

THE CREEK

Volume 16 No 3, June 2012

 **BERG** – the Balcombe Estuary Rehabilitation Group
No A0034645Y ABN 50 224 628 623

LINKING LANDHOLDERS

Di Lewis reports

Liz Barraclough presented BERG's work to an audience of over a hundred landholders at the recent Mornington Peninsula Land Management Expo organised by the Peninsula Pastures and Produce program on Sunday 20th May at The Briars.

The aim of the PP&P program is to help landholders manage their land as effectively as possible, and connect them with local support, advice and funding assistance.



Liz Barraclough speaking to landholders at the Expo. Photo: Di Lewis & Liz Barraclough

Liz was one of twelve speakers from government, private landholders and friends' groups addressing issues of agriculture in the Mornington Peninsula and Western Port Biosphere reserve, waterway health and biodiversity, and protecting the coastal environment.

BERG committee member Tony O'Connor's Century Drive property was held up by Jacqui Salter, the Shire's Landcare Facilitator, as an example of what private landholders can do. Tony is the driving force behind the Century Drive Habitat Link group, and has established wonderful wetlands on his land and in the Century Drive retarding basin, adjacent to Balcombe Creek.

Liz and other BERGers also manned a booth providing information about BERG's work.



Di Lewis and Jenny Rolleston manning the BERG booth. Displays in the background include Victorian Farmers' Federation, Trust for Nature, Coastcare Victoria, Sunshine Reserve Conservation and Fireguard Group, and the Shire.

Photo: Liz Barraclough

WILDLIFE CORRIDORS

from Liz Barraclough

What remains of the Mornington Peninsula's regional fauna is under real threat of extinction. A number of organisations are working to combat this threat by forming wildlife corridors or 'biolinks' throughout the Peninsula.

The aim is to connect areas of existing bushland and engage the community, landholders and landcare networks in the process. Those interested will be given practical information on how to develop and manage biolinks projects, get the community on board, and build the skills and resources needed.

A pilot corridor

The Devilbend Foundation is being funded by the Natural Resources Conservation League of Victoria to develop a pilot corridor and is currently looking at where this might be located. Possibilities are towards Balcombe, Warringine or Greens Bush.

CAN YOU HELP?

SOLICITOR WANTED

In 2009 the Victorian Government made a number of changes to the *Associations Incorporation Act 1981* (Vic). Some of the changes are already in force, others will come into force soon.

BERG needs a solicitor to look over the new Act and advise what changes we need to make to the BERG rules to comply with it.

If you think you may be able to help, please contact Richard Kirsner on 9509 6116, or email info@berg.org.au.

FOLDING THE CREEK

Every two months copies of *The Creek* need folding and mailing – a few hours work while watching television or the like. Gillian Montgomery is our current 'folder', but we need a couple of back-ups to cover things such as holidays or broken arms!

Call Angela Kirsner on 9509 6116 or email info@berg.org.au if can help or want to know more.

BERG REPRESENTATIVE ON DEVIL BEND C'TEE

BERG needs to be represented on the Devil Bend Foundation committee, and provide input into the Biolinks planning process (see article this page). Is this the role you were looking for? Contact Liz Barraclough on 0408 388 430 to find out more.

FREE INDIGENOUS PLANTS

Once again, BERG is offering free indigenous plants to local residents. Lots of species available! Contact Liz on 0408 388 430.

SPEAKING IN PUBLIC ...or how to overcome stage fright and sweaty palms

Di Lewis reports on the BERG Ambassador Training

Under the expert tutelage of speaking trainer and BERG member Ros Crompton, potential BERG Ambassadors Liz Barraclough, Jenny Selby, Martin Thraves, Tony O'Connor, Jenny Rolleston and Di Lewis learned that with humour, confidence, lots of planning and rehearsal, much can be achieved.

In a one-day workshop in May, we learned to structure content, use anecdote, animation and eye contact, grapple with technology and handle the audience with aplomb. This was followed by practical demonstrations of our skills in an evening session a few days later, where each of us gave a short talk and received feedback from Ros and the other Ambassadors.

Delicious refreshments were provided by Sue Betheras and Barb Thraves and the event was held in a venue kindly made available by U3A Mornington.

We hope the Ambassadors will be able to represent BERG to various groups in the community.

Some comments from the trainees

'A course like this helps concentrate one's knowledge as well as learning from others.'

'Ros Crompton is a very skilled facilitator and instructor.'

'I'm always impressed by the variety of talents members bring to



Left to right: Liz Barraclough and Jenny Rolleston hard at work at the Ambassador training, under Ros Crompton's tutelage Photo Di Lewis

BERG, as well as the many valuable programs that BERG has offered me.'

