



Newsletter 193 March 2011

Description

The March 2011 Newsletter reports on the ongoing work of Friends maintaining and enhancing Tuan Campground in the national park as well as reports from Eldorado, Stanley and details of the next meeting and an update on the Quarry on Skeleton Hill Dear Friends,

A glorious day coupled with a large and energetic group waged war on the Tuan enclosures and surrounds. Mountains of vegetation was removed from the enclosures, quite a lot of it excessive native growth plus weeds such as Nightshade. If Capeweed is the spring problem then a wet summer produces an equally large autumn one.

All enclosures are now free of Nightshade and emergent weedy grasses and all boundaries have been sprayed. The general area was tackled by pulling and cutting off the plants and stacking for burning by parks crew at a later date.

All Inkweed has been removed and seed heads collected. However this weed has proliferated throughout the park wherever there is a wet area. Outside the western boundary of the site there are countless seedlings which we will tackle by hand pulling at the next meeting. With the assistance of ranger John (who mysteriously appeared at bun time!) and his chainsaw, the dead wattles were removed and stacked.

While all this was going on Richard and his crew removed steel posts and selected some natural growth Red Box saplings for guarding. Yes, the rain brought more than weeds and these young trees will do far better than any we plant. Hopefully as they grow the block will become more park like and weed growth will be suppressed.



Autumn Greenhoods were spotted by Neville as he was pulling out Inkweed so not all was bad.



Morning tea as always was a sociable time, sharing sightings and ideas and enjoying a rest.

After stacking the remainder of the weed harvest we traveled to the Beechworth Road site at the foot of the ranges to remove the Mt Morgan Wattles. This was not a difficult task and 40+ were disposed of in about thirty minutes.

The highlights/distractions here were the large **Orchard Swallowtail Butterflies**, *Papilio aegeus*.



The large black male and the larger pale female floated around in the sunlight giving good views. This species of Swallowtail is normally found much further north along the coastal region and like the Chequered Swallowtail has moved south probably due to the tropical like conditions we have experienced. The locally common Swallowtail is the Dainty Swallowtail, *Papilio anactus*, which is

currently laying eggs on your citrus trees.

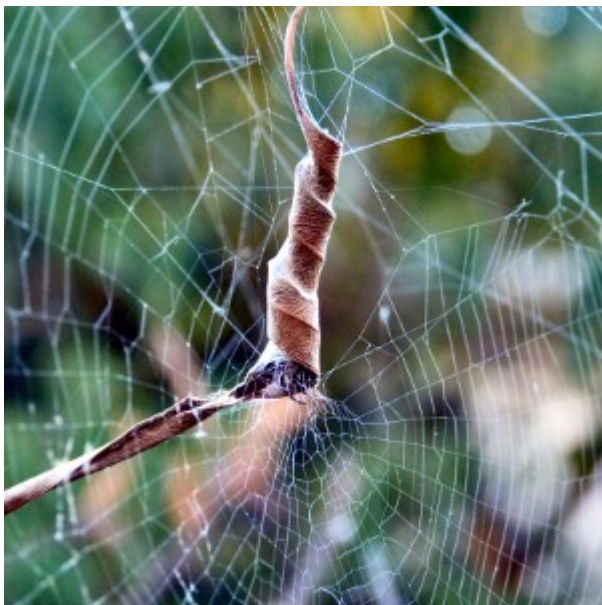
Yeddonba Aboriginal site was our chosen lunch spot. It was shady, cool and green but after a while the mossies emerged from the bracken to annoy us. A very productive day ended at 2.30 pm after which some members made the climb around the site and reported that the track had escaped damage from the rains.

Around the park

Tuan Track Walk has been very popular if the reduced numbers of leaflets in the pamphlet box are an indication. Care is needed on all tracks post the rain as there are holes and trees posing problems. The large Autumn Greenhoods are out and enjoying the good conditions. Spider webs festoon the trees and spider tucker is plentiful.

The Leaf-curling Spider

While the big golden orb weaver species hang in their web and the hairy garden orb species hide in vegetation until dusk or until something gets caught in their web, the tiny Leaf-curling Spider curls a leaf up and makes a beautiful little shelter which it hangs in its web. The web is usually located within two metres of the ground.



Eldorado Jottings

Gill continues to record a good variety of birds. Fan-tailed and Black-eared Cuckoos were the highlights this month.



Frogs are plentiful and wallabies are grazing on the new growth on the controlled burn sites.

Stanley area

Phillip reported that the bird group visited that area and the highlights were Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos, Olive Whistler and excellent views of Cicada birds which are normally difficult to see well.

Rainfall

February 249.9 mm over 10 days. **Yearly total** to date: 352.1 mm over 18 days.

NEXT MEETING SUNDAY APRIL 3RD 2011 Meet at Chiltern Post Office at 9.00am BYO lunch, binocs, chair, secateurs, gloves and a rake. Further work at Tuan campsite followed by nest box inspections using the camera. Contact 0357 261 484

CHILTERN QUARRY : PROPOSED FOR SKELETON HILL IMMEDIATELY ADJACENT TO THE PARK

A request for support from Friends of Skeleton Hill inc.

At a membersâ?? meeting it was resolved that we engage Tract Consultants www.tract.net.au to represent us at that VCAT hearing which commences in Chiltern on May 4 and is scheduled to run for up to 8 days.

In order to do this we need to quickly raise at least \$13,000. With several significant individual pledges already received, we are well on the way. However, we need everyone to consider pledging whatever they feel they can afford. We are asking you to contact Graeme Charles before March 21 to register your pledge. Every dollar is going to be important, so the smallest of pledges will be as welcome as the largest.

If you feel strongly about the quarrying of Skeleton Hill and wish to support the group donations can be made to:

Graeme Charles, President, Friends of Skeleton Hill Inc.

69 Conness St. Chiltern 3683 Tel. 03 57261173

OR directly to the group account at WAW Credit Union account BSB 803070 account number 55465

Thank you one and all for your support to date, we can now look forward to seeing this battle through to its bitter (or should I say glorious) end at VCAT.

Graeme Charles, President. See : <http://www.skeletonhillchiltern.org> for information on this quarrying proposal.

Friends of Chiltern National Park have donated \$100 to the cause.

This has been included on the Friends of Chiltern website because this quarry will have an impact upon the park.

Many distant members may be unaware of the impending destruction of Skeleton Hill.

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** Indigo Shire Council has already rejected this quarry on this site. **

Category

1. Newsletters

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