



Autumn 2016

Foundation for National Parks & Wildlife

PAWS Newsletter for Parks & Wildlife Supporters

Crowdfunding for the Tasmanian Bushfires

Caring for Australia's natural and cultural heritage since 1970

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Front cover: Help support the Tasmanian fire recovery on page 12.
Photo: Dan Broun.

Back Cover: The stunning display of the Fagus tree in Tasmania.
Photo: Toni Fish.



New Beginings

Welcome to the latest autumn newsletter from the Foundation for National Parks & Wildlife. It brings me great pleasure to introduce myself as the new CEO of this wonderful organisation and show you all the projects we have been supporting recently.

I have only been working at FNPW for a short time, however when I read the stories in this newsletter and hear about all that we do at FNPW it is incredibly inspiring.

Prior to joining FNPW, I held CEO roles with Rundle Mall Management Authority, South Australian Tourism, and Toop and Toop. I am also still Chair of the Goolwa Tourism Precinct as well as the Murraylands Tourism Partnership.

Being a British transplant in this amazing country, I am always in awe when I come across a new landscape or unusual native animal. The diversity of Australia’s flora and fauna is incredible. I look forward to seeing more of the country and meeting many passionate people in my role as CEO of FNPW.

I would like to acknowledge the incredible work of my predecessor, Susanna Bradshaw, and thank her for all that she has achieved in order to get the organisation to where it is today, funding countless environmental projects along the way.

My focus this year and into the future will be on growing our small organisation’s resources so that we can achieve more environmental goals. I will be responsible for the implementation of the organisation’s short and long term strategic plans, as well as its day to day operations.

We have big plans for FNPW this year, including updating the brand and publications, new websites and much more. So stay tuned and watch this space.

I can’t wait to get stuck in and I look forward to doing what I can to help Australia’s rich natural heritage continue for many generations.

Ian Darbyshire

Ian Darbyshire
CEO, Foundation for National Parks & Wildlife

P.S. On page 12 we have an article on the Tasmanian Bushfire appeal that we are running. It personally affected me as my only son was on the frontline, fighting the fires. Can you donate to help fire-affected species recover?

THREATENED SPECIES PROJECTS



The Search for the Enigma Moth

The stunning iridescent wings of the Enigma Moth. Photo: Dr George Gibbs.

In 2009 a brand new Australian species was discovered—the Enigma Moth. FNPW is providing a grant of \$15,000 to uncover the mysteries of this rare, newly discovered moth and engage the community in conservation at the same time.

Written by Robyn Molsher, Wildlife Program Manager, Natural Resources Kangaroo Island.

I have been working in the environmental area for about 25 years. I find the work rewarding and diverse. I am passionate about raising awareness in the general community about the environment so that more and more people will help to protect it. I find the recent research into the human health benefits of contact with nature very interesting and much of the research is reflected in this project. Its great to be able to increase people’s awareness of the value of insects which is often overlooked.



Entomologist, Richard Glatz collecting samples of the moths on Kangaroo Island. Photo: Janine Mackintosh.

The Enigma Moth, *Aenigmatinea glatzella* is a very primitive moth recently discovered on Kangaroo Island in 2009. It has shed light on the way moths and butterflies developed 80 to 100 million years ago.

It has beautiful iridescent gold and purple wings, and with its wings outstretched it is about the size of a five cent piece.

We will be using the Enigma Moth as a flagship species to raise awareness in the Kangaroo Island community about the importance of insects in their local environment. By



The small area of habitat on Kangaroo Island where the Enigma Moth can be found. Photo: Janine Mackintosh.

raising awareness of the importance of insects and by providing nature-based activities it is hoped that the local community will benefit from contact with nature and assist in protecting the natural environment into the future.

There is a lot we don’t know about the Enigma Moth so this project will be able to shed some light on the species. We will be conducting fieldwork at three sites on Kangaroo Island to learn more about the moth’s population and behaviour.

The three main objectives of this project are to:

- 1. Increase knowledge of the distribution of the rare Enigma moth through surveys.
- 2. Improve understanding and appreciation in the community of the importance of insects for ecosystem health.
- 3. Increase opportunities for people, especially youth, to connect with nature while fostering environmental stewardship.

The project is still in the early days. We are currently planning dates for the field days, school visits and surveys. Insect specialists will give talks at local schools and field days and help with conducting surveys. I am looking forward to seeing it all come together and even more excited to see the results.

This project is special as it will not only shed light on a very rare species, but also encourage local people to value insects as an important part of our biodiversity.

Short-tailed Shearwaters like this one are able to come out of their weed-free burrows thanks to this project. Photo: Tim Cooper.

Increasing Numbers of Big Island Seabirds

In 2014, FNPW funded a project with the Office of Environment and Heritage to help seabirds on the islands off the coast of Wollongong, New South Wales. Here is a progress update on the Big Island habitat rehabilitation work.



A Little Penguin chick being assessed in a recent survey. Photo: Rowena Morris.

Right on the doorstep of an industrial port in Wollongong is a special island called Big Island that is providing a home to nesting seabirds. Big Island is also known as *Booirodoong*, meaning 'Green Eel' in the local Dharawal language. This project is rehabilitating the breeding habitat for birds such as Little Penguins, shearwaters and petrels.

Invasive weeds such as Kikuyu Grass and Coastal Morning Glory have blocked

the entrance to many seabird burrows. These weeds have trapped many seabirds and prevented the fledgling of chicks. This project is about removing the invasive weeds and replacing the vegetation with coastal native species suitable for seabird breeding habitat.

