wombat NEWS and Views
newsletter for community management of the wombat forest

*The Wombat News and Views is the newsletter for the Wombat Forest Community Forest Management Trial, endorsed by the State Government of Victoria.*

**Working Groups:**

* **Biodiversity**
* **Wood Products**
* **Hydrology**
* **Pest Plants and Animals**
* **Non-Timber Products**
* **Recreation**
* **Tourism**
* **Heritage**
* **Education**
* **Tracks Forest Roads Operations**
* **Fire**

Contact Tim Anderson Community Development Officer 5348 6811 tim.anderson@dse.vic.gov.au for further information.

**The deadline for Issue 10 is September 1st.**
Please send articles and letters to the editor: Tanya Loos c/ Guildford Post Office Vic 3451, or e-mail unformatted word documents to pollen @netconnect.com.au

Short articles and letters of 500 words, or contact me to book a feature of 1000 words or more (5348 2778 AH). Thank you very much!

**This newsletter was printed courtesy of the State Government of Victoria**

# Report from Tim, Community Forestry Project Officer

Well, as we all rug up for winter (finally), the Council of Stewards, Proxies and Working Group convenors have started a series of Working Effectively Together training evenings. This training is being delivered by Arbor Vitae who have extensive experience in this area. The training already looks like it has brought about very positive changes that should see CFM rocket ahead. The culmination of the training will be a workshop to finalise the Wombat CFM Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan should pull together all aspects of CFM, set future directions and time-lines as well as setting out the overall goals and operational aspects of CFM.

I sense a change in how the Council and Working Groups are operating. The decision to leave governance based issues off the Council agenda to ground the work done at meetings to forest based issues appears very positive. There has been a growing momentum among people active in CFM to concentrate on the forest and develop the structural aspects of CFM after it has operated for a period of time.

A number of Working Groups have been engaged in their Projects. These have included the field work component of the Wood Products WG 'Arboreal Mammal Habitat Retention Prescriptions' carried out by the Arthur Rylah Institute in conjunction with a number of Working Groups and DSE. This project illustrates the differences that CFM can bring about, when the working group whose interest is centred on timber and wood products, engage ecologists to design coupe prescriptions.

The Biodiversity WG is finalising their project design, to again engage the Arthur Rylah Institute to conduct research into the 'Faunal Habitat Associations in the Wombat Forest'. This will include a series of faunal surveys across the forest. Both the T-FRO and the Weeds WG are also ready to carry out their important mapping projects across the forest.
Opportunities to engage in CFM have been broadened within the CFM structure. In

(Continued next page)

**In Issue 9**

1 –2 Tim Anderson Report
3 Hydrology
4 Pest Plant and Animal WG
5 Arboreal Habitat Retention Project
6-7 CFM roles and responsibilities
8 Biodiversity WG Report, Wood Products
9 Feature: Cultural Heritage
10 Letters, Bushwalking
11 DSE Report
12 Blackwood,Barry's Reef
13 Psy-trance Proposal
15 Letters Page
16 Back Page Interview

Hi everyone!
The next edition of the News and Views will be our Tenth Issue! To celebrate, yours truly will be revamping and revitalising the look of the newsletter. I will also contact all past contributors with details regarding a "celebrate ten issues of the Wombat News and Views" night at the Pub!
Many thanks to this issue's contributors, and to Gary McIntosh and Chris McLean for help with proofreading. *Tanya Loos*

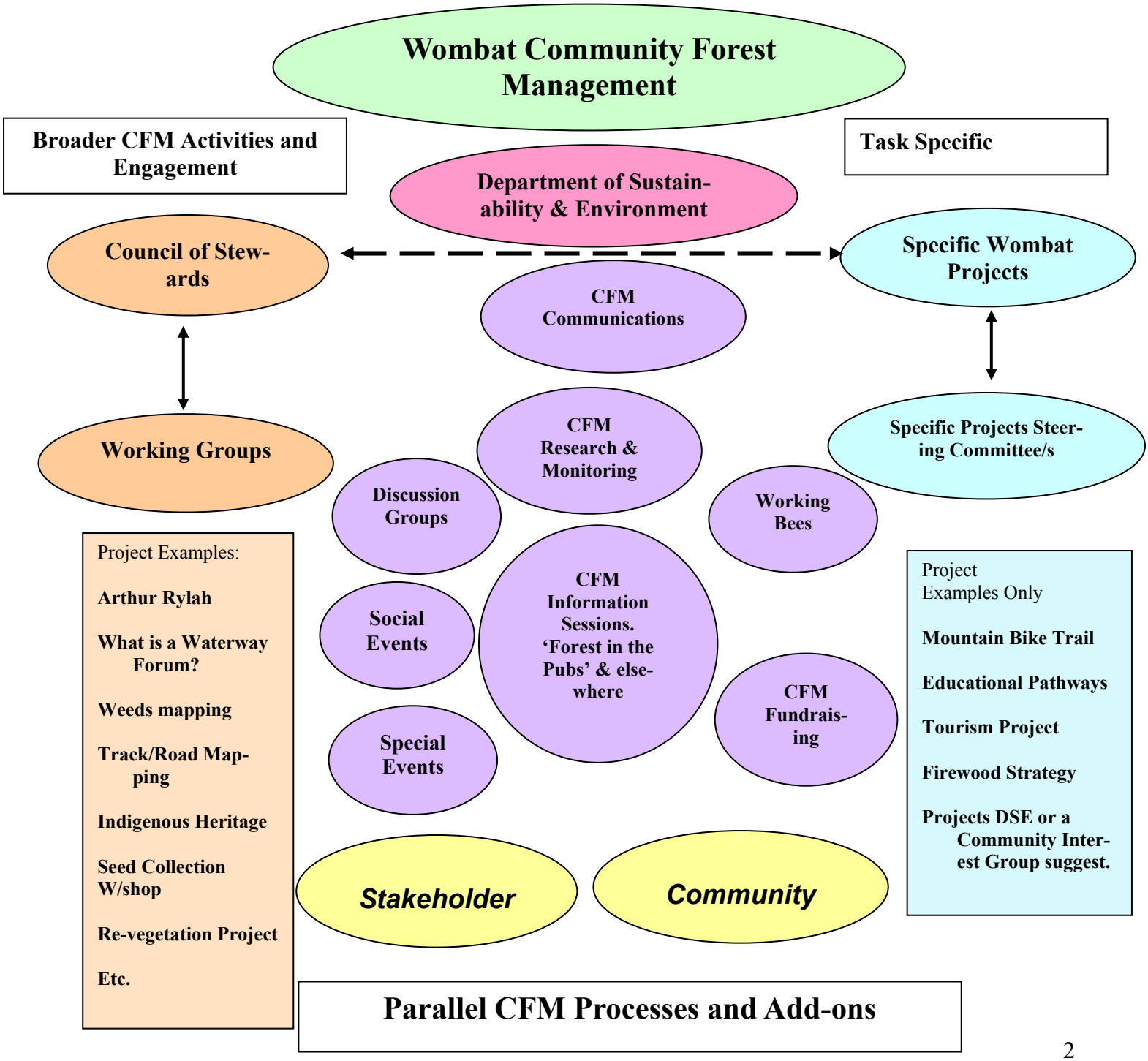
# Community Forest Development Officer Report

response to a number of people and organisations looking to get involved in CFM activities and highlighting a number of ways that they wish to get involved, a new, expanded model for CFM is now in place. While preserving the Council of Stewards/ Working Group component of CFM, the opportunity for specific project based involvement as well as a number of specific activities have been added. These range from working bees and social events to a "forests in the pubs" concept were expert speakers will talk on a topic followed by informal discussion. These may be held in a range of venues, possibly based around a meal. Below is a simple flow diagram of the new model, followed by a brief explanation.

