Warringal Conservation Society

LATE SUMMER NEWSLETTER Volume 53/2 MARCH/APRIL 2022

Warringal Conservation Society is a local community organisation caring for the environment in Banyule.

Formed in 1970, the Society is an active and productive steward of Banyule's environmental heritage.

Articles and photographs for the newsletter are welcome. Note we may edit for space or legal reasons. Opinions expressed in guest material are not necessarily those of the Society.

Keep up to date on WCS, local and not so local environmental news by visiting our Facebook page or our website www.warringal.org.au

Join us!

WCS has a lot to offer: Planting events and monthly meetings with guest speakers from a wide range of disciplines and interests. Membership forms and details in this newsletter or go to the web page.

Newsletter printed courtesy of Kate Thwaites MP, Member for Jagajaja.

MARCH MEETING

MEMBERS TALK

Join us for an evening of discussion and conversation as three members share their stories on varied environmental topics. Rob will speak on Beautiful Banyule - Images from our Neighbourhood 2021. Anthea will speak on Crakes, and James will tell us about his Cradle Mountain trip.

APRIL MEETING

PETA McDONALD: INTRODUCING SLIME MOULDS!

Slime Mould is the name given to a diverse group of organisms that can live freely as single cells and then come together to form complex fruiting bodies with spores. Stunningly beautiful when seen through a microscope, Peta has been photographing, identifying and cataloguing slime moulds from the bush and gardens around Melbourne. She will also bring in some slime mould specimens for members to view.

See more at https://www.facebook.com/groups/SlimeMold/

AT A GLANCE

MARCH

Thursday 3: General meeting from 7.30pm

Sunday 6: Clean Up Australia Day at 10am.
Malahang Festival WCS + Friends of Banyule stall from 10am.

APRIL

Thursday 7: General meeting from 7.30pm

Sunday 10: Woody weed removal with Friends of Salt Creek at 10am.

Meetings are the first Thursday of the month from 7.30pm

Please note that the MARCH meeting will be face-to-face at the Old Shire Offices, 60 Beverley Road.

Enter from Buckingham Drive near the Banyule Theatre and Greening Australia. Melways map 32:D3. **All Welcome**

Photo: H Smith

Low water in the Banyule Swamp allows for some branch stacking!

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Members,

The heat of summer has seen the Banyule Swamp recede leaving shallows and mudflats that have attracted wading birds and a Spoonbill or three.

Low water levels also provide an opportunity to enhance bird habitat by strategically placing logs and branches into the swamp to provide perches. To this end, Kylie and Warwick from the Banyule Bush crew collected a stash of large branches. Today, Friday 18th, these were carried out on foot into the swamp and placed along the fence line in the middle and around some of the dead trees. Have a look next time you visit Banyule Flats.

As we begin to resume our regular activities after the disruption of the last few years, I thank all our members for being patient and staying engaged. WCS has achieved so much over the years through the efforts of dedicated and passionate volunteers.

Middle and top left: BCC Rangers wrestle branches through the mud.

Above: The group manoeuvers a log under the direction of Bush Crew Ranger Kylie.

Centre: Branch stacks wired into position on old fence posts.

Bottom right: WCS President James Deane with Rob Granter and Don Stokes.

Bottom left: Thanks to Bush Crew team members, John MIlkins, BCC Environmental Operations Coordinator, and WCS members for a successful morning of branch stacking.

Photo: R Granter

All photos by H Smith unless otherwise noted

THE WCS TEAM AND HOW TO CONTACT US

Warringal Conservations Society Inc
PO Box 64 Rosanna 3084
Email: warringal3084@gmail.com
Web: www.warringal.org.au
FB: www.facebook.com/WarringalConservationSociety

President: James Deane. Telephone: 8060 8983

Vice President: John D'Aloia

Treasurer: Daphne Hards. Telephone: 9497 4831

Planting Coordinator: Rob Granter

Committee: Anthea Fleming, Daphne Hards, Doug McNaughton, James Deane, John D'Aloia, Michelle Giovas and Rob Granter.

Newsletter: Editor: Heather Smith 0423 191 977
Email: wcs.editor@gmail.com

NEWS UPDATES

North East Link Update: Michelle Giovas

I am still on the North East Link Community Liaison Group (CLG) North representing Warringal Conservation Society and Friends of Banyule.

In October last year, the government announced with much spin a revised design for the NELProject. A map of the updated design is available at this link, *https://bigbuild.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0005/598442/NEL-Project-Map-October-2021.pdf*

The changes or clarifications include:

- The tunnel has been extended by 1.9kms.
- Tunnel will emerge at Lenola St, near Yallambie Rd in the North and at the old Bulleen Drive in site at the South.
- By taking Simpson Army Barracks land, Greensborough Highway will be widened to be a three-lane carriage way in each direction (described as a 'tree lined boulevard') from Lower Plenty Rd to Watsonia Rd.
- The longer Tunnel will be part bored by the Tunnel Boring Machine, and part cut and cover. (*See illustration below)*
- Lower Plenty Rd Interchange has been modified but will be cut and cover construction.

