

INDIGENOTES



The Yellow Gums at Bannockburn near Geelong were cleared for a sewerage treatment plant (refer to *Indigenotes* July 1997) after and during much public protest, it was a big issue in Geelong in general, by Friday 1st September. This picture shows one of the 300 trees destroyed. Another failure of the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act and numerous other laws.

The round up on 'Round Up'.

By Russell Irving

Environmental weeds are a major threat facing our coastal environment, and commonly available glyphosate-based herbicides such as Round Up and Zero have become invaluable weapons in our fight against these invasive plant species. In the light of a special National Registration Authority for Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals (NRA) review, the use of glyphosate based products in and around aquatic environments will be restricted from 30 June this year. Groups currently using such products need to be aware of the concerns about the environmental effects of glyphosate based formulations and how changes in the current regulations effect their use in and near aquatic environments.

Roundup is one of the most extensively used herbicides for agricultural and environmental weed management. It is described as a non-selective, non-residual, post-emergent herbicide - i.e. it kills all sorts of leafy plants, leaves no active toxins in the soil and works on the fully-leaved plant, rather than on the seed or root. The glyphosate is absorbed by leaves and green stems and by roots to a much smaller extent. A wetting agent (also called a surfactant) is used in commercial glyphosate formulations to assist absorption into the plant.

Roundup is broken down in the soil through bacteria and microbial activity and has an average half life of 60 days (i.e. the time for half of it to break down). This does vary significantly depending on the level of microbial activity and soil structure and is considerably longer in dry, sandy soils or in water.

Glyphosate itself is regarded as being relatively non-toxic to animals compared to other herbicides, however the wetting agent with which it is generally combined has been found to be extremely harmful to frogs and tadpoles. In 1995 the WA Department of Environmental Protection released a report prepared by researchers from Curtin University of Technology. The report entitled the "Acute Toxicity of a Herbicide to Selected Frog Species" found that the glyphosate/surfactant formulations were ten times more toxic to tadpoles than technical grade glyphosate, probably due to the surfactant.

Given the widespread use of these chemicals the NRA decided to re-evaluate existing data. They investigated the aquatic use of 84 glyphosphate products sold in Australia. Companies with products that contain glyphosate submitted data but no additional tests were done. According to the review "there is no evidence in the scientific literature to link the use of glyphosate products with toxic impacts on aquatic fauna in the field" however anecdotal reports continue to be received so it was decided to improve the margin of safety by changing the regulations.

"We concluded that the aquatic toxicity of currently registered products containing glyphosphate is undesirably high - not due to the glyphosphate - but to the spreading agents used in the formulations." said Professor Ben Selinger, NRA Chairman. "Aquatic use of currently registered glyphosphate products will be phased out by 30 June 1997".

With the banning of Roundup for use near aquatic areas from July 1997, Monsanto released a new product, 'Roundup-Bioactive' which they claim is less toxic to tadpoles, frogs and fish. It has passed the new NRA standards and has been registered for use in or near these aquatic areas.

Frog expert Professor Michael Tyler from the University of Adelaide still recommends that the new product be used with "considerable caution" in areas such as fresh water estuaries in the absence of further toxicological data. In addition to this warning, the following general points should be noted when using Roundup or Roundup-Bioactive:-

- .. always follow the manufacturers warnings and safety precautions and only use the recommended rates for application (excessive rates are not only potentially environmentally damaging but also reduce the effectiveness of the herbicide as the plant is killed before it is transported to all parts of the plant).
- .. use with particular caution in coastal environments where the breakdown rate is slow due to the high sand content in the soil and low microbial activity.
- .. apply herbicides when the plant is actively growing to increase its effectiveness
- .. don't apply when rain has been forecast to minimized runoff and impact on non-target species.
- .. apply using ropewick application, painting onto cut stems, injection into stems or shielded sprayers to minimize non-target plant injury.

The NRA review report and fact sheet are available from Catherine Harrison, NRA Chemical Review Section on (06) 272 3213.

Pest Management Information System going strong

Editor's Note: The Department's Flora Information System is now out on CD-Rom and the Atlas of Victorian Wildlife has been around for a long while. Well, there is yet another statewide database system used for managing weeds that you should also be aware of...

Westernport Catchment of the Port Phillip Region completed a record breaking 1200 entries to the Pest Management Information System (PMIS) over six weeks in April and May, mainly involving ragwort infestations. PMIS experts say this is a 'world record'. Data entry for a further 2000 records covering various weeds in the Yarra Catchment is underway or already completed.

PMIS is a statewide networked computer database. It is used as a strategic management tool for describing and reporting on the management of pest plant and animal infestations. PMIS is not universally liked, and use of the system across the State by pest management staff has not always been enthusiastic. The huge pile of paper records accumulated by Port Phillip Region has been cleared by Margaret Degering, a casual employee who works one or two days a week, about 6-7 hours a day, doing non-stop data entry of "Location" and "Infestation" records.

"PMIS is easy," Margaret says. Once the basics are understood, many records can be entered very quickly. It is the data gathered by the hard work of people in the field that is being recorded, and now it will not be lost when they move on. According to Margaret, information that was once only in people's heads can now be utilised by others, and will only need updating in the future. Margaret thinks that if field officers could do the data entry themselves the records would be more comprehensive. Much raw data tends to be in note form, with peculiar jargon, codes and abbreviations which may not be readily understood by others, so records entered by field officers themselves may also be more comprehensible.

