

Nerpulungup News

2006 No 1
February

from the Friends of the Fitzgerald River National Park



AGM March 18th

The Annual General Meeting of the Friends of the Fitzgerald River National Park will be held on Saturday March 18th at the Twertup Field Studies Centre. Details of alternative venue in case of rain are below.

The Orders for the Day are:

- 10 am: gathering and a 'cuppa'
11 am: our Living Treasure, Kaye Vaux will reminisce with us on the topic of 'My View through the Years'
Whenever: lunch
1.30 pm AGM

This is a very important time for the FFRNP. Big changes are happening around us with the development of the Ravensthorpe nickel mine, a prospective mine at Wellstead, oil exploration off the continental shelf and the on-going march of tourism. There will undoubtedly be increased pressure on the Government in the near future for the building of a coastal road through the Park to cater for local and tourist traffic. The FFRNP need to have informed input in all these matters, so please ...

seriously consider attending!

If you cannot attend, please make sure you renew you membership. A membership form can be found on page 5. Contact the Treasurer (9846 4173) to get a current update on fees. Encourage your friends to join - more members make us and our submissions stronger!

Alternative venue

If the weather makes it impossible to get to Twertup the AGM will be held at the Gairdner Hall off the South Coast Highway at Gairdner. We can camp there, in or out of the building. There are toilets, showers and cooking facilities. Outside they have an electric BBQ and a drum suitable for fires. \$3-00 each for overnight camping fee.

Agenda items ..

to the Secretary, Anne Gadsby, **no later than 8-03-06, please.**

Mail: c/-PO, Bremer Bay, 6338
Phone: 9837 4063
email: anngad@wn.com.au

All positions on the committee, including office bearers will be declared vacant. Most current members have indicated their willingness to stand again, but there will be 2 vacancies to be filled.

Next issue: May

Gondwana Link's next step

Late in January 2006 Greening Australia and Australian Bush Heritage Fund became joint owners of Yarrabee, a 923 ha property of which 600 ha is open paddock and 324 ha is bush, vegetated creek-line and parkland. The property is on the corner of Kuch and Gnowellen Roads with the Stirling Range National Park immediately to the west. As Yarrabee is essentially a low foothill of the Stirling Range, it has good views in all directions though it is hard to take your eyes off Ellen Peak to the west.

Gondwana Link's vision is reconnected country from Kalgoorlie to the Karri forest in which ecosystem function and biodiversity are restored and maintained. Much of the current work focuses on the area between the Stirling Range and Fitzgerald River National Parks. Yarrabee is a key property in the Stirling to Fitzgerald link (see map opposite) and captures the natural gradient from the higher rainfall marri and jarrah woodlands of the Stirling Range into the lower rainfall mallee and heaths of the central Corackerup region. The property is particularly interesting as it has the easternmost extension of a Marri/Jarrah and Yate (*E. cornuta*) woodland, which remains as large paddock trees on part of the western side, and has the largest area of sand heath left across the entire Fitzgerald-Stirling section of Gondwana Link.

The regional natural resource management group (SCRIPT) have approved a tender for revegetation of the cleared areas on Yarrabee (600Ha) in the 2006 planting season. Jack Mercer (Marlak) is undertaking this revegetation program. Ecological assessment, planning and preparation is well under way and seed pickers are currently collecting seed from the existing bush for direct seeding.

We look forward to inviting you to visit Yarrabee in the future.

Amanda Keesing: Gondwana Link coordination unit.

