

The Understorey



Vol. 1, Issue 2, Summer 2014

From the desk of Lorna Long, Chairman

Hello to our members and readers of the Friends of the Porongurup Range Summer Newsletter. This is the second of our newsletters which I think you'll find full of interesting news and information.

The Friends have been busy as usual during past months undertaking various projects to support the conservation of the National Park as well as activities that promote and enhance the work of the association.

The key projects have been:

An Inspiration and Discovery day for artists and potential artists interested in contributing to the 2014 Art in the Park as reported in the Art in the Park section of the website – www.porongurup.org.au

Members, under the guidance of Lucia Quearry, undertook work at a **Twin Creeks busy bee** which included clearing fire breaks, working on the water tanks and installing a sink by the ablutions, clearing the areas around the buildings as well as clearing out the big shed. Many thanks to every one that made this a successful day. The BBQ that followed was a great time to socialise and the weather was glorious.

In addition to the busy bee at Twin Creeks, on another occasion Lucia and her devoted crew scattered seeds in the front paddock to take advantage of warmer spring days and let nature do her work. The previous work carried out in this paddock is evident in the proliferation of new growth.

Our **Annual General Meeting** was held 23rd September at the Porongurup Shop. Thanks to Di Drummond and Gordon Chester for preparing a delicious meal for us before the meeting commenced.

The turnout for the AGM was excellent so my thanks to everyone who attended. It is important that members take part in these general meetings to stay in touch with our work and ask questions of the committee.

The annual reports and financials presented at the meeting are available to members. All in all the Friends of the Porongurup Range is in good shape..... *contd*

www.porongurup.org.au

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www.porongurup.org.au

from the desk of Lorna Long (contd)

The following executive committee members were elected:

Chairman: Lorna Long
Vice Chairman: John Radys
Treasurer: Scott Drummond
Secretary: Maggie Shanklin
Committee members: Lucia Quearry, Lisa Braun and Stephen Jennings

There is room for 3 more committee members. If you feel you can contribute to the executive, we would be pleased to hear from you.

The AGM finished with a fascinating talk by **Andy Young** who was in the Porongurup area undertaking a generic review of the primitive micro-moth heliozelids which have been known to exist for at least 140 million years. They have co-evolved with flowering plants and are exceptionally diverse in the south west of Australia. As expected, the Porongurup has many species of these interesting fauna.

In October the Friends and The Oyster Harbour Catchment Group jointly hosted a one day Conference, "**Conservation, Culture, Collaboration in the Porongurup**". We were fortunate to secure the world renowned plant conservation biologist, Steve Hopper, as one of our key speakers. Thank you to David Broadhurst for submitting an article describing his impressions from the Conference. (See p.4).



Professor Stephen Hopper, Friends of Porongurup Range Chairman, Lorna Long, South Coast NRM's David Broadhurst and SCNRM Project Officer Cultural Connections, Graeme Simpson, photographed under splendid Karri trees on the grounds of Karribank Country Retreat prior to the start of the Conference. *Photo credit—Albany Advertiser*

From the desk of Lorna Long (*contd*)

Thank you to each of the members of the Porongurup Promotion Association for donating two bottles of wine from each of the wineries. We were pleased to present 'a local red' and 'a local white' to each of the speakers as well as well as locally grown Jilba olives generously supplied by Jim and Joan Baily. In addition, wine & olives along with cheese and biscuits were served afterward.

Website: Just before Christmas, Stage 2 of the Friends' website went online. We are pleased with the result. Thanks to Maggie Shanklin who worked with Kelly Jones, website designer. Kelly did a great job providing us with creative ideas and particular attention to detail. We feel that the website is professional looking and user friendly. Please visit us at www.porongurup.org.au. We look forward to your comments.

Porongurup Wine Festival: Our next event is to help out at the Porongurup Wine Festival at Jingalla Wines on 2nd March. We will assist at the gate and oversee the parking of vehicles. Our volunteer work at the festival earns funds for the organisation. If you are able to assist by helping at the gate for a couple of hours please call Lucia on 9853 1004; she is organising the rosters. We also need help on the day before (March 1st) to put up bunting for parking and help on the day of the festival directing vehicles to the parking areas.