PMIS Project Coordinator Jim Backholer was quick to confirm the 'champion' accolade. "The sheer volume of data alone was not the most important aspect" he said, "but rather the planned and systematic collection of data that was specifically relevant to a strategic management program." Other Catchments should consider employing someone like Margaret solely to undertake PMIS data entry. The ease with which she has achieved this new record should give encouragement to other users.

Ragwort, *Senecio jacobaea*, is a high priority Regionally Controlled weed in the Westernport Catchment. Through the Good Neighbour Program the Department employed five ragwort community facilitators last summer. Two facilitators were in the Shire of Cardinia for the Hills Ragwort Control Group, a Landcare group founded in 1992. The others were

employed to conduct ragwort extension in support of community weed control groups in the Red Hill, Main Ridge and Kernot areas. In addition another Catchment Management Officer from the Wonthaggi Office was directed to work in the Upper Beaconsfield area on the Department's ragwort program. Much of the PMIS data has been gathered by field officers such as these.

The biology of ragwort is such that if good control work is conducted one year and that work then lapses, the infestation reverts to previous levels or may even become worse. Fortunately these groups have been successful in obtaining Victorian Weeds Initiative funding to continue the ragwort extension activity in the 1997/98 season. The proposal is to again work with the community facilitators and to target certain properties for enforcement prior to ragwort flowering. The likely result is a new pile of PMIS "Treatment" reports.

Through diligent inspection efforts of field staff the distribution of pests within the Port Phillip Region is now much better known. Essential characteristics of infestations are now accessibly recorded, making management and monitoring much easier. The data will be illustrated on catchment and local maps to indicate the known extent of ragwort distribution and provide valuable extension tools in the future.

Other parts of the State have their own champions too. The serrated tussock program, run from Bacchus Marsh and Geelong, has amassed an equally impressive and valuable data set. Parks Victoria people in the Goldfields region have struck gold with their own approach to getting maximum data value for their collection efforts. So the challenge continues! Penny Gillespie, Catchment Management Officer, Port Phillip Region

Source: *Under Control*, Pest Plant and Animal News, Keith Turnbull Research Institute August 1997

There were several other topics that may be of interest in this edition of *Under Control*:

Biological control of Boneseed

Boneseed disease found in the You Yangs

Biological control of English Broom

Biological control of ragwort in Victoria: Project Update

Internet Sites of Interest:

The Cooperative Research Centre for Weed Management Systems home page

<http://www.waite.adelaide.edu.au/CRCWMS>

Weed Science Society of Victoria

<http://yarra.vicnet.net.au/~weedsoc/>

Manaaki Whenua Landcare Research New Zealand Inc.

<http://www.landcare.cri.nz/>

Conservation Action: **Massive Forest Clearing Proposed for East Gippsland**

In an extraordinary step backwards to the 19th century ethos of plunder the bush, there are moves afoot for widespread clearing of private forest in East Gippsland and the rest of Victoria. If it proceeds this will pose the biggest threat to East Gippsland wildlife since clearfelling and woodchipping were introduced.

Long-time Potoroo readers will be aware that the Native Vegetation Retention Controls were introduced in 1990. The 'clearing controls' as they are widely known, prohibited clearing on 85% of privately owned forests and woodlands.

Prior to the controls, around 10,000 ha of native bush on private land was destroyed in Victoria each year. This was radically improved by the imposition of the clearing controls. They did not ban all clearing but set in place a permit system which ensured that environmentally destructive clearing could not proceed. With the notable exception of some recent clearing proposals permitted by the current government, the system worked well.

The State Government now wants to change the system, so we can go back to unfettered butchering of the bush. Earlier this year the (then) Catchment and Land Protection Boards commenced drafting Regional Vegetation Plans, ostensibly to establish a framework for catchment management in their regions. What these plans should do is identify important conservation areas and remnant areas of forest that need fencing and rehabilitation.

Instead, stage one of the Regional Vegetation Plans, the only stage so far put forward - is a review of the clearing controls. Why review something that doesn't need fixing? Unsurprisingly, the push to 'review' the controls appears to come from the red-neck sections of the Victorian Farmers Federation (VFF) and - you guessed it - plantation developers and Gippsland woodchippers, Amcor and Daishowa! Confirmation of this came in a leaked copy of an extraordinary letter written by a senior bureaucrat in the Department of Natural Resources and Environment. The letter proposed that assessment of

applications for clearing permits should be transferred from the (mostly) independent and qualified officers of DNRE to the farmer-dominated and easily stacked Catchment Management Authorities. In East Gippsland this is the very body lobbying for a massive opening up of clearing! This would truly be putting the fox in charge of the hen house. This proposal is one of the many that the pro-clearing faction of the VFF has been lobbying for. Surprise, surprise, the 'draft' letter had a VFF fax stamp on it; a clear indication that parts of the VFF are working hand in glove with parts of the bureaucracy.

In East Gippsland the weakening of clearing controls would be especially damaging. The region still has around 140,000 hectares of native forest on private land. The great majority of it is on country with poor soils and so has limited agricultural value. However, many of these forests and bushlands support threatened species and rare plant communities. If clearing controls were weakened, some Gippsland farmers would inevitably seek a quick buck by selling their forest for woodchips and either replacing the once-was-bush with a plantation or keeping it clearing for a few head of stock.

