Wombat Forest Guardian

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Society Maps Out Campaign Steps For Next 12 Months

In the past four weeks the Society has held committee and general meetings to decide on the next 12 months' actions. The focus will remain on the need for:

- an urgent reduction in all timber harvesting in the Wombat Forest to sustainable levels in line with the Timber Industry Strategy,
- an end to high-intensity forestry operations such as the 'Shelterwood' system of pseudo-clearfelling and so-called 'regeneration' burns, and
- a comprehensive, independent flora and fauna survey of the forest.

"Within this broad framework, our committee is hard at work on many topics, including water catchment issues, employment programs to rehabilitate parts of the forest, submissions to Federal Government processes, educating people through our regular bus tours, preparing management options, considering electoral strategies, and highlighting the mismanagement of the forest," said WFS Director, Alan Gray.

"We've been through a period of reflection, and reassessment of our progress, and I get a sense that the committee is focussed strongly on the tasks at hand," he said.

Mr Gray said that he looks forward to strong support from members of the Society through a quick renewal of membership fees (due now for most members).

"I hope that most members will feel they've had their money's worth from the Society's year's work.

"If there's a renewal slip enclosed with this copy of the newsletter, I urge you to write a cheque right now and post it today, so we can keep up the work," he said.

Society's First AGM Successful

The Wombat Forest Society's First Annual General Meeting was held at the Daylesford Secondary College on 16 May. Committee member, Greg Morgan, presented an informative range of slides demonstrating various issues of concern to the Society in the forest, Tim Anderson discussed silviculture, rates of growth of trees in the forest, and future directions. Director, Alan Gray, reviewed the year's activities of the Society and discussed strategies for the next year's campaigning. The meeting proceeded with election of office bearers, and the new committee members are listed below. Accountant, Clem Mooney, of Trentham and South Melbourne, certified that he had audited the books of account of the Society and that all was in order.

After questions, supper, and informal chats, the Society closed the book on its first year, and ushered in the next.

OFFICE BEARERS OF THE WOMBAT FOREST SOCIETY INC, 1995/6

Director: Alan T Gray

Joint Secretaries: Wendy Bone and Robin Ramsay

Treasurer: Karen Sandow, assisted by Greg Morgan

Committee: Monty Kirby, Tim Anderson, Loris Duclos, Helen Morningstar, Deborah Collings, Neil Wilson, Wendy Notley.

- *Clem Mooney, B. Com., M.B.A., C.P.A., kindly audited the books of account of the Society at no cost. Clem has an office in South Melbourne and at his home in Trentham, and he is available to discuss financial, tax or accounting matters at the following phone numbers: (054) 241 441 or (03) 9690 2177, 168 Gladstone St, South Melbourne, 3205.*

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The committee of the Wombat Forest Society meets every second Tuesday (sometimes every Tuesday!) evening at 7:30 PM at the old Daylesford courthouse (now the Neighbourhood Centre). MEETINGS FOR THE NEXT COUPLE OF MONTHS ARE: 13 & 27 JUNE, 11 & 25 JULY, 1 & 15 AUGUST. We'd love to see some new faces lend a hand on the many satisfying tasks confronting the Society. Leave a message on (053) 48 3632 to get involved now!

"JOBS NOT WOODCHIPS FOR THE WOMBAT FOREST"

SPREAD THE WORD. Durable, weatherproof WFS stickers. Only $1.50 each, posted, from PO Box 51 Trentham, 3458, or $1.00 each from the WFS forest bus tours, 3rd Sunday of each month.

YES MINISTER — IGNORE THE PEASANTS *(THEY ONLY LIVE THERE)*

Many months ago the Wombat Forest Society presented the following 9 point plan to the State Government committee charged with preparing a Management Plan for the Wombat Forest. The only reply we recieved was a bland assurance that community concerns would be considered, yet two years after this committee was formed, it has produced no research or documents of substance, and it is now nearly ten years since the State Timber Industry Strategy dictated that a Management Plan should be prepared for our forest.

