drive and Quiss Rd is currently being upgraded with a contract bulldozer.

### Dieback Management

Planning is continuing to form up and resurface additional gravel sections of Doubtful island and Gordon Inlet roads with \$120,000 secured through SCNRM Project Dieback funding. Additional funding is currently being sort via the Great Southern Development Commission to enable a larger program to be completed.

Aerial dieback surveys were conducted over FRNP in March.

Water supply upgrades for the vehicle washdown facilities have been completed at all Ranger Stations to reduce the need to truck in water. Water harvesting at East Mt Barren Ranger Station from

the kerbed bitumen road has been upgraded to provide for vehicle wash-down and fire fighting water supply. The Murray Road Ranger Station now has a recycled water system. The Jacup Ranger Station has UV steriliser and recycles water via the dam.

### Conservation

Fauna monitoring and cat trapping and tracking programs were undertaken during February 2015. Aerial cat baiting was completed in early March covering FRNP and Ravensthorpe Range cells, using the new *Eradicat*® baits. Ground baiting is still ongoing with approximately 1,500 baits being laid each month by hand.

*The above is a slightly abbreviated version of the report delivered to the AGM by Paul Cory. Editor.*

## AGM GUEST SPEAKER SARAH COMER'S ADDRESS 'FELINES in the FITZ'

Sarah Comer is DPaW's Regional Ecologist for the South Coast Region, a position she has held for a venerable sixteen years. Sarah commenced her talk with a rhetorical question; 'can the decline in western ground parrot in FRNP be likened to the canary in the miner's cage and if so are feral cats the culprits?' The facts are alarming; following an increase in parrots at 1996 at Short Road there was a rapid decline around 2000 with the last positive record anywhere in FRNP was in April 2012.

This lead to a re-think and an active adaptive management approach in which radio and GPS collared cats tracked from the air and on the ground to obtain data on both movement/home range and effectiveness of baiting was proposed. On the South Coast, Cape Arid and Fitzgerald River National Parks and Two Peoples' Bay Nature Reserve have between them 33 collared cats at present. Concurrently DPaW had been trialling a new cat bait called 'Eradicat', a sausage type meat bait with 4.5 mg 1080 at 50 baits per km<sup>2</sup>. This high intensity baiting regime has been approved for use once yearly only as opposed to fox baiting which uses 3.0 mg 1080 three times a year at 5 baits per km<sup>2</sup>. Ninety percent of FRNP is baited in this manner. Landscape baiting at this scale requires close attention to other variables particularly weather; for example if the humidity exceeds 50% there is a reduced baiting efficiency.

Preliminary results indicate that larger cats are less likely to be baited than smaller ones. Are they more effective predators or just



more wary and cautious or both? Either way it will be critical to develop a means of control of larger cats. A positive result is that there has been a sharp rise in the numbers of quendas or southern brown bandicoots at Cape Arid NP coinciding with the advent of baiting.

Ongoing research and refinements include use of stable isotope studies of carbon and nitrogen uptake in diet to determine when cats are most hungry. This will further refine most effective timing of baiting.



*Cat in soft jaw, leg hold trap.*



*Sedated, collared cat prior to release.  
Photos DPaW*

*'Friends' are grateful to Sarah for her illuminating address. It stimulated much interest. Editor*

## THE 'FRIENDS' TEN YEARS AGO

In 2005 Andy Chapman took over as President from Nathan McQuoid. Gil Craig was Vice President, Angela Sanders –Treasurer, Anne Gadsby-Secretary, Priscilla Broadbent-Newsletter Editor, Committee members-Nathan McQuoid, Val Davies, Rosemary Jasper and Mark Jeffrey.

## FROM THE AGM –HONORARY LIFE MEMBERSHIP FOR ANNE GADSBY

Gil Craig made a presentation to Anne on behalf of 'Friends' for her hard work and commitment to the group over 15 years. These include: committee person 2000, secretary 2000-2009 (excluding 2003), vice president 2010 and president 2011-2014. Anne was a stalwart during the 'difficult years' when we opposed the walk trail through the wilderness. She presided over the activities 'Spineless Wonders' and 'Coastal Capers', a Fire Symposia and a 'Life on the Rocks' excursion.