At the moment the situation lies with the infamous Mrs. Marie Tehan. She has called in the draft reports produced by the regional committees - committees which have negligible conservation input and which are stacked with pro-clearing cronies. It is hoped she approaches her responsibilities sensibly and stops the clearing controls from being weakened.

You can help focus her mind! Write to Mrs. Tehan. Ask her to retain the current controls. The 'clearing lobby' is currently rallying numbers to write letters. We need to show her there's as many who don't want to see clearing controls weakened. If you or your group would like to help further with this issue, or at just keep up to date, contact Andrew Booth at Environment Victoria. Write or visit Andrew at EV, 19 O'Connell St., Nth Melbourne or phone (03) 9348 9044. Send your letters to Mrs. Tehan at 240 Victoria Pde., East Melbourne 3002. From Stephen Guest (with thanks for information supplied by EV)

Source: *Potoroo Review* No. 155 Spring 1997

Wood, money and habitat to burn

Consumer demand for firewood, particularly box and ironbark timber, could see Canberra's firewood resources severely depleted within the next five to ten years unless alternative timbers are found to replace existing firewood preferences. This is one of the major findings of research project carried out by Alison Treweek of the Applied Ecology Research Group from the University of Canberra.

Treweek says that the Canberra firewood industry is a multi-million dollar industry, with an estimated 20,000 homes using wood fuel for space heating. "Canberrans currently burn between 40,000 and 60,000 tonnes of firewood each winter, which accounts for 20% of the regions annual domestic energy consumption for heating," she says.

The objectives of the study were to determine the amount and type (species) of timber and areas supplying the Canberra market; what socio-economic factors influence the type of firewood the consumer buys; and the alternatives available to both the consumers and the suppliers. "The bulk of firewood coming into Canberra is from remnant bushland on private agricultural land," Treweek says. "In the last decade, Canberra's firewood supply has extended from within the local region to as far west as Forbes, Parkes and Condoblin in NSW. The majority of the firewood is now coming from regions some 500 kilometres north-west of Canberra, where there is little native bushland remaining."

The project was based on consultation with the stakeholders involved in the ACT firewood industry including: wood merchants, fireplace retailers, ACT wood consumers and farmers in the region.

The wood merchants indicated they only supplied box and ironbark timber and suggested that ACT consumers preferred this type of timber. "While several merchants have stocked other types of timber in the past, they found them unmarketable to Canberra consumers," Treweek says. "The wood merchants also understood that the supply of firewood to Canberra was becoming increasingly limited and that Canberra's firewood industry would not last more than another ten years unless alternatives were found," she says.

"The fireplace retailers, recommended good Australian hardwood such as box and ironbark when consumers purchased their new fireplace," she says. The project found that none of the wood heater retailers surveyed recommended softwood as an alternative for slow-combustion products.

Following conventional wisdom, the majority of ACT consumers burn only box or ironbark timber. Treweek says that her research showed that many consumers were unaware that other types of hardwood could be

burnt in their fireplaces. "All were quite willing to use other types of timber if the burning quality and cost of alternative timbers was competitive with the types of timber currently being burnt," she says.

Treweek's project also explored the possibility of Canberra's firewood requirements becoming self-sustaining through the creation of fuelwood plantations. "While this is a feasible option for many farmers in NSW, the current lease-hold system in Canberra makes it less attractive to farmers in the Territory," she says. Farmers were consulted about the possibilities of growing hardwood timber on their properties to supply the local firewood market. The farmers are already planting trees for a number of reasons including shelter belts and to assist with land rehabilitation. Most farmers were interested in the long term prospects of supplying firewood but required more information on the most efficient types of trees to grow for firewood. "The use of fast growing species with good heating qualities, such as some Acacias, together with a large reduction in transportation costs, make the local growing of fuel wood economically feasible," Treweek says.

The ACT firewood industry is driven by consumer preferences for particular types of timber which at this point in time is almost exclusively box Eucalypts. The environmental impacts of the ACT firewood industry are most noticeably associated with the Red Box and Yellow Box Eucalypt communities of western NSW where remnant native vegetation is in a severe state of decline.

This project suggests that if ACT consumers are aware of economically viable alternatives they are willing to change their choice of firewood. An integrated marketing and management strategy, developed in consultation with the key stakeholders in the ACT firewood industry, may see the ACT consumer's use of remnant timber for firewood change and allow the industry to be managed on a sustainable basis.

For more information contact: Alison Treweek, Applied Ecology Research Group, University of Canberra, PO Box 1, Belconnen, ACT, 2616, Ph. (06) 201 2937, Fax (06) 201 5305.

Source: Two versions of this article were accessed, one in the July 1997 edition of *Bushlines* (from Environment Australia's Biodiversity Group) and another from the August 1997 edition of the *Australian Farm Journal BUSH* published by Rural Press Magazines in conjunction with Environment Australia.

Snippets:

Green Corps

Young Australians for the Environment

If you are between the ages of 17 and 20 years and would like to commit six months to the Australian environment, then Green Corps is for you.

Thirty-one Green Corps projects will commence in September. If you would like to receive information regarding these projects phone Freecall 1800 633 844. Projects are of 36 weeks duration and include quality accredited training and conservation projects in some of Australia's unique environments, including Kangaroo Island, Robe, Fitzgerald River, Darwin, Mt. Tambourine. Projects will take place in all States and Territories.