The invasive weeds are impacting on the breeding success of Little Penguins, who are a potential population source for the Endangered Manly Little Penguin colony. The White-faced Storm-petrel has not been seen nesting on the island since 1969. This species has potentially declined six fold so we want to offer better habitat in the hope we can encourage these birds back. Weeds aside, the island offers protected habitat away from human interference and predators such as dogs, cats and foxes—so restoration is crucial.

This project commenced with two trial sites. The first site was aerially sprayed with glyphosate by helicopter in April 2014. In June and July last year volunteers planted over 3,750 seedlings on this trial site. These seedlings

are growing really well. A second site has been sprayed ready to be planted in June 2016. Little Penguins and shearwaters have been busy digging burrows and nesting in the restored habitat already.

This project has created an active Friends of Five Islands Group who are involved in the weed removal and bird monitoring. Koori members of the Illawarra Local Aboriginal Land Council green team, Berrim Nuru Environmental Managers, are also involved in the follow up weed work and replanting on Big Island. Local schools and other volunteer groups are keen to be involved by propagating and growing seedlings for the island. It is extremely special to see the passion and dedication of so many volunteers helping restore seabird breeding habitats on Big Island.

The bird surveys are one of the most exciting moments, when the shearwaters sing back to the volunteer's calls for identification. There are big smiles on every volunteer's face when they see the chicks emerge from a burrow, free of entangling weeds.

Thanks to Dr Rowena Morris, Ranger NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service for her help with this story. If you're interested in joining Friends of Five Island, email five.islands@environment.nsw.gov.au.



Some of the new native plantings, revegetating Big Island. Photo: Rowena Morris.

Progress on Tracking Murray River Turtles

A newly-hatched Broad-shelled Turtle. Photo: James Van Dyke.

FNPW granted \$36,000 to a three and a half year project tackling the extinction risk for turtle species in Australia's major river system, the Murray-Darling. FNPW featured the project in the Spring 2014 PAWS newsletter. Here is an update from the project manager.

Written by Dr Ricky Spencer, Senior Lecturer, Western Sydney University.

This project aims to quantify the decline in turtles in the iconic Murray River, identify causes and develop management options to overcome it. Turtles are of major importance in river ecosystems and they are declining at an alarming rate.

The Murray River Turtle fulfils a niche role as a major scavenger, herbivore and predator along the Murray River. Decline or loss of these abundant consumers will have serious effects on the ecosystem, potentially impacting water quality, biological diversity, general river health and the services these ecosystems currently provide.

For the first time we will identify the specific causes of the declines, predict the effect of the decline on river health and establish targeted, practical management strategies to halt and ultimately reverse the declines. Without strategic intervention, most turtles will be extinct by the end of the 21st century.

This project is also significant as it addresses a problem with culturally significant species to indigenous groups.



The Annual Partner Forum for this turtle project. Photo: Catherine Heuzenroeder.

This project is integrating local knowledge of traditional owners with cutting edge science. The Yorta Yorta Nation are traditional owners of much of the upper Murray. They provide a strong link to country and the decline of this species has been a focus for the Yorta Yorta people over the last five years.

This project unites nine partners from industry, university, government and the community. Three states are represented and it is the first study that will systematically assess turtle populations throughout the whole river. Citizen Science, in the form of TurtleSAT is a central part of our data collection. Carrying out this research has shown the amazing diversity of people that really care about the environment and turtles.

By applying modern demographic analyses to the new data we have collected, and comparing them to an unparalleled set of historical data that has been collected over the past 40 years, we have already made some important discoveries.

We have identified that Murray River Turtles have indeed declined, but these declines were previously masked by the extreme longevity of adult turtles. The causes for declines are complex and vary from the headwaters to the river mouth. Murray River Turtles were listed as endangered in 2013, and their progressive decline is finally becoming obvious in the adult population.

Foxes eat turtle eggs. We are still in the early days, but cracking the 'code' of how foxes impact on turtle populations is very important. Designing management options to disrupt foxes has been a real challenge.

One of my favourite moments was when I had a revelation about a different way of managing foxes. It will hopefully revolutionise the way we manage introduced predators into the future. Stay tuned for more information.

Thank you FNPW for your valued support with this project.





Phil Craven showing FNPW committee member, Margo Pickworth the Coomonderry Swamp project site. Photo: Margo Pickworth.

Ambassador Update on Coomonderry Swamp

Coomonderry Swamp is a 670 ha wetland on the New South Wales south coast. It is the largest semi-permanent freshwater swamp on the New South Wales coast and is home to the endangered Australasian Bittern and Green and Gold Bell Frog.

Written by Margo Pickworth, Projects Committee Member.

On an extremely hot December day, my husband and I had the great pleasure of meeting Phil Craven, Projects Officer, at the Nowra Office of the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS). Phil has been closely involved with the, now completed, Coomonderry Swamp assessment and enhancement project which FNPW helped fund. Phil's enthusiasm and intimate knowledge of the Coomonderry Swamp area was clearly evident as he took us on a tour of various aspects of the project.

Our first stop was along the Seven Mile Beach road where we donned plenty of mosquito repellent and sunscreen and headed into the swamp itself. Passing some magnificent specimens of swamp mahogany, we soon reached the thick reeds and were rewarded with the rare call of the Australasian Bittern a low booming across the swamp.

Due to the shyness of the bittern a 'songmeter' (sound recorder) had been installed at selected sites around



Margo Pickworth and Phil Craven discussing the amazing work being done in Coomonderry Swamp. Photo: Margo Pickworth.

the swamp to detect calls at dawn and dusk. Data has indicated that at least three male bitterns have territories within the swamp, which could mean that there are three breeding pairs in the swamp. Future plans include the use of drone technology to look for nesting sites.

