



NEWSLETTER NO 32 DECEMBER 2018

From the President

A very relaxed and sustainable summer break to everyone

I wish everyone a very relaxed, thoughtful and sustainable summer break. May you come back fully revitalised for the next year. It is time to reflect on the great efforts you have made in weeding, seed propagation, planting to restore habitat at *Devilbend KBA*, or wherever else you have been working for the environment. A lot of people have now switched to solar and many are waiting (*albeit with some frustration*) to transfer to affordable electric vehicles with an acceptable driving range. We want our governments at all levels to step up in their adoption and promotion.

Power generation, together with transport, industry and agriculture, accounts for most of our carbon emissions causing temperature rise. Global warming and habitat loss will cause this planet to become uninhabitable by animals unless there is a complete change to our economic system and our unsustainable lifestyle.

Devilbend Reserve is in the middle of a UNESCO Biosphere. Unless this Biosphere is embraced by the councils, businesses and the community it will fail in its purpose. Devilbend is at the hub of Biolinks which are being established with the help of private landholders and Landcare groups. The Reserve should be a shining example to all of what we can achieve in habitat repair and restoration.

Education is essential. Our marvellous School Ambassadors program is a start. But education should reach all the community through their involvement. The excellent Melbourne Water volunteer Waterwatch project and the BirdLife/Devilbend Foundation monthly bird monitoring must continue into the future, with new people to become involved and eventually take over from the current teams.

Practical involvement is available to all in monitoring, research and habitat restoration projects. New Devilbend Foundation members will be welcomed heartily.

We are glad to hear that reserve managers, Parks Victoria, intend to become involved in sound scientifically-based bird monitoring and analysis. This is commendable. Rather than short-term research projects designed to meet a pre-determined agenda, Devilbend needs a strategy focused on long-term habitat restoration and being part of a world-wide climate change mitigation program.

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2018-2019 DFI Council: -

Roger Richards (President), Annabel Richards (Secretary), Martin Thraves (Treasurer), Marnie Fitzsimons (FOD Co-ordinator), Jamie Edgerton, Jill McIvor, Jethro Sallmann, Anthony Fennell, Hansi Wegner, Michael Mann

The following 2018-2019 member groups are represented on Committee:

Birdlife Australia; Friends of Kangerong Flora Reserve; Mornington Environment Assn.; Peninsula Field Naturalists Club; MP Ratepayers & Residents Assn; Southern Peninsula Indigenous Flora & Fauna Assn; Westernport & Peninsula Protection Council

To join the "Friends of Daangean", contact Marnie Fitzsimons at
marniefitz1@gmail.com

SPIFFA meets 7.30pm at Seawinds Hub 11A Allambi Ave, Rosebud, Melway 169 K5, on the first Monday of each month with a speaker, & oft times plant identification, followed by tea and cake

Devilbend Reservoir is recognised internationally by BirdLife International and other agencies as a *Key Biodiversity Area (KBA)*. For its importance to be appreciated throughout the Biosphere and beyond it needs signage ASAP. Signs have been designed by the Devilbend Foundation and submitted to the managers. We eagerly await their installation.

Roger Richards 14 November 2018
President, Devilbend Foundation Inc.

Note: If you know anybody wishing to be involved in monitoring, community science, or other activities please contact at ornithology3@yahoo.com.au or PO Box 21 Hastings Vic 3915

Some Observations



Sea Eagle Chicks image Michael Mann



Images Marnie Fitzsimons

EDITORS NOTE

The Ambassador Program has been a roaring success this year, and one can but hope it will continue in the same vein. Thanks to superhero Hansi for getting the ball rolling, and the teachers who attend with their charges to provide them with a splendid few hours communing with nature away from the confines of the classroom

I was asked if I knew the origins of the names Devilbend and Daangean. All I knew was that the Devilbend Creek was the one that was dammed, and that Daangean was the area name used by the Bunurong people. Nothing further was forthcoming from various areas, so I took to TROVE. See at the end some things I found regarding Devilbend, Bittern and Tuerong. I had a lovely time digging about. State Library of Victoria's "Ask a Librarian" is a terrific service too.

There has been an unfortunate occurrence in the quarry area where individuals with nothing better to do have scrawled graffiti on the stone faces. And there's rubbish in the water at the far end at the bottom of the cliff.

A Devilbend turtle monitoring program is in its infancy, plotting turtle nest sites. A majority of them are destroyed by foxes each year, and on a walk with Hansi and Bron five previous seasons' nests were noted on a section of Devilbend shoreline.

It's exciting to know that our resident White-bellied Sea Eagles have two chicks, gender unknown. Hopefully we'll soon see them soaring over Devilbend Reservoir environs with their parents.

Annabel and I took the Devilbend Landcare Group for a Bittern Reservoir Catch Drain walk to the Devilbend Creek entry point. They were most impressed by the landscape but a trifle disappointed in the proliferation of blackberries in the Turners Lane area. I believe none of them had explored the area beforehand and were interested in this end of Devilbend Ck.

Marnie Fitzsimons

FOUNDATION NEWS

SUBSCRIPTION RENEWAL

Dear Devilbender,

This year has seen a continuation of our efforts to retain Devilbend as a prime Conservation Area, and see it grow into the key Biodiversity Area that we believe is its natural place.

