

Narpulungup News

August 2005
No. 3

from the Friends of the Fitzgerald River National Park



Explore your creativity and the external environment at Twertup

Friends of Fitzgerald River National Park will present an **exploration of Twertup and surrounds** in several dimensions over the weekend of **17th & 18th September 2005**. "Wilderness Art" proponent Louise Lodge will present an **Expressing the Landscape** workshop on Saturday morning. The workshop aims to give participants a taste of the art trips Louise organises in the FRNP during spring, summer and autumn. This is a one off workshop focused on expressing aspects of the fantastic Twertup environment through colour. Participants will be shown non-traditional approaches to paint media (acrylic & gouache on paper).

The workshop will be divided into two sections:

1. Observing, sketching and gathering images out in the environment
2. Demonstration back at the house of non-traditional methods of applying paint and a hands on session for all participants.

Materials will be provided. If you do have any of the following please bring them along: acrylic or gouache paints, sketching paper, brushes, a 4B pencil, water jar, rag. No experience is required.

Start time 10.00 am ... Finish 12.30

Everyone will have something to show by lunch time

Local zoologist, Andy Chapman will lead a **hike to Roes Rock pool** on Saturday afternoon with an **overnight stay** at the pool camping out of backpacks. Activities will include some observations of the Long-necked Tortoises in the pool during the evening (the tortoises have not been seen since 1985) and a 'walk on the wild-side' along some of the majestic Fitzgerald River cliffs on Sunday morning, returning to Twertup mid-afternoon. Those merely wishing to visit the pool and Roes Rock surrounds can elect to walk in and out on the Sunday carrying only the bare essentials i.e. water, lunch and a camera. The walk to the pool is relatively easy as it is along a disused FWD track; it is approximately 11 km and takes about 3 hours one way. Those opting to camp overnight will have to be backpack self-sufficient including carrying water. Please ring or email Andy for further details. Those not wishing to do a long walk can either do short walks, practise their new found artistic abilities, read in the sun with a cup of tea or just enjoy the wildflowers.

Facilities at Twertup Field Studies Centre include wood stove and gas barbecue, and rain water is available for drinking and cooking. Single beds are provided. Lighting is by 12 volt solar power and there are toilets. Plates etc and cutlery are available. Participants will need to provide their own food and bedding or swags.

There is a cost of \$20 per participant (\$10 for children) which does not include the \$5 per person per night camping fee for those over-nighting at the house.

Express the landscape!.. visit the tortoises!.. walk on the wild-side! Consider combining your Twertup weekend with a visit to Ravensthorpe Wildflower Show which is open 10-24th September 2005.

Contacts: Louise Lodge mob: 0427 700 613 email: louisemlodge@westnet.com.au
Andy Chapman 9838 1149 email: fishymaster@optusnet.com.au
FRNP Ranger (Steve Mills: Hopetoun) 9838 3060

Please register your intention to participate by phoning either Louise or Andy so we can better organise the weekend and advise you of any changes. Note that in the event of preceding heavy rain, the track to Twertup will be closed and sadly the program will be cancelled. **We hope to see you there!**

Next issue: November

Gondwana Link Udate

Five groups, including the Friends of the Fitzgerald River National Park, continue to work towards the Gondwana Link vision of reconnected country across south-western Australia in which ecosystem function and biodiversity are restored and maintained.

Gondwana Link stretches from the semi-arid woodlands around Kalgoorlie to the tall wet karri forests in the SW corner of the state. Work continues to focus on the central and eastern end of the link, particularly in the area between the Stirling Range and Fitzgerald River National Parks (FitzStirling) and the woodlands north-east of Ravens-thorpe.

