

March 2010

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Management Committee Asks Council To Support Marketing And Promotion

Last year a submission to the Council's Economic Development Advisory Board requesting funding for a three year full time trail manager position was not supported but the Board suggested an interest in marketing and promotion activity. The CoM lodged a further submission in January, for a two year full time M&P position and is now awaiting a response. Meanwhile there is a lot of effort going into promoting the Murray to Mountains Rail Trail, and with work starting on the \$13 million 145 Km Goulbourn River High Country Rail Trail to our north there is growing need for a bigger marketing effort for this Trail.

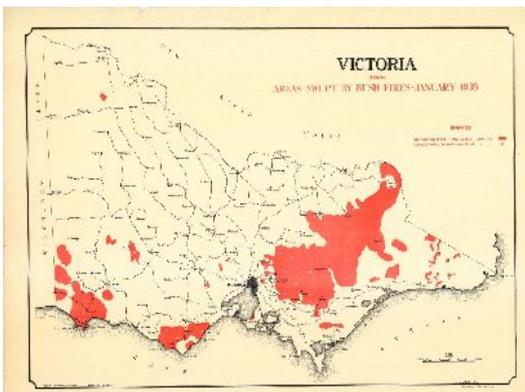


We have a web site and an information brochure but there is a lot of specialist work needed to make the most of what we have.

Michael Oxer

"Black Friday" , 13th January, 1939 saw the culmination of one of the worst bushfire seasons in Australian history.

During that January, in Victoria an area of almost 2 million hectares was burnt, with 71 people losing their lives. Whole townships were destroyed, many sawmills burnt to the ground and thousands of sheep, cattle and horses were killed by the intense heat and flames. The fires were the result of a long drought and a severe, hot, dry summer. Fanned by extremely strong winds, these fires swept rapidly across large areas of the state, causing widespread destruction. Many creeks and rivers had dried up and dry heat and hot winds sapped much of the moisture from the ground, leaving forest floors and the open plains tinder dry - perfect conditions for widespread bushfires.



Prior to 13 January, many fires were already burning. Some of the fires started as early as December 1938, but most of them started in the first week of January 1939. Some of these fires were unable to be extinguished.

Others were left unattended, or as Judge Stretton wrote in his report after the Royal Commission, the fires were allowed to burn " ... *'under control', as it is falsely and dangerously called...* "

High temperatures and strong northerly winds on Friday 13 January 1939 fanned these separate fires. They combined to create a massive fire front which swept mainly over the mountain country in the north east of Victoria, and along the coast in the south west (*the areas shown in red on the above 1939 map*) .

Next Issue: The Lost Duke



It was the devastation caused by this event that led to the construction of Costick's Weir. 'Jack' (John Hilbert) Costick was the forester of the day who supervised the building of the weir as a fire fighting supply water.

Apparently the weir was built by the **Women's Land Army**. The Australian Women's Land Army (AWLA) was established in 1942, and aimed to replace male farm workers involved in military work, with female workers, most of whom were unskilled in farm work.



The use of female labour was initially met with resistance, but this often turned to respect and praise after farmers gained experience working with AWLA women.

The group was not only involved in agricultural work but took jobs in factories, mills and munitions plants.

Recruits were required to be between 18 and 50 years of age and to be British subjects or immigrants from Allied nations.

Most were "city women" and therefore had limited experience with farm work - thus the scepticism about their ability to do the work.

The weir today provides a rare example of a substantial structure built of local materials to provide a supply for fire fighting.



It was no longer needed by the railway when steam trains were replaced with diesel locomotives.

Costick's Weir just off the Old Colquhoun Road.

The Shire Council has constructed a new concrete pathway from Hadfield St onto the Trail. There is still considerable cleaning up required and installation of safety rails at the bottom of the slope. This work is part of a wider pathway upgrade program for East Bairnsdale, with an emphasis to add better links to the Trail. Discussions are also now in progress involving the Council, East Gippsland Water, Catchment Management Authority, DSE, Parks Victoria and the Mitchell River Rotary Club, (with support from the East Gippsland BUG *) seeking a way to get an off road path link to Eagle Point/Paynesville, as part of the bigger vision of an off road network all the way to Marlo and points east.

* **Bicycle User Group** www.eastgippbug.com

New Pathway Near Bairnsdale Entry.



Michael Oxer

Volunteers repair vandalised gate and post.

Incidents of vandalism which have left several gateways on the new (2006) Nowa Nowa - Orbost section badly damaged cause unwanted extra work and expense for the Trail Committee. A gate post and gate at Joiners Road (west crossing) has recently been repaired by volunteers from the Friends Association. Thanks to them and all the other helpers who pitch in to help keep the Trail in good shape.



Michael Oxer

More Information for Trail Visitors.

Several groups planning to visit the Trail have requested details of how support vehicles can get access to various section of the Trail as a back up for a group. Private vehicles are NOT permitted on the Trail (except on approved management activities) so contact can only be made at road crossings if a group wants to make contact with their vehicle. The Trail Committee has prepared a detailed information sheet (2 pages) providing answers to this sort of question, with a list of cross road points and other information which can assist a group's trip planning. The Note can be downloaded from the Trail web site as a PDF. It can be found in the Trail Notes section.