Source: *Conservator*, ATCV Newsletter, Winter 1997.

Oldest Living Thing Known

A plant of King's Holly (*Lomatia tasmanica*) is believed to be the oldest living thing known to science. The plants incapable of reproducing by seed but has been layering and suckering for thousands of years. It is genetically identical to a fossil leaf of the same species dated at 43,000 years. The plant covers about 1 square kilometre but there are fears it may succumb to rot. Cuttings have been successfully cultivated to ensure it survives, at least in cultivation.

Source: *The Age* 9/7/97

CD ROM Review:

Victorian Flora on CD-Rom

By Viridans Biological Databases

614 Hawthorn Rd., Brighton East Victoria 3187

Requirements: MS Windows; 8mb RAM, a CD drive; preferably 486 66 Mhz or better. RRP \$120. Available from Viridans, the Gould League and DNRE Information Centre.

Field naturalists are well aware of our good fortune in Victoria in having very comprehensive information about what exists in the bush - both plants and animals. This new tool will help to make that information available much more readily. Viridans has used the State's Flora Information System to develop this scientific and land management resource for use by ordinary people. It includes the 4500 Victorian indigenous and exotic plants, with photographs for about 1100, and detailed botanical text descriptions. You can obtain distribution information (by 270² km [app.] grids) about any plant for the whole state, or you can obtain a list of species for any part of the state.

Any plant's distribution can be overlaid with maps. There are nine themes to choose from, including soils, rainfall, topography, landsat imagery, land use, towns, roads etc.

You can search for any plant by common or latin name. For many you can also access a good clear introductory photograph, then a more detailed set, with text description. These photographs are from several angles or show the whole plant. Plants are coded according to whether they are exotic or indigenous, and also by conservation status. The quality of the maps, photographs and plant information is excellent.

I approached the task of assessing this wealth of information with trepidation. There were the usual technical preliminaries, but then I was able to navigate around the database after about a quarter of an hour, and have since spent about 3 intriguing hours exploring the possibilities. On the computers I used the loading was very slow; a high speed CD-Rom drive is best.

In making such a resource available to the general public, probably some cautionary note needs to be attached. It is not a replacement for a field guide in identifying plants, and is not organised that way. I'm told this might be later development.

What you can do is bring up a plant list, alphabetically, for an area, ideal for planning a field trip. It is easy to use the various map overlays to find and select the grids you want, although these are quite in relation to the diverse range of human and natural features contained within any one grid, making it difficult to know which of the 606 plants in my local area would be found in the adjacent State Park. I also found the common names facility a bit limited, not finding, for instance, the 'generic' common names such as 'eggs and bacon'. More specific common names were given but often these aren't well known. Plants aren't listed by family, so in a case like the peas, where there are several possible genera, I was a bit frustrated by the lack of correspondence with the organisation of my Costermans.

As a teacher of Environmental Studies, I looked at the database for teaching purposes. Could I use it for students to explore and find for themselves the correlation between distribution of various plants and factors which might explain that distribution? I found the possibilities here exciting for getting various broad general ideas across, although it is useful to have a little bit of knowledge of the names of some likely 'indicator' plants to bring out the significance of various factors. It was very good for establishing ideas such as the range of plants being very different, about the distribution of some weeds, about the plant communities particular to regions. It would be ideal for producing maps showing these various relationships. It would be useful if Viridans developed some teaching material for the database.

At \$120 this is a very accessible proposition for libraries and resource collections and would embellish courses in several disciplines.

Deirdre Slattery, La Trobe University, Bendigo

Source: *The Victorian Naturalist*, Vol. 114 (4) August 1997

More Information for Managing Possums:

Coming Events:

For IFFA events see back cover

Talks/Conferences/Workshops/Courses

Sundays - 'The Environment Show', 3.30 - 4.30pm. A RAM FM radio program presented by Aart Hoebee, on local ecological issues, with guests and music. Channel 95.1 mHZ - Community Radio in the Central Highlands area. For more information contact Joff Allan on 0354 222 711 (W), 0354 226 892 (H).

29 September to 3 October, 1997. Landcare for Educators Course. Designed for teachers and community educators, this course will give participants detailed information on the general principals of land management and their application to LandCare education. Contact Creswick Landcare Centre (03) 5345 2200.

29 September to 5 October 1997. A Field Skills Workshop. The Victorian Field Naturalists Clubs Association will be running their second Skills Workshop at Lady Northcote Recreation Camp, Rowsley. Led by some well-known naturalists, including Malcolm Calder, Ken Simpson and Leon Costermans, the workshop will provide skill training and field application projects such as observation skills, plant and animal identification, geological and ecological interpretation, project design and team involvement, mapping and recording, use of references, and report presentation. Contact Dick Southcombe GFNC/VFNCA Rowsley, PO Box 1047, Geelong 3213; Phone (03) 5243 3916.

September 30 - October 1, 1997. Farm Forestry Conference - Money, Marketing and Management, Ballarat University, St Helen, Ballarat. Presented by the Corangamite Farm Forestry Project. The conference will cover farm forestry options for the low to high rainfall areas of the Corangamite region extending from the Otway Ranges in the South to the Macedon Ranges in the north - many of these options are also applicable to other regions in Victoria. Contact DNRE on Ph (03) 5333 6782 or Fax (03) 5333 6540.