If you would like to get involved in developing some of these new aspects to CFM, please do not hesitate to contact me. CFM now has major opportunities for fun and fulfilling activities that relate to the Wombat Forest and to ourselves. So send me an e-mail or phone and we can explore ways to make your ideas work.

Tim Anderson, Community Forestry Project Manager
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tim.anderson@dse.vic.gov.au

Note: The diagram below has been edited; it originally had many arrows joining all of the different part s of CFM, most if these have been removed for reasons of clarity.



**Community Forest Management Add-ons** are elements that pick a number of specific opportunities, requirements and add some of the 'fun element' that we need more of.
**CFM Specific Projects**- Single task defined projects managed by a steering committee comprised of interest groups, stakeholder groups and individuals chosen through an "Expression of Interest" process or by invitation by Project Proponent or other specified party.
**CFM/Wombat Information Sessions** – Guest speakers talk on Specific Topics or Issues (Including field trips)
**CFM Discussion Groups**- Open and tolerant informal exploration of specific topics or issues. These could occur at locally popular venues around towns in the area.
**"CFM in the Pubs"-** Perhaps combines CFM Information Sessions and CFM Discussion Groups into a single informal "Forests in the Pub" idea (Not necessarily always in a pub). This could have one or more speakers on a topic, organised around a meal or drinks with a general discussion for desert.
**Social Events**- Picnics, Dinners, Bushwalks etc.
**Special Events**- Forest Assemblies, Forest Festivals
**Working Bees**- Getting out there and doing it.
**Communications**- Newsletter, Website, Handout Material Production, Videos, Postcards etc.
**CFM Fundraising**- Dedicated group or engaged specialist to raise funds for CFM via grant or project applications etc. May be the Incorporated part of CFM.
**CFM On-going Research & Monitoring**- To facilitate the ongoing collection of data and monitoring and to coordinate aspects of internal and external applied research projects. Establish relations with Educational and Research Institutions. Look for research opportunities.

# Hydrology Report: What is a Waterway Forum



On Tuesday July 12 at the Daylesford Town Hall an important forum looked at the ecological characteristics of the waterways within the Wombat Forest. The Wombat Forest covers the headwaters of five of Victoria's major rivers, the Loddon, Campaspe, Maribyrnong, Werribee and Moorabool Rivers. The headwaters are made up of many small intermittent tributaries. These streams eventually flow into rivers and dams that provide vital water supplies to towns such as Ballarat, Geelong, Daylesford, Melbourne's western suburbs and many smaller towns in between.

"Protection of the waterways and catchments in the Wombat Forest has been identified as one of the most important forest issue to a majority of people in the communities surrounding the forest. Over the past decade problems with ambiguous definitions of waterways has led to considerable debate over appropriate management prescriptions for these waterways. Defining exactly what constitutes a waterway has proven to be a very difficult task; the recent farm dam issue is a testimony to this." Said Loris Duclos Convenor Hydrology Working Group operating within Wombat Community Forest Management.

"Very little is known about the headwaters streams in the Wombat Forest. To initiate a resolution to this gap in our knowledge the Community Forest Management Hydrology Working Group is presenting the forum which brings together some of Victoria's leading hydrological experts to discuss the unique environmental characteristics of the Wombat waterways." added Ms Duclos.

Speakers included:
**Ass. Prof Ian Rutherford**, Head of School of Anthropology, Geography and Environmental Studies (SAGES), University of Melbourne. Ian is a geomorphologist with a special interest in fluvial geomorphology and water resource management.
**Associate Professor Leon Bren,** Head of Creswick School of Forestry, University of Melbourne Leon specialises in forestry hydrology and catchment management.
**Tuesday Phelan,** Senior Forest Planner DSE Daylesford, Tuesday is responsible for the preparation of logging plans that take account of community and expert recommendations for environmental protection
**Loris Duclos**, Convenor Hydrology Working Group,

Findings from the forum will be used to develop clear definitions and protection and restoration measures for the streams that rise in the Wombat Forest. This will then feed into the process of the development of a new Forest Management Plan

The forum was a great opportunity to be involved in an exciting community process aimed at ensuring the waterways of this area are protected for future generations.

**A full report will be in next issue of the newsletter…**

*Loris Duclos*

# Pest Plant and Animal Working Group Report

The late approval of our budget was a bit of a problem for the Weed Mapping Project, as it made it difficult for us to purchase equipment, or to line up contractors. As well, the end of the financial year has raised the spectre of our funding being possibly being taken back by DSE. However, if the money is rolled over to this financial year, we will be "full steam ahead" with our weed-mapping project. We have two University of Melbourne students interested in doing the weed mapping, as well as plans to involve anyone else we can nab on a work placement with the Daylesford DSE office.



We ran into a slight problem with the weed identification resources that we were going to purchase, as they are out of print. However, Tim Anderson has purchased a laminator, and Rebecca Pagan is halfway through making a pair of laminated weed ID flash cards, which will admirably suit our immediate needs.

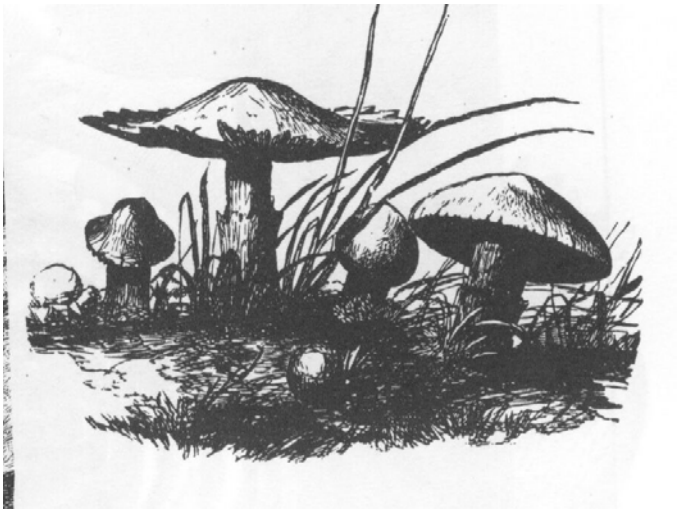
On a linked topic, after discussion with Michael Cheshire and Phil Miller, respectively Mayor and Councillor for Hepburn Shire, we have realised that there is a need for a locally relevant weed ID resource for members of the public. They mentioned specifically that new residents of the area, who have just purchased rural blocks, often request a simple weed ID guide, or advice on identifying these weeds. There are books available, but as far as we know, there is nothing which is currently in print which is locally relevant and cheap. Thus, we are looking into the viability of making our own weed ID decks. The obvious questions will be what format we will use, the number which we will make, the associated costs, and who we could get to chip in as well ( such as Hepburn Shire, Macedon Ranges Shire, Moorabool Shire, the North Central CMA, Corangamite CMA, Port Phillip & Western Port CMA), but it is a tantalising idea.