Michael Oxer



New Handrails at Critical Road Crossings.

As part of a long awaited improvement to several road crossings, new steel hand rails have been installed at four locations.

Thanks to Andrew for coordinating this project on behalf of the Trail's Management Committee.

Sites include: the two points just east of Bruthen, at Wiseleigh near the partly demolished bridge on the Omeo highway, and east of Mossiface on the Swan Reach Road. All have been made more visible with reflective safety tape.



Michael Oxer



Catchment Management Authority (CMA) Reviews Nicholson River Rehab Project.

Two officers from the CMA recently met with Friends representatives Sue, Norm and Michael, to review this revegetation project. Options for further work and possible funding were discussed. CMA was impressed by the effort and asked for some photos which showed the progress since work on this project began in May 2007. These show the quite amazing transformation achieved in less than three years, Thanks to persistent volunteer effort and supported by the CMA funding.

The Nicholson River rehabilitation project today



***CMA officers, Sue and Norm, discussing
the revegetation project.***

Michael Oxer



2005 prior to start of work



2007



2008



The Lyrebird

The Lyrebird has been around for millions of years, fossils having been found dated to 15 million years ago. This wonderful Australian bird can be found in rain forest habitats in Victoria and New South Wales. It was also brought to Tasmania in the 19th century. There are two different species of Lyrebirds: the Superb Lyrebird and Albert's Lyrebird.

The male Superb Lyrebird is the third largest songbird with a length of 80 to 98 centimeters, (31.5 to 38.5 inches).

The female is slightly smaller with a body measuring 74 to 84 centimeters, (29 to 33 inches). Albert's Lyrebird is a little bit smaller and can be found in Southern Queensland. This bird was given its name in honor of Queen Victoria's husband Prince Albert.

Both female and male birds look alike with their brown body, lighter underside and a reddish neck.

The major difference between both is the two long feathers that the male Lyrebird has on his tail which he develops after he is two years old. His tail consists of 16 feathers with two the two long outer feathers being broader to frame the tail.

The Lyrebird's mating ritual is actually very impressive. The male bird starts by building a mound of dirt usually measuring about 90 centimeters, (35.5 inches), wide and 15 centimeters, (6 inches), high that he will use as his stage to show himself off to the females in the area. In his territory he will normally have 10 to 15 mounds which he will visit in turn. He will then fan his tail over his back and head. It is in this pose that his tail resembles the musical instrument the lyre, which is how the Lyrebird got its name.

After mating, the female will build herself a nest low to the ground, (since Lyrebirds are very awkward fliers), and will lay one egg. She will work alone to sit on it for 50 days before it hatches and then to take care of her baby until it leaves the nest after 6 to 10 weeks.

Janice Preston

Adapted from [australianfauna .com](http://australianfauna.com)



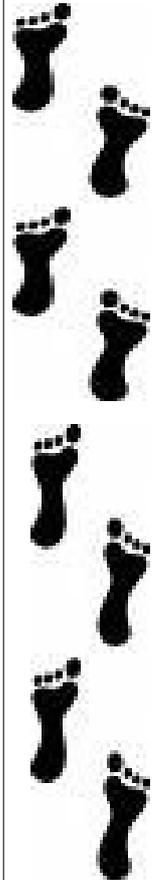
Letting The Chips Flying !



A small volunteer grant late last year from the Australian Government Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (Community Investment Program - and thanks Jill) enabled the Trail Committee (with some extra funds added by the Committee) to purchase a heavy duty chipper machine.

It will be used to turn green vegetation being removed as part of the regular fuel reduction works into mulch to support tree planting projects. This reduces the amount of material that would otherwise be burned, so it also helps our 'carbon footprint'.

Michael Oxe



Web Statistics

Month	Unique visitors	Number of visits	Pages
Jan 2010	1143	1548	13872
Feb 2010	923	1435	7196

IN AND AROUND NOWA NOWA



www.bikenowanowa.com is the new website created to inform walkers and riders about the evolution of a series of bike paths in and around Nowa Nowa. 20 kms of trail is being developed to provide a range of experiences for your enjoyment of Mt Nowa Nowa. An ascent trail and the first of 2 descent trails have been completed on Mt Nowa Nowa and a second descent trail is underway.

The trail will be fully finished ready for the **Grand Opening on April 10th, 2010** .

These trails will provide a great venue for mountain bike riders and it's anticipated that the trails will attract events and people to the area.

New Development Planned for Nowa Nowa Station Site

At the old Nowa Nowa railway station grounds there is a proposal to create a picnic area, set off area with table, parking area, information and interpretive signage.

DSE is prepared to assist with a picnic table and possibly an information sign shelter.

Heaps of photos of earlier days of the train and station are available. The Shire possibly will provide a rubbish bin (including rubbish collection). All that is needed is someone willing to co-ordinate the project working with DSE, Rail Trail and Shire.

