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**

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The deadline for Issue 9 is July 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

In the Wombat News and Views, and the CFM process in general, we have really been trying to aim for "balance". Balance is the representation of varied opinions that covers all ends of the spectrum, from the die-hard retired forester to the radical forest lover, and everyone in between. We must be careful not to discredit the extreme ends of the spectrum, on either side, and end up with a newsletter and CFM process that is so balanced that it becomes bland and meaningless.

However at the same time, how do we move forward and make decisions? At the moment, a balanced CFM process includes a Sawlog Supply Plan, despite the grave misgivings some hold regarding the depleted nature of the Wombat Forest. It also seems that having a balanced CFM Council of Stewards means that some people will be left unhappy with Council decisions.

Sawlog supply aside, perhaps the best we can all do is try to focus upon the fantastic practical projects being undertaken in the Wombat by people who love and care for our Forest, through CFM's many and varied working groups. Also, I think some relaxing social events such as a few beers around a barbie would work wonders for the brave souls sitting on the Council of Stewards. There is something about an Enormous Agenda, a Chair, a Minute-taker and a Big Board Room Table that causes people to forget the multitude of things that they have in common.

It was refreshing and pleasing to see the goodwill apparent at the recent Forest Assembly; see Tim Anderson's report for a write-up of this event.

In celebration of the hoped for balance of CFM, this issue's letters page prints two letters. I hesitated to print one of these letters for a month or two, but, hey, this is the News and VIEWS, so bring on your rants and your raves, your passionate opinions, and we will print them, and your position on the scale will be recorded for posterity. Of course, any offensive or libellous comments will be removed for legal reasons, and the fact that we wish to promote respectful debate and community minded behaviour.

Tanya Loos

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A note from the Editor:

- Issue 8 was incorrectly listed as the May issue at the top of the page: it should have said "March"!
- Dave Stephens name was misspelt as Stephenson in the Richard Loyn article.
- AND, Dave's letter to the News and Views was not printed until this issue.

I do apologise; these errors will not occur in future issues of the News and Views! *Tanya Loos*

Community Forest Development Officer Report

Around 350 people attended the third Wombat CFM Forest Assembly held on April 16 at the Daylesford Secondary College. The Chair of the Council of Stewards, Cr Michael Cheshire opened the meeting and gave a brief overview of the activities of the Council of Stewards over the past months.

Elizabeth Ashman, the new manager for the Wombat Forest explained DSE's commitment to CFM and making CFM work as well as re-affirming that the Daylesford DSE staff lived locally and were also local community members committed to CFM.

People attending the Forest Assembly had the opportunity to listen to an overview of Community Forest Management globally and the evolution of the Wombat Community Forest Management project. This looked at the reality that CFM is about a wide range of people, with a wide range of needs, uses and values for the forest, arriving at balanced management outcomes.

Following this the Working Groups had the opportunity to showcase what they were about and projects and initiatives they were involved in or planning. These included:

Heritage WG- has been looking at assembling information on Indigenous heritage as well as working with some of the local museums on aspects of European history and the forest.

Biodiversity WG– have run workshops on seed collection at Stewart's Creek, Phascogale survey and the Arthur Rylah project. The BWG is also looking to commission a research project on the habitat and faunal requirements of mature stands in the Wombat Forest.

Recreation WG- Have been involved in looking at opportunities around Firth Park, and additions to the walking trail network that could have active components such as panning and fossicking, historical interpretation etc.

Pest Plant and Animal WG- Explained aspects of their upcoming weed mapping project. This will be partly carried out in conjunction with the T-FRO project and will see roadside weeds across the forest mapped. This will enable comprehensive and coordinated weed management and removal in the future. The WG will also be carrying out some trial weed mapping along waterways and a mail out to adjacent private landholders. This will ask neighbours of the forest to fill in a form that details weeds on adjacent pubic land and may contain educational material about invasive weeds.

Wood Products WG- gave a presentation about the potential of ecological thinning of mature stands in the Wombat Forest to improve forest structure as a means of supplying ecologically responsible timber for the region. The presentation also looked at the Wood Products WG current project- Arboreal Habitat Retention Coupe Planning Project, being carried out by the Arthur Rylah Institute, CFM and DSE.

Tracks Forest Roads and Operations WG- gave a presentation on the WG's activities which have included the removal of over 80 dumped car bodies form the forest over the past 12 months. The presentation looked at the environmental impact that dumped cars can have on the forest and its waterways, an overview of the T-FRO road-mapping project.

Non-Timber Products WG- explained upcoming Seed collection course it has arranged for May 23 and 27. The presentation also contained a briefing on the planned re-vegetation trial that the WG is planning to undertake. This will be aimed at revegetating a piece of cleared public land in or beside the Wombat Forest.

Education WG– explained the production of the fantastic Wombat News and Views, the corner piece of communication for CFM. The group also explained their aim of looking at developing the Wombat CFM website.

Hydrology WG- gave a powerpoint presentation that put the Wombat Forest into a catchment context, looked at impacts within these catchments, an explanation of the upcoming "What is a Waterway Forum".

The meeting concluded with a panel style question and answer session. Questions raised from the floor related to weeds in the forest, whether CFM will have a defined membership, use of sea-water and fire retardants environmental impact, access to plantations, CFM attitude to supplying sawlogs post-2008, do Working Group views reflect the broader communities?

Present at the Assembly was Dr Chrissy Sharp, a retiring West Australian Upper House MP. Dr Sharp has worked on forest related issues in WA for nearly 30 years and complimented everyone in attendance for the respect and consideration that everyone showed each other and saw the event and CFM as a way for moving forward in the West, which is a very polarised issue.

The third Wombat CFM Forest Assembly highlighted the positives of CFM, with open minded and interested

people listening and sharing in a very cooperative atmosphere. Most of the Working Groups offered invitations for people to join their WG and get involved in activities directly related to the forest. Many thanks to the Daylesford Secondary College for opening their canteen to provide food and refreshments and thank you to those that supported the canteen by buying food, the money raised goes directly back to the school.

Article and photo by Tim Anderson
Community Forestry Project Manager.



Conservationists call for bans on aerial spraying in Water Catchments

(Media release: May 4, 2005)
"Conservationists and local residents representing Friends of the Earth, Otway Environment Council and Friends of Gippsland Bush today called on the State Government to immediately ban aerial spraying of pesticides in domestic water supply catchments. Conservationists are also calling on the State Government to release all information pertaining to chemical use within catchments and to eventually ban aerial spraying in catchments that are not domestic water supplies.



