

Newsletter 245 November 2015

Description

Friends of Chiltern Mt Pilot NP Newsletter 245 November 2015

Dear Friends

A sharp change in the temperature accompanied by a south westerly wind ensured good conditions for the day. Divided into two groups we set off for the morning's work. The grassland block workers continued the attack on the briars and their work over the last few months has transformed this block. The native grasses were at their best, plume grass and wallaby grass being the dominant species. The next weed problem here will be Bathurst Burr, a weed that does not occur in the rest of the park. The patches have been mapped ready for control measures to take place. The block boundaries have been slashed by the parks crew.

The second group worked at Bartley's Block. Friends purchased a bench seat for the block and Richard and Peter concreted it in place.



While that was going on five of us waded through the sedge patch pulling hundreds of Caper Spurge. Since it was cold and early morning we felt safe from wrigglers. Much of the Spurge had well developed seed heads which were cut off and bagged. Patches of Paterson's Curse were also pulled. The Bridal Creeper and an invasive lily, sprayed some months ago, were dead. The edges of the Vinca patch which were sprayed in winter died back. We are now considering an approach to treat the whole patch while it is growing actively.



Next stop was the Agave site where we rounded up all the emerging plants. Crossing the road we looked at the old Genista site and pulled some 30 plants out and in the process came across a small infestation of 70-80 young Agave which were quickly eradicated. Our two groups joined for lunch on the grassland hill, along with every Aussie Fly in the area, before closing for the day at 2.30pm.

Late news on the grassland block: the last of the briars have been dealt with by Mick and Tony. The task now is to do follow up maintenance by spraying any emerging plants. Jennifer has sprayed the blackberry patches. Several thousand plants have been dealt with and that effort matches the Olive effort both in the reference area and at the Rutherglen block. Well done to everyone who has contributed time and energy.

Antechinus and nest boxes: Last month, when reporting on our nest box occupants I mentioned that we had not recorded Antechinus use. Tony Marsh tells me that antechinus were using the old nest boxes pre 1991 which was prior to our new nest box program. Well I guess we may yet find Antechinus occupants along with the elusive Feathertails.

Around the Park

The Chocolate Lily show was curtailed by the very dry, warm days of October. Now is the time for Diggers Speedwell, Finger Flower, Daphne Heath and Golden Everlastings to put on a show. The recent rain will keep them fresh for a while. Valley No 2 Dam level is dropping and the emergent vegetation is sheltering smaller birds and reptiles. The picnic area is a pleasant spot for lunch or an evening meal. Valley No 1 is full and should provide good bird watching in the coming months. With the exception of Honeyeater Dam the park dams are full and should last through summer and provide good summer bird watching spots.

The Magenta Mine parking and picnic area has been redesigned and is more visitor friendly. In autumn Friends will undertake planting in the mulched areas.

At Valley No 2 the walking track and the surrounds of the hide area have been mowed and some more Peppercorns and Briars removed. Thanks to Mick and Tony. Parks staff have mowed the car park and the vehicle track into the picnic area. Tuan campsite enclosure has been mowed and looks the best I have seen it for years.

A Sticky Encounter: Sundews, *Drosera* sp are prolific this year. There are three species recorded for the park, *D*

peltata, *D auriculata* and the tiny orange-flowered *D.glanduligera* which prefers the sparsely covered heavier soils. These plants grow in nitrogen deficient soils and obtain nutrients through the juices they suck from insects big and small. A clever sticky trap indeed.





Rutherglen Natural Features Reserve: A contractor has been engaged to spray the St Johns Wort. This will be undertaken in mid-November when it is in full flower. The huge briars in the eastern section will also be contract sprayed. The plantings have benefitted from the recent rains and hopefully with some summer rain will continue to thrive. Follow-up work has been undertaken on stubborn Boxthorn and Olive stumps. The last major part of this project is the design and production of the interpretive signage for the mine area. The southern end of the block looked spectacular at the end of October, everlastings and species 3 Chocolate Lilies abounded. Web pic . We are happy to say that it is now

becoming a challenge to find a new olive seedling! The large brown wrigglers are about too. White-winged Trillers, Dusky and White-browed Woodswallows, Fantailed Cuckoos, Weebills and Western Warblers were among the birds seen while we were watering the new plants at the northern end. The surrounds of the new plantation have been sprayed by Friends.

Feral Report : Foxes prey upon so much wildlife. It is gratifying to see them lined up on a fence just 100m from the park boundary. There's the odd goat amongst them plus a few rabbits.



Next Monthly Meeting Sunday Christmas Tea Dec 6

Karen Retra has kindly agreed to come along to chat about native bees and Bee Hotels. Easily made, they would be a great addition to any garden to encourage native bees

Christmas Tea at the picnic area at Valley No. 2 Dam. BYO a meal to share and a chair. Tea around 5pm. Chatting and reflecting on the year, plus some bird watching. Contact in the field 0407 486 480 .

Friends Facebook Group now has 172 members

We are a group of people interested in Chiltern Mt Pilot National Park in North-Eastern Victoria. People can find much more information on the Park, activities of the Friends and membership details at <http://friendsofchiltern.org.au/>

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