Art Festival: From April 18th to April 26th we'll host the 13th Annual **Art in the Park** as well as the 3rd Annual **Art in the Hall Bazaar** from the 18th to the 21st April. The Art festival is an important event for the Friends. We need volunteers both before and during the events. If you can assist in any way please call Judy on 9853 1212 or myself on 9853 1137. Your help will be appreciated.

Please encourage your friends and family to come to Art in the Park and support the work of our organisation.

My best wishes to everyone from my wonderful view of the Range.

Call for volunteers

The Friends are always in need of volunteers for its projects and activities. Many types of skills are sought and you might have just what we need. Volunteering may be short term or long term, occasional or frequent.

The type of projects are:

Conservation activities
The development of Twin Creeks
Art in the Park and Art in the Hall
Social events

As the saying goes many hands make light work

Conservation Culture Collaboration in the Porongurup by David Broadhurst

David Broadhurst, Regional Landcare Facilitator at South Coast NRM attended the CCC Conference. David has been with SCNRM the past five years and was previously the NRM Officer for Oyster Harbour Catchment Group. He has been instrumental in facilitating the success of the Porongurup Weed Control Project with Lisa and Klaus Braun. We appreciate David's support. He is always ready to answer questions, or find a solution.

I recently had the pleasure of attending the "**Conservation Culture Collaboration in the Porongurup**" conference hosted by the Oyster Harbour Catchment Group and the Friends of the Porongurup Range at Karribank Country Retreat.

This event covered a great variety of topics and I have been asked to put together some thoughts regarding each of the presenters and their topics.

First off the rank was Graeme Simpson who is a Koreng Noongar man and a Project Officer Cultural Connections at South Coast NRM. Graeme welcomed us to country and played his didgeridoo. Graeme's honest presentation style was enjoyed by all. Graeme told us about the significance of the Porongurup Range and its connection to the Stirling Range and to his family. Graeme also discussed how the connection expresses itself in Noongar culture that includes totems, moieties and lore.

The second speaker was Stephen Hopper, an internationally recognised Winthrop Professor of Biodiversity at the University of Western Australia. Stephen's presentation titled "**Caring for country and rediscovering the Porongurup as the home of all totems, through the lens of Old Climatically Buffered Infertile Landscape (OCBIL) Theory**", linked in well with Graeme's presentation. Stephen focussed on how the flora and fauna evolved in the Great Southern and how it linked with Indigenous culture. Stephen also explored totems. We learnt that the State's ocean levels, topography, age of the soils, stability of the climate, lack of volcanic events and lack of glaciation led to the diverse flora and fauna we enjoy today. If you ever get a chance to sit in on a discussion with Stephen Hopper I suggest you make best efforts to attend. (Ed reference: OCBIL Theory, Stephen Hopper, Plant Soil 2009 322:49-86)

Seed collector, conservationist, farmer and member of the Ranges Link team, Peter Luscombe, explained the Ranges Link project, the work they have achieved and more importantly, the "why" in doing this. Peter's talk was called "**Ranges Link – The bigger picture**". Peter filled his presentation with lots of little stories about native animals, unique plants and some of the threats to these precious assets. I enjoyed Peter's presentation as he is similar to Graeme and is very honest in his technique.contd

Contd from p. 4

John Moore a Senior Research Scientist at the Department of Agriculture and Food WA talked about "***New Aliens in Old Landscapes***". Weeds, weeds and more weeds. John discussed what weed species we have been tackling and how to manage these species. John's wealth of knowledge and experience flowed through the conversation and made it easy for us to understand.

Following from lunch, Andrew Young, who currently lives on Kangaroo Island, was an out-of-the-blue presenter. Andrew's research on moths of the Southwest was surprisingly very interesting. I would never have guessed that the extent and diversity of moth species in our own backyard is as large as it is. Andrew highlighted several species of the Heliozelids (a family of day-flying moths), their entomology and the important role they play. Andrew has discovered several hundred undescribed and new species during his research in the area.

The last presentation before the panel discussion was another well-known local Klaus Braun who talked us through the origins of the Porongurup weeds project from inception in 2007 to today. Klaus discussed the issues they have had in delivering the project, their successes and future actions. Klaus also focussed on the partnerships and collaboration that has occurred between land managers.