"Tree plantations are the major source of aerial spraying in the Gellibrand River catchment of the Otway Ranges", said Otway Environment Council spokesperson Fiona Nelson. "There are several thousand hectares of pine plantations in the Gellibrand River catchment which supplies drinking water to over 50,000 people in the States South West. It is an outrageous proposition that plantation companies are willing to risk people's health by aerially spraying chemicals. We also have concerns about water pollution and potential impacts of spray drift" Ms Nelson said.
Mr Anthony Amis, Friends of the Earth added "The public has a right to know what is being sprayed, in what volume and where the spraying is occurring. They also have a right to know if pesticides are entering their waterways. Recent events in Tasmania reveal that water pollution can and does occur from spraying plantations. Our organisation also have concerns about possible effects of spray drift and we have concerns that the rapidly expanding bluegum industry will use large volumes of aerially applied insecticides in the near future. In February 2005 the Australian Medical Association stated that independent monitoring needs to occur in regards to environment and human health impacts of agricultural and industrial activities in water catchments. Our organisation agrees with this assessment" said Mr Amis.

According to a recent e-mail from Anthony, he attended a meeting at Gellibrand Hall on May 15th, where 50-60 people met to discuss issues pertaining to chemical use in plantations in the Otways. A new clean water working group was formed, which will invite Midway to attend another meeting, and "ask the state government to come to the table in regards to determining and monitoring impacts of spraying in water supply catchments".
Of particular interest to us here in the Wombat were Anthony's comments regarding the use of pesticides in blue gum plantations:
"There have been reports that is already being used in great quantities in Western Victoria, potentially meaning that entire waterway ecosystems could be devastated through chemical runoff, starting at the base of the food chain - algae and macroinvertebrates. This particular insecticide is toxic to some freshwater organisms at 4 parts per trillion! Alpha-cypermethrin can devastate invertebrate populations, taking 6 months or so to recover. Some bluegum plantations may be sprayed 5 times or more in one year in serious infestation events. The chemical also kills beneficial insects."
I wonder, what are the spraying regimes for our Wombat Pine plantations, and if they use Alpha-cypermethrin? Thanks to Anthony for this information.

Tanya Loos

Pest Plant and Animal Working Group Report

The working group has been liasing with DSE and the TFRO WG in regard to the Roadside Weed Mapping Project. As well, following a request from the North Central CMA, we have been finalising a project mapping weed infestations along the various creeks and river headwaters that make up the upper reaches of the Loddon and the Campaspe Rivers. This will entail paying a contractor to assess and record any weed infestations downstream from where roads and tracks in the Wombat cross any creeks in these two catchments. We have also been considering the logistics and legal issues involved in mapping the edges of the Wombat Forest, where it is bordered by private land, and Crown land not managed by DSE.

We were very interested in the comment that Milton Oliver, from TFRO WG made at the Forest Assembly regarding weed control activities which 4WD'ers had undertaken at a variety of locations across the state. We have yet to investigate the practicality of this happening within the Wombat, but the idea sounds full of promise.

Luke Bennett



A reach of Kangaroo Creek, with nice, ferny, weed free riparian vegetation; something to aim for! Photo : Tim Anderson

A Letter From Canada: Phil Millar reports from afar...

I am about half way through my visit to Canada and I have been really fortunate to attend a Community Foresty forum on the first weekend. This forum was put together by the provincial government of British Colunmbia and held in Vancouver at which I met the Minister for Forests for BC. The forum was designed for municipalities and first nations to take up tree farm licences for their communities. I have spent time with the municipal forester for district of mission, Kwantlen First Nation, municipality of Jasper Councillors, firesmart project lead Jasper National Park, Jasper Fire Chief, General Manager Foothills Model Forest, it feels like I have been away for 3 months not 3 weeks however I have picked up some good ideas to bring home and will put a presentation together for CoS to put it all together.

It's almost information overload and it will take some time to review my notes and download from my head but it has been very interesting. I have had some issues with the weather as it can be up to 30degC one day and wake up to -2degC and snowing the next day. I find it unusual to be wandering around in t-shirt and shorts surrounded by snow capped mountains. It's gorgeous country and has many parallel management issues to Australia; I have found it really interesting as to how they are dealing with these.

I have spent a fair bit of time with the Firesmart team here in Jasper and will provide more information about how the reintroduction of fire into the environment is of critical ecological importance here. This is for both the protection of communities through fuel management and ecosystem management.

Some ecosystems are in decline and as a result fauna in particular ungulates like elk are under grazing pressure along with grizzly bears etc. Disturbance within the environment is also presenting some interesting results as there are healthier grizzlys in areas outside the park, in both weight and population, these are appearing in logged areas within the foothills model forest area of which a large chunk of the Jasper National Park is in.

I have found it interesting that through research, findings are indicating they need some disturbance in the environment to maintain feeding diversity and hunting capacity.

The environment here in particular growing conditions and climate is diverse, as the same species of tree ie douglas fir can grow very large toward the west coast where the climate is more temperate and in Jasper I can put my arms completely around a 250 year old douglas fir tree.

I'll provide a more detailed report when I get home as this is only a very brief overview. *Phil Millar*
Fire Working Group

Tracks Forest Roads and Operations Working Group Report

The Tracks, Forest Roads & Operations WG attended the third Wombat Forest Assembly and presented their latest report to the public. The whole assembly was very informative and was well attended by locals and the broader Victorian community.

TFRO

- represents the motorised, or vehicular, recreational groups who visit the forest to pursue a wide variety of recreational activities
- comprises a core group of 47 members (that's our working group team), and this group has access to a wider group of 263 volunteers

represents five peak bodies representing 167 motoring clubs with an aggregate membership of almost 40,000 people – and that does not include their families, either.

The TFRO Executive comprises representation from the Confederation of Australian Motor Sport (Victoria), Australian Motorcycle Trail Riders Association, Four Wheel Drive Victoria, the Ballarat Light Car Club and the Victorian All-Wheel Drive Club. We meet every two months for formal meetings, but the Executive meets much more often and conferences about all sorts of day to day issues concerning CFM.

Sub committees and Projects

At present TFRO have two sub-committees who are working on several key projects. First, there is the Tracks Classification & Infrastructure Review sub-committee whose task has been to develop a track classification system to assist motorists in the safe and sensible exploration of the forest.

This colour-coded system indicates the kind of track and whether or not your vehicle can safely drive on it – and in what manner necessary for minimum environmental impact. This new system has been enthusiastically embraced by Parks Victoria and they have included it in the management plan approach to all parks in Victoria!