Coomonderry Swamp is one of the few areas where Green and Golden Bell Frogs are known to occur.

During the course of the project both day and night observations were made. No bell frogs were found on the western side of the swamp, however they were found on the forest edge on the eastern side. Unfortunately we were not so lucky this time.

Phil then took us to the western side of the swamp where the Green Army had planted 150 Swamp Oak and Swamp Paperbark trees along the wetland/old paddock verge to extend a natural buffer to the wetland and improve wildlife habitat. Despite floods killing 50 trees, they have been re-planted and the NPWS are providing ongoing maintenance.

Weeds have been a problem in the swamp and invasive weeds that have been targeted include Lantana, Moth vine, Blackberry and Madeira Winter Cherry.

Phil also demonstrated an innovative experimental control technique of the aquatic weed *Sagittaria platyphylla*. This involves temporary light deprivation using plastic sheeting. Early results of this method appear promising and it is hoped this will continue.

Despite the heat, it was a wonderful afternoon, especially to see the results of the project 'on the ground' and share the passion that Phil Craven has for this unique area.



Some of the new plants added to the swamp border in this project. Photo: Margo Pickworth.



The group of plant experts and enthusiasts hoping to discover some endangered plants. Photo: Paden Wilson.

Finding Endangered Pomaderris Plants

In 2015, FNPW granted \$14,300 to the Australian National Botanic Gardens (ANBG) to help secure the future of two endangered plants belonging to the *Pomaderris* genus.

As part of this project, ANBG are holding several field events that involve taking seeds and cuttings of these two plants to help propagate them and secure their future. FNPW Grants Manager, Jennie Morgan was lucky enough to join one of these days recently.

Written by Jennie Morgan, Grants Manager, FNPW.

Discovering just one endangered species is thrilling for anyone to experience—discovering over 20 specimens is even better! That is exactly what I was lucky enough to be a part of when I was invited to join a recent field day looking for *Pomaderris brunnea*.

We met up with a group of plant experts and enthusiasts at the Wirrimbirra Sanctuary in Bargo, south of Sydney. Anticipation was high as no one was completely certain we would find any of these endangered plants because we were going off historic records of the area.

It wasn't long into the walk when one of our team spotted what they suspected was our first *Pomaderris brunnea*. Sure enough a medium sized tree was closely inspected by the experts and it was indeed the endangered *Pomaderris*!



The very exciting first *Pomaderris* discovery of the day. Photo: Jennie Morgan.



FNPW Grants Manager, Jennie Morgan had a great day helping discover new *Pomaderris* plants. Photo: Paden Wilson.

Everyone was very excited and the plant specialists took a couple of small clippings to propagate later.

Once we all had a good look at the plant and we were all confident that we had worked out what we were all looking for, we all split up into smaller groups in the hope that there were more to discover. Using orange tape to mark any specimens we came across, by the end of the day we had over 20 tagged trees.

As well as discovering the location of several *Pomaderris brunnea*, we also discovered something of their behaviour. We noted that most of the plants were growing in the creek bed, indicating that they probably prefer moist environments to grow. All these discoveries made the whole day a huge success.

I finished off the day by wandering around the Wirrimbirra Sanctuary and seeing the amazing work being done to look after injured and orphaned native animals. They also have a native nursery and a wonderful variety of unusual plants on the property, including a stunning native hibiscus I took a fancy to.

Thanks so much ANBG for having me along, it was a great day and I'm really looking forward to seeing what the project will be able to achieve for these endangered plants.

Cultural Excursions at Q-Station

School children being shown the history of the Manly Q Station. Photo: Susanna Bradshaw.

Set on Sydney's North Head, surrounded by great natural beauty with over 150 years of intriguing history, sits the historical Quarantine Station. Now run as Q Station in Sydney Harbour National Park near Manly, it is one of those places that not everyone knows about. However, once they arrive, nearly everyone asks, "Why didn't I know about this?"

The Foundation for National Parks & Wildlife recently entered into an agreement with Q Station to provide grants to schools to offset some of the costs of attending an education program at the Quarantine Station. Funds for these grants are generated by the sale of sand frogs at Q Station at Reception and in the Visitor Centre. These little toy frogs remind us that the presence of frogs is often an indicator of a healthy environment.

The tours offered to these school children reveal the rich cultural heritage of the site. It's a great, interactive way for schools to understand a very important part of the history of New South Wales.



A recent educational school excursion. Photo: Q Station.

When the British arrived in Australia in 1788, they brought with them infectious diseases prevalent throughout Europe. During the voyage of the second fleet to Australia, infectious diseases, poor diet and unhygienic conditions caused the deaths of a quarter of the passengers. From 1828 -1984, North Head in Manly was used as a site for the quarantine of people with infectious disease, most of whom arrived on migrant ships. The 30 hectare site with 65 original buildings, reflects Australia's evolution from settlement through to the present day. The Quarantine Station was New South Wales's first defence against the entry of disease.

The 20th century saw many advances in medical science, immunisation, quarantine procedures and travel. Consequently, the need for the quarantine station



The historic quarantine station at Manly. Photo: Q Station.

facilities decreased significantly. As the need decreased, the physical condition of the Quarantine Station began to deteriorate. On 16 March 1984 it was reserved as part of Sydney Harbour National Park under the jurisdiction of the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS).

The NPWS established guided tours as well as a conference and function centre. However because the site is rugged, the buildings lightweight, and the landscape continually changing, maintaining the site was a demanding and expensive exercise. Despite considerable work by the NPWS over the first 15 years of its management as a National Park, resources were insufficient to return the Quarantine Station to a fit condition and ensure its cultural significance was maintained.