Finally, we had a Q&A panel session hosted by ABC Radio presenter John Cecil. The panel included a variety of stakeholders associated with the Porongurup Range. The panel included representatives from the Porongurup Promotion Association, South Coast NRM, Department of Parks and Wildlife, Department of Agriculture and Food WA (Invasives), Shire of Plantagenet, Stephen Hopper and local university student, Sayah Drummond. The brief for the panel: *The Porongurup in 2038*. It was interesting given the varied perspectives at the table. Good ideas, controversial ideas and interesting ideas were put forward. It was a shame that the panel discussion didn't go for longer since it's rare to have all of the interested parties at the one forum. □

Join us ! We are looking for new members to assist with projects, event organisation, tasks and support. Become a member—active or inactive. If you don't live in the district or wish to join us as a keen but passive member, membership as a gesture of support is welcome and appreciated.

Annual membership—\$10.00

A membership form can be downloaded www.porongurup.org.au

or contact friends@porongurup.org.au

Ecosystem Restoration Activities

Oyster Harbour Catchment including Porongurup National Park and Twin Creeks Community Conservation Reserve

A group of UWA students spent a week in the Oyster Harbour Catchment— Lectures, workshops, field activities, and student presentations formed part of the 2014 introduction to Ecosystem Restoration, a Science unit, Centre of Excellence in Natural Resource Management (CENRM), University of Western Australia.

The first morning, Unit Coordinators Dr Speldewinde & Dr Pettit introduced the elements of a good restoration project and the need for restoring ecosystem services. Klaus Braun, representing OHCG as well as the Porongurup weed control project, introduced members of OHCG and Friends. Mark Waud, OHCG Project Officer, gave an overview of ongoing and completed OHCG projects. He reminded us: “what we do in the upper part of the catchment affects the bottom of our catchment as it drains into the Oyster Harbour”.



On February 5, the students visited 4 sites in the Oyster Harbour Catchment including Twin Creeks.

Left: Peter Luscombe gathered students at one of the Twin Creeks revegetation sites and explained that some species within the planted seed mix will do extremely well despite rabbit and kangaroo damage and subsequently will provide an environment where other natives have a better chance to sprout than in original bare paddock conditions.

Right: Mark Waud describes the soil type and soil conditions at the site and explains how the seed mix developed for planting was tailored specifically for the site.



On February 8, students spent the day at Cockatoo Creek, a private property adjacent to the National Park. Since 2008, as part of the Porongurup weed project, much effort has gone into weed control on this site.

Photo left: Students assessing regeneration of native vegetation along Cockatoo Creek.

Photo right: Lisa organising a team of students to search along the creek line to weed out Dolichos Pea.

Photos courtesy Klaus Braun

Porongurup Water Hole by Jayden Vitler

I've lived in the I've Porongurup for 9 years; I like to hike both the Stirling Range and the Porongurup regularly. Hiking gives me the opportunity to observe nature at my own pace. Looking down from the top of mountain gives me a new perspective. I am currently studying for a Diploma in Conservation and Land Management at Great Southern Institute of Technology and recently got a job at the Department of Parks and Wildlife.

On a reasonably windy Sunday I decided take a hike up to Devils Slide in the Porongurup Range as I had not yet been up since the warmer weather kicked in. As I got underway with my hike I came across many tourists and keen hikers such as myself. The granite rocks either side of the trail housed many king skinks and smaller reptiles; luckily, no snakes. Careful not to get blown off the mountain I made it to the 'Trail End' sign but being a bit of explorer I decided to go past the sign and crawl down the rock face coming to a relatively flat outcrop of granite rock.

As a TAFE student currently learning about Aboriginal Heritage and Artefacts, I had a look around. After ten minutes looking at interesting plants and geological features I came across what appeared to be a gnamma (water) hole. These are depressions made on a granite face that aboriginals used to collect water. After taking a couple of photos I sent them to my lecturer at TAFE and he agreed that what I had found was indeed a gnamma hole, providing solid evidence Aboriginals may have indeed been camped up in the hills of the Porongurup Range many years ago.