*Luke Bennett*

# Bush Notes from Trentham—Blue Mount

Well, all the animals and plants are wondering when winter will start, with spring rainbows in June!
The fresh-water springs in the east Wombat have only just started gushing again. The understory comes alive with mosses and liverworts. These tiny plants turn from shrivelled matter to green and vibrant as soon as there is enough moisture in the air. The fungi are back. All those slithery things that like the wet are mobile; look out for leeches and flat worms. My favourite ones are what my nephew calls "army worms", they really do look like they are covered in army camouflage and they have a strange synthetic appearance. They can be seen under rotting leaf matter.
I never cease to be amazed by the variety of ants in Australia. The native ants in the forest, from my observations, appear to be specific to certain species of tree and their microhabitat ( more research please).
There are leaf chewers, some farm psyllids (a form of aphid with a sugar shell). They look like mini static herds of sheep on the branches of trees, with the ants grooming them. There are ants that eat termites inside dead trees. Sometimes they are harvested with firewood, and come out to see what happened to their house. I had some camp inside last winter and they ate vegie scraps and defrosted termites which I saved for them, I put them back out in spring and they were fine. Perhaps the ones that always make me smile are the jumping jacks, which make nests above ground, and get really stroppy if you hang round them too long. I love watching them harvesting seeds and dragging them into their nest like oversize handbags. It makes me wonder how long these ants have been co-existing with the plant life when you realise the plants have evolved "ant handles" to make the seeds easier to carry, and that the seeds germinate more readily in the climate controlled environs of the ant nest.

*Mary Ann Faulks*



# Wombat State Forest Arboreal Habitat Retention Project

**Introduction**

Wombat State Forest is home to many tree dwelling (arboreal) birds, gliders, owls and possums including some threatened or locally significant species such as the Powerful Owl and the Greater Glider. These animals occupy specific habitat in the forest, some of which is not common.

The draft Wombat Sawlog Supply Plan for 2004-05 resulted in discussions with the community about providing enhanced protection for fauna in forest operations. DSE and community members involved in Community Forest Management (CFM) sought advice from Arthur Rylah Institute fauna specialists to determine best practice in relation to this issue. ARI advised a management strategy that retained key habitat areas, concentrating disturbance in areas of lesser significance.

Wombat CFM subsequently indicated that if harvesting must occur within the Wombat State Forest in 2005, they preferred DSE undertake these operations in accordance with ARI's advice. This resulted in a focus on operations in highly disturbed areas such as first cut Shelterwood sites as well as developing a best practice approach to managing for arboreal fauna habitat in areas where forest operations occur.

Fauna specialists, community and government have collaborated for over four months to develop arboreal habitat retention plans for five demonstration sites in the Wombat State Forest. The demonstration sites are located in areas previously disturbed by the first of two shelterwood harvest operations. An assessment methodology and guideline recommending significant habitat protections is now in development using the principles developed at each site.

**Planning the demonstration sites**

The process of developing an arboreal habitat management strategy for each site involved:

- Identifying arboreal fauna species on each coupe through record checks and direct observation during habitat assessment and site surveys;
- Receiving advice and discussing suitable habitat (foraging, shelter and nesting) for significant species (including prey for large owls);
- Using the identification of both specific species and their habitat needs to identify areas of importance within a proposed site. This occurred with a focus on particular species e.g. Powerful Owls and Greater Gliders; and
- Developing management prescriptions aimed at protecting key habitat for arboreal fauna and ensuring best practise harvest operations.

A committee of community members nominated by the Wombat Council of Stewards, ARI and DSE staff all participated in a field tour to assess each site and identify areas of key habitat. A draft site plan was drawn up using this information and ARI advice. Committee members and DSE staff determined the final site plan at a follow up meeting. This included discussion and resolution of issues such as the exclusion of areas from harvest operations and selective retention of individual trees based on species, age and structure.

**Outcomes of the project so far**

The project so far has resulted in the identification of some important habitat features for sites in the Wombat State Forest that have had a thinning cut. Habitat features identified and protected through this project include:

- Areas of mature forest following drainage lines;
- Trees bearing hollows in the branches, base or trunk of the tree;
- Gum and peppermint species of eucalypts for food and nesting;
- Ridge top areas featuring peppermint forest with abundant hollows; and
- Large diameter trees which are likely to develop hollows faster than small diameter trees.

Project participants have also contributed in the development of management strategies for the protection of waterways, recreation and cultural heritage values. Final guidelines, methodology and a formal summary for this project are expected to be available by August 2005 and will be an important resource in informing resource supply plans in Wombat State Forest.

**Project sites**

The five demonstration sites are located across Wombat State Forest, three near Daylesford and two near Glenlyon. In selecting the sites DSE aimed to provide sites with different remnant mature forest characteristics, such as size, location and understorey quality, and a variety of regrowth age, mature tree species and density. The sites were chosen from areas previously approved for timber harvesting which met government guidelines regarding environmental and cultural values.

Harvesting operations have now occurred at three of these sites. Timber produced through the project has contributed to the Government's commitment to meet remaining sawlog licence obligations to local mills.

We would like to thank members of CFM for their participation and in particular those who put considerable effort into helping DSE to improve our operations, and for supporting funding of the Arboreal Habitat Retention Project.

*Phoebe Macak, Arthur Rylah Institute*

# CFM roles and responsibilities…. A discussion

In late April, Andrew Maclean, Department of Sustainability and Environment, sent a memo to Michael Cheshire, the Chairman of Wombat Forest Council of Stewards. This memorandum discussed the Role and responsibilities of CFM. With their permission, I have printed the memo here in the News and views in its entirety., with an edited list of extracts and comments printed opposite. Please contact me if you wish to see the entire analysis. Food for thought! Some of the recommendations offered here by Andrew are currently being addressed in the Working Together Training. Tanya Loos

26 April 2005

## Memorandum

**To:** **Michael Cheshire**
**Chairman**
**Wombat Forest Council of Stewards**

**From:** **Andrew Maclean**
**Department of Sustainability and Environment**

**Subject:** **Role and Responsibilities of CFM**

1. I have been approached on a number of occasions to provide DSE's 'definition' of community forest management. On each occasion I have responded that neither DSE corporately, or any of its staff are necessarily in a position to offer an authoritative definition.

2. The Gilmour, Petheram and Stephen report prepared a couple of years ago demonstrated that, around the world, CFM operates in many ways. The characteristics of CFM in the Wombat forest need to develop to meet the needs and aspirations of the forest community. Ultimately, an agreed definition of CFM for the Wombat forest will arise from a dialogue involving leaders in the forest community, such as the CoS, with DSE and the
3. government. DSE has not, and does not wish to now impose a model of CFM onto the community.

3. But CFM is not operating in a vacuum. There are boundaries established by the government through policy and in legislation. The CoS does not have *carte blanche*. At this stage, the CoS operates in an *advisory* capacity. Indeed, this is what the Interim Stewardship Council requested.

4. The latest manifestation of 'policy' on the matter is the letter from the Hon. John Thwaites, Minister for the Environment, sent to Les Bailey as chair of the Interim Stewardship Council on 4 November 2004. I have extracted a number of what I regard as key sentences from this letter and made comment on the implications I see for CFM and the CoS. I then go on to make some suggestions for concrete action the CoS might wish to take in response.

5. The attached analysis suggests that there are three important things that the CoS needs to do at this stage:
   - Begin work on a strategic plan for the forest that will systematically address and endeavour to resolve the various issues that confront us. DSE can help with this, but ideally the CoS will be prominent in developing the plan and ultimately seeking endorsement of the product from the community and the government.
   - Adopt behaviours and processes that builds confidence in the competence of the CoS to create value for the forest community. My observations, my reading of various emails I am copied into, reports from my DSE colleagues and conversations I have in the wider community suggest to me that this is a matter of particular concern at present.
   - Work out how the CoS wishes to relate to DSE on forest operations matters, in the context of DSE having responsibility for these, and the CoS having a mandated consultative role. DSE is keen to engage with the CoS but wishes to do so in an orderly way that ensures that necessary decisions are made in a timely fashion.