Our year runs from 1st July to 30th June and thus it is time for me to ask you to re-subscribe to our membership list and help us to continue the work at hand.

This year we are planning many new initiatives and your participation is valued more than ever.

Your subscription of **\$20** will ensure that this is so.

There are three ways that this subscription can be paid:-

1/ by Bank Transfer to

BSB 633-000 A/c No 129079448 Devilbend Foundation Inc. (please insert your surname for a receipt)

2/ by cheque, payable to Devilbend Foundation Inc., mailed c/- WPPC PO Box 9 Hastings 3915

3/ by depositing into the above account number at any Bendigo Community Bank

Please also note that the DFI Trust is registered for tax deductibility should you wish to add a donation to your subscription. Any donation over \$2.00 is tax deductible. Yours Sincerely

Roger Richards

FRIENDS of DAANGEAN (FoD)

September 29th weeding day at Woodland Break had six toilers. Work was carried out amid socializing and saving the world. It was pleasing to see where the contractors have laid the enemy to waste and it was easy to pick up where they left off. The patch we're currently working in has a forest of sizeable pittos and you don't have to move far to deal with them. It's hopeful that one day we'll see the end of pittos in Woodland Break and be able to pay attention to other needy areas. Hansi wasn't able to join us as he was required in Woods Reserve where there was chainsaw hollow monitoring going on, and cameras were being installed



FoD September Weeding Team image Marnie Fitz



FoD November Team less 3 image Marnie Fitz

to capture activity. It was wonderful to have Julie and her cake making skills back with us – Julie and cake at equal measure.

October 27th was a day off as everyone had other pursuits: probably off to the races to see Winx have her 29th straight win!

November 24th was the final day in Woodland Break for 2018. Hansi, Anthony, Alice, and later Michael arrived with the intent to borrow

Hansi's nest box camera that needed repairing after a possum bit the end off it. It wasn't long before Michael had a pair of loppers in his hand and therefore qualified for a cuppa when we knocked off. The boundary line between Parks Vic and the Mornington Peninsula Shire is a bit vague where we began weeding, so we well may have been on Shire ground. If we were then they should be grateful! Neighbouring paddocks are now visible through the trees, and this can be considered as a light at the end of a very long tunnel!

Thanks everyone for labouring in the scrub in all weathers. There's no doubt about us, we're persistent to say the least!

We return to the office on February 23rd, weather permitting.

Marnie Fitzsimons

Parks Update by Sam Pollard at the DFI AGM

- In November 2017 the launch of Non Powered Craft on Devilbend took place. Sam was involved in upgrading of signage, exclusion zones and the installation of buoys. Exclusion zones are working quite well. Most users are compliant and head to deeper water where there is less weed and more fish.
- A visitor guide to Devilbend can be down loaded with a fact sheet for non-powered water craft.
- KBA (Key Bird Area) signage is still in the hands of the Parks planning department.
- Fish licences are being checked (trout and redfin).
- ESTA (Emergency Services Tracking Authority) points have been installed in the park.
- Extension of the fishing platform has allowed for off-jetty fishing in deeper water.
- A launch area for kayaks has been established and rocking and roaming repairs have been undertaken.
- 2 new seats and a new shelter have been provided, as well as clearing around fences for fire break integrity. Also Corrections Victoria has undertaken various jobs such as attending to carpark beds, and sallow (Sydney Wattle – *Acacia longifolia*) removal.
- Gidja pointed out that Mahogany is the No 1 environmental weed in the reserve as it pollutes the eucalypt gene pool. Parks will start on this soon hopefully and it may take 10 years of drilling and filling.
- TAFE students have also undertaken plantings in the Derril Road area and have been helping with the pittosporum removal in Woodlands Reserve.
- 2000 trees were planted by friends and Sea Winds people.
- There are many ongoing issues with vandalism, such as gate ramming, graffiti, damage to fittings, illegal dumping of rubbish.
- The quarry is a 'hotspot' in summer. Parks can only give advice.

The Foundation and Friends of Daangean continue to enjoy a good rapport with Parks in working together to preserve the integrity of the reserve as both a recreation and habitat haven.

Annabel Richards

VOLUNTEER WATER-QUALITY SURVEYING

Waterwatch report

The Waterwatch team has been carrying out their monthly water monitoring duties at Devilbend and Bittern reservoirs. The water levels in both reservoirs are dropping fairly quickly as there has not been much rainfall over the last couple of months. The water quality still remains very good overall at both reservoirs despite the levels being lower; they are large bodies of water and are not affected as much as smaller dams or creeks would be. With the lower levels of water the mud at the edge of a couple of sites becomes soft and sticky making collecting water samples a little bit more hazardous and extra care needs to be taken.

There is very little rubbish being left around our testing sites, which is encouraging. This hopefully means that people are becoming more aware of keeping the area litter free.



EBD 200 October 19th image Marnie Fitz



EBD 200 November 21st image Helen Ford

The reeds and other water plants are growing very quickly at this time of the year and it always looks different every time we go testing. Melbourne Water and Parks Vic have developed four refuge ponds for Dwarf Galaxias: three in the catch drain and one in a nearby paddock, which we will be monitoring over the summer period. We will be monitoring the levels of water drop in the ponds to

ascertain whether they will support the fish in future summer periods. It's possible when they get too low they will be topped up.

There is a lot of graffiti on and around the platforms, and on the cliff face as well. Very disappointing.