This sub-committee is also in talks with the DSE to ascertain the best rationale for the complete digital mapping and infrastructure review of the Wombat. Naturally, without this, the tracks classification system cannot proceed. The infrastructure review is currently examining facilities such as Firth Park and the like to determine refurbishment, repair and redesign issues that need to be addressed and in what order of priority – and all this in consultation with the DSE who manage the forest.

Once done, TFRO can then set down a plan with the help of DSE and then begin work using the considerable volunteer base to carry out the works, and use specialists where TFRO does not have the necessary skills, to enhance the forest facilities. Research has shown that good recreational infrastructure greatly reduces the environmental impact on a park or forest. People are more likely to use these, rather than do their own thing. In addition to this, there are many tracks that need clearing by properly certified operators so that visitors to the forest don't make their own side-tracks that cause forest fragmentation and other environmental damage.

We have seen evidence of this of late. In addition to this, good tracks properly maintained mean that it is much easier for our abandoned vehicle recovery operations teams to extract wrecks and the associated rubbish.

TFRO activities for the forest

In the last two years volunteer members of TFRO (before we were actually TFRO!) have:

- removed 86 vehicle wrecks from the forest at their own expense
- estimated cost is in excess of $22,300.

Good tracks also make it easier for other working groups to have good access to carry out their projects as well.

TFRO's other sub-committee is the Recreational Motoring Codes of Conduct team. Their task is to develop a brochure that educates forest users so that they also can collaborate with what CFM is trying to achieve.

In addition to this, TFRO achievements and resources are for all working groups to share and use in achieving their outcomes also. The Weeds WG are connecting with TFRO concerning the mapping program, for example. Other groups are warmly invited to enquire of TFRO if there are joint projects they wish to develop.

All Australians own the Wombat

TFRO not only exists to work at achieving healthy forest outcomes in balance with community needs, be they social, recreational or sporting, we also exist as a voice for the recreational motoring sector most of whom do not live in the local area. We realise, as does everyone else, that the forests and parks of Victoria belong to all Australians.

In this context, TFRO believes that the CoS has a paramount responsibility to dialogue with the wider community and not just to represent the views of their Working groups!

TFRO's membership is widely dispersed across Victoria, and so part of our role is to provide a voice into the Wombat CFM process in representation of the thousands of people who love the Wombat but don't live locally to be able to make their opinions known, or to participate in the process.

TFRO bridges that gap and helps ensure a broader community appreciation of what is being achieved through this important pilot program – and that a larger resource base is available to CFM.

Strategic Issues for CFM

Of continuing concern for TFRO is that after all this time there is still no strategic plan adopted for the

Tracks Forest Roads and Operations

Wombat CFM program. TFRO delegate to CoS, Ian Crook submitted a draft plan to the Council of Stewards in February for consideration. It would be nice to receive a reply.
TFRO's concern is that the CoS should be operating to a Strategic Plan and Annual Operating Plan that are published for the benefit of all stakeholders and for accountability. From the a strategic plan, we can all share much more collaboratively and work toward the same vision. TFRO urges the CoS to come to grips with this important planning requirement and communicate it to the community.
For instance, we recognize that DSE has provided a budget to support the WG projects in the current year. However, *before* CoS looks at raising additional or external funds for *any* projects, the WGs and the Council of Stewards need to agree on and understand the strategic plan, have WG and community endorsement of it and have the priorities clearly stated in order of importance for funding and so on. The community and the CoS need to know exactly why money is being raised and spent. Common sense tells us all that appropriate accountabilities MUST be in place for the proper raising and distribution of any funds. The community expects nothing less.
Our view has always been the same, that CFM is a process that gathers the community together to participate collaboratively offering all sorts of knowledge and other resources to assist the shaping of the DSE's management strategy for all Victorians. All in spirit of mutually respectful cooperation. CFM must never be imposed on the community. This is the opposite of CFM processes the world over.

An Association
At its March meeting the CoS agreed that the purpose of an incorporated Association in the Wombat CFM context was to provide an entity to source and distribute funds to assist the Wombat CFM program. TFRO supports this approach to incorporation of an association, especially, using the Model Rules developed by Consumer Affairs Victoria. Provided of course, that agreed definitions and strategic plans are in place. The Model Rules ensure fairness and that processes cannot be tampered with.
Stemming from the April meeting it appears that several CoS members want the CoS to take over full control of such an association/incorporated body and are suggesting that …

- membership must be restricted to the stewards themselves,
- that the stewards (almost automatically?) become the Management Committee of the association, raising and distributing funds solely for projects of which they alone can approve!

If this is true, it is completely at odds with the concept of associations that run on principles of democracy, transparency and fair voting. TFRO will vigorously oppose such attempts to control what is essentially a community project. TFRO is greatly concerned that such blatant attempts to manipulate the CFM program by some CoS members could be even considered. We are very concerned about public perceptions of such a closed shop mentality, especially with regard to the public forest and public funds or donations to an association purporting to represent the community but represents itself. This very attitude was the major bone of contention that triggered the substantial attendance of motoring groups at Daylesford on May 1st last year.

Separation of powers and transparency
TFRO would strongly argue that any 'association' or 'incorporated body' must be led separately and distinctly set apart from the Council of Stewards using the Model Rules (and NOT other rules for friendly societies and so on) so that there is the democratic separation of powers and thus transparent accountability processes that remove any conflicts of interest – particularly with regard to finances and standard operating policies.
TFRO will never countenance the Council of Stewards becoming the association handling the money, or being incorporated itself to the exclusion of others in the community. Any incorporated body must involve a much broader community involvement and ownership than WGs or their nominated representatives. Such an idea has never been discussed at a stakeholders' meeting and has never been mandated for the council.
We would also argue for a non-restrictive membership of any association or incorporated body so that there is not just an implicit but an explicit expression of openness to the wider community for CFM. The push by some stewards for any kind of restriction of membership in an association simply disguises a grab for total control of the CFM process and will not be tolerated by TFRO. TFRO will diligently assist in the shaping of the best possible outcomes in all these matters.

TFRO is genuinely committed to collaboration by means of agreed processes that are transparent and inclusive of all sections of the community, whether in a working group or not. We have a genuine commitment to see shared outcomes for a healthy forest and will continue to argue for an open forest for all balanced by factual and properly researched sustainability constraints. We're committed to CFM for the long haul!

Milton Oliver

What would ideal Community Forest Management look like?