In November 2006, the site was leased to tourism operator, Mawland Quarantine Station, who have invested considerably in the adaptive re-use of the site, turning it into a hotel, conference and event centre. This has allowed increased access for the public in conjunction with new interpretive experiences that promote awareness and understanding of the site.

Offerings include history and the ever-popular ghost tours as well as education programs aligned with the Australian and New South Wales curricula. More than 20,000 visitors annually participate in these experiences.

For more information about these grants, please contact Julie Regalado, Q Station Education Program Manager, H8773-CR3@accor.com.

Great Results from the Waddi Tree Project

The Lake Eyre Basin Indigenous Rangers collecting seeds from one of only three Waddi Tree populations left in Australia. Photo supplied by Leanne Kohler.

FNPW gave \$14,000 to the Desert Channels Group for an important cultural heritage project that worked with traditional owners and remote communities to help save a threatened species.

The endangered Waddi Tree, *Acacia peuce* is only found in three areas of Queensland and the Northern Territory. The slow growing tree is at risk of extinction from fire, grazing and land clearing. Community engagement to raise awareness, as well as seed collecting has helped increase the Waddi Trees' survival chances.

This project saw the Lake Eyre Basin Indigenous Ranges collect 300 seeds from a healthy Waddi Tree population on the Coorabulka Road, south of Boulia. Some of these seeds were taken to the Department of Agriculture, Forestry & Fisheries' greenhouse in Longreach for propagation. In total 43 seedlings were successfully germinated and received ongoing care to get them ready for planting.



Some of the local children enjoying the community planting day at Boulia State School. Photo supplied by Leanne Kohler.

Meetings were held with the Pitta Pitta traditional owners in Boulia to incorporate their knowledge and ideas with the project. At times it was difficult to engage with all the traditional owners as there are several different groups and they all have differing views. There also did not appear to be anyone with an in-depth knowledge of the history of indigenous involvement with the Waddi Tree. The Lake Eyre Basin Indigenous Ranger group offered to

find out who could help supply information to include in the planned brochures and signage.

In 2015, Waddi Tree signs were designed and erected for the stand of Waddi Trees near Boulia. Along with the signage, Waddi Tree brochures have been produced and distributed to visitor information centres in Boulia, Birdsville, and Bedourie in Queensland. They were also sent to the Mac Clark Acacia Peuce Reserve in the Northern Territory. These will help increase awareness and appreciation of the endangered trees with visitors and tourists.

A Waddi Tree Community Day was organised at the Boulia State School. The Pitta Pitta traditional owners, Lake Eyre Basin Indigenous Rangers, students, parents, and community members all attended the community day. Pitta Pitta traditional owner Alfred Nathan was on hand to plant a seedling on the school grounds, assisted by two school leaders and the Lake Eyre Basin Indigenous Rangers.

Due to the drought conditions and extreme heat it was difficult to find a good time to plant all the seedlings in Boulia. Community members had differing ideas about when the best time to plant the seedlings would be. The proposed tree planting event was therefore changed to a handover of the seedlings to interested indigenous and non-indigenous community members and groups to nurture and plant them when they saw fit and so have ownership of the tree and be able to tell their story to others.



One of the educational signs funded by this project. Photo supplied by Leanne Kohler.

Improving Access to Tasmanian Parks

A newly constructed bridge is improving access to Mount Field National Park. Photo: Peter Franklin.

FNPW granted over \$11,000 to an important project in Tasmania to improve access to Mount Field National Park. More visitors will be able to visit this popular tourist area thanks to newly installed bridge and boardwalks, which will protect walkers and the environment.

Written by Peter Franklin, President of Wildcare Friends of Mount Field.

For nearly fifty years I have been a keen bushwalker, so after I retired I became more involved with volunteering on environmental projects in National Parks. As Mount Field has always been one of my favourite places and is not far from home, it has become a focus for me.

This project is about improving access at the start of a popular walking track at Mount Field National Park in Tasmania. It comprises of two main features; a bridge over Lady Barron Creek and a new board walk over a 100 m wet area after the creek crossing. This work will improve both the environment and visitor access.

At the start of one of the most popular tracks, the Lady Barron Creek must be crossed just below Lake Fenton. This creek is subject to flooding when Lake Fenton overflows. An early solution was to install two concrete pipes to allow water to flow through, but walkers had to negotiate the rounded and slippery pipes. This was not easy, especially for less agile people, and it also looked unsightly.

Each year hundreds of people of different ages and fitness levels would make this crossing. An improved bridge will make it much easier and safer for walkers to cross and also improve the water quality.



Inspecting the new bridge. Photo: Peter Franklin.

A new boardwalk will also be constructed over an existing 100 m eroded walking track in Mount Field East. This track now has a considerable flow of water, making it very boggy. The boardwalk will improve walker comfort and protect the environment. All those feet also muddied the creek, which supplies 20% of the water for the greater Hobart area.



Some of the dedicated volunteers in the Friends of Mount Field group. Photo: Peter Franklin.

Since receiving the grant from FNPW, we have got off to a flying start. We have already completed the bridge and have now taken delivery of the timber for the track upgrade.

In early January 2016 the track to Mount Field East was closed for two days whilst a contractor with heavy machinery removed the existing pipes and cleaned out the creek bed at the crossing point. A few metres downstream the debris that had built up from past flooding was removed as part of the work. The old pipes were re-seated and two new pipes added to allow for improved water flow. Boulders were added on top followed by gravel to provide a smooth walking surface.