It's also worth noting that snake season is upon us and everyone should be alert and be up to date with snakebite procedures.

Cheers

Graham

White

Richard

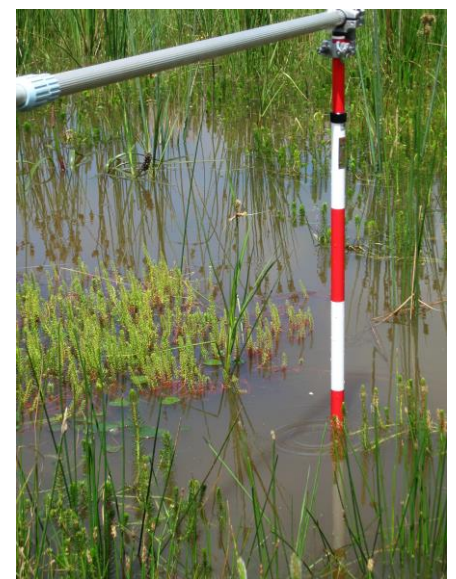


Quarry Wall Graffiti image Marnie Fitz

Akers from Melbourne Water accompanied us on October 19th Waterwatch day, as he wanted to check on the proposed refuge ponds. He provided us with a measuring pole and coupling for the sample collecting pole and gave directions where the photo monitoring points were. Pobblebonk and Eastern Common Froglets were chorusing beautifully in the Bittern Reservoir. My recording of them failed so I obviously did something wrong.

November 21st saw a noticeable drop in reservoir levels and the paddock refuge pond, the latter was at the critical level had there been fish in it. Also, the frogs were conspicuously silent.

The final Waterwatch day for 2018 was on Tuesday December 18th. The paddock pond had a small water increase after recent rain; access to it was a little more difficult than last time due to extra water in the catch drain.



EBD 200 Water Level December 18th image Marnie Fitz

Greeting us at Devilbend car park was a heap of someone's garden prunings, rubbish left at the barbeque, with one of the hotplates blackened and burnt to billy-o. At the fishing platform two new inflatable geese were abandoned, and across the quarry water rubbish was strewn through the trees across the side. Later, three youths were spotted swimming below the same area as the rubbish.

The Waterwatch team was asked to keep an eye out for a swan with a fishing lure embedded in its leg; however, we didn't see it.

Three images of the refuge pond EBD200 show varying water levels. The reach of the pole also varies as to where you can put your feet at the edge.

Marnie Fitzsimons

Macroinvertebrate survey

Our admired Adie & Geoff have retired from their macroinvertebrate surveying and until someone steps into their shoes this space will be vacant.

Secondary Students Go Ape on Pittosporum at Devilbend

A few weeks ago, 16 secondary school students and their teacher Tony O'Connor arrived to meet Hansi Wegener at Woodland Break ready to take on "bad-arse" pests in the bush. These VCAL students were completing a school-based apprenticeship by completing a one year Certificate 2 in Parks and Gardens Course at McClelland Secondary College in Frankston.

Once inducted for safety, clad with protective gear, and then armed with serious weapons including giant secateurs, cut-throat pirate-looking garden saws and deadly chemicals, Hansi addressed the troops: -

"If you look out now into the bush, you'll see those nasty critters we want to wipe out... PITTOSPORUM bushes... *Pittosporum undulatum*; a sly, sneaky invasive weed tree that's taking over the bush as we know it. It blocks out the sun and kills off everything underneath it, so look out and don't stay underneath one too long. Kill it before it gets you! See them over there....looking at us. They may know we're coming so watch out! They've got these sticky orange berries that will grow anywhere, even through your jumper. It has trained foxes and blackbirds to eat its seeds and poop them out to grow everywhere! Don't let it do that to you!! It sap also has a bad smell so don't let it stick on you. Now I'll tell you how to kill it, so listen carefully....."

A few minutes later, with the students now primed-up for serious action and battle-plan sorted, the group quietly formed a 100-metre North-South line through the bush, a few metres apart. Using the element of surprise each student on command suddenly turned east and marched in battle-cry towards the unsuspecting enemy. The Pittosporum didn't have a hope. Before they knew it they were being hacked, chopped, sawed, pulled, poisoned, broken, and piled up, ready for *burning later in the year. Hardly any escaped, except for little nippers hiding under bracken ferns or lomandra clumps. It was a massacre. It continued for what seemed like ages (probably minutes) before the troops... battle fatigued, thirsty, and hungry and exhausted had to stop. It was estimated that in that time about 500 Pittosporum perished under the onslaught, not bad given only superficial injuries occurred on the winning side including a bull ant bite, a scratched elbow, and itchy stuff down someone's back.

Said one student, "That was great. Why didn't we get out earlier in the year and work in the bush?"

Another student wanted to take his weed weapons home with him. He said he was sure the bush behind his place had pittos. Another student remarked that in future they should work all day in the



Tony's Team image Tony O'Connor

bush so they could boil a billy, have their lunch there and make a bush-hut out of the weed-trees in case it rained.

Who knows what might happen with next year's group? Getting out and working more in the bush is for certain

Tony O'Connor

*They actually remain where they fall and gradually break down.