Here, we discussed the desirable characteristics of a CFM strategy. They fitted into the following five categories.- Savoia CFM Structure Workshop September 13, 2003.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

True representation
Inclusive involvement
Open Access to all
Broad involvement
Inclusive and ongoing access to everyone throughout the process
Empower local communities
The CFM will empower the community to stop greed
Inclusion
Local community empowerment
Accessible to all
Promote community

RESPONSIBILITY (SOCIAL AND OTHER)

Whole community feels ownership long term
Share information
CFM would be well resources
Build relationships
Shared decision making
Promote global responsibility
Visible outcomes to majority of community
Information, open communication
Open and transparent
Demonstrate accountability
Social/Cultural consideration
Understand our duty of care
Share responsibility
Credibility in wider community
Custodianship

PROCESS – INTERNAL WORKINGS OF CFM

Skills shared in the community
Access to expertise (ongoing)
Natural systems based
Encourage good conduct in the Forest
Co-operative not combative
CFM Team being highest level for decision making
Visible accountability
Co-operation
Recognition of existing resources and knowledge
Adaptability and flexibility
Reduce conflict
Non-hierarchical
Ongoing reviews, modify CFM as required
Feasible
Practical
Achievable
Structurally sustainable

RELATIONSHIP TO POLITICS

Financial self sufficiency
Self sufficiency
Long-term view, ie 1000 yrs ahead
Clear timelines, deadlines
Intergenerational equity
Fulfilling responsibility
Ongoing continuity
Sustainability of process
Political longevity

FUNCTION OUTCOMES

Decide on appropriate use systems
Forest producing
CFM Vision – Realise an opportunity to develop a new economic/social/political paradigm
Employment generation
Responsible use of motor bikes, 4WD
Fire/Safety
Recreation
Harvesting
Biodiversity
Catchment
Learning through doing
Education
Pro-Active Enterprise – Economically sustainable community
Provides information
Start of The Wombat Way – scenic drives, artist stops, personal journeys, do it the Wombat Way.
Increased Community knowledge and wisdom (of the forest)

VALUES AROUND ECOLOGY/HEALTH OF FOREST

Ecosystem functioning healthily
Ecologically sustainable forest
Be about the forest
Wombat viable part of global environment
Bio-regional perspective
Healthy forest
Happy forest and happy people
What do forests flora/fauna need
Regional focus
Maximises water yields and biodiversity for local communities

Biodiversity Working Report

It has been an interesting and busy few months for our group. One high point was to volunteer to assist with a Phascogale trapping project in the Hepburn Regional Park. Andy Arnold (DSE Ballarat) runs this project every year to monitor populations in the park and allow students and others to participate. It was very exciting to see these beautiful creatures at close range; they have large dark eyes, a toilet brush shaped black tail, and a soft pale cream belly. A day in the bush with a scientist involves discussions on a range of ecological topics and the opportunity to increase your knowledge of other flora and fauna.

Our Project

The Minister (DSE) has provided a budget for CFM, and our group has been allocated funds to undertake a project. We have chosen to use the funds to further research into the role of mature forest in the Wombat Forest landscape. The research will be carried out by the Arthur
Rylah Institute, and overseen by Richard Loyn, Head of Biodiversity. They will survey a number of sites in Older Regrowth and Mature Forest to link habitat with fauna. We are in discussion with the Arthur Rylah regarding achieving the aims of the project, appropriate sites, and how to involve group and community members in the research. We will be able to draw on the results of existing research carried out by the ARI and SFRI data. Tuesday Phelan (DSE Daylesford) has been critical in progressing the project, preparing the project brief, liasing with the Arthur Rylah and helping to focus the project.
The project promises to be very exciting and we would be pleased to hear from anyone with skills in these areas. On completion we will hold a field day to present the results.

Sawlog Supply

Members of our group believe that the forest has been severely over harvested and that logging should cease until an overall plan has been prepared which addresses the biodiversity and sustainable yield issues. However, despite all our efforts and letters to the Minister, harvesting is occurring. A sawlog supply committee has been formed and we have involved ourselves in the process in an attempt to ameliorate some of the impacts.
The Arthur Rylah Institute have been engaged to assist with the prescriptions and carry out some bird and arboreal mammal surveys. This has resulted in further protection for areas with good existing habitat, usually found along creeks and riparian areas. A great deal of knowledge has been gained from these scientists.
DSE staff are carrying out flora surveys and developing the prescriptions. The DSE have employed a range of staff with good skills and a better understanding of environmental issues than in the past. However we are being asked to choose between added protection of small areas and the overall structure of the forest. It is a heartbreaking exercise to visit these areas which have been previously harvested and are now available for the second cut, surrounded by areas of forest which have been harvested twice and are only regrowth.

Some background on the Sawlog Supply Process

In August 2004 the DSE entered into a community consultation process to set a prescription for obtaining sawlogs. The prescription was also to address the restoration of the forest. A sawlog supply plan was developed and presented to the community for comment. A reference group was drawn from the Council of Stewards to report on the submissions. The reference group made a number of recommendations.
In January 2005, the DSE announced its intention to proceed with the plan, however after pressure from the community, Richard Loyn of the Arthur Rylah Institute(ARI) was brought in to assess the proposed harvesting from a biodiversity perspective. He advised against the 'restorative' harvesting of the mature forest of the Barkstead block.
On 28th February, Peter Keppell (DSE) informed the Council of Stewards that the sawlog supply plan had been withdrawn, and that areas were needed immediately to maintain economic flow to the contractor. He requested that two Post-shelterwood 1 coupes, which had been previously assessed, now be proceeded with. The two coupes, South Toe Rag and Lousy Creek, has been strongly objected to by some of the community at an information day the previous year. The Council allowed these areas to proceed.
At the same meeting it was agreed to fund (via the Wood Products Working Group) the Arthur Rylah Institute to develop harvesting plans in a further five Post-shelterwood 1 coupes, and a committee to be formed to work with the ARI and DSE. These coupes are in the process of being assessed and harvested.
The BWG has submitted a request to the Council of Stewards, to ask Elizabeth Ashman, Senior Natural Resources Manager, DSE, to brief the Council on the issues of how and where the whole licence commitment (to 2008) will be met, the accuracy of figures released by DSE regarding the available sawlog volumes in the Wombat State Forest and the DSE's responsibilities under the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act and other legal requirements.

Gayle Osborne

Rogaining:The Forest Activity given us by Victorians Rod, Gail & Neil

Rogaine® A hair stop loss and/or regrowth product. Rogaine. An Australian origin sport of long distance cross-country navigation that can have participants tearing their hair out.
So you think you know your area of the Wombat Forest well? Next time there is a rogaine in your area, take part and you might be surprised at how difficult it can be to apply that knowledge.



Checking in and recovering...