The area surrounding this project site has many endemic Fagus plants, *Fuscospora gunnii*. This is the only cold-climate native deciduous tree in Australia. The bridge that we have now installed allows people to access these popular trees much more easily. We have completed it just in time for the big increase in visitors during autumn when the Fagus leaves change colour. You can see a photo of this lovely display on the back cover of this newsletter.

Timber boards for the walkway were ordered and arrived at Mount Field in early February. Our on ground work will really get underway when the boardwalk construction starts soon.

Thanks to FNPW for the grant to help make Mt Field National Park a safer and more accessible Tasmanian destination.

Update from a PLCG Recipient

Arnold Vayo has received a PLCG grant from FNPW to help improve habitat on his bush property.

FNPW runs an important grants program for private land owners with conservation mechanisms on their land. These Private Land Conservation Grants (PLCG) can be up to \$5,000 per year for three years depending on the type of covenant.

Written by Jennie Morgan, Grants Manager, Foundation for National Parks & Wildlife.



Grants Manager, Jennie Morgan with PLCG recipient Arnold Vayo.

Arnold & Mary Vayo are the owners of "Vineyard Haven", a property of 36 ha in New Italy, New South Wales. They are incredibly passionate about conservation and have been working to improve the quality of the natural habitat on their land since purchasing it in 1971 and adding a Voluntary Conservation Agreement in 1999.

Vineyard Haven has a very interesting history and contains archaeological heritage items listed on the State Register in 2004 such as original wells/trenches from the first owners of the property in 1882. Most of the property was historically logged, but this has not occurred since at least the late 1950s. Natural regeneration continues, helped by conservation fencing installed more than a decade ago. The forest ecosystems on the property are extremely healthy, with very few weeds. Many different types of animals have been recorded at Vineyard Haven over the years, including quolls, bandicoots, Brush-tailed Phascogale, and many more.

Arnold was the recipient of a 2015 Private Land Conservation Grant and is using this grant to temporarily fence a section of his Conservation Area to prevent harmful grazing and trampling of the vegetation by macropods. Once natural regeneration has occurred and the seedlings have reached an age that they are no longer of interest to the majority of the herbivores, the fencing can be easily removed and potentially placed elsewhere on the property.

Recently, I was lucky enough to have the opportunity to visit Vineyard Haven and spend some time with Arnold. I was incredibly impressed by his passion and knowledge about the local environment. I was also able to meet some of the resident wallabies and see the property thanks to a special tour by Arnold. By doing this, I was also able to witness first-hand all of the fantastic work that has been conducted on this property over the years. Thanks for the hospitality Arnold and keep up the good work!



Arnold took Jennie and Paden on a tour of the protected bushland on his property.

Go to www.fnpw.org.au/foundation-grants/private-land-grants-nsw for more information about how you can apply for a PLCG.

Written by Arnold Vayo, PLCG recipient.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my deepest and sincerest appreciation to Jennie and her partner Paden for taking the time to visit me here at Vineyard Haven. Jennie was most enthusiastic indeed and quite willing to participate in any opportunity to experience how the Flora & Fauna integrate within the 90 acres of protected forest.

Jennie made numerous valuable contributions as we took a tour of my property. We spoke at length about the vegetation types and different species on my property such as the Forest Oak, *Allocasuarina torulosa*. It is an understorey species often found among many widely sought after species such as Tallowood, Grey Gum and White Mahogany and many more. It is also found among re-emerging rainforests like on our Vineyard Haven property.

Both Jennie and Paden were caring, capable and courteous and are welcome anytime. We also offer tours of the property to others. If you're interested in visiting, please email Jennie at jmorgan@fnpw.org.au.

Tasmania's recent bushfires were incredibly devastating. Photo: Dan Broun.

Helping Tasmania Recover

There have been over 40 devastating bushfires ravaging wilderness areas across Tasmania in January and February. Several of these fires have only just been extinguished. FNPW has started a fundraising campaign to raise \$15,000 for two important recovery strategies for these fires.

Unlike many of the ecosystems on mainland Australia that have evolved with fire, many of the dominant species in Tasmania's alpine wilderness cannot cope with fire. It instantly kills plants that have lived for thousands of years such as the Pencil Pine.

Some of Tasmania's most threatened animals live in these alpine areas, such as the Tassie Devil, Tasmanian Wedge-tailed Eagle, Spotted-tailed Quoll along with many other native animals.



An echidna that survived the recent fires. Photo: Wildcare Inc.

Half of the funds raised will go to Wildcare Inc. This organisation has several wildlife carers groups such as the Wildlife Emergency Response & Recovery Unit (WERRU), who are going out to the fire-affected areas with the Tasmanian Fire Service and remote area specialists. They are rescuing injured wildlife and putting out food for remaining animals as we speak.

As well as helping the injured animals in the short term, it's important to understand the effects of fire in these habitats and facilitate their long term recovery. That's why the other half of the funds will go to Professor James Kirkpatrick from the University of Tasmania and his team to assess and monitor the effects of these alpine fires.

Professor Kirkpatrick explains, "In order to adequately manage our natural heritage, we need to know what happens next. Which plant species will recover from these fires? How far will they penetrate into the burned areas? In what situations will they occur? Are they inhibited by native animal/rabbit grazing?"



A burnt and distressed wallaby after the fires. Photo: Dan Broun.

We need your help to fund these monitoring efforts, to better understand the long term impact of these fires. We also need your help to feed and treat the wildlife that survived these devastating fires.