DEVILBEND AMBASSADOR REPORT

Moorooduc Primary School

This year I had the opportunity to participate in the Devilbend Ambassador Program. It was a great opportunity to get outside and explore nature and a wide range of animals and insects. We definitely got out of our comfort zone by touching and handling worms and all sorts of bugs and creatures. We had a wonderful time throughout the three terms. We went water testing, bird watching, and tree planting; spoke to park rangers, helped with a frog census, and (lucky last) we went ponding. Ponding was probably my favourite because we got to learn about different water bugs. A highlight of the day was Chloe and I falling in the water and getting really muddy and wet. The mud on the bottom of the dam was sinking mud, so Chloe and I got our gumboots soaking wet and muddy. We also found heaps of insects and bugs.

On the 8th of June Tully and I, including Tyabb Rail Primary School, met Sam the park ranger. He explained to us about how bush fires can start and spread. We got his firefighting hose from the truck and sprayed it at a cone to practice our control and accuracy. We tried different pressures and while we were having a great time a photographer came and took a photo that ended up in the Western Port Newspaper.

Overall I really enjoyed the experience. We learnt a range of skills and information about nature and the environment. We also got to explore outside more, and I would personally recommend this program to other aspiring leaders. I would like to give a massive thank you to all of the helpers and officers who came to inform and educate the ambassadors. I would also like to thank Mr Quigley for driving us to and from Devilbend, and for his ongoing support.

By Chillie M

This year has created lots of different opportunities. These opportunities have produced many great memories of things I wouldn't normally participate in. One of the highlights for me was being part of the Devilbend Program. My favourite memory would be ponding because we had lots of fun whilst we learnt about different bugs, leeches, and lots of other water bugs.

The last time we went to Devilbend we were participating in the frog census. We split up into different groups and I went on to the foreshore with Hannah. We found Striped Marsh Frog eggs and lots of tiny tadpoles.

The activities that we engaged in this year were frog census; water testing; ponding; fire talk; and lots of other fun and informative activities. Overall it was a great experience and I really enjoyed meeting the Tyabb Railway Students.

It was an amazing opportunity to get outdoors in different types of weather, and we were always learning different things. I would like to thank Melbourne Water, Parks Victoria, Devilbend monitors and most of all Hansi and Mr Quigley for guiding and informing us.

By Abby

This year was a great opportunity to learn different skills and create new memories and experiences through the Devilbend Program. I have learnt so much through meeting and collaborating with other ambassadors from Tyabb Railway Primary School. Our knowledge and information learnt could not have been possible without the workers/volunteers from Devilbend, Melbourne Water and Parks Victoria. While at Devilbend we learnt how to test water, listen for frog calls and tell what frog it was and its scientific name. We also listened for bird calls, and learned how to tell the difference between each type of bird; how fires start; and what workers need to use to put them out.

During our time learning about fires Chillie, Jenaya, Cody, Hanna, Lachie and I had a chance to appear in the Western Port Newspaper and we obviously took it. Once the newspaper came out we were desperate to see it.

While we participated in the frog census we were split into four groups. I was with Mr Quigley and Lachie in section B while Chloe went with Jenaya and Rachel in section C. Abby was with Hanna and Geordie in section A and Hansi went with Roger over the road. Unfortunately none of us was successful: however I thought I faintly heard some but didn't record any. The other groups found three other frogs and Sam showed us the most poisonous frog in the world. It looked so cool and on the bottom of it there was a marble pattern. On the top it was camouflaged.

By *Tully*

This year I've had a great opportunity being a Devilbend Ambassador and have had lots of amazing experiences.

This year I have learnt so much about how to spot and investigate what birds are living at Devilbend, what bugs are living in the Devilbend Reservoir, and listening for and trying to find frogs, and water testing.

I've also loved talking to the Tyabb Railway Primary Ambassadors and the volunteers from Devilbend, Parks Victoria and Melbourne Water.

My favourite activity was definitely ponding - trying to find bugs in the water because I loved looking at all the cool bugs and trying to see if the water was polluted or not. A highlight of that day was going in the water with Chillie and getting stuck in the sinking mud. My gum boot probably got filled with water bugs and mud like 10 times.

Overall this has been a great time to get out in nature since I'm always doing activities. I have loved learning new things about stuff I never really learn about. Thanks Mr Quigley for letting us have this great experience.

By *Chloe*

Tyabb Railway Station Primary School

Being a Devilbend Ambassador is a great chance to get out in nature, get active and help many different organizations. Some of my favourite activities were helping Fisheries Victoria release 15000 trout; visiting Seawinds Nursery to see how plants are grown for lots of different reserves; and going to the Kids Teaching Kids in the city. We got to talk to many groups about how we can make a frog bog, how to use the frog census app and finally we gave them some facts about our beloved frogs.

Being an Ambassador has taught me the importance of looking after our environment. I think being a Devilbend Ambassador has helped me to get my scholarship in sustainability at Westernport Secondary College.

We have had such a great time there. To our next Devilbend Ambassadors we wish you the best of luck and we hope you have as great a time as we did there.

Thank-you from *Janaya*

I've really enjoyed the chance to be a Devilbend Ambassador. It was fun and interesting. I learned about an app to record frog croaks. I also learned that there are many frogs out there, not just one type of frog.

The most fun thing we did is probably the macro invertebrate's day and frog census recording. Kids Teaching Kids was one of the most educational camps I have been on. I loved it because it was fun and that there were so many people there looking after nature.