Approximately 25cm in diameter

Film review: **Remote and Rugged**

Blue Office Productions, with the support of South Coast NRM and at least a dozen project partners and volunteers, created an inspiring and informative film featuring conservation work being carried out in the Southcoast Region of Western Australia.

The film was produced to raise awareness by documenting the natural assets of the expansive and diverse Southcoast and to highlight environmental challenges that affect the region. Hundreds of conservation, rehabilitation & protective efforts have been undertaken or completed. Single activities such as fencing to protect a creek line on a private property through to a Gondwanan vision to link the wet forests of Margaret River to the mallee and woodlands near Kalgoorlie.

As Keith Bradby suggested while being interviewed during the film: our relationship to land care [should be] 'Connected, healthy & loved' as demonstrated by countless individuals and groups in the film.

For a free copy of *Remote and Rugged* contact South Coast NRM Media & PR Coordinator Peter Morris: peterm@southcoastnrm.com.au or call (08) 9825 8521.

Alternatively, the one hour film can be viewed in 3-parts

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vQ_wKiqVWoI

The Oyster Harbour Catchment

The catchment, as highlighted in green, stretches from northwest of Kendenup and flows east and then southerly for about 100km into the Oyster Harbour east of Albany and covers approximately 3000 square km. The catchment includes The Porongurup and Stirling National Parks and Twin Creeks Community Conservation Reserve.

Created in 1992, the Oyster Harbour Catchment Group aims to protect and enhance the environment throughout the catchment by providing a link between landholders and a wide range of land care and technical services, advice and funding assistance.

FUNDING—while grants are conditional (usually to ensure the money allocated is spent as intended), the conditions of a grant in most cases, do not impose caveats on the land.

Water quality, salinity, waterlogging, soil degradation, livestock grazing, weeds, pests, and loss of biodiversity contribute to a decline in the Oyster Harbour. Good management practices contribute to the health of the Harbour as well as the waterways in between.

At an OHCG strategic planning workshop held last September, each OHCG member involved in some aspect of conservation within the catchment reported on their project. The level of commitment, number of people involved, and their passion for the long-term health and survival of the Oyster Harbour Catchment is noteworthy.

Oyster Harbour Catchment Group Committee members

Klaus Braun—Chairman

Judy Hunt—Vice chairman

Heather Adams—Treasurer

Lucia Quearry representing FOPR

David Williamson & Lucia Quearry:

members of the executive committee who oversee the Porongurup Project managed by Klaus Braun

Secretary—Robin Surridge

Mark Waud—Project officer—9851 2703

Congratulations to **Heather Adams** who was presented with the Premier's Australia Day Active Citizenship Award 2014 at Mt Barker. Amongst her many achievements includes 3 decades of commitment and dedication in the upper Kalgan. Heather has been a made many significant contributions to the OHCG since its inception.



Members of the OHCG assist farmers, managers, landholders, community groups, urban and peri urban communities, local government and government agencies by coordinating and facilitating natural resource management. The OHCG website lists ongoing projects which run simultaneously, throughout the catchment: <http://www.ohcg.org.au/index.php/projects/>

The OHCG can help in a number of ways:

- ◇ Assistance & technical advice
- ◇ Funding sources for land care activities
- ◇ River and creek restoration
- ◇ Remnant vegetation protection
- ◇ Re-vegetation with native species
- ◇ Work shops, field trips, catchment tours
- ◇ Weed and pest control advice

It's all connected ! It's all related!

The Friends of the Porongurup Range is part of the Ranges Link. The Ranges Link is a project of the OHCG. The Porongurup weed control project is another collaborative project between the OHCG and The Friends of the Porongurup Range.

Nature Conservancy Videographer visits Twin Creeks by Lucia Quearry

Keith Bradby of Gondwana Link again has supported the Friends of the Porongurup Range and Twin Creeks Community Conservation Reserve. The Nature Conservancy (TNC) is a major conservation organisation based in the USA which, besides working on their projects in North America, they fund international conservation projects. One of TNC's aims is to conserve land and water through the efforts of dedicated and diverse staff through the USA and 33 other countries. Western Australia's Gondwana Link has benefitted from TNC's support. In August 2013 a TNC videographer was sent to Australia to record results of their philanthropy.