2 October, Thurs. "Native fish of the Yarra" Part of the Green Wedge Environment Seminar Series. Speaker: George Paras. 7:30pm in the Warrandyte Community Centre, Yarra Street, Warrandyte. For more information contact Bill Mallinson (03) 9840 9338.

October 4 to 7, 1997. Birds Australia 1997 Congress and Campout 'Birds & Woodlands'. The Congress will be held from the 4th - 5th at the Charles Sturt University campus in Albury, NSW. The major theme is woodland birds. The Campout runs from the 6th - 10th at Cornishtown, just outside the Chiltern box-ironbark forest park. For more information contact the Congress Convenor, Margaret Cameron (03) 5229 9792.

October 8, 15, 22, 29, Nov 29. Electives - Nov 8, 12. "Learning through the Environment". An extended professional development course for environmental educators. Venue: Healesville Sanctuary. Time 5pm - 7pm. For more information contact the Victorian Association for Environmental Education (03) 9428 9812 or Fax (03) 9428 0313.

October, Wed 15 'Importance of birds on farms' - Part of a

series of one day workshops held at Alcoa's Warrambeen Landcare Education Centre. Warrambeen is a well known and historic merino sheep property on the western plains of Victoria. Cost \$45.00. For bookings or more information contact Trish Taylor on (03) 5281 3250. Another two workshops are to be held this year at Warrambeen on Indigenous Grass Identification: Sun 30/11 & Sun 7/12.

October, Sat 18. "Improving your coastal plant ID skills". A field experience in plant ID presented by Greening Australia Victoria and Parks Victoria. Contact Gerard Clark (03) 9457 3024.

October, Sun 19. "Box-Ironbark Appreciation". 10:00am - 4:00pm. The Box and Ironbark forests of central Victoria are the most threatened forest type in Victoria. They support a large number of threatened plants and animals. This workshop will cover a range of issues on the conservation and management of these delicate and important forest areas. BYO lunch. Tea & coffee provided. Cost \$20/\$10. Contact the Creswick Landcare Centre (03) 5345 2200.

October, Thu 23. "Direct Seeding - the stories so far." A bus tour presented by Greening Australia Victoria and Parks Victoria. The day involves visits to a number of direct seeding sites, all at different stages of development and using different seeding techniques. Contact Gerard Clarke (03) 9457 3024.

October, Fri 24 & Sat 25. 'Victoria's National Parks - the next century'. A crucial conference presented by the Victorian National Parks Association. Through plenary sessions and workshops, this conference will consider such timely issues as: Future pressures on Parks, Who should pay for park management; Tourism; Neglected areas; Marketing, education & interpretation; Aboriginal communities and park management; Park Rangers; Friends groups; Management issues; Implications of Fire and Greenhouse. For more details and to register contact PR Conference Consultants Pty Ltd, PO Box 326 Deepdene Delivery Centre 3103, Ph: (03) 9816 9111, Fax: (03) 9816 9287, Email: prcc@labyrinth.net.au

October 24 - November 7, 1997. Platypus Fieldwork Training - an intensive practical course and research expedition. This two-week training course will provide a 'hands-on' introduction to platypus research and a range of other practical biology study skills. Key aspects of wildlife research techniques will be covered. Such training will provide an exceptional opportunity to gain valuable fieldwork skills and experience in the context of a genuine research expedition. Course & expedition fee: \$1500 which covers all accommodation, food, tuition and use of specialist equipment. Places limited to eight participants - so apply immediately. Contact the Australian Platypus Conservancy on (03) 9716 1626.

October, Wed 29. 3:00-4:00 "Biocontrol of Dock". Talk by Ian Faithfull, part of seminar series at Keith Turnbull Research Institute, Ballarto Rd., Frankston. All interested people welcome.

November, Thu 6. "Wildlife Corridors" Part of the Green Wedge Environment Seminar Series. Speaker: Andrew Bennet. 7:30pm in the Warrandyte Community Centre, Yarra Street, Warrandyte. For more information contact Bill Mallinson (03) 9840 9338.

November, Sat 15. Ecological Sustainability in the Victorian Alps in the Laby Theatre, University of Melbourne. This symposium will present the results of research on the

alpine environment and its ecology, and will examine the implications of the research results for future management decisions on the use and management of Victoria's alpine areas. Speakers will include Alec Costin, David Ashton, Keith McDougall, Ian Mansergh, Neville Rosengren, David Scott and more. Cost: \$85 for the day. Presented by the Royal Society of Victoria, contact The Secretary, 8 La Trobe St. Melbourne 3000 on (03) 9663 5259.

November 17 - 20, 1997. Creating a Green Future. National Conference presented in Melbourne by the Australian and New Zealand Society for Ecological Economics (ANZSEE). Environmental issues must be discussed in relation to their economic context. ANZSEE hopes to stimulate debate amongst people from diverse backgrounds. The conference will cover such areas as sustainable land management, environmental tax reform, urban ecology, energy policy and cost-benefit analysis. Contact: Conference Secretariat, Conference Plus, Level 5, 406 Lonsdale St, Melbourne 3000. Ph: (03) 9602 3073, Fax (03) 9642 5152.

November 28 - 29, 1997. Sustainability & Local Environments; Myths, Models & Milestones, University of Sydney, NSW. This is Environs Australia's second National Conference and it will explore the cutting edge of sustainability practice in local communities, and contribute to the development of achievable goals and solutions for the 21st Century. For further information contact Peter Lyons, Executive Officer, Environs Australia, 2nd floor, Ross House, 247 Flinders Lane, Melbourne, Vic 3000. Phone (03) 9654 1322, fax (03) 9654 1625 or email <mcavic@peg.apc.org>.