To give you an idea of costs involved, here is a shopping list of some of what is needed:

- \$2,000+ per month for feed pellets and fresh produce for burnt out areas to help surviving animals. The larger the affected areas, the more food will be required.
- \$400 for a medical kit to take to fire affected sites.
- \$350 to feed just one injured animal for a year.
- \$300 per month for fuel to allow wildlife carers to travel to affected areas, rescue wildlife and put out food.
- \$1,000 will allow Professor Kirkpatrick and his team to conduct a research field trip to assess the damage.

Your donation will directly assist this recovery effort. The hard work that dedicated volunteers are putting in needs support during this crisis.

Depending on your donation you can go in the draw to win a number of spectacular prizes from Tasmania. For example you could win a \$500 voucher to the award-winning accommodation at Pumphouse Point on Lake St Clair, family passes for the Tahune Airwalk and Pennicott Wilderness Tours, and lots more!

www.chuffed.org/project/bushfire-appeal-for-tasmanias-wildlife

The Short-nosed Seasnake was recently rediscovered on the Ningaloo Reef. Photo: Grant Griffin.

Rediscovering Two Extinct Australian Species

In 2013, FNPW awarded a grant to Blanche D'Anastasi's research into seasnakes through the Paddy Pallin Science Grant program. Little did we know Blanche would very soon play a key role in rediscovering two seasnake species previously thought to be extinct!

Written by Blanche D'Anastasi, PhD candidate, James Cook University QLD.



Blanche D'Anastasi is a passionate conservationist.

True sea snakes are predatory, fully marine reptiles that form the most biodiverse group of marine reptiles on earth. There are around 70 different species and Western Australia hosts 22 species, of which five are endemic.

These snakes are chronically understudied and major knowledge gaps exist about their basic biology, ecology, connectivity and capacity for recovery from population declines. Consequently, little is known about the conservation status of sea snakes compared with other marine vertebrates.

No sightings of the Leaf-scaled or Short-nosed Sea Snakes had been recorded at Ashmore Reef since the late 1990's and they were presumed extinct. However with a handful of historic records from coastal Western Australia, we hoped that there might still be undiscovered populations. In 2013, with the help of FNPW, I set out to address major knowledge gaps for true sea snakes in WA and hopefully find these missing sea snakes.

In collaboration with WA Department of Parks and Wildlife (DPaW) and WA Department of Fisheries (DoF), I undertook scuba diving, snorkelling, manta-tows, low tide walks, and created the Australian Sea Snakes national sighting program to document the distribution and connectivity of true sea snakes.

Whilst out on a DoF vessel in Shark Bay in 2013, I was able to capture two little sea snakes. An assessment of their scale shapes and DNA showed that these were the

very special Leaf-scaled Sea Snakes, thought to be extinct. An ongoing collaboration with DoF led to the discovery of a total of 15 Leaf-scaled Sea Snakes, indicating that a breeding population was present.

This discovery is profound, because we get another chance to protect this species that we thought we'd lost. The story becomes even more interesting as these sea snakes were discovered in the lush seagrass beds of subtropical Shark Bay, some 1,400 kms south of the snakes' only known coral habitat on Ashmore Reef.

Finding them in seagrass beds at Shark Bay was a real surprise. Future surveys for Leaf-scaled Sea Snakes will now include seagrass habitats. This will help to get a more realistic sense of where these sea snakes are found. Then we can focus our efforts on protecting the right places and the right habitats from human impacts.

A second extraordinary discovery occurred when DPaW Officer Grant Griffin sent me a photo of a pair of snakes for identification. It turned out that these snakes were the Short-nosed Sea Snake. We were blown away as these potentially extinct snakes were there in plain sight, living on the Ningaloo Reef. What is even more exciting is that they were courting and hopefully producing the next generation of Short-nosed Sea Snakes.

Whilst these findings are exciting, the unexplained local extinctions of several sea snakes species within Marine Reserves demonstrate that reserves alone cannot prevent sea snake extinctions. Thus, further research is required to understand what the key threatening processes are.



The endangered Short-nosed Sea Snakes courting on the Ningaloo Reef. Photo: Grant Griffin.

Gordon TAFE students learning about the cultural history of the Stony Knoll Scrubland. Photo: Greening Australia.

Improving Habitat for Two Threatened Species

FNPW awarded a \$15,525 grant to Greening Australia in 2014 to carry out important habitat restoration for two threatened species—the Corangamite Water Skink and the Growling Grass Frog. The project has now been completed with some very positive results.

The Corangamite Water Skink is endangered and only lives in one location within the Victorian Volcanic Plain. The Growling Grass frog is listed as vulnerable. Its habitat once spread across large areas of south-east Australia, but its numbers have declined significantly.

The Dreeite Nature Conservation Reserve contains large patches of Stony Knoll Shrubland, vital habitat for the Skink and the Growling Grass Frog.

Greening Australia were able to reduce threats from invasive weed species and improve the Stony Knoll vegetation by laying jute matting to help suppress weed regeneration between outcrops of shrubland, leading down towards a wetland area. Invasive weeds, including the Toowoomba Canary Grass, *Phalaris aquatica* and Tall Wheat Grass *Lophopyrum ponticum*, had grown over much of the stony habitat needed by the skinks. The lack of suitable bushes and trees for cover from predators also made them more visible to cats and birds.



A basking Corangamite Water Skink. Photo: Greening Australia.

This project planted 1,500 tubestock of native grasses and groundcover species within and surrounding the matting to connect up existing patches of native vegetation. Once the plants become more established, they will create a wildlife corridor for the skink and frog, giving them greater areas for movement and protection around the wetland system.



