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Walking and Talking with the Bushwalking Victoria Vice President

Iranian Bushwalking Club Joins Bushwalking Victoria

Iranian Bushwalkers, the first bushwalking group for Iranian residents of Victoria, has recently joined Bushwalking Victoria. Other nationalities are welcome to join the club. The club has about 50 members. Welcome to Bushwalking Victoria.



Its membership showed their enthusiasm for participating in Bushwalking Victoria activities when 20 members joined the working bee to clear Sassafras Creek Track on Sunday 12 October. What an impressive turnout.

Images: Some members of the Iranian Bushwalking Club at work on the Sassafras Creek Track (Joslin Guest, Boroondara Bushwalkers)



New Field Officer Coordinator Appointed to BTAC

In the September edition of the newsletter, Megan Major, the Bushwalking Tracks and Conservation (BTAC) Convener called for nominations for the position of Field Officer Coordinator on the BTAC committee.

We have pleasure in announcing that Peter Maffei, a member of Strzelecki Bushwalking Club, has been appointed to the position. Peter is also a member of the Friends of Baw Baw National Park.

Peter's name may be familiar you many of you as one of the organiser of this year's Federation Walks Weekend at Rawson.

Charlie Ablitt

BTAC Track and Conservation Program

29-30 Nov, 2014 Upper Howqua	<p>This is a very enjoyable location. We will drive to the base camp at the upper Howqua River campsite, and clear overgrowth from the nearby track(s). A reasonable level of fitness is required as we will need to climb up the track. A Parks Victoria ranger will be in attendance.</p> <p>Contact Charlie Ablitt at conservation@bushwalkingvictoria.org.au for more information and to register interest in joining the activity.</p> <p>Let Charlie know if you can operate a brush cutter or hedge trimmer or have a Chainsaw Licence or an Agricultural Chemical Users Permit.</p> <p>Please note: An expression of interest to participate in a BTAC activity or project does not necessarily guarantee an invitation to participate as sometimes we need to assemble a team with particular skills, or there is a logistical limit to the number of participants. New willing hands will always be considered. In all instances we will keep you informed.</p>
24-26 Jan, 2015 Falls Creek	<p>The annual Sallow Willow Eradication weekend is currently being planned.</p> <p>Sponsor: Parks Victoria.</p>

BTAC Field Officer Reports

Collated by Megan Major, BTAC Convener.

Ballarat and Central Victoria – John Petheram

Canadian Forest on the north-eastern edge of Ballarat, a popular walking area, is in danger of being sold for real-estate development. Hence the Ballarat Bushwalking and Outdoor Club is supporting the Friends of the Canadian Forest Corridor's bid for the creation of a multi-use forest park. The launch of the campaign attracted 125 people, including representatives of the main political parties.

Otway Ranges – Bernard Jordan

- Access to Marriners Falls, near Apollo Bay, has been closed by Park Victoria due to risk of falling trees. It sets a precedent. The locals have protested.
- The Old Beechy Rail Trail has received an Innovation in Design Award in the Victorian Community Sports and Recreation Awards 2104. It is an attractive walking and riding trail and has been recently extended to Ferguson.

Wilson's Promontory – Ian McKellar

- In September, 12 BTAC volunteers finished clearing the South East Track from the light station to Waterloo Bay.
- Parks Victoria crews have slashed the walking track from Martins Hill to the Roaring Meg campsite and have removed fallen trees on the Sealers Cove Track. They are also doing work to ameliorate tree risk around the Sealers and Refuge Cove campsites.
- Planning is also under way for replacement of the Sealers Cove toilets.
- Bushwalking Victoria requested that a toilet to be placed at the junction of the Telegraph Saddle and the Waterloo Bay tracks. Currently the patch of ti-tree on the western side of the Telegraph Saddle Track is an unofficial toilet, much used by walkers who do not use or carry a trowel for burying bodily waste. (A trowel for such purposes should always be essential part of everyone's walking equipment.)
- A meeting of the 'reconvened' Wilsons Prom Advisory Committee is scheduled for December. Members of the previous committee will attend. Bushwalking Victoria will be represented.

