



# FriendsNET

Number 49 November 2004



Sue Wright,  
Network Committee  
Convener, sums  
up the recent  
Municipal Friends  
Seminar

## Focus on Friends and Municipal Councils

In a first for the Friends Network, a number of Municipal Friends groups gathered at the South Yarra Senior Citizens Centre on 11 September, to talk specifically about the issues Councils and Friends Groups face when working together.

Keynote speaker Andrew Shannon (Team Leader of Parks and Recreation at the City of Hobsons Bay) and colleague Michelle Gooding gave a very accurate overview of the challenges modern Councils face – a perspective not always appreciated from outside the Municipal arena.

The seminar then went 'on tour' with excellent presentations from four Friends Groups in the north, south, east and west of the city area. Each had an inspiring story to tell of communities and councils working side by side. There were also problems and solutions, concerns and encouragement. We thank the presenters—Alison Johnston (Friends of Donald MacDonald Reserve), Mary Symons (Greenlink Box Hill), Judy Hindle (Friends of Westona Wetlands) and Robert Bender (Friends of Wilson Reserve).

The buzz of intense conversation over lunch indicated how inspired everyone had been by the morning's information swapping.

The afternoon's guest speaker was journalist Jane Canaway from Fairfax Community News who talked about using the local media for awareness and publicity. Jane gave some well honed advice about approaching and involving the Press and also included a focus on other recruiting strategies.

The afternoon's last formal session was a review of the survey distributed on arrival, concerning the ways people found their Friends group, and why they continued. There was also a question of the best recruiting strategies people used. Overwhelmingly, word of mouth and personal representation were the most listed successful methods.

The Network Committee was particularly grateful to the Municipal Association of Victoria for endorsing the Seminar and the Melbourne City Council for their message of support and for donating the excellent meeting facility.

## What do you know about restrictions on collecting?

Are you aware that there are tight restrictions on collecting almost anything native, including skeleton fragments, especially on public land?

However, it is possible to get permits for approved purposes.

Last year, the Friends of Inverleigh Flora and Fauna Reserve applied for and were granted two permits: one to handle dead native animals and another to collect protected flora.

Neil Anderson explains how and why.

We obtained the 'permit to collect dead things', as one member referred to it, to allow designated Friends group members to legally store native animals found dead from any cause until the Museum, Parks Victoria and the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) have been contacted to see if they want the specimens. This permit allowed us to have a Sugar Glider and a Barn Owl preserved, which are now on display at DSE in Geelong and at Parks Victoria in the You Yangs.

The purpose of the flora permit is twofold. Firstly, it allows us to collect specimens for identification by the National Herbarium in Melbourne. This has allowed us to confirm the identity of two rare orchids (*Diuris punctata*, Purple donkey-orchid, and *Chiloglottis x pescottiana*, Bronze Bird-orchid) and several other plants not previously identified in the Reserve. Secondly, the permit allows us to collect seed and cuttings from plants in the reserve to propagate for revegetation purposes.

As well as the more common grassland species, we are concentrating on some of the less common species (e.g. *Ptilotus erubescens*, Hairy Tails, and *Leucochrysum albicans* ssp. *albicans* var. *tricolor*, Hoary Sunray). We are aiming to propagate these plants in members' gardens initially, which will allow us to harvest all the seed produced, and hopefully reduce the need to collect fresh seed from the Reserve.

The permits can be obtained from the appropriate Regional DSE Flora and Fauna Officer. Permission still has to be obtained from private landholders and public land managers and the DSE notified of intended taking activities. The DSE has concerns over the collection of propagating materials from rare/threatened plants. They require reports on the successes and especially failures of propagating attempts so that they can collate successful propagation methods for various species, and can determine species that may require more controlled trials to determine successful propagating techniques.

# Ten Tips for leading effective guided walks

The author of this article, Leon Costermans, has trained leaders in environmental education and bushwalking. He regularly leads Walk, Talk & Gawks for the VNPA.