Thank-you to the Devilbend Foundation and Hansi for making this happen.

Thanks, *Lachlan*

Co-ordinator Comments

I can't believe it been just over 12 months since Geordie Male from Tyabb Railway Station Primary School contacted me, asking if there were a few things he and a few students could do at Devilbend. I remember thinking, 'absolutely'!!

I put together a few ideas that he could present to his boss, Emma Slater (Principal), who loved the idea. The school selection program then started to select four wonderful young year 6 students to be the first Devilbend School Ambassadors.

Thinking it would be good to give the students an introduction to the reserve prior to the program starting in the New Year, a frog census was organised in December 2017. I remember it being a wonderful morning; one of those mornings that nature turns on, and we seemed to discover or see something in every nook and cranny.

I was also extremely lucky the day prior when I popped out to the reserve to scout some locations and by chance I bumped into Gary Sissons, a local newspaper photographer. Not knowing who he was or what he did, we simply started up a friendly conversation and before I know it he was offering to come out and photograph the kids for the paper. They ended up on the front page.

How cool was that :)!

A little later, in the second term of 2018, Moorooduc Primary School joined the Ambassador program.

It was an offer of a helping hand and some tech advice that led me to meet Peter Quigley, Principal of MPS. I remember talking at length to Peter about what our ambitions & aims were that we wanted to achieve at the reserve, and what we had already been doing.

Peter then explained he was the Principal of Moorooduc Primary School, and it would be such a great resource for his school and considering too that they were just down the end of the road, it would be perfect.

He quickly got the ball rolling at his end with the school council, and with me liaising between the two schools we quickly had a second lot of Ambassadors joining us for fun adventures at Devilbend.

Looking back over the last 12 months it's been a fantastic year: we've had the school Ambassadors to Devilbend; so many memories; a lot of fun, and I know I earned a lot.

I would like to thank Parks Victoria, especially Sam Pollard, for all his help and support throughout the year.



Frog Census with James Frazer & School Ambassadors
image Hansi Wegner

Also a thank you to Monica Tewman from the macro-invertebrates team of Melbourne Water, and Graham White (leader of the Water Watch group) for their help.

And not to mention my DFI committee members, a big thank you to Roger Richards, Annabel Richards, Marnie Fitzsimons (who is always a fantastic help and support), and Anthony Fennell. Also, thank you Michael Mann who is always putting his hand up to help when he can.

Wrapping up:

The last visit for the 2018 School

Ambassadors from Tyabb Railway Station Primary School and Moorooduc Primary School was a fantastic morning, thanks to

James Frazer from Melbourne Water teaching us all about frogs: their types of habitat; stages of life; the types of frogs we are likely to find in our specific area; and what different habitats the different frogs prefer.

We also learnt about this fantastic app called 'Frog Census' that's available for you to download to your phone or tablet.

The app allows you to easily and conveniently do your own survey of frogs: so give it a go in your own local area - you may even discover a frog that was not known to be there.

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details...>

Thanks DB Ambassadors for a fantastic year and great memories.

Hansi Wegner

Program / School Ambassadors coordinator



PARKS VIC NEWS

DEVILBEND RESERVE - RANGER'S UPDATE

November 2018

Over the past few months the Parks team has focused a large amount of time monitoring, mapping and treating the new and emerging weed *Disa bracteata* (South African Weed Orchid) not only in Devilbend but Langwarrin FFR and Arthurs Seat State Park. Unfortunately, we have found other isolated sites in our travels ground truthing along shorelines and other parts of the catch drain to add onto the new sites we found last year along a small section of the catch drain. Melbourne Water has been treating the catch drain and Eastern shoreline sites every fortnight, spraying and digging out any flowering plants. The next few months will see works on blackberry throughout Northern Peninsula and any fire deployments that come up within the state and interstate.

The water tank art project with the Bunurong Land Council, Bunjilwarra and the Willum Warrain has made a start with the first signs of the back drop being painted on the tank. Over the next few months you will see more work done.

For all volunteers who have not yet registered to Parks Victoria Park please register following the link <http://parkweb.vic.gov.au/get-involved/volunteer/join>

Weed of the Month – Blackberry

Blackberry is a perennial, semi-deciduous, prickly, scrambling invasive plant. It is a semi-prostrate to almost-erect shrub, with arching and entangling stems arising from a woody crown and forms thickets up to several metres high. The root/crown system is the only perennial part of the plant.

Sam Pollard

Ranger Northern Peninsula Parks & Reserves



Fruiting Blackberry image Sam Pollard

Red-eared Slider Turtle

The [Red-eared Slider Turtle](#) has been reported in the Devilbend Natural Features Reserve. This species has previously been found in the wild in and around the metropolitan areas of Melbourne. It competes with native turtles for food, basking sites, nesting sites and suitable habitat. The turtle is classified as a controlled pest animal under the Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994.

