



The Trail Mail



Committee Chosen For Coming Year

At the Annual General meeting, held on June 5 a new committee of the Friends was elected. Office bearers are:

President: Janice Preston

Vice President: Vicki Everett

Secretary: Sue Peirce

Treasurer: John Websdale



New Rail Trail Flier.

A new light weight, double -sided, full colour card to promote the rail trail has been produced and is being widely distributed. Production costs are a fraction of the A4 map brochure and can be used more easily in self serve brochure racks. As part of a marketing operation, the Nicholson Caravan Park management has mailed several hundred to cycling and walking groups across Australia. Supplies are available on request from Michael, Ph 5156 8228.

Two new Rotary seats for the trail.

Rotary Club of Mitchell River (Bairnsdale) members have voted to donate two seats to be installed on the rail trail. They will be located at selected spots on the section between Phillips Lane and the highway crossing at Commins Road. Thanks to assistance from John Nelson and RCMR secretary John Butler and members of the Club.

Inside this Issue

2005 President's Report.....	2
Visitors 'wowed' by our rail trail.....	4
Web site updates.....	4
Web Site Statistics.....	4
Working Bee held May 1.	4
Nowa Nowa - Orbost extension 'launch' signs to be installed.....	5
Wilderness Bike Ride - 2005	5
May Ride to Raymond Island	6
Activities Calendar 2005.....	7

REMEMBER FRIENDS 2005/6 MEMBERSHIP FEES

Friends of the East Gippsland Rail Trail



The Trail Mail



2005 President's Report

On November 23rd 2003, a meeting called by the East Gippsland Rail Trail Board of Management, was held at Mingling Waters at Nowa Nowa. The meeting was to inform the public of the plans for the East Gippsland Rail Trail and to facilitate the commencement of a friends group, recognizing that the small management group needed support for the development, maintenance and promotion of the trail. A committee was formed at this meeting and the Friends of the East Gippsland Rail Trail was born.

The first meeting of the friends group was held at Nicholson on December 15th 2003 and the Statement of Purpose which was developed at the November meeting was reviewed. This is the Statement of Purpose .

1. To support completion of the East Gippsland Rail Trail with full and consistent development of the Rail Trail between Bairnsdale and Orbost via Nicholson, Bruthen and Nowa Nowa.
2. To support the Committee of Management of the East Gippsland Rail Trail in management of the Rail Trail through appropriate terms of reference.
3. To promote the tourism, recreational, environmental and historical value of the East Gippsland Rail Trail to the community, governments and sponsors.
4. To develop expertise in significant aspects of the East Gippsland Rail Trail including
 - Vegetation management
 - Fauna and habitats
 - Recognition and respect for the cultural significance of traditional landowners
 - Conservation of artefacts
 - History of the former railway
 - Trail guide and interpretation signs
 - Assistance with infrastructure management and tourism promotion, etc

The Friends of the East Gippsland Rail Trail was incorporated on December 24th 2003. A great Christmas present thanks to the work of Sue Peirce and Michael Oxer who have been dedicated and tireless workers for the friends group.

In the first year, meetings were held monthly at alternating venues between Bairnsdale, Bruthen, Lakes Entrance, Nowa Nowa, and Orbost to encourage and assist input from Friends from along the trail. We have reduced the meetings to 2nd monthly this year. A special mention needs to be made here of the fantastic effort made by the entire Orbost contingent and especially Eddie Slatter and Vicki Everett who regularly attend our meetings at all venues. Thank you and well done.

The Friends group has contributed in many ways to the development , maintenance and promotion of the East Gippsland Rail Trail. Regular organized rides on both the trail and other local venues have encouraged membership of the group and use of the trail. Friends have been involved in advertising through newspaper articles, and involvement in rides to local events such as Nowa Nowa Nudes and Forestech promotion on the BV Rail Trail Discovery Weekend..

Our newsletter has kept friends and interested people abreast of the development of the friends group and the trail. Thank you Marlene Robb for taking on the publication of the newsletter this year and to Craig Ingram's office for the recent offer of printing the newsletter for us. For those of you who received a newsletter in your letterbox without a stamp, please thank the bike mail crew including, Vicki Everett, Michael Oxer, and Alan Jones

One of the most significant advertising developments is thanks to Keith Law with assistance from Michael Oxer. The East Gippsland Rail Trail Website is a mine of information and enables world wide access to information about our wonderful trail. If you haven't logged on yet, you don't know what you've missed. Thanks Keith for a wonderful job.