*Andrew Maclean*

| Extract from Minister Thwaites' 4 November Letter to ISC Chair | Implications for Community Forest Management and the Work of the CoS | Suggested actions the CoS could take to address these implications. |
|---|---|---|
| 1. I would encourage the new organisation to give the highest priority to continuing to effectively engage local and Victorian communities in the process. | • Engagement and communication need to be given top priority in advancing CFM. | • Establish clear processes and protocols for communication with the wider community. |
| 4. I would encourage the group to keep working towards a robust model of governance and take the time to gain ownership from all the partners. | • The CoS needs to ensure CFM is soundly governed and can demonstrate that it is supported by a wide cross section of the community. | • Establish a clear governance framework for CoS that ensures that it is accountable to the wider forest community. |
| 6. In the early stages … I believe a key contribution of the Council of Stewards can make is to continue to build trust and confidence among forest stakeholders. | • The CoS needs to work hard to build trust and confidence among stakeholders. It needs to be able to test and demonstrate this to earn further legitimacy. | • Adopt self-management and behaviours that will develop trust among stakeholders. |
| 8. In line with your proposal for the relationship with DSE to be one of advice and collaboration, I expect DSE to seek and pay close attention to advice it receives from the Council of Stewards. | • The CoS can expect DSE to bring issues onto the agenda and seek advice from the CoS on these. The CoS could assist DSE and itself if it were to indicate what sort of decisions it wishes to be involved in. | • Establish processes for CoS involvement in decision making that work for both DSE and the CoS. |
| 10. The Government's policy for the Wombat forest clearly indicates that a decision about the use of the forest for timber production after 2008 will be made in consultation with the community. … Successful resolution of this issue will be seen as an indicator of success for CFM. | • The Council of Stewards should work with DSE to facilitate the supply of sawlogs sufficient to meet remaining licence commitments until 2008. | • Continue to work with DSE to develop timber-harvesting plans that meet sawlog licence commitments and take into account other community interests in the forest. |
| 11. Until 2008, the remaining sawlog supply commitments will need to be met through harvesting of the Wombat forest. | • The Government will make a decision about supplying sawlogs from the forest after 2008. It will consider community opinion about the matter and presumably seek advice from the CoS. The CoS will need to ensure it is in a position to offer well-founded advice on the matter. | • Begin considering how the CoS will formulate and offer advice about any post 2008 timber harvesting. |
| 12. One way the group may choose to engage and involve the community is through the development of a community forest management plan. | • A strategic plan outlining management directions for the forest would be a good means of communication with the wider community. See also extract 2. | • Commence discussion with DSE about establishing a new strategic plan for management of the Wombat forest. |

# Biodiversity Working Group Report

Arthur Rylah Institute Project
We are in the final stages of planning our project in conjunction with the Arthur Rylah Institute. The long term aim of the project is to increase our knowledge and understanding of faunal habitat associations in the Wombat State Forest. Mature forest is not old growth, it is a definition applied to trees that have reached a stage in their growth that the crowns have flattened. Young trees have pointed crowns. There is no old growth remaining in the Wombat.
In simple terms we are aiming to survey the wildlife in these areas and link this to the vegetation in order to build a picture of these relationships and then to define the role the mature forest plays in the Wombat Forest.
We have chosen 30 sites in mature forest, using 22 sites already surveyed by the Arthur Rylah. Each site is 1 hectare and will be surveyed by spotlight for arboreal mammals (possums and gliders). We are in discussion with the ARI regarding the number of sites which can be surveyed within our budget and the possibility of including their owl call and bird surveys.
By using 22 sites already surveyed by ARI we will have access ti the vegetation studies and therefore only have to carry out vegetation surveys on a further 8 sites.
The ARI will also hold a training session in hair tube construction and installation. We intend to involve some people in this training session and then develop a program to involve the community in installing hair tubes on these sites.
The amount of work to get this project going and the community involved is enormous, particularly as we are all volunteers. We have decided to take it a small step at a time and build the information on these sites over a number of years. We will look for opportunities for University and other researchers to use these sites, and hope to undertake surveys for bats, reptiles, fungi and soil at a later date.
One of the aims of our group is to increase community knowledge of the flora and fauna in the forest and we see this project as a way to increase participation.
Group members attend more meetings than can be imagined; Council of Stewards meetings, Sawlog Committees, Biodiversity and a range of other meetings regarding Community Forest Management. It is now time to have some fun and get out in the bush and do this research.
Stewarts Creek
We are organising a community day at Stewarts Creek in early September to pull pine wildlings and plant some musk daisy and Blackwood trees in the gully. Stewards Creek is an area which has been cleared of its pine plantation and is being returned to native vegetation. The Musk daisy and Blackwood have been raised from seed collected on the site at our last picnic on the site.
We have volunteered to remove pine wildings from the site in exchange for a donation to Jon and Gayle Rowdens' Wildlife Shelter. Hancock's have made a donation of $300 and now it is up to us to fulfil our part of the agreement.
Unfortunately this newsletter will be printed prior to our meeting to finalise the date. Anyone interested in participating in either the Stewarts Creek day or our Research project please give me a ring on 53 487558.

*Gayle Osborne*

# Wood Products Working Group Report

Sawlog harvesting is now suspended for the Winter closure period and gives us a window of opportunity to evaluate the Arboreal Habitat retention project and other trials previously conducted to focus on common ground for the way forward for 2005/6. The facilitation workshops scheduled for July should prove most beneficial in setting the groundwork for preparing plans for the coming financial year.
The WPWG Forest Mensuration and Mapping Toolkit project including an instruction component has been carried over to 2005/6 to facilitate development in liaison with all stakeholders. Come on board if you're interested. We are tentatively looking at a series of Summer workshops.
All the best to everyone for the Winter break.
Gary McIntosh
Secretary WPWG
Email: gary.mcintosh@optusnet.com.au



# Cultural Heritage Working Group

Our working group has been fairly quiet lately. We have three projects waiting for approval; funding for ongoing research and networking expenses, restoration work on the lost children's walking track, and financial help with a book being brought out by Friends of the Lerderderg. These hard-working community members have also been having historical sites marked on the south side of the Divide. In the meantime, I would like to share a few thoughts of mine about the rich and varied cultural heritage of the forest.

Since I became part of the Cultural heritage WG I think three words would summarise my involvement.
The first is **focus**, a milder term than tunnel vision, but sometimes the latter term comes closer! Nearly every walk in the forest takes an historical perspective. There will be either a particular purpose for the excursion, such as checking out an old cemetery, gold mine, or sawmill site, or the eyes will be scanning automatically for small clues to human activity, like a few shaped stones, or the odd remnant fruit tree, or even a levelled piece of ground. I tend to notice particularly the kind of vegetation that might have had significance for Aboriginal people.
Secondly, **humility** comes upon you when you start finding out how much work has been done by so many other people, and how much they know compared to yourself, and their willingness to share this knowledge. It seems to me that the more questions you find answers for, the more questions remain unanswered.
This brings us to **addiction**! Local history is like a huge jig-saw puzzle, small pieces of information gradually filling in a very big picture, with people and stories in that picture coming alive. It's amazing how these pieces of information pop up out of the blue, from people you meet, things you hear on the radio, or a topic you are interested in turns up in a paper or a book you have picked up at random.
Whether you are looking up the family you are interested in, or interested in a particular aspect of forest history, the bits of information lead you on and on, until you are totally immersed and swimming.