Reports of the red-eared slider are critical to protect Victoria from the establishment of the species. If you think you have found the Red-eared Slider turtle report it immediately to 136186, or email highrisk.invasiveanimals@ecodev.vic.gov.au with reports of high risk invasive animals please take a photo and record as much information as possible such as when, where, how the animal was sighted. *ParksVic site*

LINKING THE MORNINGTON PENINSULA LANDSCAPE PROJECT

In memory of Matt Stahmer

It is with much sadness that we received news that Matt Stahmer died of heart failure whilst surfing on 19th November. He was a gregarious and caring person who would go above and beyond to help others. He was also hilarious. I had the wonderful experience of working with Matt in the Natural Systems Team of the Mornington Peninsula Shire since I began in 2012. He was passionate about the local environment and his legacy lives on across the Peninsula, including a significant patch of Calcareous Swale Grassland he helped to establish at St Andrews Beach Recreation Hall; his work to protect the Frankston Spider Orchid; the biolinks along Browns Road Rosebud and Meakins Rd Flinders, and so much more. His hearty laughter and zest for life will be missed by all who knew him. Our thoughts are with his family and friends.



Matt Stahmer

I've been thinking a lot about the strength we all receive from nature. At this busy time of the year, I encourage you to take some time out for yourself to re-energise and reflect on the big picture – what a beautiful place we

live in and how lucky we all are. A few weeks ago, I headed out to Balcombe Estuary to check out Hansi Wegner's great camera set up for nest box monitoring which transmits live videos to a handheld screen.



Hansi with Nest Box Camera

Last week I also attended the DELWP 'Weeds at the Early Stages of Invasion (WESI)' Weed workshop run by Kate Blood and Bianca Gold. The top weeds were:

1. Sicilian Sea Lavender
2. Berry-Flower heath
3. Chilean needle grass
4. Black Flag/Star fish iris
5. Bitou Bush
6. White flowering Brooms
7. African Daisy



Notes are available from me by request – just drop me an email:

Jacqueline.salter@mornpen.vic.gov.au

Weed samples from WESI workshop. Image: J Salter

I wish you all a wonderful festive season.

Jacqueline.salter@mornpen.vic.gov.au or phone 0408 213 079.

Jacqui Salter, Landcare Facilitator

OPINIONS & OTHER COMMENTS CORNER

Disclaimer: The views expressed in here do not necessarily reflect those of the editor or DFI

Mornington Peninsula Ratepayers and Residents Association Enlightenment

Since the formation of the Devilbend Foundation Council in 2006, I have been sitting on the Council as the representative of the Mornington Peninsula Ratepayers and Residents Association (MPRRA). At MPRRA's invitation I spoke to the assembled members at their AGM, held on 11th November, in the Rosebud library.

I began with presenting a brief history of the Devilbend Natural Features Reserve (DNFR) area along these lines:

- The two reservoirs (Devilbend Reservoir and Bittern Reservoir), which comprise about 25% of the whole area, were decommissioned as potable water storages for the Mornington Peninsula in the 60s. Melbourne Water, as land manager, prepared a glossy Master Plan for the area in the early 80s, and initiated a public consultation process.
- Local environmental groups led by the late Dr Brian Cumming and Tony Brindley, quickly mobilized to oppose the Master Plan. They formed a coalition of about 40 groups (from federal, state and local levels) known as the "Devilbend Working Group, DLG". DLG objected to the proposed sale of most of the land to developers for private sale, arguing that the land was in the public domain and should remain so. They also made clear that the proposed "conservation zones" surrounding the water bodies were totally inadequate to support sustainable populations of wildlife.
- More importantly, inspired especially by Brian, the DLG created a "Community Vision", in which the habitat of the entire area would be restored, and eventually the area would become a world-class conservation reserve.

- To cut a long story of political struggle short, the outcome of the DLG's efforts were as follows: almost all of the area was kept in the public domain, and the DNFR was proclaimed with Parks Victoria appointed as land manager in 2006.
- In the same year the Devilbend Foundation Inc. (DFI) was formed as an apex group of many of the original DLG member groups.
- Parks Victoria organised a highly participatory consultation, leading to the publication of the DNFR management plan in 2010.
- Compromises between competing interests in the use of the reserve had to be made in the planning process, but the heavy DFI engagement enabled most aspects of the original Community Vision being reflected in the final plan.

I then summarised the remarkable array of ongoing DFI activities that are reported on in the bulk of this, and every, DFI News.

In conclusion, I shared the view that PV is managing the reserve very well, in accordance with the management plan. The partnership between Parks Victoria and DFI (among other local organisations) continues to be very productive, and the public facilities; the network of trails; and the habitat restoration work are moving us a long way towards the achievement of the Community Vision.

Jamie Edgerton

Search and Rescue

During the years that I spent in East Gippsland as a Fisheries and Wildlife Officer I was sometimes called upon to perform duties that were outside the normal activities associated with my position. During the twelve years I spent at Bairnsdale I was often involved in rescue or recovery operations on the Gippsland lakes. The local Police did not have a boat so in any search or recovery operation on the water they invariably called on me and the Departmental boat.

Two recovery operations that I was involved in occurred during the mid-1960s, and each resulted in the loss of young lives.

In the first incident a group of young couples on motorbikes arrived at Paynesville on a Saturday afternoon and relaxed on the foreshore with a few drinks. From local reports they were well behaved and not causing any disturbance. In the early evening one of the party members, a young man who was there alone, walked out into the lake fully clothed and kept walking until he disappeared from view. I got an early call the following Sunday morning requesting that I pick up a diver and a Police Officer and proceed to the site of the suspected drowning. By the time we arrived on the scene the visiting group of bikers had departed except for one couple who had stayed behind to indicate the spot where their friend had disappeared.