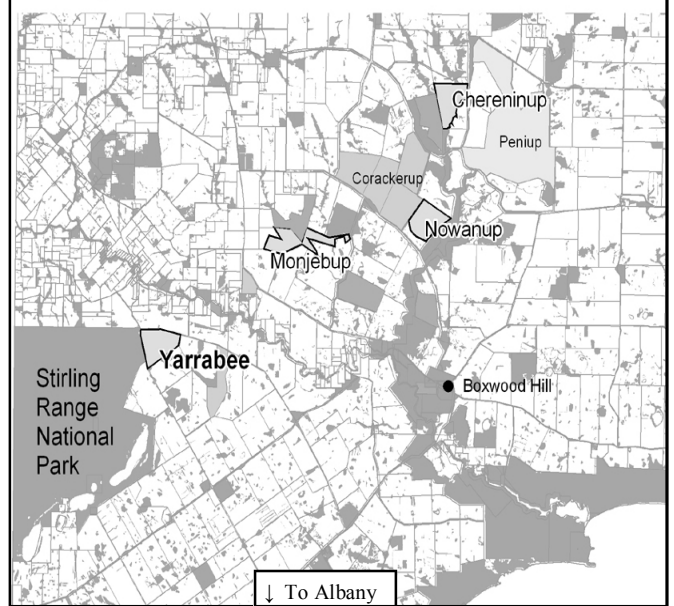
P.S. The internal fences will soon be removed. If anyone is interested in the jam fence posts please ring Amanda Keesing on 9842-2754.

The RNO report:

The BHP Billiton Ravensthorpe Nickel Operations Community Liaison Committee of (RNO CLC) has the Friends represented on it through committee member Nathan McQuoid. This committee was set up in 2002 to assist the world's largest resource company, BHP Billiton, to have a community interface and to implement the community consultation commitments of its charter, as part of its development of the nickel resource at Bandalup Hill east of Ravensthorpe.

It is a fascinating opportunity to learn about how this company undertakes its business and in particular how

Yarrabee is a key location in the Fitz-Stirling area of Gondwana Link. Monjebup and Chereninup have been purchased by Australian Bush Heritage Fund and Nowanup is owned by Greening Australia.



The Yarrabee map

it relates to the community in areas surrounding its resource assets.

There have been some discussions and a project about sustainability led by Professor David Brereton from The University of Queensland Centre for Social Responsibility in Mining. This project seeks to set up a framework to monitor RNO's sustainability; the major flaw is that there is no plan or program developed by RNO for sustainability such that it can be monitored. I have been attempting to get such a plan developed and it seems this is not going to be easy.

Their charter makes interesting reading as it makes a statement about what the company is about and the initiatives that it is committed to these include sustainability.

The next meeting of the CLC on February 8th will involve a presentation by RNO Manager of Health Safety Environment and Community, Adrian Lee, who will provide an overview of the RNO Environmental works program.

I'll maintain my efforts for RNO to ramp up their ability to meet the leadership expectations of members of the community in conducting their business, [particularly in the areas of environmental management and sustainability]. I believe they should be doing much more than basic compliance and have the opportunity for significant results in a fragile area if they embrace sustainability effectively.

Nathan McQuoid

More photos from Nowanup



Ron and Helen Taylor & Andy Chapman enjoying a cuppa



Nathan McQuoid among the regrowth at Nowanup



Early risers - Ian Weir, Mark Jeffrey, Andy, Ron & Nathan



Craig Luscombe and Mark Jeffrey discussing seeds

Protecting South Coast from the Biological Bulldozer

For the first time WA has a visual snapshot view of where the plant killer *Phytophthora Dieback* has infected vegetation in the South Coast Region on all land tenures from Walpole to Cape Arid National Park.

This has been the first part of a project that brings communities and government together to protect South Coast vegetation from infection and invasion by the devastating pathogen known scientifically as *Phytophthora cinnamomi*.

Project Dieback Manager Dr Joanna Young has also been working with WOW Wilderness EcoProjects manager Gary Muir and the South Coast Regional Initiative Planning Team (SCRIPT) to build a comprehensive online database of dieback affected areas and plants at risk in the region.

The website is currently in its final testing phase and includes detailed maps to show affected areas with 3D "fly-overs" of key areas, developed in conjunction with the Google Earth initiative.

SCRIPT has secured Australian Government funding and support through its regional NRM Investment Plan to build a partnerships with the Department of Conservation and Land Management and the Dieback Working Group to implement the project.

The First Investment Plan secured \$33.7 million, the maximum proportion of the three year indicative regional allocation that the South Coast was able to access at that time. The Second Investment Plan aims to secure a further \$7.8 million in Natural Heritage Trust and National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality investment in 2006/07.