She has been an outspoken advocate for hooded plover conservation on the south coast and for resources to manage the dieback threat between Bremer Bay and Point Anne/Doubtful Bay area. She is currently on the South Coast Management Committee as well as the FRNP Advisory Committee. If all this were not enough she found time to be an effective rustler to round up helpers during the Twertup re build. Many thanks Anne and congratulations from all of us.



*Gil Craig makes a presentation of a photo taken by John Tucker of hooded plovers to Anne in the elegant Quaalup homestead lounge room. Photo John Tucker.*

## The 'Friends' ten years ago (continued)

Activities were an 'Expressing the Landscape' workshop at Twertup lead by Louise Lodge followed by a hike to and overnight camp at Roes Rock pool. There was a Nowanup weekend involving seed collection with Craig Luscombe, a guided meander with Nathan McQuoid and Ian Weir's experimental room-sized pin hole camera project. Paula Deegan was producing the Fitzgerald Biosphere Biological Review.

## FROM THE AGM -TWERTUP SUMMARY FOR 2015

Since the last Friends AGM in April 2014 the work on the Twertup Field Studies Centre has taken a huge leap forward with the completion of the walls by stonemason Paul Young on the 30<sup>th</sup> of January. Paul commenced work on the 27<sup>th</sup> of September 2014.

Reconstruction has been a long haul when you consider that it is seven years since the fire and the decision to rebuild the Centre. The securing of funds to facilitate the foundational work, starting with the dismantling of the old cottage walls was followed by numerous seasons of hard work. The many volunteers have made what seemed in many ways an unlikely project, come to fruition. Visitors can now imagine the Centre being operational and a bonus for the promotion of the park and its future conservation.

More than half a dozen successful Busy Bee's were held in 2014 and early 2015. This contrasted with the frequent cancelled efforts during 2013 when heavy rains turned up at inconvenient times and the access roads had to be closed.

The concrete tank was cleaned out and fitted with a bee-proof roof and a new Polytank was installed at the other end of the building. These soon filled from the ample roof catchment area.

The Albany Men's Shed finished refurbishing various window frames in early June and the external frames were installed as the stonework proceeded.

During the stonework phase there was an excellent response to providing support for Paul as bricks had to be cleaned and soaked prior to placement.

Extra spongolite bricks were obtained from Ravensthorpe and "Yarrabee" at Gnowellen. These more compact though less colorful blocks, were mainly used for the interior walls.

The larger part of the fossil wall was installed in an interior wall.

The fitting of cladding above the walls and lining the ceiling will be undertaken by a contractor.

The next Busy Bee tasks are;

- Sealing the walls (requires appropriate advice)
- Sanding and priming door and window frames.
- Hanging the doors (more specialized)

These need not be done in one hit, but can be done incrementally.

Finally, there will be the glazing of the windows and French doors and this will be looked at for 2016.

The completion of these tasks will see the Centre usable although general access to the area will remain restricted until all substantial works are finished, including the local landscaping.

It has been suggested that there are sufficient extra spongolite bricks to pave the areas beneath the verandahs, however the separate proposed ablution block will need to have priority. The soft bricks would be likely be inappropriate for high traffic areas.

As a construction site, the requirements of Occupational Safety and Health for building sites continues to apply to any work being carried out.

Finally, Gil has kept a comprehensive register of all those who contributed in some way, small or large and this will be collated for the new Centre archives and perhaps as an item to put into the proposed time capsule.

Well done everyone.

*Contributed by Steve Janicke*



*January 2014*



*February 2015 Photos Geraldine Janicke*



## REPORT ON TOOL MAKING WORKSHOP BREMER BAY

In January this year, under the shade of a peppermint tree in Bremer Bay, a group of about 30 people were shown the kitchenware, tools, foods and medicines of a traditional Noongar household.

Running the demonstration was Noongar man, Larry Blight. He is of the Menang people from the Albany area, and has close family ties to Bremer Bay.