Securing and restoring

Bushland of extremely high conservation value has been purchased by both Greening Australia and Australian Bush Heritage Fund in the FitzStirling region. Greening Australia's 750 ha property, Nowanup, has around 400 ha bush including patches of the locally endemic Corackerup Moort (*Eucalyptus vesiculosa*). Australian Bush Heritage purchased Chereninup Creek Reserve (880ha) in 2002 and this year purchased Monjebup Creek Reserve, 1100 ha of the 'healthiest looking, least disturbed area of private bush that I have looked at in the whole Fitzgerald to Stirling area' (Keith Bradby, Gondwana Link coordinator).

Greening Australia have been involved with several large restoration projects in the FitzStirling area. The 60 ha of revegetation carried out on Chereninup Reserve in 2003 using 50 endemic species has been very successful. The second wave of germination that occurred a year after direct seeding has ensured good coverage and a variety of seedlings on the different soil types. At Nowanup, revegetation of the cleared land is underway. Around 50ha has been sown with moort (*Eucalyptus platypus* subsp. *platypus*) and Corackerup moort seed and 10,000 broombush (*Melaleuca hamata*) seedlings have been planted as part of a trial of two different forms of this broombush for brush fencing material. Part of the cleared land will be used to establish a sandalwood plantation. A diverse range of host species is being established and sandalwood nuts will then be planted next to the year- old host plants. Greening Australia's

Reconnection program coordinated by Barry Heydenrych is also ensuring that significant areas of locally native vegetation are being created on cleared private land.



A

number of

Greening Australia has a modified plough that is being used for large scale revegetation with native species.

different restoration techniques are being used. Some areas are being left to revegetate on their own; brush mulching has been used as a direct seeding technique (the soil surface was mechanically broken then seed bearing brush layed on top) and a disc plough has been modified for large scale seeding with native seeds.

Increasing knowledge

Margaret Robertson has volunteered with Gondwana Link for over a year. Her forte is gathering stories and her work enables the creative and practical use of local people's stories and knowledge to provide information and insights about the ecological and cultural processes that concern Gondwana Link.

Dr Simon Judd, Gondwana Link Science coordinator, will continue to direct research into key areas. A Functional Landscape Plan (see p.3) has highlighted deficiencies in our knowledge and Simon is working with institutions, science forums and other group to fill these knowledge gaps .

Charles Roche of The Wilderness Society has been working in the semi-arid woodlands east of the rabbit proof fence. Later this year he will publish a report on the ecological values of the area.



Properties secured in the area between the Stirling Range and Fitzgerald River National Parks.

Wider involvement

A wide variety of approaches is needed if we are to achieve the ambitious Gondwana Link vision. Over the last year many groups, institutions and volunteers have contributed to Gondwana Link.

The second year University of Western Australia Landscape Architecture students concentrated on the FitzStirling area for their 'rural studio' unit and spent a week at Nowanup researching all aspects of the environment. Their work culminated in posters, an exhibition, a brochure and a display about Gondwana Link at the King's Park Wildflower Festival.

Environmental Management students from Edith Cowan University have spent several days intensively sampling in the key rivers and streams of the FitzStirling area. This has given us much needed benchmark information. Two Edith Cowan University students have also based their projects in the region.



ECU students sampling water in Corackerup Creek. This work provided much needed benchmark data

Artists of the south coast region have been involved through the *liminal* and Hotspot projects. In February this year members of the Friends and the Fitzgerald Biosphere Group were asked to join the *liminal* photographic workshop held in Bremer Bay. The current Hotspot project encourages artists to respond to the natural environment with its extraordinary biodiversity and history of human interaction with the landscape, to produce works which speak of the place.

The Nature Conservancy continues to be extremely supportive of Gondwana Link and is still working with us on the spreadsheet tool for planning conservation actions. A 'Functional Landscape Plan' for the FitzStirling region has been written and circulated for input. Angela Sanders and Nathan McQuoid have been part of the team which created this iterative plan. Trustees and staff from the Maine chapter of The Nature Conservancy visited the FRNP in 2004 and were lucky enough to see honey possums near West Mount Barren.

An intern from a German University worked for Gondwana Link for 3 months and assisted with the collation of a fauna data base for the whole Gondwana Link area.

