



Spinulosa

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Newsletter of *Montrose Environmental Group Inc.*

MEG Website: www.meg.org.au Regn. No. A0018558J

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Letter from the editor

The wildflowers have put on a lovely display this year and a hot dry summer is on its way. I hope you got a chance to appreciate the wildflowers this season, but if not there are plenty of plants still in bloom.

As you are probably aware, I have now stepped down as President of the Montrose Environmental Group after five years in that role, and two years prior as a committee member. I will remain the editor of *Spinulosa* for the next year or so until we are able to find a replacement. If you would be interested in taking this role on we'd really like to hear from you.

Over the past seven years, my time on the MEG committee has been filled with fantastic events ranging from guided nature walks, education sessions, interactive activities for kids, and planting and weeding working bees. I've met some incredible people with a wealth of knowledge and enthusiastic passion for protecting the environment and natural bushland amenity of the Montrose area.

I'd like to extend a very big thank you to all the people who have helped me on my journey with MEG. Without you I wouldn't have enjoyed my time on the committee as much as I have and we wouldn't have been able to make such a positive impact.

Fiona Sutton.

AGM with Bruce Fuhrer

On 5 September we enjoyed our Annual General Meeting with guest speaker Bruce Fuhrer, mycologist extraordinaire. His spectacular photographs captivated the crowd of around 38 attendees. A minor technical difficulty in the way of a faulty projector cable at the Town Centre was quickly overcome thanks to the help and initiative of Graeme Lorimer.

Bruce's slideshow illustrated the wide variety of shapes and colours that fungi come in, from white to purples and bright reds and oranges. The patterning in some of the bracket fungi was absolutely spectacular.

He included fascinating stories of his experiences which included the night he discovered a mushroom that glows in the dark. His photos really illustrated how much its bioluminescence could light up a room.

Bruce's wit, and award-winning photographs really made for an entertaining presentation, one many of us will not soon forget.

A brief AGM followed Bruce's presentation and many people stayed on to join us for lunch. It was fantastic to meet some new people and catch up with old friends. Thanks must go to all those who contributed to organising the event and for the donations made to MEG that will help fund the group's future work.

Welcome Bron and Karen

Following our AGM in early September, MEG welcomes two new office bearers, Karen Davies (Treasurer) and Bron Gwyther (Vice-President).

Karen joined the Friends of Bungalook in 2011 in order to protect and learn more about local bushland reserves. She has studied Conservation and Land Management and is also involved with the Knox Environment Society and Minak Reserve in Selby. Her favourite native plant is the Rough Bush Pea (*Pultenea scabra*). Karen works as a Vet nurse and her 2 dogs (a scottie and a mixed terrier) are an important part of her life.

Bron joined MEG in 2013 after hearing of the group's good work through her (then) role as an Environmental Land Management Officer for Melbourne Water. She has a background in environmental science and currently works as a river health consultant. Her favourite native plant is Cherry Ballart (*Exocarpos cupressiformis*) and her favourite local place is the little patch of bush around Montrose reservoir (Bretby Way).

Bron and Karen have been working with the committee for several months and are both keen to make this a great year of events and advocacy for MEG.



Photo:
Andy
Drewitt

Exhibition: A Crafted History

Don't forget the art exhibition featured in the winter

Spinulosa has opened and will continue until 9 January 2016. Penelope Aitkens, who has joined the Friends of Bungalook Conservation Reserves working bees to learn more about Swamp Everlasting, will have her paintings on display