On average, every 18 months a rogaine of 6, 8, 12 or 24 hours takes place in Wombat Forest. The weekend of 14-15 May it seemed that Firth Parks' toilet sprouted as rows of portaloos catered for some 400 participants assembled for a 12 hour day/night rogaine. Sometimes there are opportunities for participants to take in local attractions after the event. This event finished at midnight on Saturday so many would have been raring to go late Sunday morning – had they known where to go.
Rogaining developed in Victoria in 1976 from related bush walking events. As well as all states, it is now staged in New Zealand, Canada, USA, Czech Republic and Sweden. The World Championships circulates amongst those nations.
So apart from its origin, what distinguishes rogaining from orienteering? (See an earlier newsletter or the web site for an article on orienteering). The length of the event is the greatest contrast. The longest orienteering event is 3 hours whereas the shortest rogaine is 6 hours. 24 Hours is the classic rogaine length but the shorter events are the most popular. A number of people both orienteer and rogaine. But a lot more do one or the other.

Rogaining is social. Yes, it does have its truly competitive element who can run day and night for 24 hours and amass an incredible number of points. But most of us are there for a more recreational enjoyment including teams of uni students who sometimes dress up or down to suit their social climbing aspirations.
Being for teams of 2-5 it is social and family oriented. Amongst the many grades are those for families, novices and super vets (60+). All teams start together and try and finish at the same time because if you are late you lose a bucket of points.
There is a hash house at every bush event. This provides food and drink (included in the entry fee) during much of longer events and after you finish for shorter events. You can plan your route to call by the hash house for nourishment. Or even take a tent and sleep there at night taking advantage of the food and the warmth of a log fire in winter.
There is usually instruction available prior to each event starting. And help from other rogainers if you ask for it – although that doesn't preclude them from sneaking in and out of control sites like jungle guerrillas.
While most rogaines are on foot, there are occasional bike and paddle rogaines
Rogaining ups the challenge. Because you can visit the checkpoints in any sequence, the team dynamics start from the time you get the map (well before event start). The aim is to plan a route that maximises the varied points allocated to checkpoints while taking account of the navigational and physical capability of team members. This is where the first anti-social tendencies become evident!
Unlike a detailed and generally accurate orienteering map, rogaining relies on a customised VicMap. Usually no attempt is made to bring it up to date. This does keep the workload down for organisers but there are two more important reasons for that approach. Firstly it maintains the rogaine tradition of using commonly available public map data. Secondly, it requires an extra element of thought for rogainers in trying to deduce where unmapped tracks might run in relation to checkpoints. Of course most of us aren't very good at that but it's still a lot of fun trying.
Rogaining is participative. The format of rogaining whereby each team selects its own route means that there is no sense of being ahead of or behind other teams. There is no set number of checkpoints to be collected – just what you can manage. And the multi-grade structure makes us all look good in the result tables. Like orienteering, there are no prizes – though junior teams might get a Freddo. Volunteers are valued and even rewarded with special event t-shirts showing that they contributed to the success of a rogaine.

Rogaining is relevant to Wombat Forest values and life values. I cannot do better than quote from "Rogaining: Cross-Country Navigation" by Neil and Rod Phillips (3rd

Rogaining…

edn, 2000).

"This emphasis on participation benefits not only the individual rogainers but also the wider community. Societies contribute heavily to sports and expect benefits back, such as increased health and team spirit. Instead, what we see all too often is win-at-all-costs behaviour that leads to cheating, lying, sledging and drug-taking with no sense of fair play and minimal community involvement. Parents scream at the umpire. Soon their children follow.
By contrast, both local and regional communities benefit from rogaining. From each event, a steady stream of people return with increased self-reliance and confidence in their ability to meet a challenge. They return with an increased awareness of the importance of supporting all members of a team in any task. They return with a reaffirmation of the importance of preserving our local environments and through this the world around them. They rogaine for life."

Further information is available from www.vra.rogaine.asn.au or VRA, PO Box 30, Collins Street West, Victoria, 8007

Ken Dowling

Fauna Snapshot: The Wedgie

Description and habits: This magnificent bird is our largest bird of prey, and an unmistakeable sight soaring over forest or field. The Wedge-tailed eagle nests in tall trees, and returns to the same nest tree over a number of years. This means the breeding success of these diurnal raptors is dependent on the retention of nest trees.

Occurrence in the Wombat Forest: Soaring high over the canopy, breeding, or perched, while eating prey, usually rabbits caught in nearby open field.

Conservation status: The Wedge-tailed Eagle is not listed.

Threats: Wedge-tailed Eagle nest sites are particularly vulnerable to disturbance, even walking under a nest is enough disturbance to cause the adults to abandon their chicks.

Detection clues: The signs to look for, for a nest tree of diurnal raptors, are parent birds carrying nesting material or prey in their beaks, or the call of the young alerting your attention to the nest, a huge messy platform of sticks high in the canopy. The nest site should be observed from as far a distance as possible.

Tanya Loos

Referencing and Acknowledgement

As Wombat CFM continues to expand, the Wombat Forest News and Views continues to receive new articles from varying sectors of the broader 'community'.
It is important to acknowledge the original source of all written material published in the newsletter, thus recognising the inclusive and collaborative nature of CFM.
An integral component of CFM is acknowledging the many volunteers that are continually contributing to its development and evolution.
Some simple referencing guidelines for submitting written articles for publication may include:

- Where multiple authors have compiled an article, acknowledge their names
- Where a group or community organization has compiled an article, also acknowledge the group's name
- Where another person's or group's written work has been paraphrased, include an appropriate reference

Where another's work is copied, include it as a quote in quotation marks with an appropriate reference
This may be new ground for many people and as such any corrections or additions to acknowledgements and references will be received cheerfully.
For those wanting more detail on referencing or some accepted citation methods, try accessing the following web links:
http://www.lib.monash.edu.au/tutorials/citing/harvard.html
http://www.shef.ac.uk/library/libdocs/hsl-dvc1.html

Happy writing, Gary McIntosh, and Tanya Loos

What DSE's been up to...

Firewood
The Wombat firewood collection area map has recently been upgraded. There are several new firewood areas, and the Glenlyon Road site is now closed to collection. New maps are available from all firewood agencies and local DSE offices. Please ask for a map when you purchase your permit, to ensure you are collecting wood from current designated sites. Collectors are encouraged to gather firewood before winter, as access to some areas will be limited during the wet months to avoid damage to tracks and waterways.