'...pushing myself to do public speaking gets me much more motivated and enthused about my passion, which is the natural environment. This course got me excited about what we can all do together to save and enhance the beautiful natural world around us.'

FIELD NEWS

Field Officer Liz Barraclough reports

Working bees

In **March** a small, select group of five (quality if not quantity!) did a great job removing Flax-leaf Broom seedlings and large Polygala from the foreshore between the Yacht Club and Bay Road.

In **April** we returned to the area we weeded in February, in the vicinity of where Victoria Cres joins the easement to the Esplanade. We continued with a satisfying onslaught on what was, before our efforts, rampant Polygala, and also removed Boneseed, Pittosporum, Cotoneaster and Broom.

In **May** another small, select group – six this time – planted along the foreshore reserve between the south carpark and Bay Road. With our earlier plantings here and removal of woody weeds, the area is looking good.

At the **Hopetoun Creek** working bee in May, despite being an even smaller group, we planted 34 shrubs and trees and 40 sedges.

The **Friday Morning Group** is back working near Uralla Bridge, continuing our weed control here. The recent rains have flooded many of the regenerating weed seedlings away, but on higher ground they have proliferated. We hope we have caught them before

they have had time to seed.

A few weeks ago Sally McCleod, leader of the Naturelinks Team, tutored us in using the weed burner. The Shire requires us to have this training so they can issue us with permits for weed burning.

Grants

We have been awarded three 2012 Melbourne Water Community grants.

- A **Group Support Grant** of \$1,100 will enable two more BERG members to undertake the Mornington Peninsula Habitat Management course, further extending our base of expertise.
- We have \$15,064.50 to follow up our previous work along **Hopetoun Creek** with control of woody weeds, selective spraying and hand-weeding of scrambling and groundcover weeds, enhancement planting and community awareness activities. The



Sally McCleod (centre) supervises Anne Scally with the weed burner, watched by Di Dyson (left) and Sue Betheras Photo Liz Barraclough

work on the eastern bank will extend from the kindergarten to the reed swamp, and on the western bank, will be in the riparian section behind St Ives Ave and Hopetoun Ave.

- We have \$18,543.50 to follow-up and consolidate our work on both sides of **Balcombe Creek** from the Uralla Rd bridge for 100m towards the sea. The work will comprise planting and community awareness activities.

Applications are in for:

- a **Community Action Grant** to restore two threatened areas: a riparian section of Swamp Melaleuca and adjoining grassy woodland on the north side of the creek between the Augusta St and Uralla Rd bridges, and the Hyacinth Orchid area on the western side of the track at the eastern end of the Ferraro Ovals;
- a **Caring for our Country, Coast Action Coastcare Grant 2012–13**, primarily for essential weed follow-up of the foreshore north of the bridge between the carpark and the bottom of Coolangatta Rd.

Upgrading the signs in the reserve

New signs have been promised for months, but we are nearly there! Posts with small directional plaques are in place (see photo), and the new interpretive signs and map are printed and will very soon be installed by members of the Mount Martha Rotary Club.



Photo Angela Kirsner

Monitoring our birdlife

Inspired by a Birdlife Forum I attended in April with BERG members Pam Hearn, Ros Crompton and Sue Betheras, we are organizing a seasonal bird monitoring program in the Balcombe Estuary Reserves.

The forum focussed on the relationship between birds and their habitat, the decline of species, and restoration of habitat. It was



The reward for working in the foreshore reserve at the May working bee was morning tea (with Jenny's ginger cake) in a fabulous spot! Clockwise: John Trevillian, Michael Sanders, Barb Thraves, Jenny Selby and Chris Spencer. Photo Angela Kirsner

emphasized that the prevalence of birds, the species present and their behaviour are sensitive indicators of ecosystem health.

We hope, through our monitoring program, to provide ongoing data to help measure the effects of our work in the Reserve and alert us to problems.

NEWS FROM THE BRIARS

Dwarf Galaxias relocated

About 700 these endangered native fish have been relocated from the path of Peninsula Link to the Crake Pond at The Briars. The pond is free of Mosquito Fish, an introduced species which threatens Dwarf Galaxias, and it provides excellent plant cover. Ongoing surveys have revealed prolific breeding by the 'dwarflies'.

Board walk along Harrap Creek

Liaison continues with Melbourne Water on erosion control and revegetation of Harrap Creek. Agreement was reached on the route of the proposed boardwalk across the Creek to provide access to Craigie Road and the shared path network to the north. A Cultural Heritage Management Plan and Environmental Management Plan are needed before work can start.

