

Mt. Buffalo Field Naturalist Group

Telephone (03) 5752 2080

Convenors: Roger & Meredith Briggs
"Nil Desperandum"
271 Mummery Rd.,
Myrtleford, Victoria, 3737.

Email: rbriggs@netc.net.au
Web Site: www.go.alpinelink.com.au/naturalist

November 2004

Dear Member,

This newsletter is being sent to members of the Field Naturalist Group and of the Friends of Mt. Buffalo. Please notify the convenors (and accept our apologies) if this has been sent incorrectly. We have just revised the mailing lists, and have included addresses from an old list which had more names on, so there may well be errors.

Firstly, an apology. Some members of the Field Naturalist Group seem to have missed out on the last newsletter, so we have included a copy of it with this one. The last newsletter included a questionnaire. We have only received half a dozen replies to the questionnaire to date, and this makes it difficult to plan a future for the group. Members of the Friends of Mt. Buffalo are also invited to fill out this form if they wish

We hope some other members have been able to enjoy Mt. Buffalo this Spring, as the small bushes of Rice Flower (*Pimelia linifolia*) grace the banks of the road. The dominant plants may be quite different to those of last year. Perhaps we can add to the observations about the plants since the fire that we have made on our web site. Please check it out. The address is on the letterhead.

As reported in the last newsletter, we received a grant covering part of the cost of the Lucid software needed to achieve our aim of an easy-to-use photographic guide to the plants of the park. We were granted only about a third of the sum applied for, which was for two copies of the software. The Friends of Mt. Buffalo have been able to supply the shortfall to enable us to purchase one copy. The program now is in a new (more expensive) version, but we will now have the possibility of having a web-based search facility as well as producing a CD if we wish.

As indicated earlier, one main issue we have identifying and illustrating the grasses, along with the sedges and rushes, that grow on Mt. Buffalo. We will not be able to illustrate the differences in one or two photos, but will aim to illustrate typical examples of as many of the grasses as we can identify. We hope to get further knowledge in this area in our activities over the next few months.

There seems to be some interest in having occasional meetings over the winter months, and inviting a speaker with a subject of interest. If you wish to be informed of such meetings, please indicate that on the questionnaire, as we wish to limit some of our mailings to those members who are able to attend such meetings.

Coming Events:

1. Meeting: Weds. Dec 8, Ovens Research Station. Agenda will include a discussion

of observations people have made on the mountain. We will have an update on our plants project, looking in more detail at the eventual structure of our database, and how we can involve members in the work. Roger will attempt an introduction to Grasses and Sedges, and we will discuss a proposed merger between the Field Naturalist and Friends groups.

2. Flower Walks: Sat Jan 8. Meredith and Roger will conduct a short walk starting from the lower car park at the Chalet at 10:00 am, and another starting at the day-stay picnic area before the Camp Ground entrance at 2:00 pm. These will be open to the public. Feel free to join us for the walk, or to assist in running this walk. We may need your help to ward off stray lyrebirds as one badly distracted the potential botanists last year.

3. Grass Day: Liz McPhee will lead us as we look at different grassland and sedge communities on the following day (Sunday Dec. 9). Liz has a particular interest in regeneration of alpine areas. Bring picnic lunch.

4. Quadrat Day: Sat Feb 19: Our annual day studying the changes in a series of quadrats across the Dixon's Falls Track. Hopefully it will be fine for a change, in which case, you will need a sun-hat. Meet at the beginning of the Dixons Falls Track at 10:00 am. If you can come for part of a day, follow down the track until you see us.

It would be helpful if you could inform the convenors if you plan to attend any of the events on the Mountain, in case dates or times are altered. We will try to post any changes on our web site.

Want to help in another way but can't make the meetings? Please get in touch with us as we look to organizing our program and projects for 2005.

Rangers Notes: from Matt Moylan (written in October)

Kevin is off the mountain for a while, and I will be organising (at least trying to) the various volunteer groups we have at Buffalo.

At the moment we are organising our work schedules for the year. There has been a lot of movement in the office as Darin and Kev are now both working out of Bright and us newies are still getting settled in. As well as the position I am in there is also another new Ranger, Dale Smithyman.

Dale has taken on a role involving road & track maintenance and natural values management. There will also be another new Ranger, Sonia MacDonald, starting in mid-November.

The work we have recently been conducting has included preparing the Lake Catani campground for the summer season and opening to campers over the Melb. Cup weekend, walking track clearing, removing fallen trees on MVO tracks, de-winterising cross-country ski trails and general park and office tasks.

Some of the work we have upcoming may be of interest to you. We have a number of plants needing to be put in the ground in the near future in three locations, The Horn, The Campground & Eurobin walking track, I will call you regarding volunteers if we should need them. Other future works include pest plant control (honeysuckle), track improvements (repair steps, drains, etc), and planning/designing our summer interps program among other things.

Regarding the Chalet - the new lease-holders are Burbank. The General Manager is Gerrard Guiltin and it is still a co-joined lease with them also operating the Cresta ski area. From all reports they are doing a good job.