The diver, who happened to be the owner of a local garage, found the body within a minute or two and managed to float it over to the boat. We then took the body back to a nearby jetty laid it out and waited for the arrival of the undertaker. The deceased, a small man, looked to be about 20 years of age and he was fully dressed in his biking clothes, boots, jeans and leather jacket. Laying there with his hands by his side he looked as though he was sleeping. However, the blue pallor of his face indicated that it was a sleep from which there was no awakening. I thought at the time what a sad and bizarre way for someone to end their life. The young couple who had remained at the scene had a brief look at the body and then departed. The police informed me that they had difficulty finding his next of kin, all they knew was his name.

The second incident involved the drowning of two young girls in the Tambo River downstream from Bruthen at a place known as Tambo Upper. As the story unfolded it appeared that a woman had left her three young girls on the bank of the river while she went off to do something or other. From my memory of the tragedy I believe the eldest girl was about 12, there were two younger girls with the youngest being of pre-school age. When the mother returned sometime later the two older girls had disappeared and only the youngest remained standing on the bank of the River and pointing into the water. I received a phone call from the police early that afternoon so I picked up a Police Officer and proceeded up the Tambo River to a spot known locally as the Cliffs. Here the River is bounded on one side by the Tambo Upper road and on the other by a line of steep cliffs. The riverbank on the road

side was heavily vegetated with a small clear spot here and there to provide access for anglers. It was not a place where I would leave three young children unattended.

When we arrived on the scene there were a number of police and local farmers standing around and very little happening. There were no divers available so I and the local police officer started towing a grapnel up and down the river in the hope of snagging the bodies. It was a very crude way of attempting to recover a drowned person but in the absence of any other recovery activity it was the best we could do. If a similar tragedy occurred today no doubt a team of expert police divers would be sent from Melbourne to assist in the recovery operation. Later that afternoon a fish net was stretched across a bend in the river and the two bodies were recovered as they drifted with the current and became enmeshed in the net. The Police believed that the mid-aged girl had fallen into the river and the eldest girl had attempted to save her and both had drowned.

I didn't attend the inquest and I don't know if the Coroner made some negative comments on the circumstances of the incident. It was a tragedy that need not have happened.

Kevin Street

SOME HISTORY

***Herald* (Melbourne, Vic.: 1861 - 1954), Thursday 24 May 1923, page 16**

HEARD THE SCREAMS

Tales of Eerie Sounds in Bush

EXPLANATIONS DIFFER

Additional reminiscences of experiences in the bush are related by correspondents who have at various times heard blood-curdling screams, resembling those which have terrified residents of Christmas Hills. More than usual interest attaches to the contribution sent by Mr T. J. Ruddell, Deepdene, who gives the result of nearly 80 years' experience of bush life in this State. He speaks of early experiences with the Aborigines.

BUNYIP DID EXIST

Sir, — I would like to tell my experience after nearly 80 years in touch with bush-life in Victoria. About 1850, my father purchased a cattle station in Western Port, now Mornington. The station was named "Tuerong." "With it he bought stock and outfit. The first occupant was Mr Thomas, who was also appointed "Black Protector," to distribute the flour, blankets, and other comforts to the natives. Although rations stopped when he left, the tribe still remained in their quamby—a collection of shelters made simply by planting two forked sticks in the ground, a sapling across for the ridge, and branches and bark leant against the ridge. These mi-mis ran in two parallel lines, about 30 feet apart. Across the one end was a bark square, about 8 x 10, composed of flat sheets, sewn or tied together with dried sinews from kangaroos. On this large sheet there was sketched in some white substance, similar to the clay or paint with which they smeared their faces and bodies for corroboree or war-dance, the outline of the bunyip or debbil-debbil of the lagoon, or lake, or pond. The bunyip when spoken of was always associated with still water, never a river or creek. Its noise was like "drum-boolabool," or thunder. It seemed a sketch of it very largo amphibious creature like a walrus or seal. Some years afterwards, when I was in business as photographer, Mr Street, of the City Buffet, who had been a collector of wild animals previous to the Zoo, got me round to photograph lions, tigers and other animals. There was a sea devil (which snapped at my camera legs), with unblinking, round eyes, the exact counterpart of the sketch on the sheet of bark of which I speak. Although like the New Zealand dodo, they have become extinct, the bunyip traditions have been handed down from tribe to tribe—Yours, etc.

T. J. RUDELL.

"Tuerong," Barnsbury Rd., Deepdene, May 23.

P.S. Tuerong Pastoral Run No. 191 - Ralph Ruddell held the Tuerong run from 25th May 1852 until Charles Vaughan & Edward Wild took it over from 17th April 1860. They held it until 19th August 1864 when it was forfeited.

Victorian Squatters Compiled by Robert Spreadborough & Hugh Anderson 1983

The license for Tuerong, 12,000 acres, was held by William Jackson Thomas, son of William Thomas the Assistant Aboriginal Protector (*Valda Cole*)

Hastings District Heritage Study Vol 2

Devilbend Ck Reg ID No. 14242, the same number as Balcombe Ck, which indicates they are one and the same

Victorian Register of Geographic Names (VICNAMES)

The traditional Boonwurrung name for Devilbend Ck was Tichunggorroc

Victorian Register of Geographic Names

Daangean is written on the map below and note the spelling of Western Port.



