

Convenors – Roger & Meredith Briggs
"Nil Desperandum"
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23 November 2003

Dear Member,

It is interesting to have a very different spring on Mt. Buffalo. We have been overseas for part of it, but were amazed to see the Marsh Marigolds still flowering at the Cresta Ski run in November.

In some ways the drive up the mountain looks more grey than before, and we miss the great display that the wattles normally give.

The regeneration continues to be of much interest and we would be interested to hear of members observations as they come up over the coming months.

The latest issue of "The Victorian Naturalist" has several interesting articles related to the fires. It was good to see some concern about the potential for spread of weeds, particularly Yarrow, after the fire. We noticed on Mt. Hotham, that large amounts of this weed in the Alpine Resort were saved along with the resort, whereas lots of areas with less weed infestation were badly burnt. There are also observations as to whether alpine grazing reduces blazing, and some early impressions of the effects of the fire on the Bogong High Plains. This little magazine often has interesting items, so let us know if you want to join our parent group (The Field Naturalist Club of Victoria). The subscription won't send anyone broke.

We found a leek orchid growing at Eurobin Falls that the books say flowers after fire. Which brings me to pass on to people interested that the Terrestrial Study Group of the Aust. Native Orchid Society (ANOS) is going to have a look for another leek orchid around the Chalet on Dec. 20th and 21st – meeting at the Chalet car park at 10:00 am. *Prasophyllum suttonii* was described on Mt Buffalo, and is now thought to be different from the similar orchids seen elsewhere. These have been re-named *Pr. alpestre* (Mauve leek orchid). This means that *Pr. suttonii* has not been seen since 1902. Perhaps it flowers in relation to fires also. Come and join the search.

Before that, we would like to have a meeting to catch up with Kevin about what is happening in the park. We note that the Big Walk is open again, and the top half is on our agenda for the near future. I am sure the rangers will have some interesting observations to share. So plan to come for a general discussion on Tuesday 16 December at 8:00 pm at the Ovens Research Station. It may be wise to check the web-site or give us a call if you plan to come, just in case we change the day at the last minute. December is a tricky month to hold a meeting.

Talking of our Web site: this is running: www.go.alpinelink.com.au/naturalist/
On this site you can see a report of the excellent meeting "The Nature of Fire" that we held on June 20. About 100 people attended, and enjoyed our panel of experts. The interest was indicated by the questions and discussion that followed. We also acquired some new members who will be receiving this newsletter for the first time.

Following that meeting, there was a Fungi Foray, which Peter Harrison led as John was unavailable. He tells us he had an interesting session – all to himself. There must be members who are interested in this activity, and we are most fortunate to

have this expertise within the group. Please let us know of your interest, so we can pass on details of the next Foray. Hopefully we can make the next one ourselves.

We will run a Botany Day on the mountain on Saturday 31 January – again meet at the Chalet car park at 10:30 am. If members would be willing to lead people on different activities on that day, please let us know so we can put it on the web. We are aware that we have some members with special interests, and it would be good to share these. We are keen to hear what ideas you may have. Obviously, it is difficult to send out a mailing for each summer activity, especially as it involves park staff time and postage. Perhaps if people sent us their email addresses, we could easily notify them of late changes.

We also plan to do our annual survey of the quadrats on Bogong Plain, at the beginning of the Dickson's Falls Walk on Sat Feb. 21, meeting at the beginning of the walk at 10:30 am. Bring sun hats etc.

The photos for the CD are coming along slowly. We have been trying to sort out the different species of Bluebells, and this is proving quite a challenge.

Hoping to see you at one or more of these activities,

Roger & Meredith Briggs

From the Ranger

As summer is fast approaching, we are gearing up for another busy time of the year. And we are busily trying to get as many tracks and facilities repaired before the bulk of the summer visitors arrive. A bit of an update of where we are at:

- Contracts have been let for the reconstruction of boardwalks on Dicksons Falls Track, Long Plan Track and Viewpoint Track. There are expected to start in early December with the intention of being finished by Christmas.
- Contracts have also been let for our "Good Neighbour" weed spraying program, again work will be starting in the first week of December.
- Contracts have been tendered for another large weed program, including Himalayan Honeysuckle and should be decided within a few weeks. Works to begin in late December.
- Signage orders have been placed for all roadside signs and for all signs for the Monolith Track. These will hopefully arrive in the next week or so and we will endeavour to get them in by Christmas.
- The Lake Catani campground opened on November 1 and is already almost booked out during January.
- We are looking at setting up post fire monitoring programs for some of our rare plants – Fern Leaf Baeckea, Buffalo Sallow Wattle in particular. We are also looking at setting up exclusion monitoring plots and line transects for Sambar Deer.
- We will again be running a summer interpretation program during January. The details of this will be finalised shortly.

So as you can see, we have a bit on our plate. Post fire works are going along well and are full steam ahead, as we look forward to another great summer (with a few less fires this year!)

Kevin Cosgriff

Ranger, Mt. Buffalo National Park