In October 2004, 60 people joined in a 10 day Great Walk which traversed the country between the Fitzgerald River and Stirling Range National Parks. The aim of this Great Walk was to highlight the efforts of the organisations and



Participants in the liminal photographic workshop met at the Bremer Bay Telecentre before heading into the park

landholders to recreate the bush linkages between the two national parks. In February 2005 the Albany Library hosted an exhibition of photographs and artworks from the Great Walk as well as posters on Gondwana Link. Over 50 people attended the opening of the exhibition.

The future

Gondwana Link will continue to secure and restore bushland to strengthen and recreate bush linkages in the FitzStirling. While our efforts have largely involved this area we need to look at opportunities in other parts of the link. The 'Ravensthorpe Connection', the area between the eastern end of the FRNP and the unallocated crown land east of Ravensthorpe, is very much in our sights. But as opportunities arise anywhere in the link we will be ready to act.

Friends of Fitzgerald River National Park, Greening Australia (WA), Australian Bush Heritage Fund, Fitzgerald Biosphere Group and The Wilderness Society are working together to reconnect and rebuild natural habitats from the Karri to Kalgoorlie that will protect the wildlife and plants, and benefit rural ways of life. For more information see:-

Senior Ranger leaves the FRNP.

Peter Wilkins is leaving the Park after 5 years in the position. Members of the FFRNP wish him and his family every happiness as they move on to South Australia

As a mark of our appreciation the Friends presented Peter with an ABC book voucher. Peter has asked us to print the following ...

Gil Craig recently presented me with a generous ABC bookshop voucher on behalf of the Friends of the Fitzgerald. I love to buy new books, normally some type of field guide, so this voucher will help purchase my first South Australian environmental field guide. Thankyou very much!

Peter.

What some of our members are up to

Updating the photo albums

from Helen Taylor

Recently The ‘Grand Old Lady’ of our group, Kaye Vaux, moved into a unit. This meant divesting herself of many non-essentials. Amongst these were a wad of photos taken during her years of supporting the Friends.

How we miss Kaye’s Halfway House at Ongerup where a welcome could always be counted on.

At the AGM in April, Angela Sanders gave me a new 300 pocket album and asked me if I’d sort the photos out. This was difficult to do without the other albums from Twertup so, courtesy of the Rangers, they eventually arrived at Hopetoun.

Oh, what a task!! A quarter of a century of photographs! Sorting out the albums has been attempted before. I tried previously and put it in the too-hard basket. Amelia Moir’s handwriting appears, so she may have had a go. The entries begin in Heather Pierce’s exquisitely neat handwriting; then there’s Andy Chapman’s and of course Kaye’s and others I don’t recognize.

Kaye and I were keen photographers in the 80’s and 90’s, but records of gatherings seem to be petering out now, or perhaps it is that outdoor activities are not so frequent. There are only three shots that I took of ‘Life on the Rocks’ weekend. Does anyone have more they are willing to donate?

There are literally dozens of photos of Twertup and it’s surrounds – not to mention the countless times it features in gatherings and busy bees. There is a heap of others that are doubled up – Syd Shea’s visit, the ‘Night of the Hats’, Peter McMillan’s insect workshop, eight of Nathan’s farewell at Pt Ann. (He never really went away did he?), even John Bannister flensing a baby whale on Hamersley Beach. Some sleeves have captions but are empty. Endless shots have nothing written on the back, no date, no names of people featured. Identifying some was possible from the location and people. There is another wad of scenery which may or may not have significance.

Entering the photos in date order was utterly impossible without the purchase of all new albums and re-doing the whole lot.

It seemed quite a challenge. Oh, but what memories this project dredged up! Reminders of the fun we had. Restoring the cottage initially, renovating and altering it later. The places we got to and the things we did! Wading through hip-deep Twertup Creek in our undies. Wriggling into minute caves in search of owl pellets. Digging pit traps; learning about geology; going on walks; searching for frogs and reptiles, and camping out. Bird watching, whale watching, and sharing the knowledge we gained through University Extension Courses, and with schoolchildren.