Eastern Highlands – Dave Rimmer

- Clearing of the northern section of Freemans Mill Track, Bunyip SP, has been complete, which means that the entire track can now be walked.
- Bayside Bushwalking Club has adopted Freemans Mill Track, and will do a walk-through soon to familiarise themselves with the track and its requirements and to do a light clear on the way.
- 1,000 Z cards for the Walk into History Trail are available from Bushwalking Victoria's Administration Manager.

Dandenong Ranges – Bev Williams

An enthusiastic turnout of more than 40 volunteers helped clear the Sassafras Creek Track on Sunday 12 October.



Image: Sassafras Creek volunteers at the meeting point (image - Joslin Guest, Boroondara Bushwalkers)

Bushwalking Environment

Restoration of Youngs Hut

17-20 October

Dragging overflowing wheelbarrows across the High Plains at close to midnight is a different way to start a weekend but that was what enthusiasts from Border Bushwalking Club (BBC) did as part of their restoration effort at Youngs Hut on the Bogong High Plains. The hut, about 5km south of pole 333 on the High Plains above Falls Creek, has been cared for by BBC for decades. Club member Ron Hammond organised this restoration effort.

We started walking to 333 about 8pm. On the way, we saw bright lights dancing in the dark ahead of us. It was like you would imagine aliens or the Min Min lights to look like. But it was not ET, it was the eight volunteers from Wangaratta with full packs and wearing bright headlights bringing two wheelbarrows loaded with heavy power tools, with ladders and an insulation roll strapped on top, up the rough path. Two people were out front hauling the barrows on ropes and a third person guided the barrow from behind. A fourth person, who was working out the best path to follow, yelled instructions to the others. We took turns at being the back barrow person, which was the hardest job. We made it to the hut about 11.30pm. More helpers walked in next morning and we began the renovation



The restoration was led by Wangaratta builder, Lochie Gales, who is a member of the Wangaratta Out and About Club. His team consisted of Rob, Graham (Lochie's brother), David (brother of the BBC vice-president), Ian, Trevor and Tony. From the BBC, there was Paul Schirmer, Bill Krautz, his partner, Vera, and Eileen Clark. Ron's daughter, Alex, and her fiancée, Tim, also helped.

Association and moved to the site over winter by Parks Victoria, were used to re-clad three sides of the hut. The boards at the front which are protected by the veranda are in better condition and did not need re-cladding. It was a production line process, with groups taking off the boards, laying insulation then cutting and nailing new boards. (We were about 10 boards short, so we will return in coming months to finish the area around the chimney.) The exterior was then painted with linseed oil, taking the number of coats to three, as the boards had been oiled twice before being taken to the hut. We also cleaned inside the hut and gave the stove a new seal. A heap of rubbish was taken away.

The hut looks like new. Take a wander out and have a look.



The hard-working group really knew their stuff, having already worked on Wallace, Roper and Edmondson Huts. They plan to work on other huts. There is something very satisfying about helping to give historic hut decades of extra life. And seeing a late-night High Country wheelbarrow invasion is something else. It will take a lot to top that!

Michael Lowe, Border Bushwalking Club
Footprints, November 2014

Mt Worth Park

Sunday 5 October

A lovely chorus of bird song welcomed eight people, including the ranger, to Mt Worth State Park.

The tasks consisted of two people spraying a 'healthy' crop of blackberries in the area recently planted with trees. Three people worked on Jack's Wheelchair Track, brush cutting and grooming. Another two people brush cut from the end of Jack's track up to Mudstone Creek and one person used the hedge trimmer through to Seymours Mill along the Moonlight Creek Track.

Storms had brought down several trees along the Moonlight Creek Track which we will deal with on another occasion. All the fallen trees are passable, including a massive Mountain Ash which will probably have the track diverted around the back of the root.

Two groups walked past us while we were working on Moonlight Creek Track - a walking group and a family. We felt encouraged to see people having an adventure deep into the park. When we arrived back at the picnic area, the car park was full and lots of people were enjoying the atmosphere of this beautiful location. We ate our lunch amid the happy chatter.

You may also have experienced this after being in the bush, but there is nothing like wiping a healthily fed leech out of the rubber rings on the front of the washing machine to bring a certain smile to one's face.