December, Thu 4. "Foxes" Part of the Green Wedge Environment Seminar Series. Speaker: Linton Staples. 7:30pm in the Warrandyte Community Centre, Yarra Street, Warrandyte. For more information contact Bill Mallinson (03) 9840 9338.

December 6 to 9, 1997. 'The 3rd International Megapode Symposium' - for science and Conservation. Held in Victoria's Little Desert National Park, this conference emphasises the personal experiences and adventures of those involved in studying this unique family of birds in some of the most exciting and remote regions of the world. Contact Dr. Darryl Jones, Faculty of Environmental Sciences, Griffith University, Nathan Qld 4111, Australia, Phone 61 7 3875 7451, Fax 61 7 3875 7459, E-mail: D. Jones@ens.gu.edu.au

9 - 12 December 'The Other 99% - The Conservation and Biodiversity of Invertebrates'. Sydney, NSW. The objective of this meeting is to demonstrate the importance of invertebrates in biodiversity research and in nature conservation. Contact the Australian Museum, Invertebrate Biodiversity Conference, 6 College St, Sydney NSW 2000, Fax (02) 9320 600, E-mail: invert@amsq.austmus.oz.au

4-10 January 1998 Alpine Ecology Course on the Bogong High Plains for land managers, rangers, teachers and conservationists. An opportunity to learn about the plants, animals and soils that make up alpine ecosystems and their significance for land use and conservation issues in the Alps. The course includes: practical demonstration and field experience, evening talks, individual projects, course notes, accommodation in modern chalet, three hearty meals a day. No detailed knowledge required. Course Fee \$625. Based at Howman's Gap Alpine Centre. Contact Heather

Anderson on (03) 9637 8427 or Warwick Papst on (03) 9479 1230 soon, applications close on 31 October 1997. Presented by DNRE and supported by La Trobe University.

Excursions and Field Trips

Sundays - 7pm sharp. Morning Walk in Queensland's Toohey Forest. Meet at the Toohey Road carpark. Contact Chris Stokan (06) 3343 2943.

October 11 - 19, 1997. "Garden Celebration activities at Melbourne Zoo". An opportunity to discover the "greener" side of Melbourne Zoo with displays of Butterfly Gardening, attracting birds to your garden, and growing local plants. Other features include an Endangered Victorian flora and a Striped Legless Lizard display. Special events include the Rod Quantok Mystery Tour with cocktail party (Fri 10 & 17th and Sat 11 & 18th) and Breakfast with the Butterflies (Sun 12 & 19). Bookings are essential. Contact Melbourne Zoo (03) 9285 9355..

October, Sun 12. 2:00 - 4:00pm. FO Evans Street Grasslands Inc - Guided Wildflower Walk. Meet at the Information Center in the Evans Street Grasslands, Sunbury. The Friends will also be holding a guided walk on Sunday 16 November. Contact Veronica Burgess (03) 9744 4669 (AH) or Karen Wilson (03) 9205 2378 (BH).

October Sun 12. 11:00am-3:00pm. Greenlink Oakleigh Annual Open Day. Come to the nursery, at South Oakleigh Secondary College on Centre Rd., South Oakleigh, to see the nursery, eat soup and homemade bread, go ponding with Jok and plant around the wetland.

October 18 - 19, VicGroup Banding Project at Rushworth. Co-ordinated by Charles and Joan Sandbrink this Birds Australia research project is being carried out at several sites. For anyone interested in joining the project your help would very much be appreciated. At this stage weekends are also planned for 8 - 9 and 22 - 23 November, and 6 - 7 December. Ring Joan or Charles on (03) 9401 2832 after hours, or Charles at Head Office on (03) 9882 2622.

October, Sun 19. Visit Cranbourne Botanic Gardens. Presented by the Keilor Plains SGAP, Rodger and Gwen Elliot will lead a tour of the Cranbourne Botanic Gardens. BYO BBQ/Picnic lunch. Meet 10am in the Stringybark picnic area, Stringybark Road. Enter gardens off South Gippsland Highway, Ballarto Road. Melways 133 K10. Contact Marilyn Anderson (03) 9336 7754.

October, Sat 25 - Sun 26. Friends of Warrandyte State Park's Spring Camp at Anglesea. A perfect time to see one of the best wildflower heathlands in the State. Come for the day or stay for two. Contact Mike Coupar (03) 9903 9567 or Ron Taylor (03) 9844 4285.

November Sat 1 & Sun 2 "Australian Native Orchid Show". 10 - 5pm. Presented by the Society for Growing Australian Plants. Masonic Hall, Geringhap Street, Geelong. Admission \$2. Sales and refreshments.

Restoration Activities

September, Sun 28. Sunbury Conservation Society. Planting afternoon at Spavin Drive Dam. Enter Aldridge Drive, Sunbury. Melways 362 B. Afternoon tea provided. Contact Elissa Kerassitis (03) 9309 1052.

October, Sun 5. 12 noon - 2pm. Turkish Community Planting day at the "Yabby Pool", Broadmeadows Valley Park. Walk in from Erinbank Court, Westmeadows. Melways 6 E4. Contact Elissa or Dimi at Parks Hume (03) 9309 1052.