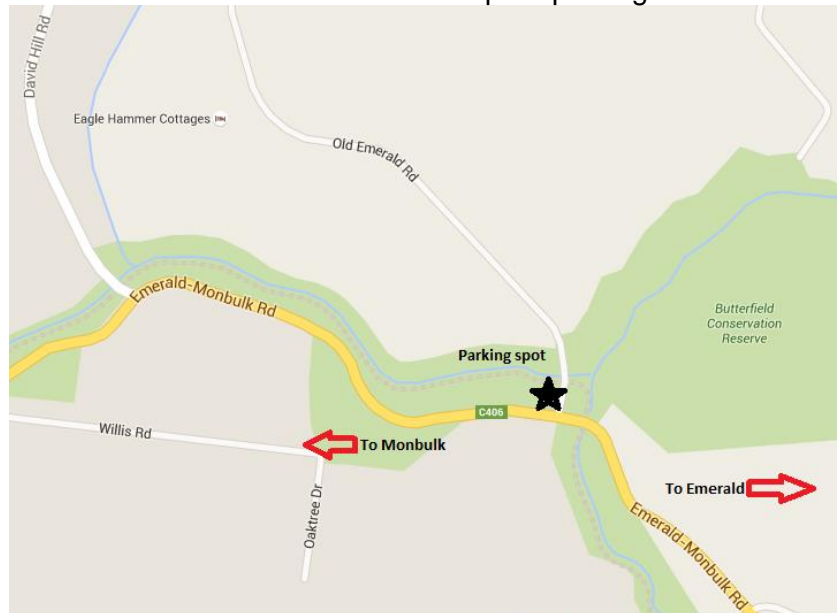
When: 29 October 2015 – 9 January 2016

Where: ArtsSpace@ Realm, 177 Maroondah Highway Ringwood 3134

<http://www.artsinmaroondah.com.au/MaroondahArtGallery.aspx>

Spring Bird Survey

The Spring Bird survey will be held on Sunday **15 November** at **2:30 pm** until approximately 4 pm. The walk will be led by Ken Harris who has requested an excursion to **Butterfield Conservation Reserve**, corner Old Emerald Road and Monbulk-Emerald Road, Monbulk. The reserve is known for having a large diversity of bird species and the walk will be on easy terrain. Just 25 minutes from Montrose. We know it's a little drive away, but we hope you'll agree that it will be well worth the trip and a great opportunity to explore further areas of our beautiful corner of the world. See map for parking.



Christmas Party

The MEG Christmas Party will be on Saturday **12 December**, **12 noon** at the gazebo and picnic area in **Wicks Reserve**, The Basin. A car park is available via Basin-Olinda Road.

BYO Picnic lunch for yourself and/or to share. Barbeques are available. Depending on park utilisation on the day, seating may be limited so bring a chair as a backup if you'd like one.

Friends of Bungalook Conservation Reserves will be at their monthly working bee from 9:30 am – 12 noon that day before making their way down the road to Wicks Reserve. Feel free to come along to the working bee and picnic for a productive and social end to the year.

Annual Summary

July 2014 – June 2015

After farewelling Kim Wormald and welcoming Bernard Heinze to the committee at last years AGM, the committee for the past year comprised four active members (Fiona Sutton, John Venn, Marcus Wills-Cooke and Bernard Heinze) and two support members (Vanessa Marrama and Annette Muir).

MEG has made a big contribution over the past year holding a variety of events and advocating for the environment. The committee occasionally distributed the MEG brochure to the library and local shops around Montrose in a hope of attracting new members. As of June 2015, MEG had 48 financial memberships either as life members, groups, families or singles (three less than the same time last year).

Events and happenings over the last financial year are as follows.

AGM August 2014

The AGM was a great success last year, held on 31 August. Special guests Jean and David Edwards had attendees enthralled with their slideshow presentation. Earlier that year they were honored as Yarra Ranges Shire Council's Environmental Achievers of the Year.

David and Jean began by giving a history of their environmental activities which started in the 1970's as members of the Montrose Environmental Group. Many familiar names were mentioned of environmentally-minded people, past and present.

The slide show continued onto their amazing home, which was built in the 1970's using sustainable design and resource principles. Their garden includes a large veggie patch and an even larger bush block that they have cared for and improved the quality of.

Finally they discussed their work on the Mt Evelyn Aqueduct. A large portion of their lives has been volunteered to advocate for the protection of the reserve and

undertake management to protect and enhance its ecological values.

The presentation by the Edwards was then followed by the brief AGM and lunch allowing members to catch up and meet new people.

Spring Bird Walk, Chelodina Festival and Christmas Party

MEG was asked to hold a stall at the Chelodina Festival on 7 December. As the festival fell on the weekend we usually try to hold our Christmas party and our resources were wearing thin for the Bird Survey, we decided to join the events together.

The Chelodina Festival was held by the Yarra Ranges Council and Friends of Elizabeth Bridge Reserve. Despite the rain, there were many people at the event, mostly involved in the music performances that dominated the day.

Around 10 people attended the bird survey that was led by Jonathon Ricciardello, a Zoologist with Ecology Australia (flora and fauna consultants). The waterbirds put on a lovely display for the small group who enjoyed close viewing as they grazed and paddled. Other interesting facts about plants and wetland ecology were discussed to give a more holistic appreciate of the reserve.