Sunday 2 November

Seven people arrived amid a shower of rain. On this working bee, we focused on Moonlight Creek Track which had been affected by recent weather activity. Three people brush-cut to Seymours Mill, while another three removed five fallen trees with chainsaws. A couple more fallen trees were also removed from Moonlight Divide Track. One person was on pruning duty.

An enormous tree root of a mature Mountain Ash blocked the track just past the Mudstone Creek, so we cut a new track around it. Another fallen tree, part of it was balanced on top of the London Bridge, was also removed. We then cut a new track around the London Bridge and removed a lower part of the 'arch' to improve ease of passage.

On Monday my wife and I returned to the park and managed to reposition a piston, a

relic from the timber industry, in an upright position at the Gardiners No. 2 Mill site.



Enjoy the track, everyone.

Tony Castle, Friends Of Mount Worth State Park

Letter to the Editor

Trail Bike Damage

I have led walks on the steep fire line between Mississippi Track and Mississippi Road and on the Tanglefoot Track where I have seen the damage trail bikes do or encountered trail bikes on walker-only tracks.

I'm convinced that the only way to discourage illegal trail bikers is to have LARGE logs across walking tracks in scrubby areas. Negotiating trees down over a track is a common thing for bushwalkers and perhaps we need to be more circumspect in clearing fallen trees off tracks.

I also believe that the way to eventually curtail illegal use on walking tracks by trail bikers is to legislate "hoon" penalties that result in illegal trail bike having their bikes confiscated by the police or rangers for good, along with substantial fines in the thousands of dollars. But making it illegal for trail bikes to use walker-only tracks is not sufficient of itself; it needs to be policed.

If the chances of getting caught are high and the penalties quite punitive, we might see some change in behaviour.

David De Bondi, Boroondara Bushwalkers

Great Ocean Walk Survey



We are exploring interpretation options for the Great Ocean Walk and would like to know about your experiences. Can you help us?

We would like to talk to people who have walked for any number of days (even if you've only completed one) – where you walked from campsite to campsite or pick up/drop off if accommodated offsite.

We will ask you about the following:

- The location for the breaks that you had along the way
- Favourite views
- Wildlife that you saw that you could or could not identify
- Birds that you would like to know more about
- Plants that you would like to know more about
- Cultural stories that you would have liked to know about
- Feedback on the campsites
- Other suggestions for walkability and enjoyability

And anything else you would like to add.

This is qualitative research, so we would like to talk to you by phone.

Interested? Please forward your contact details to Jenny Gardner at projects@creativehatinterpretation.com.au.

Jenny Gardner
Consultant in Natural and Cultural Heritage Interpretation
Creative Hat Interpretations

Jenny is an Individual member of Bushwalking Victoria.

Camp Fires

DEPI's Land and Fire Regional Manager for Hume, Shaun Lawlor said that Victoria is one of the most bushfire prone areas in the world and that, unfortunately, about 10% of Victorian bushfires start from escaped campfires.

While campfires are nostalgically part of the overnight bushwalking experience, they are not necessary and can cause a massive amount of destruction if lit in other than an authorised fireplace. They leave long-term marks on the landscape where nothing will grow for decades. With a bit of wind, sparks can carry and start a bushfire quickly.

For cooking, fuel stoves are cleaner and cook faster.

Guidelines for campfires

- Check restrictions for the area. Campfires are not allowed in some areas of public land and are prohibited on a Total Fire Ban day.
- Only have a campfire where an authorised fireplace is provided.
- Clear an area of 3m around the campfire of flammable materials such as leaves and twigs.
- Ensure the fire is at least 3m away from tents and other camping equipment (especially flammable items such as gas cylinders and fuel containers).
- Keep your campfire to the minimum necessary for cooking or to keep warm. It should be no more than 1m² in dimension.
- If you intend having a campfire, bring your own firewood. Fallen and dead timber in our parks provides habitat for native creatures. Never cut or break branches from living trees or shrubs.
- It is illegal to light a campfire when wind speed more than 10km per hour. A guide for wind speed: if the wind is strong enough to carry sparks, don't light a campfire or allow one to remain alight.
- Never leave a campfire unattended, not even for a minute. Have someone who has the capacity and means to extinguish the fire in attendance at all times. The on-the-spot fine for leaving campfire unattended in Victoria is \$433.
- Keep a big container of water handy.
- Extinguish the fire at night.
- Put your fire out properly using water, not soil. Fires can smoulder under soil for up to 8 hours, and can not only reignite, but can be a danger to anyone coming in contact with them after you have gone.