The longer tunnel is an improvement as land (although cleared) will be returned as 'Open Space'. That is from native plains dry grassy woodland with significant River Red and Studley Park Gums loss, to constructed bike paths, hard landscape etc.

Areas of concern are:

- Much of the disruptive and environmentally damaging Early Works was unnecessary i.e. removal of 12 homes in Yallambie.
- The quiet and unassessed increase in Matted Flax Lilly removal from 95 plants to 139 which is an increase of 46 %.
- A five-level carpark to be built at Watsonia Station is very poorly designed, and is a physical and visual barrier blocking the station and shopping centre from the east.
- Simpson Army Barracks land, Windsor Reserve and Garbonia Reserve will be major staging areas for the seven-year construction build. Land needed for this is approximately a massive 12 hectares!
- The tunnel emerges south of Watsonia Station and shops, when it should emerge north.
- Two green bridges crossing the trenched NEL are located at Elder Street and Watsonia Road. The community are arguing for the area between to be covered also and open space returned for more pedestrian and cycling access.

In the next few months NELP intends further consultation on the Urban Design and Landscape Plan via Engage Victoria.

If you have concerns or questions that you wish to raise at the CLG please feel free to contact me on 0409179121 or *michellgiovas@gmail.com*.
Or visit the NELP hub in Watsonia, or try via Big Build on 1800 105 105.

From website https://bigbuild.vic.gov.au/library/north-east-link-program/fact-sheets/project-update-october-2021

MARCH = MALAHANG FESTIVAL

After the Clean Up Australia event on **6 March**, come over to the **Malahang Wellbeing Festival**.

WCS will be joining Friends of Banyule on their stall from 10am to 4pm. Come and say hello. We will be talking to folks about WCS's 50 years of work and projects, and of course the North East Link.

SEE YOU THERE!

50TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION UPDATE

It is the committee's intention to hold our deferred **50th Anniversary celebration** on **Sunday 15 May**. The rough plan is to hold an informal morning tea after the May working bee at the nearby Tawny Pond site.

All present and past members and WCS friends are welcome. Keep an eye out for more details via email and Facebook closer to the date.

FAUNA REPORT

UNUSUAL FIND - Button Quail

During January, my son found a dead bird in his swimming-pool. He put it in a plastic box in his freezer, and eventually brought it to me. I was most surprised to find a female Painted Button-quail. Not a suburban bird at all, but there are many records of them turning up in suburban gardens with some shrub cover, where they may stay a few days.

Their normal habitat is open woodland hillsides, where they scratch in leaf-litter. They clear small round 'platelets' by rotating, while standing on one foot and scratching with the other. They are very similar to True Quail, except that they have no hind-toe, and sex-roles are reversed. The female is larger and more colourful, and after laying a clutch of eggs, leaves the male to brood and rear the chicks. Like all ground-dwelling birds, they are very vulnerable to foxes and cats.

The specimen I photographed must have been flying along Darebin Creek line, probably en route to the Parklands. There is a small wound on the breast - perhaps it was struck by a hawk, and fell into the pool. As it was in excellent condition, and found nearby, I

Photo: A Fleming

decided to give it to Darebin Parklands, to add to their collection of mounted birds. Ranger Pete Wilshire was very pleased. Note that there are hefty fines for retaining specimens of protected species.

I have not been to Healesville Sanctuary for a while, but on visits to the Woodland Aviary I have observed captive birds and their chicks, where I photographed a pair many years ago.

Anthea Fleming

WORKING BEES START AGAIN - HOORAY!

Join us for our 1st Community Event for 2022.

Clean Up Australia Day at Banyule Flats.
Sunday 6 March at 10am.

Join us and BCC's Bushland Management crew at Banyule Flats Reserve in Viewbank to collect litter through our beautiful reserve.

You can register on the day, or pre-register on the following link:*www.cleanupaustraliaday.org.au/fundraisers/kyliedamico/banyule-flats*

Meeting at Somerset Drive Carpark, Viewbank.

Look out for the white 4-wheel drive on the hill in between the two sports ovals, west of the car park, and opposite the clubrooms.

Everyone Welcome. Looking forward to seeing you.

Our **April event** will be held on **Sunday 10 April** when we will be removing woody weeds around the Warringal Parklands - Yarra River / Salt Creek area. More details to follow.

WCS ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL JULY 2021 - JUNE 2022

Name: _____

Address: _____

_____

Email: _____

Telephone: _____ Mobile: _____

Special areas of interest: *This helps us when arranging speakers and events.*

_____

Subscription types:

☐ Single $20 ☐ Concession $15 (seniors/students etc)

☐ Family $25 ☐ Life subscription $200

There are three ways to renew:

1. Renew online at:
www.warringal.org.au/about-us/membership

2. Pay by direct debit:
Acc name: Warringal Conservation Society
BSB: 633 108 Acc no: 143918613
(Be sure to identify yourself as the depositor.)