The kitchenware on display included bowls, grindstones and blades, all made from rocks that had been shaped to serve these different purposes. Throughout the course of the afternoon we watched as branches became tool handles, flower stalks became matches, leaves became soaps and sedatives, and roots and seeds became painkillers.

We learned how to make a knife the traditional Noongar way. The knife handle was a branch or boorn from the way-na or peppermint tree *Agonis flexuosa* and the blades were shards of glass, though traditionally rock shards would have been used. The 'glue' used to bond the glass pieces to the handle had a very pleasant fragrance reminiscent of incense: rather surprising when you consider the ingredients used to make it. Larry crushed together dried roo poo, or yonga goomp, charcoal, or kop, and resin, or tibidoo, from the grass tree, *Xanthorrhoea platyphylla* or parluk, in a large - and beautiful - stone grinding bowl.

The resulting powder was sprinkled onto the boorn and heated, where-upon it transformed into a slightly sticky black substance. When he had built up sufficient quantity on the boorn, Larry inserted the glass pieces. When it cooled the resin was rock-hard and the blades were fixed firmly in place.

Another part of the parluk, the flower stalk, was used by Noongar people to make fire. The end of a dry stalk was twirled rapidly in a hole in another piece of wood, filled with the ever useful dried yonga goomp to help the process along. During the workshop demonstration, the industrious efforts of Larry and about twenty kids resulted in boovi...no karl. In other words: no smoke... no fire.

Despite Larry's warnings that the root of a sedge-like plant, *Haemodorum spicatum*, is spicy hot, the temptation to see if their tongues really would turn purple if they ate it was too much for most. the kids present. They each had a nibble (as did quite a few adults) ..Larry was right.

Known as blood root for its incredible bright red colour, the root of this plant was used by Noongar people to relieve the pain of toothache. It has special meaning to the Noongar people of Albany, who call it Meen. They are known as the Menang or the Meen people.

We learned that the green seed pods of the Cyclops wattle *Acadia cyclops* or koonart, can be ground into flour, samphire, mil-yu, is an edible source of salt, and the nectar of many banksia species can be used as an energy drink. The spores of bracken fern, moon-don, can be used to relieve the pain of bull ant and bee stings, and the leaves of some plants, including the karri oak tree *Allocasuarina decussata* create a soapy lather when rubbed vigorously between your hands with water. The lather has another valuable use: when added to water it has a soporific effect on any nearby fish, making them easier to catch. The same goes for kangaroos that drink the water.

We would like to extend a special thanks to Larry for travelling to Bremer Bay for the day and giving us such a fascinating insight into Noongar culture, and the significance of a number of EPBC-listed species to Noongar people.

Thanks also to Alison Lullfitz for her assistance with coordinating the event, and the Bremer Bay CRC for their support. This project could not have been conducted without the generous financial backing of South Coast Natural Resource Management.



*Contributed by Leonie McMahon*



*Drew Willcocks tries his hand at fire making under the guidance of Larry Blight.*

## SOME ACTIVITIES FOR YOU TO CONSIDER

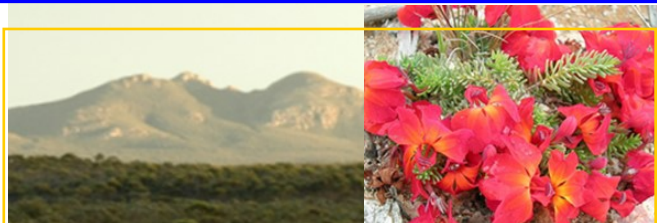
### Anyone for numbats?

Tony Friend of DPaW has offered 'Friends' the opportunity to do numbat 'tracks and traces' identification at Dryandra later this year. The background to this is the numbat translocation project which took place in Cocanarup Timber Reserve between December 2006 and December 2009 in which 51 wild and zoo bred, radio collared numbats were released. 'Friends' participated in the project by radio tracking numbats over this period. It was evident early on that predation, including by native species (raptors, pythons, chuditch, and goannas) was a factor in their demise. On 6 July 2012 I had the dubious distinction of recovering the collar belonging to the last numbat 'Akala' who presumably had succumbed to an unknown predator.

