

Friends of Chiltern-Mt Pilot National Park, Inc.

Annual Report: 2012-2013

Apart from a very dry spell over summer, there has been quite good rainfall during the year. Scarlet Honeyeaters have been sighted occasionally in the Park throughout the year but not everyone has been fortunate enough to see them.

Parks Victoria have installed new gates, that were funded by the Friends' group, and improved the fencing at the parking area at Bartley's Block so that access to this area is now safer and better organized.

Friends' activities during the year included:

- Presentation by Alan Gibb

The Friends' AGM was held in September and we were treated to a very interesting and informative presentation by Alan Gibb about his research into the wattles of Victoria. The extensive question session at the end of his talk indicated the strong level of interest in his work.

- Committee for 2012-13

At the 2012 AGM, the following were elected to the committee: Neville Bartlett (Secretary), Peter Gotham (Treasurer), Eileen Collins, Jenny Davidson, Moya Smith, June Gotham, Phillip Seely, Joseph Birkhead, John Hawker and Richard Jerome.

- Maintenance of the Tuan Campground

Removal of weeds and the addition of mulch in the enclosures at the Tuan Campground site has produced excellent results with much vegetation now flourishing. The two photographs below show the site at the beginning versus how it looks at present.



- Removal of various weeds from the Park is a constant part of Friends' activities each year. This year work has focused on Cootamundra Wattles on and near Magenta Road and in several other areas of the park.



- Checking of mammal nest boxes

This is an ongoing activity that can be readily undertaken when other activities are impractical. Boxes with occupants are often encountered and it is a delight to see many of the boxes being used by Squirrel Gliders, Sugar Gliders and Tuans. This year has been notable for several encounters with Tuans in nest boxes.



- Maintenance of the area around the bird hide at the south-western end of Valley No 2 Dam

The Friends' group has continued clearing a track from the bird hide towards the parking area. Parks Victoria has erected some signs and further work needs to be done to improve the section at the northern end. This area of the park is becoming much more user friendly as a result of the combined efforts of Friends and Parks Victoria.



- 2013 release of captive-bred Regent Honeyeaters

A training day for Regent Honeyeater tracking was conducted in March so that old hands could refresh their skills and newcomers trained. Thirty seven captive-bred Regent Honeyeaters were released in April 2013 and many Friends have been active in assisting with the follow-up search for released and wild birds. The tracking has enabled the discovery of birds that have survived from the previous release in 2010. The fact that such birds are still alive is an encouraging sign for the species in Victoria.



- Participation in regular bird counts

Regular counts of Regent Honeyeaters and Swift Parrots are conducted twice a year as part of national surveys.

- 2013 Calendars

A calendar featuring many photographs taken around the Park was prepared and printed. The sale of 150 calendars contributed substantial funds to the group.

Thank you to the photographers: Eileen Collins, Joseph Birckhead, Dean Ingwersen and Neville Bartlett.

- Launch of a bird brochure for the park

In February 2013 a bird brochure (costing a total of \$6,500) was launched using grants of \$2,500 from Parks Victoria, \$1,000 from Indigo Shire and \$200 from one of our members. The brochure is available to members of the public from the Chiltern Information Centre and the Chiltern Post Office.

- Re-development of the Friends' web-site

Friends have an upgraded web-site thanks to the efforts of Tony Marsh. We now have a good platform on which to post material and there is an increase of interest from people who have learnt of our activities via the website.

- Members have conducted surveys and maintained mammal nest boxes at the Rutherglen Nature Conservation Reserve that is situated to the north west of the park.
- Activities for 2013-14

It is planned to erect a plaque to commemorate the human history of Bartley's Block and to create a set of Chiltern-Mt Pilot National Park post cards for sale in Chiltern.



We greatly appreciate the support provided by Parks Victoria rangers Brian Pritchard, John McDonald and Kris Hermans. Friends would like to thank Tony Marsh for managing the group's web-site as well as the support of Matt and Emma at the Post Office and others in Chiltern who have sold calendars on behalf of Friends.

Neville R. Bartlett
Secretary
13th September 2013