The Aboriginal people who lived around this area probably visited the forest regularly to gather various materials for food and craft. Observations of the movements of birds and animals and the life cycles of plants and trees would be indications of when it was time to make certain trips. I think of them trekking up the streams and creek beds and using other tracks known to them. I wonder how many of the natural landmarks were places of spiritual significance, and if there were also journeys undertaken of a ceremonial nature? Do local people nowadays use the appearance or disappearance of birds and insect life and the timing of the flowering of plant species as seasonal indicators? Taking notice of these things could tell us much about what the coming season has in store for us.

When the first settlers moved in to the area, first the pastoral runs, and later other farming activity, they more or less nibbled at the edges of the forest. Early maps mark the area known nowadays as the Wombat Forest as a thick forest not suitable for settlement. The discovery of gold changed all that. A look at the DSE map of Wombat Forest shows a network of roads and tracks, old mines and sawmills, hills, gullies and creeks that say that the forest was once home to a large population mining for gold, felling timber and milling it, and trying to make a living in small clearings scattered throughout the forest. Much of this activity disappeared as the gold and the timber ran out. The forest has reclaimed the disturbed ground, and a walk in the bush today, along some of the old tracks poses such questions as 'who were these people?' and 'where did they go?'. The only clues to abandoned sites are small piles of disturbed ground, old mine shafts, and piles of sawdust. More experienced eyes can spot the line of an old tramway and other small clues. Perhaps it is a good thing that the forest retains some of its secrets from the unfortunate attentions of vandals and souvenir hunters.

Books and old newspapers give a graphic account of the harsh conditions and isolation under which these forbears of ours lived. Two books I have read lately are "Diary of a Welsh Swagman" and Dr Wisewould's "Doctor on the Divide". Unfortunately, both are now hard to obtain, but give a wonderful insight into what life was like in those days and the characters who peopled the forest. Another 'must read' is the biography of John La Gerche, our first forest 'policeman' and much more than that, written by Angela Taylor, and available at the Daylesford museum.
One group who followed the lure of gold to this area were the Chinese. Nearly everyone else tended to view them with suspicion, but they became very useful members of the community because they also created vegetable gardens.
The quite well known "Chinaman's Garden" was situated in the gully which is now covered by Lake Daylesford. Vegetables were supplied to the local community, including the Daylesford Hospital.
There was another "Chinaman's Garden" near Spring Hill, according to a sign on Swaby's Track North. I wonder who tended that garden, and where he sold his vegetables? Did he take them to Spring Hill, or the nearby sawmill? Is the grave in Glenlyon Cemetery simply marked "Chinaman" his grave? Were there any market gardens in the area other than Chinese? Do the descendents of early settlers remember the gardens of their forebears and what they grew?

So many stories to hear, tell, and pass on to others – and questions to answer. Come on in – the water's fine!

*Anne Dobbs*

## Letters to the News and Views

Dear Editor,

Australians have a reputation of being a nation of knockers, and this is born out by the negative letters we see published occasionally in the Wombat News & Views. It is so very easy to stand back, do nothing, and criticise any new organisation or project.

It is working with a group of people of diverse personalities, backgrounds and opinions to formulate an outcome which will have far-reaching effects for good of the environment that is the hard part.

If the negativity that surrounded all the new ideas and inventions that our fellow Australians had worked on over the years had any effect, we would not now have penicillin, the black box, stump-jump ploughs, Sunshine harvesters, Furphy water tanks, Clean Up Australia Day, and many other Australian firsts which have made a great difference to our lives.

CFM in the Wombat Forest is also an Australian first, and as such, deserves at least some time to trial the efficacy of such a notion.

Everyone who lives in and breathes the air of this country is entitled to say how they wish their forests to be kept for the future of a healthy environment and the use of their descendants. There are many people who have spent their whole lives learning everything they can about their particular interest, without having gained a University degree. We vote for the governments we want to run our political affairs, but we don't then leave it up to them to do exactly as they wish without some input from ourselves.

If we left everything to the "experts" and just sat in our comfy armchairs for the rest of our lives, doing nothing, the environment would be in a parlous state indeed, as past history will bear out.

*Denise Dalton*
*Cultural Heritage Working Group*

## Bushwalking in the Wombat Forest

The Wombat State Forest is host to many and varied recreational activities. At just about any time of the year, one would find four-wheel driving, trail-biking, prospecting and bushwalking all taking place within its boundaries.

This forest is a great asset to Victorians, and the enormous network of tracks and trails provides access to all parts of the Wombat.

For many years, the bushwalking clubs of Victoria have travelled to towns such as Daylesford, Blackwood and Trentham to explore and enjoy the surrounding forests and their mining and logging heritage. Walks in the Daylesford area, particularly in what is now the Hepburn Regional Park, have always been popular. Another frequently visited area is around Blackwood. Byres Back Track to O'Brien's Crossing, and the tracks upstream along the Lerderderg have been tramped by probably thousands of bushwalkers over the years.

In recent times, the Great Dividing Trail Association has built up a bushwalking trail network throughout central Victoria, much of it in the Wombat Forest, providing bushwalkers with all types of walks, from the easy stroll to the hardest slog. From a Wombat Forest point of view, the recently opened 80 km Lerderderg Track from Daylesford to Bacchus Marsh is of particular interest.
From Lake Daylesford the trail goes via the Cornish Hill gold-mining site to Jubilee Lake, then on past the sites of Graves and Nolan's Sawmills to Blackwood. Here the track enters Lerderderg State Park and continues via the Springs Reserve and Mt Blackwood, emerging from the Park some 9km from the finish at Bacchus Marsh Railway Station.

Another part of the Great Dividing Trail, the Federation Track, joins Daylesford to Ballarat, via Sailors Falls, Wombat Station, Mollongghip, Dean and Creswick. This track also passes through a large part of the Wombat State Forest, between Sailors Falls and Mollongghip. This stretch of the Trail features extensive railway earthworks on the former Creswick to Daylesford Railway, and well-preserved cuttings of Andersons timber tramway near Mollongghip.

On October 16 this year, the Wombat Forest and the Lerderderg State Park will come alive with hundreds of bushwalkers when the Essendon Bushwalking Club hosts the annual walks day of the Victorian Federation of Walking Clubs (Vicwalk). The centre of activity will be the Blackwood Recreation Reserve on the Lerderderg River. Some 20 different walks in the Blackwood area will be staged. These will be led by experienced leaders from the Essendon club, and will be of various stages of difficulty. Both members of Vicwalk clubs and the general public are welcome to take part.
Anyone interested in taking part in the walk can obtain details by sending an email to bill@wtcasey.com

*Bill Casey, Great Dividing Trail Association*

# What DSE's been up to...

**Firewood**
DSE is reminding domestic firewood collectors to start planning for their next year's winter requirements, as dry firewood will only be available in limited supply. Currently both dry and green firewood can be sourced from the Wombat State Forest. Residents should plan ahead, and start collecting and storing green wood for the following year. There are fifteen designated firewood collection areas open in the Wombat State Forest this winter. All firewood collection in the Wombat State Forest requires a valid permit.

Firewood collectors are reminded to stay strictly within the designated areas and not to collect wind-fallen trees out of these areas as they form an integral part of the Wombat State Forest's ecosystem. DSE will be conducting patrols throughout the Wombat State Forest to ensure there is a sustainable firewood resource, and vehicular damage is minimised whilst soil conditions are boggy.