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The friends group has been involved in a number of working bees and were successful thanks to Sue Peirce in gaining funds for equipment through a small equipment grant.. It is a great sense of achievement when at the end of the day, we can look at our work and know that trail users will appreciate our efforts. I need to make particular mention of Frank Garden, Clive Gaskill, Alan Jones, Gus, and the other silent members who have contributed throughout the past year and a half in weed control, removal of debris from the trail, litter control, signage, bollard construction and in any other way. Please don't forget to let us know the time you put in on trail maintenance or other work for the friends group, as records of volunteer hours helps us with submissions for funding.

Thank you also to John Websdale in your capacity as treasurer this year. I know how busy you are. If I have forgotten to mention anyone else, please accept my sincere apologies. Everyone's efforts are greatly appreciated.

In September it was announced that the Australian Government will provide funds for the completion of the trail to Orbost. I believe that the efforts of the Friends of the East Gippsland Rail Trail already described in this report, contributed to the allocation of funds. We I hope to see the trail complete by the end of the year.

Wow!!!!!!!!!!!!

In the past 12 months we have seen the patronage of our wonderful trail increase enormously. And we've seen the Friends of the East Gippsland Rail Trail develop and grow to a membership of over 80.

My vision is that over the next 12 months our group will continue to grow and develop and further friendships will blossom. I've made some wonderful friends in this group and I hope you will too. I encourage everyone who has something to offer, join in, have fun, be counted. Thank you everyone for your assistance and support.

Janice Preston

Visitors 'wowed' by our rail trail.

Sixteen members of the Sutherland Bushwalking Club (southern Sydney) spent several days cycling in the area between April 25 and May 3 this year. A letter from one of the participants reads: 'Dear Rail Trail Committee. We had the most wonderful trip on the East Gippsland Rail Trail. We all want to do it again when the Orbost to Nowa Nowa section is completed. While in the area we read in the local paper that funding had been allocated for this section. Any information on when it may be completed? All our car organisation went well and we all loved it. Our eldest rider was 86.

I'm enclosing the trip report written by one of the participants. I have an E-mail address if there is any information update. Great trip, great accommodation and good meals. '

Signed. Marilyn. Dated 1.6.2005

Web site updates.

The comments facility on the web site has been updated. It is proving a valuable way of getting feedback from trail visitors.

A revised Friends membership application form has also been added to the Resources page on the site.

You can refer others who would like to join the Friends - and you are our best recruiters! - so they can download the form.

Web Site Statistics

Month	Unique visitors	Number of visits
Jan 2005	157	207
Feb 2005	214	242
Mar 2005	188	231
Apr 2005	201	232
May 2005	162	185
Jun 2005	128	158

Statistics to 17 June 2005

Now, the website has a forum for the public to leave their feedback and comments.

There is also a Friends Forum restricted to Friends. To access the Friends Forum simply register at

www.eastgippslandrailtrail.com

and go to the Feedback Forum page and follow the links.

Working Bee held May 1.

We worked on the trail from Nicholson Bridge to Nicholson - Sarsfield Road, generally cleaning up. The cuttings from dead black wattle were stacked into piles for burning. We added Cotoneaster and Pampas Grass.

The Sarsfield CFA later burnt off the large piles of black wattle which had been cut out last year.

One of the de-mountable metal bollards made by Alan Jones was installed at the bridge entry on the west side, to prevent vehicles illegally crossing the bridge.

Trimming the bushes at the end of the bridge, removing some more weeds and then it was time to fire up the BBQ at Nicholson Wharf for lunch.

Thanks to Andrew, Michael, Gus, Ian and Robin, and the Sarsfield CFA for your time working on the trail.

The next Working Bee will be on September 11th. Details will be provided closer to the date but also watch the web site for updates: www.eastgippslandrailtrail.com

Nowa Nowa - Orbost extension 'launch' signs to be installed.

Following the launch event by Mr Peter McGauran the two signs announcing the extension will be installed at key points near Nowa Nowa and Newmerella. The post and frame for the Nowa Nowa sign was erected on the day of the AGM .

Michael Oxer, Andrew Sharpe with Peter McGauran at launch of extension works



Wilderness Bike Ride - 2005

Wulgulmerang, Deddick, Bonang, Goongerah were just names for me before the Wilderness Bike Ride – the high country, the fire country of 2003. What better way to explore than on a bike, with others to look after our food, shelter and well being.

The second Wilderness Bike ride started from Orbost with perfect weather on April 13. With bikes loaded onto cattle trucks and cyclists onto buses we headed for Wulgulmerang Reserve where we were reunited with our bikes, assisted with pedal replacement and handlebar realignment, provided with lunch and instructions and then to the road!