The jute matting being used to suppress weeds and helping the new plants grow. Photo: Greening Australia.

Great consideration was taken to not disturb or impact upon any significant known Aboriginal sites or artefacts by liaising with Parks Victoria Ranger in Charge and Aboriginal Heritage Officer. This ensured plantings were undertaken in an appropriate location.

Gordon TAFE Diploma Students in Conservation and Land Management participated in the day of ground works which included planting, laying of jute matting and guarding of plants. They were also taken on a cultural walk and talk conducted by John Clarke, Aboriginal Heritage Officer from Parks Victoria, to engage the students in the significance of the Aboriginal history of the area.

Adverse weather conditions with significantly reduced rainfall, and higher than average temperatures have led to the death of 15% seedlings. Guards were applied to the herbaceous plants, which appear to be surviving with more rigour than the un-guarded plants. Groundcover species such as Nodding Saltbush *Enadla nutans* have adapted better to the dry conditions and are growing well.

Browsing by wallabies has also claimed some of the revegetated plants. To compensate for this there will be some more planting carried out to complement the initial plants. Follow up weeding will also help maintain the area.

FNPW and Greening Australia look forward to seeing the ongoing positive results for the Stony Knoll Shrubland's threatened species.

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION PROJECTS

10-Year-Old Wildlife Photographer

A beautiful close up of the Eastern Water Skink drinking. Photo: McKinley Moens.

10-year-old McKinley Moens recently won a photo competition run by FNPW's environmental education program, Backyard Buddies. We didn't know she was only 10 when we awarded her the prize. Amazing talent in someone so young!

Written by McKinley Moens, Backyard Buddies photo comp winner.



The Blue Mountains is often called the "city within a national park". Being surrounded by the national park, we are lucky to have a wide variety of native animals sharing our garden with us. It was great to win a competition for doing something that I love—wildlife photography.

I find all of our Backyard Buddies fascinating... from bees covered in pollen to our "regulars" like the possums and Satin Bowerbirds that live and breed in our garden, to our seasonal visitors like the Sacred Kingfishers.

We don't keep pets as we prefer animals that are free to come and go as they please. We feel privileged that our native wildlife likes to share our garden and we do our best to maintain a friendly environment for them. We don't have grass, instead we have rocky paths and a lot of native plants, particularly acacia, banksia, grevillea and bottlebrush. We leave water out every day for the birds and the Eastern Water Skinks. We also give the skinks the occasional strawberry as a treat. One of our skinks is quite friendly and seems to enjoy having contact with us, as she always approaches us when we leave water for her.

I would like to be an Ornithologist one day, so birds are my first love. I have participated in the Aussie Backyard Bird Count now for two years and I have identified 28 species that visited our garden during Bird Week. Our garden is somewhat of a bird nursery with Brown Thornbills, Satin Bowerbirds, Eastern Spinebills and Sacred Kingfishers all nesting in our garden.



Left: McKinley's winning shot in the Backyard Buddies competition of a Sacred Kingfisher. Right: her achievements appeared in the Blue Mountains Gazette.



Last year a Satin Bowerbird raised two chicks in our garden. We were often amused watching them as one was very obedient but the other was quite a rascal roaming all over the place when the mother was in search of food. When she returned she would coax it back to the protection of their tree before she would feed it and then he would be off again.

One of the highlights of my day is when the little birds descend upon our garden. The Brown Thornbills, Striated Thornbills, Grey Fantails, Eastern Spinebills, Eastern Yellow Robins and Lewin's Honeyeaters all arrive en masse in a flurry of activity. The trees look like they are crawling with birds.

We went to Europe last year and, as much as I loved Europe, I really missed the sound of the Australian bush. It made me grateful that I can call the beautiful Blue Mountains my home.



A beautiful Satin Bowerbird photo captured by McKinley.

Middle Head Celebration for Plant a Tree for Me?

Volunteers being shown the different native and invasive plants to look out for.

Refugees Lending a Hand In National Parks

Asylum seekers getting stuck into some bush regeneration. Photo: Trina Soulos.

We had a great turn out for our Plant a Tree for Me! event on the 10th December 2015. It was a wonderful way to celebrate our 45th year and to acknowledge our philanthropic and corporate supporters, and the regular volunteers who help out across the Sydney Harbour National Park.

The day also celebrated Community and Philanthropy Partnerships Week 2015 (CPPW)—an initiative supported through the Prime Minister's Community Business Partnership. It's important to celebrate our achievements and we would like to thank the Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal (FRRR) for providing the grant to support FNPW with our CPPW event and to produce a short video highlighting the days efforts. Check out our video at www.fnpw.org.au/PATFM-video.

Leon Burchill, NPWS Field Officer wowed the crowd with a mesmerizing didgeridoo performance. He also conducted an Acknowledgment of Country to show our respect to the local Aboriginal culture and heritage and the ongoing relationship traditional owners have with their land.

60 corporate and local volunteers from six companies provided over 350 volunteer hours of bush regeneration including weeding, cultural heritage restoration and



Volunteers from BNP Paribas having fun after their hard day's work.



A cicada shell discovery while weeding. There was also a curious Kookaburra looking for insects being dug up by the volunteers.

planting out 300 native seedlings on the day. The afternoon saw a further 70 regular volunteers from various community groups who give their time to Sydney Harbour National Park come along and enjoy a BBQ and Christmas drinks. These amazing volunteers contributed to over 4,000 hours of volunteering last year.

We would like to thank FNPW Board Member David Pumphrey for coming along and the corporate teams from Qantas, Marsh Australia, PwC, Grant Thornton, Zurich and BNP Paribas. We are proud to support the work of NSW National Parks & Wildlife Service (NPWS), and the regular volunteers and look forward to another 45 years of working with our partners in nature.