As the videographer was making a recording of various aspects at Twin Creeks, she listened to me bend her ear about Friends of the Range, flora, fauna and plans for the future. I was capably supported by Susie Luscombe at Twin Creeks then we repaired to interview and film Peter Luscombe at their Caladenia Hill property.

Gondwana Link, with funding from TNC, lead the Ranges Link group through the process of creating a Conservation Action Plan (CAP) for the *corridors project* of which Twin Creeks is a part. The CAP plan helped the Ranges Link group identify 8 key ecological targets including: 1) Wandoo woodland ecosystem, 2) Kalgan River, the tributaries and wetlands, 3) Rock Sheoak, 4) Banksia attenuate shrub land, 5) Mallee heath 6) Jarrah and Marri woodland, 7) black gloved wallaby and 8) black cockatoos. The plan helps to focus our efforts on fencing and revegetation activities and flora and fauna monitoring. The result is a dynamic document adaptable to environmental changes.

A report by Keith Bradby describing the Gondwana Link project is available on the Nature Conservancy website http://www.nature.org/cs/groups/webcontent/@web/@australia/documents/document/prd_062380.pdf

2014 Great Cocky Count—Sunday 6 April

Join up for an annual community-based survey (sites are located all over the southwest WA) to count as many endangered Carnaby's Black Cockatoos as possible for one hour at sunset. It is easy to be involved: volunteers go to a specified location and count all the cockatoos flying into their night time roosting trees within a one hour period starting 30 minutes before sunset. Register as a volunteer: www.birdlife.org.au/carnabys/great-cocky-count

In addition, Birdlife Australia is seeking additional night roosts for all black cockatoos. For more information about the GCC or to advise us about a roost site, contact Hugh Finn on 9287 2251 or 0400 177 615 or at greatcockycount@birdlife.org.au

The Great Cocky Count is funded by Perth Region NRM through an Australian Government Caring for our Country initiative.

Geology corner by Lucia Quearry

Lay of the Land

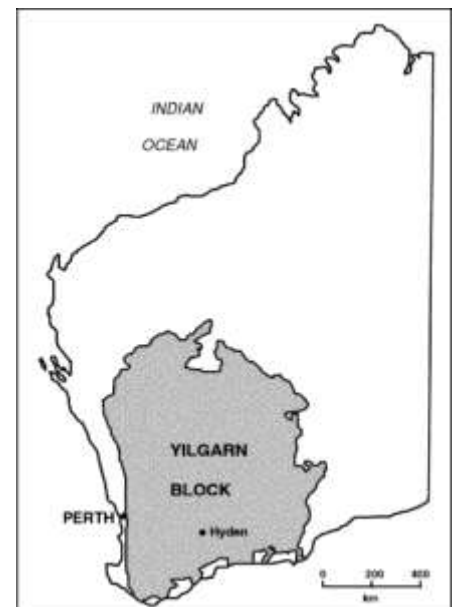
I'm pleased to be able to offer the first of several general ruminations on earth science.

In order to put geologic events into some time frame most of us can comprehend scientists often compress the entire geologic time scale into 24 hours. Put into that perspective the creation of the Porongurup is thought to have occurred at about 18 hours into the day!

But, I like to use 'years ago' terminology. Geologists believe the earth started forming 4.6 billion years ago. Granites which form the Porongurup Range were emplaced about 1.2 billion years ago during the collision with the continental mass we today call Antarctica.

Some of the oldest rocks known on earth, the most tectonically stable, the least altered by time, are found here in Australia, here in WA. The old cratonic shields identified around the world, some up to 3 billion years old, are special because they display unaltered ancient geologic history.

The **Yilgarn block**, mostly granite, lies under much of southern WA and is the largest of the 3 blocks of cratonic shield found in Australia. The Porongurup Range sits on the southern edge of this block.



The work of Friends of the Range Executive Committee by Lorna Long

The Executive Committee believe it is important for members to be aware and understand the work of the Committee. I'll will provide you with an update in each newsletter.

The members of the executive are developing objectives for their relevant portfolios in order to prioritise them and determine how they can be best achieved.