Several more kilometres of dual purpose trails (walking, cycling) that will take in sections of Lambournes Break and Drivers Break, providing variety in the scenery and suitability for all ages, will link the Mt Nowa Nowa trails to the East Gippsland Rail Trail. You will also be able to walk to the summit of Mt. Nowa Nowa and take in the historic fire tower.



Another new and exciting development is the tentative agreement for a shared walking, cycling and horse riding trail to link Nowa Nowa and Lake Tyers Beach. With the aid of a local firm of architects who have pledged to provide the planning and engineering expertise, a new shared bridge at Burnt Bridge will provide the necessary link between the 2 communities. Funding is currently being sought to enable this exciting project to proceed.

Janice Preston Andrew Sharpe



**Please contact Andrew Sharpe
(03) 5152 0400 if you are
interested.**

Meetings



Meeting dates for 2010.

Feb 8 th	Orbost
May 10 th	Nowa Nowa
Aug 8 th AGM	Bruthen
Nov 8 th	Bairnsdale

Activities

Rides

July 11 Mississippi Trail

September Orbost

Details of rides to come.

Further information contact secretary, Sue Peirce. Ph. 51568228

or email : peirces@wideband.com.au



Good news is that following the recent heavy rainfall no significant damage has been reported along the Rail Trail !

Good News ! !

The Best Ride Yet

In 2009 over Easter a small group of Melbourne women ventured out to East Gippsland to check out the scenery we take for granted here in our corner of Victoria.

Diane Nicholas, a member of the Melbourne Women's Walking Club wrote this account of a group ride along the East Gippsland Rail Trail.



The one thing you can't plan ahead is the weather and the forecast was dire for the week of our ride on the East Gippsland Rail Trail - showers and cold almost every day. As it turned out it hardly ever rained while we were riding.

We were a small group of members of the Melbourne Women's Walking Club, which includes one or two rides a year in its program. Some riders are not used to road riding, so we prefer to use rail trails. Because we have had so much trouble getting bikes on weekend trains, we decided to begin and end this ride mid-week. However, V Line has now added a guard's van to the Bairnsdale train - partly in response to cyclists' "lobbying". Why did they ever eliminate them?

After going around in a few circles in Bairnsdale, we finally found the beginning of the rail trail (a few more signs for dummies like us would be a good thing). Once on the trail, riding across the plains was a delight. After so many months of brown, everything was now a vivid green after the rain. We paused at the bridge over the Nicholson River and goggled at the unusual sight of a river almost overflowing its banks.

WOW!



Lunch on a friendly log.

Then we pushed on generally climbing up to Bumberrah for lunch. Then it was a lovely roll down to Mossface. Although I was looking for it, we missed the beautiful restored kiln, which was concealed by the bush, but on the return trip it was ahead and easy to spot. It was a fairly easy ride through mostly open country to Bruthen where we booked into the pub. As we arrived it began to pour, so the afternoon was spent beside the stove in the bar, chatting and reading.



Overawed wombat.

The next day we set off across the Tambo River for Nowa Nowa, climbing gently into the forest. Much of the trail here had a fairly heavy coating of sand, which when wet is pretty hard to push through. This day was quite a different ride, wilder and much more remote, passing through tall forest for most of the day. It is a wonderful feeling to ride over long, high embankments looking down on creeks and fern gullies. We rested at the Gippsland Lakes Discovery Trail turn off, then continued the long climb up to Colquhoun where a friendly log accommodated all five of us for lunch. We then pedalled on to be pulled up sharply by our firstsight of the breathtaking Stony Creek Trestle Bridge (and on a more mundane note - a welcome toilet). We gazed in awe at this magnificent structure while below, a wombat waddled about, dwarfed by the sheer size of the bridge.



Thanks Eddie!

Although not as grand, we still marvelled at the two trestles that followed. By early afternoon we were rolling down to Nowa Nowa. Just as we reached the store, I had a flat front tyre - nicely timed, We were booked into the Nowa Nowa Caravan Park, a lovely old-fashioned caravan park with real caravans and old style hospitality and helpfulness. The first thing we noticed was the vase of fresh flowers on the table! Then we saw the coffee plunger with a small jar of real coffee. Terry, a resident bicycle enthusiast was called on to help with my flat tyre, but he was clearing sticks off the trail at the time, a task he undertakes regularly. So, Eddie very kindly did the job. (My aged thumbs haven't the strength to get the tyre back on the rim and I always pinch the tube with tyre levers).



Who put this hill here?

There was plenty of time for a walk along Boggy Creek to the gorge to admire the rushing, frothing waters. Then we walked in the other direction to look at the sculptures. The ride from Nowa Nowa through undulating farmland to Orbost was uneventful. We enjoyed two nights of wonderful hospitality with Gail and Lillian. This enabled us to ride to Marlo for a trip on the Curlip on Sunday.

The next day we set out to repeat the trip in reverse. It's nice to see things from other directions and to go down where you went up and up where you went down. Altogether this trip was voted the best ride ever.