The Dieback Project website is due to be launched in April. For further information or to get involved in the project, contact Dr Joanna Young on 08 98 401 260 or Gary Muir on 08 98 401 420.

From SCRIPT weekly email 7th February 2006 -

www.script.asn.au

script@agric.wa.gov.au

Friends Re-united!

Members of the FFRNP are delighted to welcome Mark (now our Senior Ranger) and Natasha back into the Park after about 6 1/2 years absence. And we look forward to saying hello to Tessa and Hettie.

Fauna Survey at Nowanup, December 2005.

As most members will recall, FFRNP, has been supportive of the concept of Gondwana Link. Nowanup is a property which is part of that system, and is managed by Greening Australia.

FFRNP held a very interesting weekend there in November (see report on page 5). In December, Angela Sanders and volunteers completed a week long fauna survey.

Angela had done a lot of the preliminary work before the clay patches became almost impossible to dig, so by December we were ready to go, and assembled at Fred Powell's place, Bamarook.

My first full day, Thursday. Sam Tozer (my grand daughter), Angela and I put out extra Elliot traps in a Mallee Heath area near the NW corner. Sam was in charge of making the peanut paste and rolled-oat balls and throwing them into the traps. Angela showed us around the rest of the area.

Traps were suited to habitat. There were Elliots in the Moort and on the Mallee and Heath terrain. Pit traps were situated in sandy and clay areas, and some Funnel on the top of one of the mesas.

We started early at the funnels, where we caught two species of gecko, *Diplodactylus granariensis* and *Underwoodisaurus milii* and a bob-tail, *Tiliqua rugosa*. On to the Elliots before the day got too hot, and then to the pit lines. These proved to be the most productive. I wished I had the camera when Sam saw her first Honey Possum, *Tarsipes rostratus*. There were numerous spiders and scorpions, a few pie-dish beetles and the occasional Skink.

Friday. Linda Straun joined us for the day to add her botanical expertise to the expedition, we found an Ash-Grey mouse, *Pseudomys albocinereus* and more Honey Possums in the pits

By now we had the rounds well organised; Anne and Sam did the traps, and Angela did the birding while it was still cool, both groups keeping in touch with mobile phones in case something interesting turned up. In the late afternoon we did more birding, and one evening went spotlighting which wasn't very productive. We even managed a trip into Ongerup for fuel, an ice cream and a look at the new Yongergnow, building being constructed. It will be most impressive.

Sam left on Saturday after doing the rounds, and at Bamarook Fred's brother and nephew (another Sam) had arrived. Later we were joined by Greg Harrold. Quite a crowd! Fred's mob were harvesting. Sunday afternoon. Greg searched for reptiles by raking piles of woody debris, and found several.

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Last day with Sam 2 assisting. A great help. We were checking and leaving the funnels and Elliots closed for pick-up by Greg and Angela. Temperatures were rising, so we set off very early. As before, it was the pits which produced the treasures. Several skinks, more scorpions than previously, and a Dunnart, *Sminthopsis griseiventor*. This was checked with Angela and Greg, as it was my first acquaintance with the species.

After a general clean-up at the house and a bite of lunch we were ready to leave mid- afternoon. It had been a very interesting survey. We're all looking forward to the next!

Anne Gadsby

FFRNP MEMBERSHIP FORM:

Family \$25 * Individual \$15 * Concession \$10 * or donation

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◀ Please circle your membership type.
Make cheques payable to
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Friends of the Fitzgerald
River National Park
1190 Nanarup Rd
Nanarup 6330

Tick if a receipt is
required.

☐

A unique experience

Although it wasn't planned, there is no doubt that 'The Camera' dominated the events at Nowanup on November 19th and 20th.

The brainchild of Ian Weir, it was four metres square, had a roof but no floor. He constructed it in a paddock (with the help of Friends) where Mother Nature was rapidly taking over with masses of orange pea shrubs (flowering finished), red Glandular Raspwort, white Goodenia, pale yellow Pop Plants and deep blue Dampiera.

'The Camera' was constructed of sheets of closely fitting, laminated polystyrene foam, making it completely dark inside – airless and warm too. Facing west, a lens from an old box camera had been inserted into an aperture cut through the 'wall'. This had the effect of making the whole structure into a massive camera.