Source: *The Friends of the Briars newsletter, April 2012*

ESTUARYWATCH

John Inchley reports

BERG has been asked by Melbourne Water to trial EstuaryWatch, a new community-based estuarine monitoring program.

EstuaryWatch was initiated in 2006 with the Corangamite Catchment Management Authority. Trials have now extended to the Port Phillip and Westernport catchment, initially in the estuaries of the Balcombe and Merricks creeks. BERG's involvement will build on our ten years' activity in the WaterWatch program.

The aims of EstuaryWatch are two-fold: to raise community awareness and understanding of estuarine environments, and to support better decisions about and management of estuaries.

A BERG EstuaryWatch group will take regular samples of water in the estuary from specific locations to measure water quality (as we already do further up the creek in WaterWatch). We will also take photos over time from a point at the estuary mouth, using BERG's new purpose-bought camera.

We would welcome more people on the team. Call John Inchley on 5974 1095 to find out what's involved.

THE WATER DRAGON IS STILL ABOUT

It was February last year when we first reported sightings of a handsome Gippsland Water Dragon in the reserve, probably a dumped pet. Michael Fry has seen it again recently, sunning itself beside one of the picnic tables. But it's grown – he estimates it is now at least a metre long. He was particularly struck by the pink colouring under its neck.

BERG welcomes new members:

Rosie Batten, Sue Critchley, Alison Hazledine & family, Tyler Lamb, Richie Ball, Ron & Jill Bonighton, Sharon Rogers & family, Sarah Rule, Helen Serong & family, Jenny Ramm

IN THE RESERVE



Photo Angela Kirsner

Along Maude Street and through the Bunyip, the green form of *Correa reflexa* (left) is covered in its beautiful bell-like flowers.

Watch out also for the Nodding Greenhood Orchids, which have formed a mat of leaves under the tea tree below Ferrero Oval and will be in flower soon.

BERG Working Bees	Other BERG Activities	Other Groups
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Monthly working bee: 3rd Sunday, from 9.00 to 12.00. Next are 17th June and 15th July. Meet at the Rotunda (Mel: 144 K11) or phone Liz Barraclough on 0408 388 430 to find the work site. ❖ Tuesdays 9.00 to 12.00. Enquiries to Mary Stemp, 5974 3996. ❖ Friday mornings. For details call Sue Betheras, 0408 808 201 or Liz Barraclough, 0408 388 430. ❖ Hopetoun Creek Greenfield Reserve. Contact Hazel Athey, 0419 899 560. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Waterwatch testing: Monthly at the Augusta St Bridge. Enquiries to John Inchley on 5974 1095. ❖ BERG Committee meets every 7-9 weeks at Mt Martha House, Saturdays 9.30am. Next meeting 30th June. All members welcome. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Fairbairn Bushland Reserve Friends Group working bees. Contact Judith Whittaker 5974 8174 or John Stoker, 5977 1397. ❖ BirdLife Mornington Peninsula birdwatching 2nd Wednesday and 3rd Sunday. Enquiries Max Burrows 9789 0224 or www.penboc.org.au. ❖ SPIFFA (Southern Peninsula Indigenous Flora and Fauna Association) 1st Monday, 7.30 pm, at Parks Vic, Hinton St, Rosebud. Enquiries 5988 6529, or www.spiffa.org.
<p>BERG COMMITTEE</p> <p>PRESIDENT JOHN INCHLEY • VICE PRESIDENT MICHAEL SANDERS • SECRETARY DI LEWIS • TREASURER RICHARD KIRSNER FIELD OFFICER LIZ BARRACLOUGH • NEWSLETTER, MEMBERSHIP ANGELA KIRSNER • SCHOOLS LIAISON JENNY SELBY • ROTARY CLUB LIAISON GEOFF KAYE • PUBLICITY BARBARA THRIVES & ROS CROMPTON HOPETOUN CREEK GREENFIELD RESERVE GROUP HAZEL ATHEY • CENTURY DVE HABITAT LINK GROUP TONY O'CONNOR</p>		
<p>PO Box 433, MT MARTHA 3934 • PHONE: 0447 160 288 EMAIL: INFO@BERG.ORG.AU • WEBSITE: WWW.BERG.ORG.AU</p>		

THE CREEK

Print Post Approved pp339493/00001
 If undelivered, please return to:
 BERG, PO Box 433
 Mount Martha 3934

**SURFACE
MAIL**

**POSTAGE
PAID
AUSTRALIA**

THE CREEK is proudly printed & supported by