Collection of wind-fall trees from roadsides in the Hepburn, Macedon and Moorabool Shires is also generally prohibited.

**Hazard Management**
A tractor and slasher has been working and will continue throughout the winter, conditions permitting, on roads in the East Wombat to maintain a clear fire break along the sides of roads that have previously been cleared either by hand or with a flail mower. Roads already completed are Finger Post Road, Gerrys Road and Burnt Mill Road. These breaks not only assist in fire suppression but provide a better line of sight on corners and protect wildlife by making them visible before they move onto the road allowing for traffic to slow to safer speeds.

**Fire Operations Plan**
The draft Fire Operations Plan is currently under development for the Bacchus Marsh Fire District, which includes the Wombat State Forest. DSE is responsible for the prevention and suppression of fires on public land in Victoria. In order to meet this commitment and in line with the Code of Practice for Fire Management. Each year DSE develops a Fire Operations Plan that outlines the location of prescribed burns for both fuel reduction and ecological values, major forest access road construction and mechanical hazard reduction operations.
The Bacchus Marsh Fire District includes the following public land areas:

You Yangs Regional Park
Brisbane Ranges National Park
Stieglitz Historic Park
Werribee Gorge and Lerderderg State Parks
Pyrete Ranges
Wombat State Forest
Cobaw State Forest
Macedon Regional Park
Hepburn Regional Park
Woodlands Historic Park
Organ Pipes National Park
The native grassland areas west of Melbourne

In order to ensure that the plan covers local issues as well as state responsibilities, DSE will be undertaking a wide consultation process involving a diverse range of skills and interest both within the Department and externally. This includes the local community, and any interested community member can become involved by nominating areas of public land for consideration and possible inclusion in the 2005/2006 Fire Operations Plan, or have input into proposed operations when the Draft Plan is released in August 2005. Nominations should be in writing and addressed to Department of Sustainability and Environment, Fire Management, 219a Main Street Bacchus Marsh 3340.

The draft plan will be released in August and several meetings are planned across the district to discuss Prescribed Burning, Roading and Fire Management Issues. It is anticipated that these meetings will also include other relevant public land management issues.

All meetings will be open from 7:30pm to 9:30pm on the following dates and will include a short information sessions as well as opportunity for group and individual discussions.

**Maude Tennis Club – Wednesday 27th July**
**Blackwood Hall – Thursday 28th July**
**Trentham Mechanics Hall – Tuesday 2nd August**
**St Annes Vineyards, Myrniong – Thursday 4th August**
**Daylesford Senior Citizens Centre – Wednesday 10th August**
**Woodend Community Centre – Thursday 11th August**

For more information on the Fire Operations Plan or other issues regarding Fire Management, contact the Fire Management Officer on 53676573.

**Roading**
Those travelling along New Sultan Track recently may have noticed a few changes. During the past month, the Daylesford crew replaced the old wooden bridge over Lerderderg River with a more durable box culvert. Maintenance of Lerderderg Road continued with spreading of new gravel.

## DSE Report, continued

Currently crew members are rebuilding the bridge over the Loddon River on Loddon River Road. Work is expected to continue throughout July. Those travelling between Babbingtons Road and Springs Road will need to detour via Bridge Road or Daylesford-Trentham Road whilst the works are underway.

**Harvesting**
With the onset of wet weather in mid-June, Senior Natural Resource Manager Elizabeth Ashman enforced a closure for timber harvesting activities in the Wombat State Forest. The closure precludes the use of machinery on logging coupes until at least the end of September. Operations are only partially complete at Cockatoo Creek, the third of the five arboreal habitat retention project sites. Suspension of operations during the winter months is important to maintenance of soil and stream health.

**Sawlog Resource Review**
Planners Tuesday Phelan and Rebecca Pagan have started work on a new project to review how prescriptions developed with the community over the past few years impact on the extent of timber resource in the Wombat State Forest. The project will determine where new wetland, arboreal habitat and amenity prescriptions apply in the forest. This will enable measurement of the extent to which the area permitted for harvesting is reduced. Adjustments will also be made for the retention of large trees, gum and peppermint species. The girls anticipate working with CFM participants over the next few months through a committee to be discussed at the next Council of Stewards meeting.

**Got a question for DSE?**
If you wish to speak with Daylesford DSE staff about forest and fire management in the Wombat State Forest, we can be contacted by phone on 5348 2211, email on wombat.cfm@dse.vic.gov.au or visit (preferably by appointment) at 14 Mineral Water Drive, Daylesford.

## Local Area Report: Blackwood and Barry's Reef

Environmental Perspectives", 9.4.05 sponsored by Port Phillip & Western Port Catchment Management Authority was a great day. (Requests have already been received that the next 'talk fest' be held earlier in the day with a sandwich luncheon).
Representatives from Blackwood's Crown Reserves Committee of Management and 'Town Care' paid close attention to policies and methods in respect to protection of remnant vegetation and weed eradication as practised by celebrated environmentalist, Tim d' Ombrain..
Jon Rowden, (Wildlife Victoria) presented a pitiful scenario of animal mortalities on main roads.
Graphic information about water flow from Bob Ford of Central Highlands Water, Cr. Pat. Toohey. Woodlands Ward and our Loris will be depicted in a pictorial display at the Blackwood General Store.

Stage 1 of 70 km. Advisory Dusk to Dawn speed signs on the Myrniong - Trentham and Trentham - Daylesford roads will be completed this month, courtesy of Vic. Roads.
Acting upon advice by Mr. Graham Freestone, Manager Program Development Vic.Roads to 'raise community awareness of wildlife mortalities on arterial roads', we wrote to Optus requesting that they replace their tiger cub emblem with an Australian animal. Both letters remain unanswered!
We are indebted to Moorabool Shire's Community Grants scheme for $4.200 towards signposting of historic mine sites and timber mills in Moorabool's area of the Wombat State Forest. Hoping to complete this innovative program, we have written to Hepburn/Moorabool Cultural Arts Liaison Officer, Jon Stephens seeking sponsorship to take EWFA's (East Wombat Forest Alliance) project throughout the remaining 42.000 ha. of Forest.

'Blackwood Loop Walking Tracks', stage 1 of a series of walks along former water races in Simmons Reef, courtesy of an Australian Government Grant, is being stepped out by local scientist, John Davies and GDTA/EWFA associates. Moorabool Shire has also given an additional $5.000. towards construction costs.
Just behind houses and Garden of St. Erth, the understorey in this riparian segment of the Wombat Forest radiates an air of meditative spirituality.

2-7-05, Alan Hall, President of the Blackwood Historical Society guided members around the area, showing us for example, where the Simmons Reef cemetery and Quicks Hotel used to be and best of all, a wide tunnel hewn from solid rock through which carriers would lead their horse driven drays to collect and take away ore for crushing. A tangible monument to an era when life was incredibly tough for people and their loyal horses. Another cogent reason for continuing EWFA's heritage signposting throughout the Wombat State Forest.

*Pat Liffman, Barry's Reef.*

# A Designated Site for Psytrance events in the Wombat Forest?

This proposal is aimed at securing a designated site for staging Psytrance Musical events in the Wombat State Forest. Currently these events are causing objections from the local authorities and being treated as unwelcome. The Psytrance community, among others, are finding this unjust and are at times forced to run events without proper permits or permission. The lack of support by the local authorities, whom they are supposed to respect and look up to, are driving these events underground. The site proposed is a section of the paddock on Farm Road, Wombat State Forest. This site will meet all current concerns in the running of Psytrance events in State Forests including; environmental damage, disturbance to other by-passers and campers, car parking, obstructing road access and the preservation of the Psytrance culture.