William Thomas's Map State Library Victoria

Age (Melbourne, Vic.: 1854 - 1954), Monday 28 December 1936, page 12

PENINSULA WATER SCHEME

A 130,000,000 Gallon Storage

Good progress with the construction of the Bittern reservoir, near Hastings, which will be the main storage for Dromana, Rosebud, Rye, Sorrento and Portsea under the Mornington Peninsula water supply scheme, is reported by the chairman of the Water Commission, Mr. East. This reservoir, which will have a capacity of 130,000,000 gallons, and is nearing completion, will be filled from the Bunyip water scheme by a branch main from the existing Cranbourne pipeline. The main will consist of 89,000 feet of 27-inch, 24-inch and 21-inch diameter pipes. Pipe laying will commence early in the New Year, and will be followed by the construction of a supply channel from the Bittern reservoir to a service basin at Dromana. It is anticipated that if funds are made available the whole work, including the main pipe line from Dromana to Portsea, and reticulation of the towns concerned, could be completed in about two years.

Estimated to cost £160,000, the under taking has already been aided from un-employment relief funds to the extent of £55,000. At present 38 men are engaged on the work, and as the scheme extends this number will be substantially increased. The work is being carried out under the direction of Mr. W F. Nevill, divisional engineer.

TROVE Digitised Newspapers

***Argus* (Melbourne, Vic.: 1848 - 1957), Tuesday 19 August 1941, page 2**

BITTERN RESERVOIR FULL

Bittern Reservoir, main storage for the water supply extension to Dromana, Sorrento, and Portsea, has now been filled to capacity -130,000,000 gallons - for the first time.

Mr. J.J.R. East, State Rivers and Water Supply Commission chairman, explained yesterday that this reservoir, completed last year, was supplied from headwaters of the Bunyip River by many miles of races and pipeline.

TROVE Digitised Newspapers

Devilbend Reservoir Works



Daangean Point, 1962 prior to flooding the reservoir. Initial scars from quarrying are visible



Daangean Point 1973 after construction and flooding of the reservoir

Devilbend 1962 & 1973 image SLV



Tower Construction image State Library Victoria



Causeway Construction image State Library Victoria

**APPENDIX 2: APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP OF
DEVILBEND FOUNDATION INC.**

I,
.....
(Full name of applicant)

of
.....
(Address)

Email
Address.....Telephone.....

Desire to become a Member of the Devilbend Foundation Inc.
In the event of my admission as a Member I agree to be bound by the Rules of the
Foundation for the time being in force.

.....
Signature of Applicant

.....
Date.

I.....a Councillor of the Foundation
Nominate the applicant for membership of the Foundation.

.....
Signature of Proposer

.....
Date

I..... a Councillor of the Foundation
Second the nomination of the applicant for membership of the foundation.

.....
Signature of Seconder

.....
date.

DONATION TO DEVILBEND FOUNDATION Inc.

WE ARE A TAX-DEDUCTIBLE ORGANISATION! HELP US TO RAISE FUNDS TO MAKE DEVILBEND A WORLD CLASS CONSERVATION RESERVE!

All donations over \$2 can be claimed by donors as tax-deductible, so do help us raise funds & benefit yourself as this financial year comes to a close through our Devilbend Conservation Reserve Trust Fund as we are listed on the Register of Environmental Organisations under Section 6.1.1 sub-section 30-55 (1) of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997.

Yes I would like to donate \$..... to the Devilbend Conservation Reserve Trust Fund

☐ I attach a cheque, or postal order addressed to:

Westernport and Peninsula Protection Council

Attention: Devilbend Foundation Inc.

PO Box 9

Hastings

Vic 3915

☐ I will use the Foundation's Bendigo Bank, Mornington: BSB 633 000, 'Devilbend Conservation Reserve Trust Fund Account' number 130522204 & let you know that I donated to this account direct (Ring DFI Acting Treasurer Annabel Richards on 5983 1294).

Name.....Signed.....

Address.....Date.....

“STRATEGIC PLANNING APPROACH” BOOKLET

Please send me a copy of the Foundation's 20-page coloured publication '*Devilbend Reserve – A Strategic Planning Approach*'. Post form to Westernport and Peninsula Protection Council
Attention: Devilbend Foundation Inc.

PO Box 9

Hastings

Vic 3915

Name.....Phone.....

Email.....

Address.....

FRIENDS OF DAANGEAN VOLUNTEERS

I'm interested in being a Devilbend Foundation supporter as a volunteer in the Friends of Daangean. Please keep me in touch & note my name & contact details here.

Please contact Marnie Fitzsimons on 5981 2483 or marniefitz1@gmail.com or post this to PO Box 9 Hastings 3915

Name..... (Please print)

Phone.....Mobile.....

Email.....

My special interest in Devilbend Reserve is.....

Signed.....Date.....

PO Box 9, Hastings 3915

GROUP MEMBERSHIP INVOICE 2016-17

Group

Address:

Email address for
contact.....

Membership fee: Full Group Membership \$40 for large groups, \$20 smaller.

Please make cheques to Devilbend Foundation Inc., & post to:

Westernport and Peninsula Protection Council

Attention: Devilbend Foundation Inc.

PO Box 9

Hastings

Vic 3915 or bring cheque or cash to the AGM.

Donation: \$----- [Donations made to the Devilbend Conservation Reserve Trust Fund are tax
deductible.]