It was set up in such a way that the floriferous paddock, a nearby breakaway and the distant Stirling Range appeared upside down on three walls and ceiling. Friends who were present were invited to come inside and stand beside a Raspwort. Ian had a digital camera set up in one corner. Friends were asked to keep entirely still for five minutes whilst he took a time exposure of both people and landscape.

The purpose of this is to produce one of a series of images to be exhibited during the Perth International Festival of the Arts in February. Firstly they will be on display at the Albany Residency Museum (11th February - 12th March), afterwards to tour the State.

On the Saturday morning Craig Luscombe from Nindethana Seeds in Albany talked to those who gathered in the shed at Nowanup. He had brought along ice-cream cartons of a variety of seeds - eucalypts looking like light brown sand; winged black hakea seeds; bead-like, red, poisonous seeds from Broome; black 'Cyclops' wattle seed, each one surrounded by a bright orange aril, so loved by ants they are carried underground.

Craig explained his storage and collecting techniques, having brought some equipment with him. His

audience had plenty of questions and related experiences of their own, making it an interesting exchange of knowledge.

A walk was then taken beside the adjoining bush where many flowers were in bloom and where Craig hoped to find plants heavy in seed, so he could demonstrate his collecting strategies.

It was encouraging to see the adult daughter of one of the original Friends present, with yet another generation of naturalist coming along in the shape of her toddler, Amber.

In the cool of the evening, Friends gathered around the huge camp-fireplace to partake of wine and food, and to yarn before retiring early.

When the fire was raked out the following morning to put on the billy, a couple of foil-wrapped, well-baked potatoes were unearthed.

It was an early start for the Committee on Sunday morning with a meeting at 7.30.a.m. Among the items discussed was the fact that the Fitzie still has no Ranger-in-charge. At one stage Steve Mills, based at Hopetoun, was the only Ranger on duty as the Ranger based at Bremer Bay was on holidays. This situation needs to be rectified urgently before the summer season.

Then back to 'The Camera' with Ian waiting for the correct light to take more shots.

Nathan McQuoid conducted a walk, pointing out rare flora, and explaining how he had sown native seeds. He expressed disappointment at the amount of eucalypts that had survived, but a search among the long native grasses revealed a number of small specimens. He explained that the National Trust had bought the property to be part of the Gondwana Link project. Immediately across the road lies Corackerup Reserve of which Nowanup will be an extension.

A return for lunch, then followed another walk beside a nearby breakaway, after which Friends wandered home with more fascinating memories to tuck away and examine at leisure.

Helen Taylor



Left:
the box
camera
being built



Right:
the box
complete

Fitzgerald river National Park Update

After a very wet start we have just about cleared away all the packing boxes and are starting to get things into order.

It looks like being a busy year in the park, with some large projects in the pipeline to keep us rangers on our toes. Capital funding of \$25,000 has been allocated for the replacement of the beach access at Quoin Head. This will improve the general safety of the area by channelling users down a ramp, and prevent further fore-dune erosion. Works are due to be completed in April 2006 provided the rain eases up a bit.

The re-alignment work on Pabelup Drive will continue as weather permits. This work will improve drainage and soften some of the more severe bends in the road. This seemingly simple project is in fact a rather drawn-out process relying on engineers inspections and drawings, employment of road contractors and, of course, suitable weather (all of which can be highly unpredictable!) However, once finished it will complement the roadwork already completed on the western side of the park.

Both the Fitzgerald and Hamersley Inlets broke through to the sea last month, causing some local excitement and very spectacular aerial pictures of discolouration of the sea reportedly reaching out as far as 2 km.

On a personal note - Natasha and I are delighted to be back in the Fitzgerald, several years wiser (I hope) and with the addition to our family of Tessa and Hettie. I hope to catch up with everyone at the AGM.

Mark Moore: Senior Ranger FRNP



The chained river bed of the flooded Fitzgerald River January 2006. Photo courtesy S. Janicke.



Damage at Roes Rock Pool January 2006

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