October Sun 5 10:00am-4:00pm. FO Braeside Park Spring Planting Festival (go to Lower Dandenong Rd., Braeside, Melways 88 D8) . Enjoy tree planting, art, heathland walks, conservation group displays, learn about propagation and revegetation and eat sausages. Contact 13 19 63.

October, Sun 5. 9:30am. FO Merri Creek - Harding St Litter Removal morning. Starting just below Harding Street Bridge. Contact (03) 9480 5492.

October, Wed 8. 9:30 am. FO Sherbrooke Forest - project morning. Moore Break site. Meet at Jacka Street entrance, Melways 75 E3. Will be tackling ground ivy and hollies. BYO gloves, secateurs, a cup and dress for the weather. Contact Vivien Freshwater (03) 9754 3093.

October, Sun 12. 1:30 - 3:30pm. FO Upper Moonee Ponds Creek activity afternoon. Includes some planting, but we may be concentrating on watering existing plantings depending on what sort of rain we've been receiving. Walk in to the Moonee Ponds Creek from Wright Street, Westmeadows, Melways 5 G5. Afternoon tea will be provided. Contact Elissa Kerassitis at Parks Hume (03) 9309 1052.

October, Sat 11, 10 am. Hmong Chinese Community invite you to a Community Planting Day and BBQ at Fantasy Park, Meadow Heights. Enter Tarwin Place, Melways 179 J10. Contact Elissa or Dimi at Parks Hume (03) 9309 1052.

October, Sun 12. 10am. FO Yandell Reserve - checking nestboxes. Meet near Scout Hall off St Helena Road. Tea & coffee provided. Contact Graham Patterson AH (03) 9432 0163 or Lisa Pittle (03) 9480 4680.

October, Sun 12, 10 am. FO Emu Bottom Wetlands Planting Morning and BBQ. Walk (or drive) in from Racecourse Road, Sunbury, Melways 362 F7. Contact Elissa at Parks Hume (03) 9309 1052.

October, Sun 12, 12 - 2 pm. FO the Flame Robin activity afternoon. Finish off our Spring planting plus mulch spreading in preparation for Autumn 1998 plantings. Roper Reserve, Camp Road, Broadmeadows. Melways 7 B10. Contact Elissa Kerassitis, at Parks Hume (03) 9309 1052.

October, Sat 25. 10am - 2pm. "Reeds and River Red Gums - Reconnecting with the Land". A special multicultural Planting Festival to be held along the Moonee Ponds Creek to commemorate Refugee Week and the Spring Planting Festival. Cultural food, drink and entertainment will be provided, plus giveaways and T-shirt sales. Everyone welcome - it will be a fun and colourful experience. The planting site is on the western bank of the Moonee Ponds Creek, next to the Jacana Footbridge. Melways 6 D8 & D9. Contact Elissa or Dimi at Parks Hume (03) 9309 1052.

Thank you to all the people who have contacted us regarding on-coming events their groups are organising. Elissa Kerassitis (03) 9486 6768.

More Things to do: **East Gippsland Forest Forever Camp**

November 1st-4th Cup Weekend

Camp by the Brodribb River and come on guided walks with Botanists, Ecologists and friendly locals. See first hand the remarkable and spectacular diversity of East Gippsland's forests. We'll show you ancient rainforests, towering old-growth forests and the habitat of rare and endangered plants and animals. Learn about the intricate biological links and how current forest management practices are destroying these forests and threatening wildlife with extinction. East Gippsland's forests are a priceless part of the World's heritage.

Goongerah Campground - Bonang Highway

Toilet facilities and fireplaces on site. BYO food, camping gear, transport, wet weather gear etc. Cost for 4 Days: \$30 per person, \$25 concession, \$50 family or \$40 concession or \$10 per day.

Activities include: spotlight prowls, guided walks on Errinundra Plateau, old growth forest walks, forest management tour, warm temperate rainforest walks, rainforest slide show, logging coupe inspection, self guided nature trail, talks, discussions and campfire yarns.

Provided: Tour guides, local knowledge, loo paper, firewood, rain water, information marquee, fruit, and a tarp for shelter.

For more information call Andrew 015 055 230 or Jill on 03 5154 0145 or register by mail: CROEG, Bonang Hwy., Goongerah, VIC 3888

Organised by

Concerned Residents of East Gippsland

Possum Watchers Wanted

Keen possum-watchers are needed for surveys in the Central Highlands. These will be carried out as part of a new project of Environment Victoria's (EV) called Project Possum. Volunteers will help scientist Dr. David Lindenmayer study the decline of the Leadbeater's Possum. This endangered species lives only in the Mountain Ash forests of the Central Highlands about two hours drive from Melbourne. Information gathered will be used to help preserve the possum and its forest habitat.

Surveys will begin in late September and volunteers are needed on Friday and Saturday nights. People will arrive at the study area before dusk, spend an hour watching trees for possums and then enjoy a campfire tea before returning to Melbourne. Transport and training will be provided.

If you would like to be involved in this practical project, contact Ruth Singer at EV on (03) 9348 9044.