If you want a more comprehensive version of the article (hard copy or pdf), contact Leon on 9783 5015 (phone/fax) or by e-mail at lcost@bigpond.com

Most Friends groups organise walks in their reserve for visitors such as other Friends groups, school groups or the general public. What do we hope people will gain from the walk? And how can we judge our success?

Dealing with a group of strangers can be a bit daunting for someone not used to it, but *with good planning*, you will probably find the experience rewarding and enjoyable. Most people's greatest fear is that they will be asked questions which they can't answer. Don't worry – nobody expects you to know everything, and it's good to have the group involved in trying to find answers.

Here are a few basic tips which might help. Note that they refer only to simple, short walks of, say, an hour, along an easy track.

## Before the walk

1. *Think through the aims and purpose of the walk.* You might say simply 'to interest people', but questions then arise: why, and what style of presentation will give the best results? An answer is that people gain more from being *actively involved*, not merely passive listeners. So consider possible ways of involving people. (See hints below.)
2. *Pre-walk the route*, plan suitable stopping points, look for *varied* features which might be of particular interest and for which you might need to obtain more information, and determine a suitable finishing point which might be a climax or highlight – the walk shouldn't just 'fade out' (see point 10).
3. *Decide on the best duration, distance and group size.* Walks always take much longer when people are stopping frequently because they are interested, so don't try to go too far. Generally ten is a comfortable maximum group size (if there are going to be many more people, consider getting an additional leader or have, say, two walks, possibly alternating with another activity).

A group involved in identifying a tree on a walk organised by Friends of Wyperfeld – could this be a plant of special significance?



4. *Give people clear and adequate prior information* concerning meeting and finishing arrangements, the nature of the track, what to bring, and what you plan to do. Walks are more successful when both leader *and* walkers are well prepared!
5. *Consider having some support material to issue*, such as a simple map or brief summary of interesting features (including perhaps diagrams of plants etc.). Plan ways of getting walkers to *use* these in making their observations (see point 9).

## On the walk

6. When people gather, give them (individually) the opportunity to say *why they came*, *what interests them*, etc. This is where you start getting them involved. Outline the plan for the walk, and make it clear that you will welcome questions and contributions.
7. At your first (carefully selected) point of interest, *ask people what they notice*, or *questions which occur to them as a result of their observation*. Perhaps you hope they will notice a significant change in vegetation, or some effects of fire, or the nest of an animal, or other evidence of animal activity. Encourage others in the group to give possible explanations, and discuss these – *avoid the temptation to want to give all the answers yourself*. The purpose is to show people that *they* are the best ones to build on their own observations – with your help. You are a 'facilitator' not just a 'hander-out of information'.
8. Keep moving at a rate which is a *balance between having enough time to look and discuss, but not letting people become restless and bored*. Constantly watch your whole group to gauge interest. Be flexible to *build on* unexpected observations, questions or events. And have someone at the back to keep the stragglers with the group!
9. If you have given out printed material, have people *use it*, e.g. to locate their position on the map, or to attempt to identify a plant (even a weed) from leaf/flower/fruit diagrams. And don't forget that words of encouragement work for *any* age group!
10. Aim to finish *on time*, and at a spot which represents a *good 'rounding off' point* – a view, or something of special interest. Try to gauge success *in terms of your aims* – ask people to *briefly* indicate things which particularly interested them, or whether they might come back *or even join your Group* (a real success!). In summary, try to finish on a friendly and positive note.

# Experience Exchange (your space)

## A forget-me-notty problem

Sue McLean (Friends of Kangerong) writes: Forget-me-nots appeared along Dunns Creek in the Kangerong Flora Reserve about three years ago. Last year I made a really concentrated effort to pull them all out but the patch I most clearly remember seems to have produced about the same volume of plants this year as it did last year. It has

taken about 5 years to get rid of *Briza major* along the track, and I don't think I have the energy to pull all the forget-me-nots for that length of time along about 900 m of creek—especially as the other side of the creek is privately owned and covered with weeds of all sorts, including forget-me-nots. Does anyone know how long the seed is viable? Any suggestions?