This same committee (officially named the Midlands Forest Management Area Advisory Committee) also voted to exclude any Wombat Forest Society committee members from being on this committee, even though the Society represents more local poeple concerned about Wombat Forest management issues than any other group in the region.

WOMBAT FOREST SOCIETY 9 POINT PLAN

The WFS believes the following management changes and actions are urgently required:

1. Abandonment of pseudo-clearfelling operations (called Shelterwood harvesting) and a return to selective falling to supply local sawmills.
2. Total exclusion of export woodchipping operations from the Wombat Forest.
3. A comprehensive flora and fauna survey which is independent of the Victorian Department of Conservation & Natural Resources.
4. Hydrological studies to determine the exact effect of *any* form of logging on downstream water quality and quantity.
5. Rare, threatened and endangered species to receive the same level of protection as is given in other parts of the State for the same species.
6. An urgent end to 'regeneration' burns after harvesting operations.
7. A return to the maximum levels of sawlog and pulpwood harvesting as specified in the Victorian Timber Industry Strategy.
8. A comprehensive study of the total economic value of all forest values, such as that proposed to the Federal Government's DEST by consultant economist, Frances Gray.
9. A judicial inquiry into the mismanagement of the Wombat Forest by the Victorian DCNR.

WORLD CLASS THEATRE HITS DAYLESFORD FOR THE FOREST

World-renowned actor, and Wombat Forest Society Secretary, Robin Ramsay, will be performing his new hit one-man play, *The Accidental Mystic*, at the Daylesford Town Hall on Saturday, 29 July this year, as a fundraiser for the Society.

Anyone who saw Robin perform *The Bastard From The Bush* last year at the Town Hall for The Society, will know that *now* is the time to reserve tickets. The capacity audience left the town hall last year after an utterly spellbinding performance, and *The Accidental Mystic* has just completed a Melbourne season at the CUB Malthouse Theatre before capacity crowds at each evening's performance, and to broad critical acclaim.

This is a rare opportunity to see world-class theatre in Daylesford at bargain basement prices. Robin, and his supporting musicians, will be donating all proceeds from the play to the Wombat Forest Society, in another generous gesture to follow from last year. *The Bastard From The Bush* proceeds allowed the Society to campaign throughout the vital lead-up to woodchip licence renewals last year, and this year's performance will be just as important for realising campaign objectives. **Tickets are available from the Daylesford Health Food Shop, or by mail from the Society at PO Box 51 Trentham, 3458. Adults:$12;concession:$10;delicious, gourmet supper: $3 on the night.**

Foresters Play God With Powerful Owl

by Wendy Bone
Secretary, WFS.

Thank you to all WFS members who phoned and wrote to the State Government about the powerful owl, or bought windcheaters and/or T-shirts. We had a significant win in January when we halted the logging and woodchipping at Coupe 13 near Bullarto where we believe the owl is roosting and has been heard calling on numerous occasions since the first week of March.

We were extremely excited in mid-May when we realised that another owl was answering the first owl's call, which means that he has found a mate, and will probably start nesting and raising young in the area during winter.

Suitable habitat trees large enough for the owl are extremely rare in the Wombat Forest and we have been most fortunate in finding 5 such suitable trees in Coupe 13. The State foresters have set aside 500 hectares of mostly degraded forest (ie forest that has been logged in the past 40 years).

We do not believe that this area will sustain the powerful owl family, so we must all continue to pressure the Department to provide the necessary 800 hectares of mature forest which they allow the owl in other parts of the State.

T-shirts are $16 each (sizes: small, medium, large and extra large), and windcheaters are $27 each (medium, large, extra large, and extra extra large) from PO Box 51 Trentham, 3458.

FOREST BUS TOUR TIMETABLE (3RD SUNDAY OF EVERY MONTH): 18 JUNE, 16 JULY, 20 AUG, 17 SEPT, 15 OCT, 19 NOV, 17 DEC. RING (053) 48 3632 FOR BOOKINGS.