The main concern in the running of these events in State Forests is that they are destructive to the environment, they harm surrounding plant life and generally just 'trash' the forest. Although these claims are anything but true, with the use of the Farm Road Paddock no native plants or wildlife are close enough to be disturbed. Therefore, these issues would no longer be of any concern. There is plenty of room for cars to park, an event to be held and people to camp without any disturbance or destruction to the surrounding forest what-so-ever.

The next major concern is the intrusion into the space of other people that may be in the area for a family picnic, camping trip, bush-walk etc. As the Farm Road Paddock would be a designated site for these events, which is also quite out of the way from any camping grounds or picnic sites, there would be no issue with the area being required by campers or picnickers. If this kind of conflict did arise, Site Managers would have authority to resolve the problem and explain the purpose of the site.

The issue of community members attending the event not having adequate parking, and ending up obstructing forest roads with their cars (in turn causing a safety hazard in terms of emergency access should it arise) would be eliminated, as the Farm Road Paddock has more than adequate parking space and safe, open, easily accessible roads coming from more than one direction from the site. The construction of the proposed parking space would make it obvious to attendees where to park and they would not park in the forest where plant life inhabits, whilst providing a safe area that will not generate issues with sliding, bogging or other associated problems.

With the designation of the Farm Road Paddock all concerns at the presence of these events are fully addressed. The forest would no longer be at risk of any damage, the issue of others being disturbed by the event is taken out of the picture, parking is fully contained and catered for, roads are fully accessible and the Psytrance Ritual can continue its tradition in peace. It stands to reason that this proposal is beneficial to both our State Forests and our people. All it takes is the designation of one small clearing of land, making this a proposal definitely worthy of consideration, and even better carried out. Best of all, it would allow the community to be proud to call the Australian bushland their own.

The Psytrance Ritual is the celebration of the combination of music, dance and nature. It has been a tradition carried out for decades worldwide, and it would be a tragedy to see this unique ritual disappear from the heart of the Australian bushland.

*Billy Lawrence*
*Daylesford Secondary College*



## Mudlark Forest Trial Firewood for sale

⇒ This is first Genuine CFM produced firewood available to the public.

⇒ Collected Nov-Dec 2003 from Mudlark Trial area

⇒ For pick up at $60 per meter call George Howard 5348 6568

⇒ some delivery by arrangement

# Fauna Snapshot: Sambar, an introduced deer species in the Wombat

**Distribution and abundance**

The current population of Sambar in Australia originates from Sri Lanka, India and the Philippines. Sambar were deliberately released in Victoria via acclimatisation societies of the 19th century, and releases have occurred since then through accidental or deliberate liberation from deer farms, or by hunters. Original populations were most successful in Westernport and French Island, then spread to the Eastern Highland forests, eventually colonising ACT and NSW. It is believed that the range is still expanding. In Victoria, most sources list the Eastern forests as the main area of distribution However Menkhorst, in his field guide to the Mammals of Australia(2001) lists "Isolated populations at Mt Cole, Western Victoria and Sunday Island." The Victorian Wildlife Atlas (2004) records the Sambar at the Grampians and Beaufort, as well as their population stronghold in the East. Anecdotal reports of Sambar in the Wombat Forest exist, although people are yet to submit their records to the Atlas.

Sambar are very alert and wary, and thus hard to detect. This makes estimation of the population size difficult. In 2002, the number of Sambar of Victoria was conservatively estimated at 8000 animals.

**Preferred habitat**

Sambar inhabit both wet and dry sclerophyll forests, with a preference for hilly country. Heavily vegetated gullies offer cover from hunters and other human disturbance, for largely crepuscular activities such as browsing and mating. Sheltered, drier slopes are used for sunning and protection from the weather.

**Diet**

Sambar forage on a wide variety of soft-leaved and hard leaved grasses, sedges and shrubs. Blackberry fruit are also eaten when available. Grapevines, walnuts, ornamental trees in rural parks and gardens, regrowth after current forestry operations and finally, seedlings planted in native revegetation projects are also food sources.

**Habits, Reproductive biology**

The Sambar is considered to be the most successful deer species in Australia, as it is the only deer species that is capable of growing in numbers without human assistance in the form of regular liberations from deer farms, or by hunters. Sambar habits and reproductive biology seem particularly suited to the Australian forests that they have made their home.

Firstly, unlike other deer species, Sambar do not form herds. This lessens the impact on the comparatively less fertile forests at any one time, and also affords more protection from hunters and other disturbance, than a hundred strong herd.

Sambar breeding strategies are also appropriate for Australian conditions. Solitary males attract females into their largely permanent territories by scent marking and marking trees with their antlers, by scratching or with mud from a wallow. Female deer or hinds come into oestrus while still suckling large young, therefore theoretically three calves can be produced per year. Breeding season may happen at any time of year, which means that the deer can breed opportunistically when conditions are good, a great advantage in an environment prone to cycles of drought and bushfires. Most breeding peaks in May /June, and November/December.

**The need for management.**

In Menkhorst's Mammals of Victoria (1995), the Sambar is not described as a significant pest species, instead that Sambar are "widely considered to be the best game animal in Australia", and that as populations seem to be healthy "present state government policy is that active management will not occur".

The negative impacts of deer species in conservation areas have been increasingly recognised in the past decade or so. In NSW, under the Threatened Species Conservation Act, herbivory and environmental degradation caused by feral deer has been listed as a key threatening process in Schedule 3 of the Act. Here in Victoria, in late 2004, the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Scientific Advisory Committee have made a preliminary recommendation on a nomination for listing degradation and loss of terrestrial habitats caused by feral deer.

The Sambar is a generalist browser and grazer, with a particular fondness for fresh, young growth. Their use of trails, and permanent wallows has significant impacts on endangered and riparian vegetation. They are regarded as pests in two main areas, after forestry operations, and in areas of high conservation value, such as in plant communities that are endangered Ecological Vegetation Classes. It is not known whether they are significant pest species in the Wombat Forest.

**Victorian Legislation**

The management of Sambar as a pest species in Victoria is hampered by current legislation. Victorian legislation reveals that Sambar are not regarded as a significant pest species, and the existing legislation actually ensures the maintenance of populations for hunting use.

Although an introduced animal, all deer, including Sambar are protected under the Wildlife Act 1975. This means Sambar are managed as Game animals, not pests. They are allowed to be hunted in designated areas only, and during a specified 'open season'. Hunting is banned in conservation areas, and there are even deer sanctuaries, areas legislated as "Recognised Deer Habitat". These areas act as refuges enabling breeding and replenishment of the population to occur. The current heavy hunting pressure is thus more like a sustainable harvest than a control program.

**A personal note:** I have seen Sambar in my local forest, and they are noble, beautiful, intelligent animals! Those who hunt these animals for sport are urged to read the Fact Sheet on ethical deer hunting, available on the DSE website: www.dse.gov.au *Tanya Loos*

# Letters to the News and Views

Dear Editor,
I note the article in Issue 8, May 2005, headed 'Conservationists call for bans on aerial spraying in water catchments. I note also that Mr Anthony Amis is scare-mongering with his claims as to the likely effects of aerial applications of pesticides in plantations.