3. By mail: Fill in this form and mail with your cheque or money order to:
PO Box 64 Rosanna 3084 Victoria.

Any queries email: warringal3084@gmail.com

☐ I would like to receive my newsletter by email.

☐ Yes - put me on the Plantings notification list.

GUEST SPEAKER REPORT

FEBRUARY > ANDREW WOOD
Regenerating the Yarra for a better future!

2022 kicked off with an interesting presentation by Andrew Wood, Specialist Advisor for the Yarra River Keeper Association (YRKA). Andrew advises YRKA on ecological regeneration and landscape architecture, ensuring planting plans are carried out with both aesthetic and ecosystem functions in mind.

His work for the next two to three years will be to develop and facilitate a set of projects that will result in a healthier, less weed infested and fragmented Yarra. Presently there are 10 sites earmarked, each with a diversity of goals. These will be achieved through ecological planning, planting, weeding, and further maintenance in collaboration with local groups.

The plan is to link remnant vegetation islands to create corridors. He briefly outlined some the current issues. For example, the lack of diversity of the vegetation along the river valley. Tree Violets are taking over due to lack of regular flooding. Many old plantings are undermined by senescence or weeds. Generally, plantings only last about 15 years, then need replacing - there is rarely natural recolonisation.

His aim for all new plantings to be climate resilient, as well as providing food and habitat.

Maintenance is a major consideration.

It takes 1-2 years to prep each site, then 2-3 to control weeds. Then what next? Very dedicated volunteers are needed to continue the work into the future. Andrew spoke about the difference between groups of volunteers. Older groups are generally built on long

friendships and site loyalty, compared to younger individuals that will go to any site but may not stay involved over time. It is often the preference of Parks Victoria and Councils to run volunteers through programs like ParkConnect as Friends Groups can become troublesome advocates for their sites.

He described site plans, planting methods, species lists, weed control etc for each of the sites presently underway: Andrews Reserve (Yarra Bend Park), Chandler corridor (near old APM), Phillips Fox Billabong (Yarra Flats), and others including around our own Windmill Swale at Banyule Flats. Andrew has some exciting plans for this and other sites in our area, and will be inviting all WCS members to be involved.

If you would like to watch the recording go to: *https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/7H03os135YCPR3806AGl8JyUhspvO-d4lTyMXI1YCskmhYh8tFsXFCsnWOAdt2Zh.-y-7c6hxdjHtrCXN?startTime=1643878166000*

CAN YOU HELP?

Call out for local species sightings information

Paul Davis, BCC Biodiversity Advisor is developing a *No Local Extinction Plan* in 2022 for six key indicator species that are known to be present in the Banyule area. He's asking for help with local observations and information on the following species:

- Powerful Owl;
- Eltham Copper Butterfly;
- Swift Parrot;
- Platypus;
- Krefft's Glider (previously known as Sugar Glider).

The plan will enable Council to better understand the presence of these six key species and their habitat requirements. It will look at ways of protecting and enhancing these habitats, identify gaps and connection possibilities between fragmented habitats, and identify community involvement opportunities, including ongoing monitoring programs.

If you are able to provide any observations on these species (please limit to the last 5 years) within Banyule or adjacent municipalities, which have not been formally reported, Paul would love to hear from you. Email: *paul.davis@banyule.vic.gov.au.*

Swift Parrot. Photo: Chris Tzaros

NATURE NOTES

February 2022

James Deane showed some fine photos from his wildlife camera - a Fox at night at Banyule Swamp - it stalked a Snipe which escaped. An early morning shot of a Swamp Wallaby grazing, and a Wombat.

Anthea Fleming showed pictures of Kangaroos in Yarra Flats, and some insects -a Robber-fly with its prey, a Katydid, and a Wattle Goat Moth. Some birds from Wilson Reserve - a Red-rumped Parrot eating dock seeds, a Spotless Crake skulking in the Reedy Billabong, and an unusual visitor to Bailey's, an Azure Kingfisher.

Photo: A Fleming

Daphne Hards reported an Eastern Spinebill and a Brown Thornbill in her garden, White Ibis overhead and the unwelcome appearance of a Noisy Miner.

Celia Smith saw a very young Turtle on the Bike Path at Wilson Reserve.

King Parrots attacked **George Paras**' tomatoes. They seemed rather tame, as if someone has been feeding them. Lots of glider observations near glider box in back yard. Young glider became independent, and has moved away.

Rob Granter filmed a large female Wombat eating Tradescantia near the Plenty foot-bridge.

Dianne Williamson saw a flock of 15 Red-rumped Parrots near Bonds Road.

In early January, **Heather Smith** saw two Kookaburras having a tug-of-war with a dead rat. **Don Stokes** rescued a Bluetongue from Plenty Road.

Andrew Lees reported that the Annulus Billabong is now dry, but he had seen a Buff-banded Rail nearby. Also saw a Frogmouth family, parents and two young.

Photos top and bottom left: J Deane

Photos top and bottom, middle and right: A Fleming

If not delivered return to: PO Box 64 Rosanna 3084

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