

Newsletter 045 August 1997

Description

Newsletter No. 45 August 1997

Dear Friends,

Dry, sunny weather, which has been the norm for too long now, made our August meeting enjoyable.

It was very quiet at Cyanide Dam so we moved to Magenta for lunch among the noise of the Friar birds, Wattle-birds, and smaller honeyeaters, including Regents. The Ironbarks are in good flower around Magenta and along Riley's Road, near the Indigo Cemetery, and these are good birding spots.

Orchid rosettes and lily foliage are plentiful – however I feel their flower buds will become tasty morsels for the browsing wildlife in these dry conditions. (Although as I write it is pouring !) The good news is that the Briza is really struggling. Since it is a shallow rooted annual it is easily destroyed by the scratching armies of White-winged Choughs as they turn the forest floor over in search of food.

Insectivorous birds are scarce, probably affected by lack of food due to the dry weather conditions.

Surprise visitors turned up at 1.30 p.m.! Natasha Schedvin and Todd Soderquist (en route to Tarcutta to survey for Regent Honeyeaters and Swift Parrots.) found us by luck at Magenta. They spent a couple of hours with us searching for Regents. They saw more here than at Tarcutta 9-0. The group search ended at 5.00 p.m. and our tally was 19.

PUZZLE

For several years we have been observing stringybarks with the bark torn from their bases, exposing the deep groove made by the longicorn beetle larvae. The answer to the question, – Which animal is responsible for this activity? – has baffled everyone, both amateur and professional.

About ninety-eight percent of the rippings are within fifty centimetres of ground level. Occasionally they are at one to three metres.

Possible culprits included echidna, tuan, sugar glider, squirrel glider, and antechinus.

Echidna can only work at ground level, and the gliders and antechinus are probably not strong enough to inflict such damage. That leaves the Tuan.

By good fortune we had Todd Soderquist on site. Todd has done exhaustive research on Tuans. It was his considered opinion that Tuans could indeed be the culprits.

They were capable of inflicting the damage. The fact that there were many trees affected, and that the –prize – at the top of the channel was a rich food source were all significant pointers. Some pieces of bark torn from the trunk measured thirty centimetres long by eight centimetres wide and two centimetres thick.

Todd explained that Tuans were quite able to carry two pieces of this size in their curled tail. Throughout his extensive research in many areas Todd has not observed this activity.

It seems at the moment that it is peculiar to the Chiltern environment and he hopes to attach collars to some Tuans in future in an effort to prove the theory.

Such are Nature's interactions a rich source of food, an able forager, and a form of pest control ! One of the spin-offs in an intact environment.

Question : How do they locate the longicorn ? Every ripping exposes a beetle larvae groove.

Swift Parrot

Survey: None were recorded on August the second. However some were recorded on July the thirty-first and August the fifth. Following the day's activities we returned to the Senior Citizen's Hall to enjoy tea and socialising, and to conduct the meetings.

From the Ranger

John advised that a start has been made on the signage programme. There will be twelve large Chiltern Box Ironbark

National Park signs for the main entrances and thirty minor entrance signs of medium size.

After enjoying a shared tea of Pizza, delicious salads and dessert we settled down for the business part of the day.

Annual General Meeting

Present: 20 members Apologies: 5

The financial report was tabled. A copy is attached.

The Convenor's report was presented. A copy is attached.

Tony Long, Chief Ranger, took the chair for the election of office bearers.

Secretary: Scott Jessup Convenor/Treasurer: Eileen Collins

Committee: Neville Bartlett, Judith Walsh, Philip Seeley, Darren Philips.

Public Officer: Steve Bush.

Meeting closed.

General Meeting

Correspondence:

1. The issues paper for consideration in the formation of the Park Management Plan.
2. Community Grant forms from Indigo Shire.
3. Parks Victoria Grant Application booklet.

Finance:

Bank balance: \$8071.60 Accounts passed for payment \$ 2917.60

General Business:

1. Members are requested to take the opportunity to comment on the issues paper and to forward comments and ideas in writing. Please take this chance to be involved in your park's future.
2. Parks Victoria Grant. After consultation with Ranger John , a decision about a project will be made.

Options are further fencing, or metal signage for the White Box Walk to match that on the Freeway Walk.

3. Indigo Shire Grant. Request for funding for trees, guards and stakes to complete the reclamation of a roadside dump.

4. This will be the final newsletter for those who are unfinancial. A pink line on the address label indicates fees are due.

NEXT MEETING SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 7TH

PLACE: CORNER DEPOT/RUTHERGLEN ROADS

TIME:9.00 a.m.

BRING: LUNCH, GLOVES, RAKE, ENERGY AND A FRIEND

GUEST SPEAKER : TONY LONG, CHIEF RANGER FOR NORTH-EAST

Tony presented an outline of the new Parks Victoria structure and showed where we in the north-east fit in. Wodonga is the NRE location and Parks Victoria offices are situated there. The Chiltern depot is a Parks Victoria depot. Parks Victoria has a staff of 900.

The issues paper relating to the Park Management Plan was explained. Tony urged everyone to put forward their ideas for discussion. The draft plan will be available for public comment in January/February 1998 and the final plan is scheduled for June 1998.

Tony explained the present situation with regard to mining. He informed us that a small company wishes to drill at Magenta Mine under a pre-existing lease and that CRA, the major operator in the previous exploration, has no further interest in the park.

The quarry and its increasingly ugly face was discussed. Tony explained that a new profile has been created by cutting further into the hillside and that this would allow for creation of 5m by 5m benches. Revegetation of these benches should ensure visual improvement in the long term.

The subject of park usage was discussed at length. Tony explained that Parks Victoria encourages wide use of the park through activities compatible with the park values.

No date has been set for the official opening of the park. Spring would be the appropriate time and Tony asked members to put forward suggestions for a possible week of celebration through various activities. Since there will be a large number of visitors in Chiltern from the Birds Australia Congress in the week of October 6-10th this week was considered a possibility for an opening.

The creation of a Regional Tip adjacent to the park is still of great concern. Environmental problems, traffic, noise, smell, pests and general degradation are some of the concerns. Friends can play a part in resisting this development on park borders.

Park signage is on the way. However, no special funding has been provided for the National Park.

Vermin and noxious weed control and track closure programmes are in place. Unnamed tracks will be named and Friends were invited to put forward suggestions of historical names.

In closing Tony thanked Friends for their support of the park and looked forward to a continuing partnership. Contributions by Friends and work undertaken has added greatly to the knowledge and quality of the park.

After question time there was a short slide presentation.

It was a pleasure to have Tony as our guest speaker. We thank him for his time.

I look forward to a deluge of issues comments and ideas for track names to put forward to the steering committee. Eileen

Category

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