In May last year, Amis provided a press release to the Portland Observer, in which he claimed that some seven insecticides were likely to be widely used in the Blue Gum plantations in the Green Triangle region. The following is from my rebuttal to that press release.

"The article on the warning about insecticide use in bluegums (7/5/04) was based on a press release from Anthony Amis of the Friends of the Earth which was a complete beat-up, containing factually incorrect information, and was clearly a scare tactic.

There were only two insecticides in the list given in the release that are used in plantations in WA. One, alpha-cypermethrin is registered for aerial application in plantations. The other, carbaryl, is used in pellet baits in WA to control wingless grasshopper in agriculture, viticulture and plantations. Five other insecticides listed by Amis are not used in plantations in WA. Since companies involved in the Green Triangle, including those named by Amis, are WA-based and the chemicals are not registered for aerial use in plantations, they are unlikely to be used in Victoria.

Further, the WA Department of Health has reviewed the health and environmental effects of alpha-cypermethrin. The chemical does not affect genetic material, and when sprayed in the field, is not considered a threat to human health in relation to chronic toxicity - a low dose exposure over an extended period of time. Studies have shown that the mixture of isomers in cypermethrin, which includes the two isomers in alpha-cypermethrin, do not cause cancer, or affect a developing foetus, or affect reproduction. Alpha-cypermethrin does not build up in soil and does not tend to leach to sub-surface soil layers, and has a relatively short soil half-life, which is the time for half of the applied dose to be destroyed or dissipated.

It is very toxic to fish, but due to the rapid loss from water its toxic effect to fish is not readily observed under field conditions. Although highly toxic to marron in WA, and to bees, it has a repellent effect - marron crawl out of the water onto the banks and bees avoid contact with the chemical.

The potential economic damage to plantations from insect infestations is considerable, but in WA, in the southwest, a Community Consultative Group was set up in 2001. After making several recommendations to the Minister of Agriculture in 2002, that group went into recess until April this year.

I quote from the minutes of the most recent meeting: 'There have been no incidents reported to the Health Department regarding inappropriate use of pesticides in timber plantations since the CCG#1 recommendations were adopted by the Minister', and ' The Minister noted that the issues brought before the CCG relate to pesticide use in general and are not necessarily related to the plantation industry'.

The (April) meeting agreed that the practices adopted by the plantation timber industry following the CCG1 were a model for all other chemical users to follow. There was far more concern about the practices of the viticulture industry in the same area eg. the use of mister-blowers to spray for insect control. Amis has not let the facts get in the way of a hysterical beat-up".

I n my opinion, Amis has little credibility where his knowledge of pesticides and their use is concerned. I have recently sent a substantial volume of material to the Otways group referred to in your article, refuting the claims made by Amis and others to the meeting in Gellibrand on May 15th.

For example, the statement that 'the public has a right to know what is being sprayed, in what volume and where the spraying is occurring' is a pure scare tactic. It is mandatory for complete records to be kept, of chemicals used, at what rate over what areas, during what times, with recording of weather records - temperature, wind speed and direction, relative humidity - all of which have to fall into specified ranges before spraying can take place. Forestry organizations also practice the 'good neighbour' approach when aerial spraying is to take place.

Further, there are very specific requirements for aerial spraying. Helicopter application is the preferred forestry method, with GPS mapping of flight lines (the 'flying flagman' technology). Helicopter application is more accurate because speed is slower than fixed wing, which is far more widely used in agriculture.

The chemicals used are registered for plantations. Another misconception widely propagated is that there is insufficient regulation. On the contrary, Australia has one of the most advanced regulatory systems worldwide, which starts with the Agricultural Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) set up under Commonwealth Government legislation, and responsible for pesticides up to the point of retail sale, that is, all trial work, registration, labelling which is highly specified, OH & S and EH & S etc. State Government Control of Use Acts and Regulations then take over, with input from several other Acts including Health Acts (OH & S), Transport Acts, Dangerous Goods Acts, EPA Acts etc.

Amis states that alpha-cypermethrin is toxic to some freshwater organisms at 4 ppt. Where is the evidence? That arose from certain false claims about oyster deaths in Tasmania. The figure for oysters is actually in the ppm range which is a million times greater, and given that plantation applications require at least 20 m buffers from permanent streams, that application is to foliage, that the insecticide is one of the most soil-fast (that is it sticks like super-glue to soil) if it does reach the soil, the chance of water contamination becomes vanishingly small.

Finally, I point out that forestry operations are governed by a Code of Practice, but agriculture is not. The chemicals used in plantation forestry are also far more widely used in agriculture; in fact forestry pesticide use accounts for less than 5% of the Australian pesticides market. The major users are agriculture and horticulture, with industrial use (roadsides, railways, factories etc) and domestic use being other contributors.

Yours sincerely,
Dr. Barry Tomkins, Senior Fellow, School of Forestry, University of Melbourne, Creswick.
( Dr Tomkins also included a detailed professional declaration of his role as an independent research scientist, whose work is not vetted by any companies. My apologies to Barry for running out of room! Pls e-mail me for a copy-Editor)

# Back Page Interview: Introducing the people of CFM: Gary McIntosh

**Where do you live? And where are you from?**
I live in Bullarto township, a small hamlet 10km east of Daylesford in Central Victoria. Born and educated in Sydney, I lived near Kuringai National Park where I spent much of my youth. My family and I have owned property and forest estates in NSW where I learnt forestry skills from an early age. I moved there when leaving school, purchasing and managing my own forest blocks for many years before moving to Victoria in 1990. The McIntosh's have a long history of involvement in forestry when selective harvesting and thinning was extensively practiced.
**Occupation**
Volunteer in Landcare and Community Forest Management. Some consultancy in private sector.
**Your Role in CFM? What Does this involve?**
I am secretary of the Wood Products Working Group, proxy representative on the Council of Stewards, past member of the Interim Stewardship Council and also worked as part of a broader team in silvicultural forest thinning trials pre-CFM. In 2005/6 I will be reducing my voluntary commitment, encouraging new and existing members to participate where possible. The Wood Products Working Group has endeavoured to develop acceptable silvicultural prescriptions in liaison with all stakeholders that are ecologically responsible and sustainable, putting these as recommendations to the Council of Stewards and the Department of Sustainability and Environment.
**What are the best things about CFM in the Wombat?**
Developing new friends, relationships, teams and networks. The opportunity to be collaboratively involved in the management of the Wombat Forest is a real privilege.
**What would improve CFM in the Wombat?**
Better communication. Dialogue, discussion and debate needs to occur in that order. Social-political issues are something that has been difficult for sure and these need to be maturely addressed and acknowledged as an integral component of CFM. There is so much 'common ground' out there that we simply have to focus on it. Engaging people with expertise in forestry in the discussions on sawlog supply would make sense.
**What activity do you do most in the Wombat Forest?**
Horse riding through the forest, enjoying and observing the environment and its inhabitants.
**What is it you value most about the Wombat Forest today? And in the future?**
The social interaction and being in the forest. I love big trees, for quality sawlog, for habitat, for old-growth characteristics, for balanced eco-systems, for spiritual well being.
**What is your opinion on the sawlog extraction in the Wombat issue?**
I have a vision of a forest that is managed holistically for all values. Some call it 'Ecosystem Management'. Given the Wombat Forest has so many domestic water catchments within its boundaries, timber resource production and utilization should be provided as a by-product of managing for the enhancement of the ecosystems. We certainly must keep our local sawmills supplied with timber from a socially and economically responsible perspective. This is a real challenge given the depleted state of the forest, a balancing act, but achievable.

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