We are also reviewing and rewriting the constitution to meet the requirements of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission which oversees all of the Not-for-profits sector in Australia. In addition, we will be developing several new policies and procedures to meet current governance requirements. Whilst it is good to be doing the hands-on work of the organisation, we are obligated to meet the required standards of governance expected of Not-for-profits. Our plan this year is to balance our projects and activities between meeting the objectives of the portfolios and developing the required paperwork.

As you can see from this we are an active committee and welcome people to join any of these groups or come onto the executive as a committee member. Please feel free to call me and chat if you are interested in volunteering or have any questions.
Lorna Long Chairman 9853 1137



Twin Creeks Busy Bee— 1st September 2013



The busy bee held on the first Sunday in September was a great success. Members were divided into five groups: laneway work, tackling old fence line, tidying up fire-breaks, cleaning up the sheds and completing final maintenance work on the water tanks. The small tank was donated to the Friends by Elders and the Mt Barker Coop in 2011. A barbecue followed on a day when the weather did the right thing too. Thanks for Ron & Rin Hills for transporting their front end loader to Twin Creeks (pictured top left). Ron helped John Radys move vegetation off the laneway. The fencing crew rolled up old burnt wire which was loaded to Stephen Jennings' trailer for a tip run (Bo Janmaat and Sanni Ten Hengel pictured top right). Peter Stewart from the Albany Bushcarers Group, along with his family, worked on the firebreaks. (Kelly O'Neill and John Radys bottom left and Peter Stewart and other volunteers bottom right). Thanks to everyone who came on the day.

Australia Day Award

Peter Stewart, nominated by multiple community groups (including the Friends) for his conservation work, was awarded The Premier's Active Citizenship Award in a presentation in Albany on Australia Day 2014.

Congratulations, Peter. Thank you for your dedication and service to the community.

Gondwana Panorama Exhibition

An exhibition of panoramic landscape works created through a series of photography, film making and digital installation workshops exploring the Gondwana Link landscape and our human connection to it was officially opened to a packed room (standing room only) at the Vancouver Arts Centre on February 8th. Basil Schur, project coordinator, introduced the project and said he felt that the photographs and films acknowledge the beauty and fragile nature of the environment in which we live. Eugene Eades, Noongar leader and educator, thanked Keith Bradby Director, Gondwana Link and Amanda Keesing, Gondwana Link information manager, for their generous support to the Noongar cause and the fantastic partnerships formed by the many Noongar groups who have come together to help heal the land. "The photographs hanging around the room moved me in a special way....takes me back to dreamtime and love for the environment" , Eugene said. Stephen Hopper (Professor of Biology, UWA) followed and opened the exhibition. "There is first class work going on that will ensure new ways of sustainable living in this unique landscape." Professor Hopper talked about a combination of approaches: ".....a place for science, arts, culture and a place in our hearts if this country is to survive into the future."

In addition to many spectacular landscape scenes, three films, created as part of the project, were shown and can be viewed at the exhibition which has moved to the West Australian Museum through to 28 February or view them at:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hrIguLdEIwY>

Connecting our Heritage (the Gondwana Link)

This 5- minute film includes remarks by Keith Bradby, Stephen Hopper and Peter Luscombe. Stephen Hopper sums up "To a biologist like me, this is the nearest place to heaven on earth."

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0-sx-mRvBLQ&list=PL6B858688E8DE3698&index=1>
(about 5 min)

Place for Learning and Place for Healing Eugene Eades, Noongar facilitator for Greening Australia and the Gondwana Link, as well as the primary driver for a range of Noongar and cross cultural activities, Eugene works with Noongar and others to bring land back to a natural state. Of particular interest is Nowanup a meeting place which he also refers to as the Bush University where amongst other things, educational programs are held for students as far away as the metropolitan areas. Eugene said, "for some [students] it is the first time they see the stars".

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IKrV-6MVJQo> (about 6 minutes)

Gondwana Panorama Basil Schur introduced the film clip with a comment on time spent in the high country:.... [to Mount Lindesay and Porongurup National park] "built awareness and unique perspectives for the participants in the Green Skills Community Arts Project."