And the faces! Reminders of supporters who have left the district. Bill Lullfitz who would offer a home from home to where we could retreat if the road was too wet to get into Twertup. The Bathgates – Joan was our treasurer and Bob lent his muscle to most projects. There are those who have died, and by now, the children featured are grown with children of their own – and wasn’t I slim and dark-haired 20 years ago!!

The very first photos were in black and white and taken by people from the Zoology Dept of UWA in 1970. The first in colour were little 8.5cm square ones taken by Ranger Tony Tapper in 1972. 6 x 4s had to be cut down to fit into the sleeves of the older album. The latest are computer generated, A4 size.

It truly is a record of the history of our group.

All members of the FFRNP are (and will be in the future when they enjoy the photo albums at Twertup) extremely grateful to Helen for undertaking this job. There are not many active members who have played such an important role for so long in the Friends as Helen. We owe a lot to her, and her husband Ron, who have given us a great deal of their time and energy over many years.

Looking for Western Ground Parrots and other things.

An update from FFRNP Secretary, Anne Gadsby

In May, Birds WA, Brenda Newby and Shapelle McNee co-ordinated a Western Ground Parrot search team in the Nuytsland Nature Reserve. Previously the WGP survey teams had been working in the Cape Arid National Park and, with funds from various sources, it was possible to extend the search area further east. We camped at Tooklejenana, a delightful wooded site overlooking the plain to the south, and about 20 km west of Israelite Bay.

Systematic listening produced a few possible calls for further investigation, but it was decided to send a small team to Mount Ragged, 40 km to the north. Cleve and Jenny Hassell, Andy Chapman and I completed eight listening sessions in superb habitat, but no Western Ground Parrots. Andy commented that summer conditions might have been too dry.

Cleve and Andy climbed the mountain, while Jenny and I ‘botanised’ below. Photos were taken, and journeys resumed. Cleve and Jenny went back to Esperance, while we returned to camp for a fast transfer to a new spot just beyond Pt. Malcolm.

Imagine the surprise! One of the remaining team had been lost! No sign of Margaret since she had set off to listen at 5am. To cut a long story short, she was located

safe and well by very efficient S.E.S expertise early the following morning. POLAIR 1 is very noisy!

A few days at the beach, but no more WGP's. this trip.

The second survey to West Nuytsland early in June followed up the possible contacts from May, and extended the search inland from Pt. Malcolm. We didn't lose anyone this time, and we located a new population of WGP's. We pulled out three days early due to approaching foul weather, but the feeling of euphoria remained as we sloshed our way through the track..

Then a change in direction for me as I joined the Malleefowl Preservation Group's search for nest mounds at Eyre Bird Observatory. Great fun, although I didn't ever want to see another towering sand dune at the end of the two weeks. One very active mound, and several potentials were found. Eyre received some very welcome rain.

I'm off again next month. I've been listening for WGP's since 1998, but have never seen one. This time.....?

HAVE YOU RENEWED YOUR MEMBERSHIP?

If not, please send your cheque for...

Family- \$25, Individual - \$15, Concession - \$10... to

The Treasurer
Friends of the Fitzgerald River National Park
1190 Nanerup Rd
Nanerup WA 6330

Please include your postal address, phone, fax numbers and email address if your wish us to contact you by email when necessary.

Twertup cleaning roster:

September: Anne
October: Val & Steven
November: Barbara M
December: Andy
January: **volunteers needed**
February: " "
March: AGM

Quiz for Naturalists, Historians and Dreamers

Ground Parrot Camp-out Nuytsland Reserve (Cape Arid) May 2005

1. Who said: "everyman with or without brains moves in a different circle and knows things unknown to every other man?"

J F Archibald Albert Einstein Billy Cotton
or Barry Humphries?