We were truly in the high country, mountain ranges in the distance and into the Snowy River valley. The downhill along the valley was rough and wonderful – then over McKillop's Bridge into Deddick Springs Camp. The deceptively steep climb into the campsite was the sting in the tail and many of us were overcome with leg fatigue and walked into camp.

The evening was mild, the dogs friendly, and with appetites satiated some even had energy for the bush dance.

On Day 2 the route took us out of the valley and into Snowy River National Park – mostly dirt roads, steep up and down, keeping the heart rate elevated.

At Bendoc we set up camp at Bendoc, just before the rain started, we were warm and dry in the Bendoc Community Hall where "The Pirates of the Caribbean" was showing, or the Bendoc pub.

The rain made for a challenging Day 3 as we entered the cool temperate rain forest with the misty rain providing an appropriate ambience. Rooty break Track provided opportunity to get off the bike and see the huge trees up close, and the leeches even closer.

By lunchtime we were wet and muddy as we explored the rainforest from the comfort of a boardwalk – magnificent trees, mosses, lichens, ferns and enormous earthworms. Then back on the bike to get warm and even muddier!

The campsite at Goongerah was a welcome sight after 65k of slippery, muddy, rough track. Some cyclists gave their bikes a bath in the creek, others were cleaned by the Goongerah CFA doing some opportunistic fundraising.

Our final ride into Orbost was on made roads – what a difference that makes, a wonderful ride into Orbost in perfect conditions.

The Wilderness Bike Ride is one of the most challenging of catered bike rides, and one of the best in my opinion. The scenery, the sense of lush mountain wilderness, companionship of fellow cyclists and volunteers made this a memorable experience.

Congratulations to all involved in organising the ride. The food, showers, campsites, entertainment, route control were excellent – we were the beneficiaries of local knowledge combined with thoughtful planning and ably supported by the high country folk.

A great way to explore the remote high country – this ride is a must for any keen cyclist.

Sue Peirce

May Ride to Raymond Island

"We'll meet at Howitt Park at 10 o'clock...."

Great idea – except on Market Day!



It was instinct, I think, that led us to the railtrail start to meet up with Alan for this ride out to Paynesville and beyond. Alan must have a gift for weather forecasting because this was a glorious, clear autumn day – perfect for a ride beside the water. (He was spot on for the weather on our other beach ride to Metung.)

Leaving Bairnsdale, we cycled along the main road to Paynesville before turning onto a quiet, safe route which followed the river to Eagle Point. From Eagle Point we took a back trail into Paynesville.

Raymond Island is just across McMillan Strait from Paynesville accessed by ferry. It is approximately 760 ha and one-third is Crown Land maintained by Parks Victoria and DSE. Koalas were introduced to the

island in 1953 from Phillip Island but gradually became a problem with overbrowsing. There are very few trees suitable for koalas to eat on the island – the most preferred being the coastal manna gum and these trees were being overeaten. A recent cull has reduced numbers to a sustainable level. The large koala population draws visitors from all over (of course we saw none as it's difficult to ride whilst looking upwards) but the island has other attractions. It is really ideal for cycling because it's flat and there are many inviting trails to take – in among the forest or following the coastline. Just near the ferry point there is a good picnic area and that's where we had our lunch after a quick tour around the island.

On the return trip we detoured to Bluff Lookout where we could see over the silt jetties snaking out into Lake King. These jetties are probably worth a ride by themselves. In flood times large deposits of silt were brought down along the river. Closer to Lake King, the river flow slows , and so the silt settled to form the fingers of land known as "the silt jetties". Apparently the only other silt jetties larger are those of the Mississippi River, a much grander river than the Mitchell!

Thanks Alan for organizing a satisfying day's outing.

Activities Calendar 2005

July 31 Orbost	Orbost – Simpson's Creek return by rail trail where access allows. 35 km. Meet Forest Park Orbost 10 am	Marlene and Keith 5154 1232
Aug 28 Start from Nowa Nowa and Bairnsdale	Ride from N-N or Bairnsdale and meet in Bruthen main street for lunch at 12.30 Start Bairnsdale at 10 am Nicholson 11.am Nowa Nowa 10am	Sue/Michael 5156 8228
Sept 25 Bairnsdale	Lindenow to Middle Weir Meet 10 am Lindenow	Alan Jones 5153 1454
Oct 23 Orbost	Route to be determined	Eddie
Nov 20 Bairnsdale	Bullumwaal Rd	Alan Jones
Dec 4 Orbost	Route to be determined Lake Tyers House	