Roading
The last month has been extremely busy for Daylesford's three machinery operators. Relatively dry conditions have seen road grading and maintenance proceed with minimal delays due to wet weather. Gibbs Access Track, Binks Road, Paradise Road and Lerderderg River Road have received major upgrades, and by the end of May Babbingtons Road, Osborne Road and Telegraph Road will be freshly graded.
Daylesford's fire dozer is busily upgrading access tracks from East Trentham down to the northern edge of the Lerderderg State Park. This work has been done to protect the dense regrowth in this area following the 1983 bushfires. A second dozer is currently upgrading access and drainage on a number of four-wheel-drive tracks south of Blackwood Ridge Road.

Wombat Sawlog Supply Planning
The joint Arthur Rylah Institute (ARI)-CFM-DSE project to prepare harvest plans for this year's coupes is well underway. Richard Loyn, Phoebe Macak, Ed McNabb and Jenny Nelson from ARI have been providing their expertise on planning for arboreal (tree-dwelling) fauna in harvesting; touring sites with project members and developing new prescriptions for retaining key fauna habitat. Project representatives from CFM and community members with particular expertise have also been working with DSE staff on a coupe-by-coupe basis to plan for the careful management of other significant values including waterways, large trees, rare flora and cultural heritage. To date the project group has finalised plans for two coupes with another three in progress. Kilarni (harvesting contractor) and Dwyers Sawmill have undertaken the harvesting work on the first finalised coupe, South Toerag Track, and the second finalised coupe, Boase Paddock/ Cockatiel Creek is due to start early May. Copies of coupe plans are available upon request from the DSE Daylesford office (ph. 5348 2211).

Fuel Reduction Burning
The start of May has signalled an end to the window of opportunity for completing prescribed burning in the Wombat State Forest. The shorter days and cold damp nights mean that the fine fuels (leaves and small twigs) that a fire will depend upon to develop and carry from one area to another are becoming increasingly moist. Whilst dry slopes and ridges may still burn, many gullies and southern slopes will not. There may be some opportunities with continuing warm weather and hotter northerly winds to complete further burns but in the main, conditions are moving outside of the prescribed requirements.
Over the past two months DSE has completed prescribed burns in and around the Wombat Sate Forest; Albion Track at Blackwood and Barrys Reef, Star Track, Jacksons Lookout and Kids Gully around Daylesford and Ivorsons Reef at Eganstown. As well as prescribed burns in the Brisbane Ranges National Park and in the Macedon Ranges Regional Park.

Proposed Fire Operations for 2005/06
With the current autumn prescribed burning period drawing to a close, attention is now focused on planning fire operation works for the 2005-2006 fire season including prescribed burning and construction on roads and tracks. The planning process will lead to the development of the Fire Operations Plan, which is a three-year rolling plan covering all prescribed burns, proposed new road /track construction and other works associated with fire prevention.
Fire Management is seeking your input into the proposed Fire Operations Plan, and is now calling for nominations of areas for burns and works to be included in next year's plan. Once all nominations have been received the Draft Fire Operations Plan will be circulated for public comment from mid-July through to mid-August 2005.

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.

Cultural Heritage Working Group Report

Trentham Historical Society:
Our Convenor, Anne Dobbs, has continued networking with this group, having attended their last meeting in Trentham and acquiring further information on the history of the area, as well as recommended reading matter to allow ongoing research into the history of the users of the forest.
Forest Assembly:
The Assembly was well attended, and it was interesting to note also the attendance of a group of environmental science students from Monash University, along with their lecturer, Dr. Stephen Legg, who provided CHWG with many sources of information for further research of indigenous history of the forest. Also present was a member of the West Australian Greens Party, Dr Chrissy Sharp, on holiday in the area, who offered a compliment for all the work done so far by the CFM.
The CHWG was pleased to note, at the official launch of the Assembly, an acknowledgement of the Jaara People, the Traditional Owners of the land upon which we met, .
There was sufficient time allowed for each representative present from Working Groups to make a presentation to the community, along the lines of their involvement over the past few months and the results of that involvement.
On a personal note, I believe it would be appropriate to ask all attendees at future Forest Assemblies, to turn off their mobile phones, or at least change the setting from ring to silent, as the constant ringing of mobiles can be very distracting to the speakers, and is considered to be poor etiquette.
My thanks to Kellie Grattidge and Dave Stephens for help with mounting the display on the day, and thanks also to the DSE for supplying the extremely useful display boards, which enabled us to set up quickly and with ease.
I would also like to thank Gary McIntosh for his help at the end of the day in dismantling the display board.

Denise Dalton

Tourism Working Group Report

A concept for a Wombat Forest mountain bike trail network, briefly mentioned in the last newsletter, is now being developed as a proposal for the Tourism Working Group. Although primarily aimed at mountain bikers it is likely it will suit walkers, runners and to some extent horse riders.
The proposal will focus on a pilot area to test demand (although given the number of mountain bikes on cars each weekend in Daylesford, it seems demand is there), map content, trail information and signage system. The network is broadly modelled on other successful trail systems. A recent nearby system is that at Dunolly (www.imagelink.net.au/Cycle).
The Victorian Orienteering Association is contributing detailed track network information that can be applied to DSE map data. A similar map package is soon to be released in Castlemaine. Riders will be able to select their own routes although there will be suggested routes in each map pack. Some routes will have themes and others will be based on a combination of length and difficulty – some tarmac only rides will be feasible for novices. An initial theme ride will be *The Three Springs* that takes in Leitches Creek Spring, Lyonville Spring (when operating again) and Glenlyon Spring.
If the pilot is successful the network would be extended in suitable areas. A further development modelled on overseas systems is to develop touring routes for multi day rides (www.centralotagorailtrail.co.nz). These will be devised to promote overnight stays at forest townships. A typical example would be Ballarat - Creswick - Daylesford - Trentham - Woodend. This route would take advantage of train stations at each end and sections of the multi-use Great Dividing Trail which is proving increasingly popular with mountain bikers.

Ken Dowling

Wood Products Working Group Report

Members of the WPWG have been involved in many projects over the past two months. Here's a brief overview.

Arboreal Habitat Retention Coupe Planning Project (AHRCPP).

This project focuses on developing coupe plans for sawlog utilization from post-SH1 sites (sites that have previously received a Shelterwood One harvest and have large, scattered and often exposed retained trees) and is a partnership between Wombat CFM and the Department of Sustainability and Environment and is being managed by Richard Loyn from the Arthur Rylah Institute.