2. Name three Perth suburbs named after native plants.
3. Which prominent birdo described the call of Western Gerygone as "the ghost of a kitten's mew, the echo of dwarf violins played in the moon"

Alan Bell Dom Serventy John Dell or
David Attenborough?

4. Which unusual bird was seen from the window of the Port Hotel in Hopetoun in 1945?
5. How many bird species are endemic in WA?
6. Who described the purpose of life as "usefulness and happiness"

Spike Milligan Bob Dylan Pope John Paul II
or the Dalai Lama?

7. What was the name of Matthew Flinders' cat?
8. Who said "for the first time in my life I was able to assume the high moral ground. I found the atmosphere there exhilarating and intoxicating".

Homer Simpson Rodney Adler OC Smith or
Horace Rumpole?

9. Who wrote a book about a famous dog that lived in the Pilbara in the late 1970s

Tom Hungerford Donald Stuart Tim Winton
or Louis de Bernieres?

10. Name the four species of bird whose range in WA extends as far east as we are at present -ie Cape Arid - (give or take say 100 km).

11. Complete the following limerick:

"There once was a man from Bel Air
who encountered a maid on a stair
when the bannister broke, he made a quick joke
....."

12. What is the name of the untidy mountain close to where we are now (ie Cape Arid), which was given the same name independently by two different explorers? Who were they?

Answers in the next issue.

Nature's News - in the Park

Western shield monitoring success

The autumn Western Shield fauna monitoring result was the most successful that I have witnessed. The Twertup trap line yielded animal numbers from 34 to 58 animals per night, a trap success rate of up to 42% a night and 33% over the whole Twertup trapping program. We caught 11 mammal, 2 gecko, 2 frog and 1 skink species. Of the mammals there were 15 Dibblers, 4 Quendas (Bandicoot), 3 Red-tailed Phascogales, 1 Heath Mouse, a Tamar Wallaby and many Bush Rats and Brush-tailed possums. The Moir track trapping was also better than has been in recent years.

Dibblers and other fauna

Some interesting results have come from Tony Friend's Dabbler research. Tony has set-up a grid on Moir track specifically for Dabbler research. On the first night his team caught 18 Dibblers with more new animals caught after that.

Steve Mills discovered a new Dabbler population after setting some traps around East Mt. Barren in response to regular observations of small mammals crossing the road.

Other nice observations in the park were a Southern Giant Petrel swimming close to shore at Point Ann and an Echidna on the Horrie and Dorrie walk.

Feral cats

There have been a higher than usual number of feral cat observations reported across the park and on neighboring farms in recent times. Four cats were collected in the Jacup area in June.

CALM has been trialing various strategies to trap

and bait feral cats. An important ingredient seems to be a sex scent that is produced from parts of the feral cats' anatomy. This product is appropriately named "Pongo" and is sprayed around trap sites to lure cats to traps. CALM is also collecting samples from dead feral cats to collate information about the numbers of cats in an area, their genetics and diet. You can contact your local CALM Officer regarding collection of samples.

Whales

At last the whales have arrived in reasonable numbers; up to twelve have been observed from Point Ann at one time. They did arrive a while ago but not in any number until recent weeks. Both Humpback and Southern Right Whales have been observed.

Works

Garry and Peter have done some more brush cutting at Twertup completing the Long Walk, now all the short walks at Twertup have been tidied up.

Moving on

Finally, the Wilkins family is moving on, returning to the hometown of Pt. Lincoln in South Australia where I will be taking on the Senior Ranger position for the Eyre district. This will mean working on the beautiful Port Lincoln and Coffin Bay National Parks as well as other mainland and Island protected areas.

We have absolutely loved every minute of our time here, especially the times spent with the Friends learning about the park, you are extremely fortunate to have a great National Park in your backyard.

Hope to see you in Port Lincoln someday,

Peter Wilkins, Senior Ranger

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