Share your questions, experiences or ideas – contact a Committee member (see page 4)

## 'Long-root' planting – a planting technique for the dry north-west?

Jim Moore, Convener of Friends of Hattah-Kulkynne NP, explains a novel project which his group has recently undertaken.

'Since 1985, we have been engaged in a tree planting scheme involving pumping water from Lake Mournpoul. But since 1998, the lake has been dry.

'This year the rangers introduced a new scheme: 'long-root' planting using Carroll tubes.'

*The Carroll Tree Tube was developed by the mineral sands industry in WA to improve the success rate of trees planted in light sandy soils. It consists of 75 mm plastic tube cut into 800 mm lengths, split into halves lengthwise, held together by two rings cut from the same tube, and one end taped over.*

Jim goes on: 'After we had made 1000 of these tubes, we had a big working bee, filled them with compost, and planted seedlings

in the tops. Held in nursery conditions, the roots develop to the length of the tube.'

*Deep holes are then 'drilled' in the sand using water jetters, the tube inserted, and the two halves then withdrawn.*

'Because the roots were into the moist deeper soil, no further watering was necessary. Plants have done well so far.'

*The process is labour intensive, but the tubes can be re-used.*

*Jim Robinson, of Greening Australia Victoria, has kindly provided FriendsNET with some further literature on 'water-jetting', and 'long stem' planting to stabilise river banks, if anyone would like it.*

Have any other groups investigated similar techniques? Please let us know.



*Friends of Hattah-Kulkynne cutting the plastic tubing into 800 mm lengths – a step in their production of 1000 Carroll tubes to be used in their tree-planting project.*

## Geoff's Group Grapevine

On my recent visit to Canada I had the opportunity to look at Friends group and other volunteer involvement in the national parks system administered by Parks Canada. A major focus of their Friends Groups is the running of souvenir/interpretive shops in parks, often staffed by paid employees. The nearest thing we have in Victoria is the entrance facility of the Friends of Nyerimilang on the Gippsland Lakes, staffed entirely by volunteers.

The Friends of Leadbeaters Possum held their inaugural Public Meeting on 7 September – another Friends of Species Group.

Those we have become aware of are listed below. Not all these groups are formally affiliated with the Network – something we encourage. We would also welcome any updated details for these groups.

Friends of the Brolga (Murray McIntyre 5333 6825)  
Friends of the Brush-tailed Rock Wallaby (Jim Reside 5152 6367)  
Friends of the Eastern Barred Bandicoot (Kay Aldridge 5572 1547)  
Friends of the Eltham Copper Butterfly (Anna Richtarik 0417 366 509)  
Friends of the Grey Crowned Babbler (Doug Robinson 5761 1676)

Friends of the Growling Grass Frog (Damien Cook 0402 127 933)  
Friends of the Helmeted Honeyeater (Kieran Martin 5964 8341)  
Friends of the Hooded Plover (Margaret Bell 5988 0358)  
Friends of the Koalas (Phillip Island) (Patsy Hunt 5952 2407)  
Friends of Leadbeaters Possum (Sera Blair 5962 4043)  
Friends of the Malleefowl (Wimpy Reichelt 5391 5232)  
Friends of the Platypus (Geoff Williams 9716 1613)  
Friends of the Pottoroo (Becca Smith 9383 5631)  
Friends of the Striped Legless Lizard (Megan O'Shea 9366 2711)  
Friends of the Tuan (Julie Kirkwood 9341 6507)  
Little Tern Taskforce (Peter Mitchell 5156 3007)  
Malleefowl Preservation Society (Archie Van 5023 4439)  
Red-tailed Network (Richard Hill 1800 262 062)  
Sherbrooke Lyrebird Study Group (Norman Carter 9754 4424)  
Victorian Malleefowl Recovery Group (Ann Stokie 5229 8648)

We would also like to hear details of any other species-focused groups.