Research in Grassy Ecosystems Seminar

Your chance to find out what's been happening in grassy ecosystem research over the past few years in Victoria through the Grassy Ecosystem Reference Group (GERG). People who have received GERG research grants to carry out research will present and discuss their work at seminar to be held at:

Birds Australia (formerly RAOU)

415 Riversdale Rd.

Hawthorn East

9:30 am, Saturday, 11 October 1997

Projects to be presented include:

An ecological history of a sub-coastal grassy woodland at Ocean Grove Ian Lunt

Small scale spatial and temporal dynamics of basalt plains grasslands John Morgan

Factors influencing landholder opinion of *Microlaena stipoides* Catherine Allan

Attitudes, management and incentives for conservation on private land Kate Stothers

Effects of grazing, cultivation and burning on species-rich grasslands Paul Foreman

The composition and abundance of invertebrates in grazed grassland Sue Hadden

Alternative detection techniques for *Delma impar* Megan O'Shea

Herbicide control of Chilean Needle Grass Rachel Dare

Dr. Mark Burgmann (University of Melbourne) will give a presentation on the basics of project design for applied research. Recommended for anyone considering undertaking research and/or improving ecosystem management programs.

Registration is essential (limited seating, lunch provided, no charge):

Contact: Tim Barlow, Grassy Ecosystems Project Officer, VNPA (03) 9650 8296 or

Vanessa Craigie, Grassland Planner, DNRE (03) 9412 4199

The Threatened Species Network

Promoting conservation of Australia's threatened flora and fauna.

The Threatened Species Network, established in 1990, is a community based network that aims to increase public awareness and involvement in the protection and recovery of threatened species and their habitat. The Network's focus is on empowering the community to participate in research, monitoring, management and educational projects for the conservation of threatened species.

You can help. To get involved in the recovery of threatened species contact network staff in your state (listed below). Examples of this years activities around Australia include:

- Mapping and identifying priority areas for the management and restoration of the habitat of the Mary River Cod in Queensland.
- Training workshops on the ecology and biology of the Tiger Quoll, followed by field surveys in Victoria
- Community involvement in recovery plans for the little tern, green and golden bell frog and a variety of plant species in NSW
- Promotion of the "Quoll friendly" Chook shed, in Tasmania, which allows free access for chooks, but entrances are too high for quolls or devils.
- The newly formed South Australian Bird Action Group will be working with other key groups to promote community participation in threatened bird surveys throughout SA.
- Programs for the conservation of rare plant species are being developed with the Swan Region Rare Flora Recovery Team in WA
- Field surveys and protection measures to save threatened plant species such as *Acacia pickardii*, in a remote area some 500 km south-east Alice Springs, Northern Territory.

Visit our website to catch up on all the latest information from each of our state co-ordinators at <http://www.peg.apc.org/~ntsnnsw>

Network Co-ordinators contacts:

Queensland Maria Vander Gragt
Ph (07) 3221 0573 Fax (07) 3229 7992

NSW Kim Brebach
Ph (02) 0241 1438 Fax (02) 9247 7118

Victoria Felicity Faris
Ph (03) 9650 8296 Fax (03) 9654 6843

South Australia Vicki-Jo Russell
Ph (08) 8223 5155 Fax (08) 8232 4782

Northern Territory TSN Coordinator
Ph (08) 8952 1541 Fax (08) 8953 2988

Western Australia Denise True
Ph (08) 9228 3227 Fax (08) 9228 3227

Source: Threatened Species Network 1997 What's On Calendar.

Drawing by Brian Bainbridge, from the GERG 1995/96 Annual Report

IFFA activities:

IFFA (Vic) Meeting
Tuesday,
30 September 1997,
7:30 PM

Astronomer's Residence,
Birdwood Avenue, South Yarra

SPIFFA

Public meetings are on the first Monday of every month at 7:30 pm at the Waterfall Gully Community Centre, corner of Bayview Rd. and Nixon St., Rosebud.
Contact: Jon Greening (03) 5985 5561.

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Membership

IFFA membership costs
\$40 for non-profit organizations,
\$50 for corporations,
\$25 for individuals and families,
or \$20 concession.

Membership includes
11 issues of Indigenotes per year.

Members should check the mailing label to ascertain the status of their membership. If people require and invoice, please send a purchase order and we will oblige accordingly.

Otherwise we do not issue reminders to members.

Cheques can be remitted to the Membership Secretary's P.O. Box as listed. A receipt will be attached to the front page of the following issue.

Office Bearers:

President: Roger Jones, 20 Patterson St., Bon Beach 3197 Ph. (03) 9772 1707 (ah) or (03) 9239 4555 (bh). Fax (03) 9239 4688. Email: roger.jones@dar.csiro.au

Vice-President: Peter Tucker, (03) 9818 1537 (ah).

Secretary: Lill Roberts, P.O. Box 192, Blackburn South 3130, Ph. (03) 9878 0858 Email: lill@netspace.com.au

Membership Secretary and Treasurer: Neil Gardiner, P.O. Box 2055, East Ivanhoe 3079, (03) 9499 7048.

Committee members: Geoff Carr (03) 9481 7679(bh) and (03) 9380 8582.

Editorial team:

c/o P.O. Box 228, Preston, Victoria, 3072.

Editor: Lincoln Kern, (03) 9480 4680 (ah).

Coming Events:

Elissa Kerassitis (03) 9486 6768 (ah).

Contributions to *Indigenotes* should be sent to the editors — the deadline for the next issue will be October 9th. Contributions can be typed or hand written but computer disk copies on IBM-compatible format is preferred.

The views expressed in Indigenotes are not necessarily those of the Indigenous Flora and Fauna Association.