There was also good news; numbats successfully bred in the reserve (see photo below) and what is now unknown is whether there are wild bred numbats still out there. As numbats cannot be trapped, the best way to establish their presence/absence is by remote camera and track and trace identification. Anyone interested in participating in this training and subsequent work is invited to contact Andy Chapman on 98381149 or by email [fishymaster1@bigpond.com](mailto:fishymaster1@bigpond.com). If there is sufficient interest a date will be set for this activity. Watch this space



*Justin Jonson's delightful photo of a locally bred numbat in Cocanarup Timber Reserve in December 2008.*



### Plants & Patterns Galore!

#### *A story about plant diversity*

A guided tour through a variety of landforms in the Fitzgerald River National Park (western end) considering the origins of the stunning plant diversity in the Park.

Nathan McQuoid and Alison Lullfitz will lead the excursion driving and walking to several locations including Pabelup Swamp, Pt Ann and St Mary Inlet.

*Sunday, June 28, 2015.*

Meet at Mt Maxwell carpark which is off Pabelup Drive near western park entry (accessible to 2WD) at 10:00am. Bring your own refreshments and lunch. Dress for walking in the bush including suitable walking shoes. Be prepared to walk about 4 km.

**RSVP** and for more information contact:

Nathan McQuoid, [nathanm@westnet.com.au](mailto:nathanm@westnet.com.au) ph. 0439 936 591, or Alison Lullfitz, [rovingwrights@gmail.com](mailto:rovingwrights@gmail.com) ph. 0447 878 784

There will be a guided walk and talk on the Hakea Walk trail on 16 August. Details will be in next edition in July.

#### NEW BOOK RECEIVED BY 'FRIENDS'

Geologist Peter Lane has sent us the third edition of his book 'Geology of Western Australia's National Parks-geology for everyone'. Like the previous editions the book provides a easy to understand explanation of complex processes. It is well presented with colour photographs and lovely pen and wash drawings. It will enable you to more fully enjoy your national parks. It will be reviewed in the next edition of Narpulungup News. It is available from the author at 502 Carters Road, Margaret River, WA. 6285. Phone (08) 97572927.

*We thank Peter for the donation of his book.*



## HERE'S A FIRST, A LETTER TO THE EDITOR

The Editor  
Narpulungup News  
Po Box 199  
Ravensthorpe  
WA

Dear Editor,

It's just over a month since the AGM of 'Friends' when I retired from the active committee. For those of you who missed the occasion, I was given a brilliant photograph of Hooded Plovers taken at Lake Shaster reserve by John Tucker

I was very surprised and delighted, and probably didn't respond to all of Gil's very kind remarks.

Serving on the committee in various positions, volunteering for action in the Ground Parrot Recovery team, and trying to keep track of some elusive Hooded Plovers at Pt Ann and Fitzgerald inlet, I have met and learned from so many interesting people. Fellow committee members, DPaW staff, other 'Friends' groups and visiting speakers. Very many thanks to all of them, it's been a pleasure to be involved.

Very many sincere thanks,  
Anne. 14/05/15



*Anne's smile says it all. So does Leonie's.*

## VALÈ TOM ATTERBY OAM 1928-2015

With sadness 'Friends' record the passing of former Fitzgerald farmer Tom Atterby on New Years day. He farmed at Fitzgerald from 1963-93 and then moved to Northam. Tom had many interests and claims to fame. To us, he was best known as the inaugural Chair of the FRNP Advisory Committee between 1987 and 1991. This was when the then recently formed Department of Conservation and Land Management was producing the FRNP Management Plan and this committee was heavily involved in the process. To those who served with him Tom is remembered for two things; for being a stickler for strict meeting procedure and for getting decisions made. Sometimes members were invited to stay at the farm overnight and resume the meeting the next day after breakfast to achieve this. Tom was guest speaker at our AGM in Hopetoun in 2008. We extend our condolences to Gwen and her family.

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