- If your campfire is cool to touch it is safe to leave.
WARNING: If there is any warmth at all emanating from coals as your hand approaches them, it is neither safe to touch nor leave. (Use the back of your hand to test the level of heat emanating.)
Penalties for lighting fires illegally include large fines and possible imprisonment.

How to put out a campfire

1. First, drown the campfire with water.
2. With a shovel or other appropriate tool, stir the embers after they are covered with water and make sure that everything is wet.
3. Feel the coals, embers and any partially-burned wood with the back of your hand. Everything, including the campfire surround (concrete, metal, rocks, etc) should be cool to the touch. Wet, stir and feel again to make sure material that was at the bottom is not hot.
4. Repeat steps 1-4 until all the drenched ashes, logs, and the material the fireplace is constructed of are cool to the touch.
5. When you think you are done, take an extra minute and add more water and stir and touch again as an extra precaution.
6. Finally, check the entire campsite for possible sparks or embers, because it only takes one to start a bushfire.

There are lots of websites giving instructions about how to light and put our campfires. Visit them.

Sources:

<http://news.cfa.vic.gov.au/news/keep-your-campfire-safe.html>,

<http://www.depi.vic.gov.au/about-us/media-centre/media-releases/compliance-operation-reiterates-campfire-safety>

<http://www.gocampingaustraliablog.com/2012/12/do-you-know-how-to-put-out-campfire.html>



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Contributions

Email or post news, views, club profiles, articles, photographs, sketches and letters on any topic of interest to bushwalkers (publication is subject to editorial approval) to: editor@bushwalkingvictoria.org.au or
24 Moorhouse Street
Camberwell Victoria 3124

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Editor: Joslin Guest

Who's Who at Bushwalking Victoria Bushwalking Victoria

Reg No: A0002548Y

ABN: 88344 633 037

Office:

Patsy Scales Office Manager admin@bushwalkingvictoria.org.au 03 8846 4131

Office Bearers:

Tony Walker President president@bushwalkingvictoria.org.au 0414 278 121

Charles Ablitt Vice-President VP@bushwalkingvictoria.org.au 0400 967 054

Fred Bover Secretary secretary@bushwalkingvictoria.org.au 0439 002 844

John Creaser Treasurer treasurer@bushwalkingvictoria.org.au 0498 654 091

General Board Members:

Megan Major megan@bushwalkingvictoria.org.au 0425 702 788

Peter Conroy peter@bushwalkingvictoria.org.au 0425 721 479

Robyn Shingles robyn@bushwalkingvictoria.org.au 0419 501 666

Chris Towers chris@bushwalkingvictoria.org.au 0427 358 869

Standing Committees:

Peter Campbell Bush Search & Rescue Victoria Convener convener@bsar.org

Megan Major Bushwalking Tracks & Conservation Convener tracks@bushwalkingvictoria.org.au

Charles Ablitt Bushwalking Tracks & Conservation Projects Coordinator conservation@bushwalkingvictoria.org.au

Phil Brochie Land Management Submissions land@bushwalkingvictoria.org.au

Specialist Officers:

Bushwalking Australia Insurance veronica.astudillo@marshadvantage.com

Joslin Guest Publications & News Editor editor@bushwalkingvictoria.org.au

Peter Conroy Federation Walks Coordinator peter@bushwalkingvictoria.org.au

Chris Towers Web Manager chris@bushwalkingvictoria.org.au

Consultants:

Elaine Towers Strategy strategy@bushwalkingvictoria.org.au

Stephen Skaleskog Honorary Auditor & Accounting Consultant

Representatives on other Organisations:

Bushwalking Australia: Victorian Delegate: Tony Walker

Victorian Deputy Delegate: Chris Towers

Organisations where BWV Members Provide a Bushwalking Perspective:

Grampians Peak Trail Task Force Phil Brochie

Living Links Steering Committee Tony Walker

Address:

PO Box 1007
Templestowe VIC 3106