The project objective is *'to develop a site level coupe planning system that optimizes post harvesting habitat conditions for arboreal fauna on Shelterwood Two sites within the Wombat Forest.'* The project team includes members of various CFM working groups; Harold Suckling and Jim Dwyer are the WPWG reps. This demonstrates the collaborative nature that continues to evolve in community forest management. It should be noted that this project, whilst involving CFM working groups, has been prepared by DSE and is considered contentious by some groups.

The WPWG, at its March meeting, tentatively agreed to become the CFM working group sponsor for the project for the remainder of this financial year, the Council of Stewards having indicated at its earlier February meeting we should focus on these post-SH1 sites. Sawlog harvesting and supply from these areas is underway. The WPWG, whilst supportive of the trial, suggests that a more holistic approach to forest management may be more acceptable in the longer term.

Forest Assembly

On 16th April we saw the Forest Assembly well attended. The WPWG display, power-point presentation and talk provided information on the four trials of community involvement in local forest management to date. These included:

2002: even-aged coupe thinning aimed at enhancing hydrological values

2003/4: uneven-aged coupe thinning with a prescription known as Forest Restoration and Resource Utilistaion (FRRU) aimed at protecting and enhancing hydrological and biodiversity values

2005: trackside harvesting (verge thinning) focused on sawlog utilization, minimal disturbance and safety along tracks adjacent to post-SH1 coupes

2005: AHRCPP focused on sawlog utilization, minimal disturbance and safety within post-SH1 coupes

All the trials have provided varying quantities and quality of sawlog and residual wood products and received varying levels of community support. The trials have been conducted in the three main forest structures (even-aged, uneven-aged, post-SH1) and now provide a valuable opportunity for conducting comparative analyses including post-harvest evaluations from triple bottom line perspectives.

Such evaluations will assist the Council of Stewards and the Department of Sustainability and Environment in determining future directions to address the issue of wood product supply in the most ecologically responsible, socially acceptable and sustainable manner.

Accessing the most appropriate machinery for the scale of the various thinning operations from an economic, logistical and safety perspective has proved to be a major hurdle. Thinning operations by their very nature can be hazardous and stringent OH& S and Worksafe guidelines must be met. The WPWG previously investigated this issue including the purchase of a mechanical falling head by the local harvesting contractor to maximize safety (see Edition 4 pg 4 WFNV Aug 2004).

Axemen's Association need Woodchop logs

Members of the WPWG and the Axemen's Association recently got together with other working groups and DSE to discuss the issue of log supply for the Axemen Association's yearly woodchop events. About 100 small diameter logs are needed and these are usually accessed from forest thinning operations. Logs for the next woodchop event are to be sourced from thinning a stand of Ash planted on the western slope of Coghlands Hill near Bullarto. Meeting ongoing supply for next year's cultural/heritage events is a work in progress.

Bullarto Shelterbelt

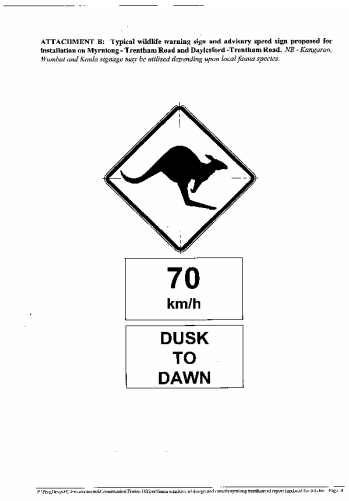
Some roadside trees on the Daylesford – Trentham Road that are adjacent to the Leitches Creek Powerful Owl Zone in the Wombat State Forest are to be removed for safety reasons. Other trees that are also dangerously close to the roadside are to be removed along some other stretches where guard-rails are inappropriate.

In late April I received confirmation that a revegetation project I had previously designed for Daylesford Region Landcare Group in 2004 was to be implemented by Vic Roads to compensate for the offset planting required for the roadside tree removal.

The project includes the planting of approximately 1000 indigenous trees and shrubs and 1000 grasses and sedges traversing the upper reaches of Leitches Creek. The reafforested area will connect two remnant patches of native forest whilst also providing a valuable shelterbelt to neighbouring properties. Some offset planting and weed control has also been conducted at sites along the roadside and more offset planting is planned. Seed collection, site preparation and plant propagation will precede the planting phase of the revegetation project planned for Spring 2006.

Great news is that the general speed limit on the Dayles-

Wood Products Working Group



Great news is that the general speed limit on the Daylesford – Trentham Road through this heavily forested area has now been reduced to 90km/h and additional advisory signs warning of wildlife including recommended speeds of 70km/h from 'Dusk till Dawn' are also to be displayed (see left). Thanks to Pat Liffman, Jon Rowden, Gayle Chappel and others for their combined efforts.

Ecological thinning prescription development

Well, this one is real doozey. As I was preparing a prescription for 'ecological thinning' for a patch of sclerophyll forest typical of that found in the Wombat, Diploma of Conservation and Land Management students and lecturers from the University of Melbourne agreed to assist with field assessments and data collection as part of their 'Biological Surveys' module (see photo right).

This project objective is to develop a site-specific 'ecological thinning' prescription that builds on the experience of previous trials utilising existing information, working in collaboration with local Council and the Department of Sustainability and Environment. Whilst this project is on private land, the coupe plan and prescription development will provide a valuable cross-reference for future ecological thinning works that may be required in areas of the Wombat State Forest. Another work in progress.

Forest Mensuration and Mapping Toolkit (FMMT)

This is the toolkit that enables data collection and collation for coupe assessments, monitoring and evaluation. It includes a GPS and software. Originally developed for Daylesford Region Landcare Group for use in collaboration with CFM participants, the WPWG has now put forward this project for CFM funding as an urgent proposal to the Council of Stewards. All working groups and CFM participants will be able to utilize the 'toolkit' in CFM related activities. These activities may include weed mapping, biodiversity and hydrological surveys plus development of coupe plans, coupe assessments (reconnaissance plans), monitoring and evaluation.

The toolkit will also enable ground-truthing of the overall 'State of the forest' as well as providing the opportunity for community participation. It's great to be out the bush doing lots of stuff again rather than just talking about it.

Gary McIntosh
Secretary WPWG
Email: gary.mcintosh@optusnet.com.au



Diploma CALM students and lecturers at another site inspection. Photo: Bruce Macpherson, 2005

Education and Community Involvement Working Group

"In the end we conserve only what we love.
We will love only what we understand.
We will understand only what we are taught."
Baba Dioum
Senagalese Poet
(Contributed by Eric Fah)

Aim #1:

To promote clear communication between all participants in the CFM process.

The primary way we achieve this currently is through the Wombat News and Views. We have also assisted on a couple of community stalls at various events in the Wombat.