Many hands made the job easier as volunteers teamed up to help restore this unique bushland park and further the cultural heritage work that has been undertaken here over the last seven years.

It was a great day that allowed us to celebrate our corporate supporters and volunteers, and to remind everyone why our National Parks are so important.

If you would like to support our Plant a Tree from Me! initiative, please visit our new campaign website: www.plantatreeforme.org.au.

FNPW worked with NSW National Parks & Wildlife Service and Settlement Services International (SSI), the largest not-for-profit humanitarian settlement organisation in Australia, to fund a pilot project with refugees. This project demonstrated an innovative and effective way of engaging a group of recent migrants, refugees and asylum seekers within our National Parks.

New South Wales has the largest number of refugees and asylum seekers in the country. In particular, Western Sydney is home to a diverse range of refugees and newly arrived migrants. Refugee and humanitarian entrants face many specific barriers in the community.

Some of the challenges they face include finding affordable accommodation, acquiring English language skills, finding employment, accessing affordable childcare, meeting with members of the community and many more.



The group getting a tour of the area from one of the local rangers.

This project provided a pathway for the participants to more easily integrate into the wider community, supported the development of new skills, cross-cultural exchange, and the opportunity for the group to undertake important environmental volunteer work. Research has shown that refugees, once they have the opportunity to establish themselves, make important economic, civil and social contributions to Australian society.

The pilot program, which started as a 12-week project, was extended for several weeks as volunteers developed



Some of the asylum seekers helping out at the Sydney Harbour National Park. Photo: Trina Soulos.

a strong relationship with staff from the NSW National Parks & Wildlife Services. Together, volunteers, Field Officers, and Rangers took part in weeding, planting native species, carpentry work and the repainting of an historic fort. Notably, everyone who took part in the project developed a strong connection and shared sense of purpose over the course of the program.

Shukrullah, a refugee from Afghanistan said, "I like coming here because if I stay at home the whole day I think too much and I feel too stressed. Here you get to meet new friends and spend the whole day in a nice place."

Sydney Harbour National Park Ranger, Mel Tyas spoke as she presented certificates to the volunteers at the end of the project, "The results are excellent and we are happy to say that you have been the best volunteering group we've had at the park."

"You have worked hard on this land and now it belongs to you too," she added. "Please come back whenever you want, we hope to see you soon again."

This program has helped create new opportunities, break down barriers and support positive contribution to the Australian environment by people that want to call Australia home.

For further information or to support the next group please visit: www.fnpw.org.au/refugeevolunteers.



Community and Fundraising Events

Baring all for charity in the Sydney Skinny. Reckon you've got what it takes to swim next year? Photo: Felicity Harvey.

FNPW Partners & Supporters



STRATHCONA GIRLS GRAMMAR

The Strathcona Baptist Girls Grammar School in Melbourne generously held a "Green" fundraising day to raise money for FNPW. The Green Day centred around environmental games and activities like pin the leaf on the tree. These fabulous girls raised \$625 for FNPW!



Some of the "Green Team" from Strathcona Girls who held a wonderful fundraising day for FNPW. Photo: Penny Allen.

HOLLOWS FOR HABITAT

Two team members from FNPW, Melanie Wagner and Felicity Harvey, recently attended a forum on tree hollow habitats for native animals. The Hunter Local Land Services and the Greater Sydney Local Land Services organised the day and had several keynote speakers discuss their research and information on best practice for hollow habitat creation. This knowledge will enrich the Backyard Buddies environmental education program.



SYDNEY SKINNY

This year's 4th annual Sydney Skinny raised over \$7,500 for FNPW! We had fundraisers raising money through our Everyday Hero page, as well as a sizzling sausage sizzle, raffle draw and a generous donation from Nudie. Paul West from 'River Cottage Australia' was there on the day to lend a hand and did a live cross to the Channel 7 'Sunrise' weather with a goanna on his head from Australian Wildlife Displays! We had two staff members, Felicity Harvey and Jennie Morgan take the plunge and go in the swim for FNPW. It was a great, positive day for everyone involved.



Australian Wildlife Displays with their animals and Paul West accepting the cheque on behalf of FNPW from Nudie.

RECENT & UPCOMING EVENTS

APRIL	
16-24th	Australian Heritage Week
18th	World Heritage Day
22nd	Earth Day
MAY	
8th	Mother's Day
9th-15th	National Volunteer's Week
23rd	World Turtle Day
26th	National Sorry Day

Thank you Supporters

JANUARY - MARCH 2016

Individual Donations of \$500+

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- Sue Maple-Brown • John C H Lawes
- S Baillieu Myer AC • Fred Mayer
- Denise Walters • Doug Paisley
- Michael Crouch • Philip Curry
- Mr and Mrs Ralph Harris
- Sandra Grollmus • Patrick Medley
- Trevor Pound • Mary-Louise Williams

Welcome to our new Regular Givers

- Elizabeth Keen • Evan L Jones
- April Hill • Georgina San Roque
- Janice Baxter • Dot Moller

Corporate, Government & Not-for-Profit Support

- Beswick Family Fund • NSW Environmental Trust
- Stuart Alexander & Co • Peninsula Hot Springs
- Nudie Foods • Desert Channels Group
- Local Land Services

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Foundation for National Parks & Wildlife

The Foundation for National Parks & Wildlife is a non-government organisation. It is an apolitical, independent, not-for-profit constituted to grow appreciation of and raise funds for the benefit of Australia's natural and cultural heritage.

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