*Geoff Durham is the Network's Group Liaison Officer*

## How to contact us ...

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## And We Welcome ...

Some of these are new groups, and some we formerly recognised and now formally affiliate.

**Friends of Box Ironbark Forests**  
The forests are those between Bendigo and Daylesford. The group has campaigned for protection under the National Parks Act and aims to promote understanding and protection. Doug Ralph 5470 5407

**E G Ritchie Flora Reserve Friends Group**  
The E G Ritchie Flora Reserve is on the corner of Summoner Street and Dana Avenue, Blairgowrie (Melway 167 D5). This small group for a small reserve has working bees on the first Sunday of each month. Pru Ervin 9889 6363

**Friends of Flinders Coastline**  
Volunteer weeding and vegetation rehabilitation for parks and shire areas near Flinders. Felicity Druce 5989 0747

**Friends of Frog Hollow**  
This group with 40 members aims 'to protect and enhance the natural environment of the Frog Hollow region of Endeavour Hills'. Stephen Hallett 9700 6996

**Friends of George Street and the Urban Forest (Bayside)**  
Heathland regeneration and assisting with ecological burns are two of this group's activities. Melway 77B12 & 77 B11. Valerie Tarrant 9598 0554

**Friends of Harrap Creek Bushland Reserve**  
Melway 145 B7-8. Recently incorporated, this group aims to 'provide a local community focus and ownership of the reserve'. Mary Stemp 5977 1089

**Friends of Horseshoe Bend Farm**  
Parks Victoria manage this farm adjacent to Brimbank Park, Melways 15 A9. This new group will 'promote and encourage the activities of the farm', and hope to publish its history. John Shorten 9336 1023

**Kananook Creek Association**  
This group has worked since 1970 'to clean, restore and preserve the Kananook Creek, Frankston, and its environment'. They were recently recognised with a CMA Landcare award. Olwen Bawden 9789 0598

**Friends of Salt Creek & Associated Parklands**  
Salt Creek reserve is adjacent to Ellesmere Road, Rosanna, Melway 20 A 9-12. The primary purpose of the group is 'to preserve, restore and enhance the Salt Creek and its associated parklands'. Dr Henry Burley 9458 1872

**Friends of Wanderslore**  
Wanderslore Sanctuary is a ten-hectare Trust for Nature property at Launching Place. Steve Fernee 5941 8672

**Friends of Warneet**  
Biodiversity is what motivates this group in supporting the Warneet Nature Reserve, Melway 142. (Ms) Robin Dzedins 5998 0059

**Friends of Wayside Road Foreshore Reserve**  
Wayside Road is at Somers, Melway 194 D11. This group is affiliated with FOLKLAW. Its objectives include 'To educate and create community awareness of the problems facing wildlife, and promote public participation in the solutions'. Anne Kotzmann 5983 5534

## Call for Best Friends for 2005

Have you a member of your group who for more than 10 years has made an outstanding contribution through exceptional dedication as a volunteer Friend?

Nomination for Best Friend Award 2005 is now open. Nominations will close on 1 April 2005.

Nominations can only be accepted from a Friends Group and must be accompanied by

three written supporting references, preferably including one from the appropriate management authority. Regular involvement over a period of 10 years is an important consideration. Assessment is by an independent panel.

Forms are available from the VNPA office (60 Leicester St, Carlton 3053) or from the Awards Secretary, Margaret Boyd Phone 9560 8084, e-mail mmboyd@ozemail.com.au.

Deadline for  
March issue:  
15 February 2005

If undelivered, return to:  
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c/- VNPA, 60 Leicester Street  
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