In the future, we hope to extend this stalls extension work, put more energy into the website, and organise and promote many more CFM social activities, such as community barbecues/picnics. Any community minded, fun lovin' people who want to help out with events will be warmly welcomed into our group!

Aim #2:

To create, and participate in educational activities that foster greater understanding of the many environmental and social values of the Wombat Forest.

Last year, the Education Working Group assisted the Creswick Landcare Centre, Australian Master Treegrowers and a number of other institutions in the creation of a highly successful and enjoyable Community Forest Management Workshop series. We also participated in Waterwatch and environmental monitoring activities in the Blackwood Blue Mount area.

In the future, we hope to foster greater links with primary and secondary schools in the region, and produce a wide range of educational materials for students and the wider public. We particularly need new Working Group members in this area.

We invite you to join our relaxed and practical group for our fortnightly meetings; please call Tanya Loos 5348 2778 (after hours) or 5473 4202 (work) for further information.

Letters to the News and Views

Dear Sir,
Being an out of state (Vic) dweller, I am intrigued by the move for CFM of forests in Victoria. My previous experience indicated the sensible way to go an any program of development or maintenance was, when you have a problem to solve, or an ongoing program to maintain, you are best advised to call in the experts. So if you want a road or a bridge built, call the engineers. If you want to run a hospital efficiently, call in the doctors.

How then can forests be managed to give all of the benefits the forests can provide, accepting that timber supply and (and the attendant employment) is only one of many benefits, but also accepting that all the other benefits accrue to sensible sustained yield; ie professional management based on tried and proven methods.
Any interference in forest management; however well meaning, will lead first to a terrible dislocation of local communities when mills cut production, or worse, close down, and most importantly to greater reliance on imports.

Do you realise timber and paper products are second only to oil imports? Have you asked yourself where the imported timber is to come from, not only New Zealand plantations, but also the rainforests of Indonesia, or the Philippines? Is this what CFM of Wombat wants?

So when a well meaning body of bush walkers etc want a say in how "their" forests are managed, what practical advice can they offer which will be better than that given by professional foresters?

I have a foreboding of chaos (which already seems to have arrived), lack of funding for the now painfully arriving "program of development", and a general with\drawing of the Wombat from any productive use.
New South Wales has done a similar dirty deed on its forests, not by the CFM route, but by dedicating increasing areas as National Parks, thus adding to our arboreal museum acreage, and doing nothing else with one of the few remaining sustainable products of Australia.
I can't understand what your Dept of Forests is doing to allow this impending disaster to happen. On balance I feel lucky to live in New South Wales, so far we haven't gone down (I mean the DOWN) the road to CFM.

yours faithfully,
John Gardner
7 Royal Tar Cres
Nambucca Heads NSW 2448

To the News and Views,

A rich tapestry of individuals is now successfully involved in CFM as our success or otherwise affects so many. As many and more than those drawing water from its rivers all the way to the sea.

The CFM Council of Stewards has recently employed the advice of a hydrologist and a biodiversity expert in an effort to improve its information base and wisdom to help it decide if, how, and where logging could occur in the Wombat.

Advice is a tricky thing. Humans often mistakenly seek out the advice that tells us what we want to hear.
As individuals we expect government and business to employ the specialised expert who will verify their actions. Somehow we accept their lack of commitment to truth. We accept radical increases in water rates because an expert has been employed to recommend this as the best way to impose decreased water consumption. A pine plantation corporation can trot out experts recommending Triazine herbicides as the best way to control "pest species" in domestic water catchments, despite their relationship to prostrate, breast and uterus cancers.

We have the human right to safe affordable water from our kitchen tap. It's our right as individuals, citizens and a community; as essential a right as safe medicine and adequate shelter.

May the Department of Sustainability and Environment, or DSE's current discussion with the Wombat Forest Community about the repair of degraded water catchments be as honest as the truth I pray we expect of ourselves as individuals.

David Stephens,
Daylesford,
Wombat Forest
Community.



Back Page Interview: Introducing the people of CFM: Tim Anderson

Where do you live? And where are you from?
I live in Daylesford at present and lived in Wheatsheaf for around 15 years. I am originally from Western Australia, my ancestors settled in the Southwest of WA as part of the Wakefieldian Australind experiment in the 1840's. I spent my late primary and early secondary school years in the Blue Mountains of NSW. This is where I spent almost every day in the Blue Mountains National Park, exploring, swimming and getting the feel and appreciation for the Australian bush.

Occupation
Community Forestry Project Manager.

Your Role in CFM? What Does this involve?
My job is to implement and facilitate the Community Forest Management process. Initially this involved providing a process that allowed for broad community engagement in the design and implementation of a workable structure for CFM and to work on some forest related activities. The job now also entails working on the currently proposed Working Group projects, media, giving talks on CFM to interested groups and a range of allied and support activities,and the nuts and bolts maintenance of CFM.

What are the best things about CFM in the Wombat?
The fantastic opportunity that CFM offers for progression past the ongoing controversy over forests and from the polarised and emotive to informed and inclusive dialogue. This has got to be a better basis for making long ranging ecologically sustainable decisions, maintaining harmony within communities and as a seeding ground for new opportunities.

What would improve CFM in the Wombat?
Less politics. CFM is about moving past the politics of forests and into actually having significant input into forest based activities and aspects of forest management. We have lost a lot of willing and knowledgable people to CFM because of the internal politics.

What activity do you do most in the Wombat Forest?
Think- I find the Wombat a great place to think, on many levels. It can be as simple as thinking through personal issues through to the myriad of thoughts, ideas and insights you get looking at aspects of the forest. These can be a search for understanding the relationships between all life in the forest, to looking at relationships between geology, aspect and rainfall. I am continually amazed at how quickly the forest's flora can change, even within a few metres.

What is it you value most about the Wombat Forest today?And in the future?
I most value the beauty of the Wombat, from a single little critter or plant to a gullies of wild waterways and wild vegetation. I value the resilience and vitality I see and feel in the forest.

What is your opinion on the sawlog extraction in the Wombat issue?
Like the previous interviewee, I also believe that environmentalism is not about preservationism. We should, where possible, use our local resources to provide for our community's consumption, within an ecological sustainable context. To that end, the simple thing would be to lock up the forest, and pass off our environmental impacts to another part of the State or globe. I personally do not support monoculture plantations with their chemical management regime as an ecological alternative. So using ecologists like the Arthur Rylah Institute to design our logging coupes looks like a very progressive move. The issues CFM has inherited from the over-harvesting of the previous 2 decades does make this very challenging.

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