We had a delicious spread of food to share, including one of my favorites... Cherries! It was very fulfilling to reflect on the achievements the group had made over the past year.

Kevin & Jill Heinze People's Garden working bee

Roger and Barbara Rooks have been maintaining MEGs native garden at the Kevin and Jill Heinze People's Garden. In fact they've been maintaining it so well that it was decided a working bee was not necessary this year. We are hoping to be able to put a sign up to identify MEG's area and help promote the group.

A big thank you must go to Roger and Barbara for all their hard work.

Friends of Bungalook Conservation Reserves Update

This update was written by Graeme Lorimer, the coordinator of the group

The Friends of Bungalook Conservation Reserves had eleven working bees during the past year, averaging 5-6 people and representing about 200 person-hours. Over 100 hours was also spent outside working bees, particularly organising burns and tending spider-orchids. The reserve's habitat for flora and fauna continues to improve. There has been good regeneration following burns in March 2012 and March 2014, including some rare species that had died out apart from seeds in the soil.

We are hoping that the 2014 fire stimulated germination of new plants of the Kilsyth South Spider-orchid, in which case we might detect them when flowering this spring or next. Currently, the known wild population remains at three. There are also four plants in pots that germinated at the Royal Botanic Gardens in late 2013 (a big milestone, surviving to this stage) and a batch of tiny seedlings that have just been taken out of their sterile germination flask.

A new issue has emerged in recent months. Melbourne Water wishes to completely clear the retarding basin embankment (including some extremely rare plants) and keep it covered with mown grass. It's not clear why this is necessary but the impact would be enormous. It looks like the new MEG committee will have some persuading to do regarding this matter.

The group was also awarded a grant from the Port Phillip and Westernport CMA. As a result \$22,400 is now available to undertake two ecological burns which have the added bonus of reducing fuel loads.

Friends of Heathfield Creek Update

This update has been written by Claire Thomas, the coordinator of the group.

We are definitely making a difference, now half way through our 13th year of weeding determinedly. We were rewarded in March

this year when a juvenile echidna was spotted in the Reserve. Our youngsters were excited to see their distinct scratchings in the earth.

We are beginning to find areas, that once filled with ivy and honey suckle and /or blackberry and angled onion are now only requiring spot weeding, mostly ivy seedlings brought in by bird droppings.

These same areas are regrowing indigenous vegetation, which supports the theory that if we carefully restore the higher quality areas the bush will come back by itself.

We are still having big flushes of yellow buttercup in the secondary waterways.

With so much rain of late and the ground so soft underfoot, tackling this without causing erosion is a problem so we're waiting for drier conditions.

We are really keen to get new members with an abundance of energy and a passion for the natural environment to help us take on some of our more challenging areas.

The SYR is using our site as one of their survey points to monitor impacts of climate change on indigenous flora.

SYR, Melbourne Water and contractors from Eco Repair continue to provide valuable resources and support to assist our work at the Reserve.

Looking forward to spring! Best wishes everyone,

Claire Thomas, Coordinator FOHC

Website

Andrew Lorimer has just commenced the process of upgrading our website. Upgrading the site content will be one of the main projects for the coming year. If you have any comments on the current website, we'd greatly appreciate them ASAP so we can incorporate any changes into the new design. Visit www.meg.org.au to view the current website.

Spinulosa

Spinulosa continues to be produced each quarter and has featured updates on past

and upcoming events, and articles of interest.

Kim Wormald continues to fascinate us in each newsletter with her incredible photographs of birds and seemingly infinite wealth of avian knowledge. Her Lirra Lirra blog has many more articles and beautiful photographs so go to www.lirralirra.com if you'd like to check it out.

Thanks must go to the Council for printing the newsletter for our members who prefer to receive a paper copy, and also Annette Muir who has been responsible for the mailing out.



Boral Quarry

It was noticed that a group of trees were cleared at the Kilsyth Quarry. To ensure that the clearing was undertaken with appropriate approvals, MEG contacted the Yarra Ranges Council and Councillor Len Cox. It was determined that the clearing was legal so no further action was necessary.

No other action occurred last year but that they've recently sent out a survey request that we encouraged people to respond to.

Walkabout Montrose

Walkabout Montrose is still on sale in a number of locations around Montrose

including Montrose Post Office, Montrose Meats and Kurunga Native Nursery. As with previous years, sales have slowed, as would be expected.

Yarra Ranges Shire Draft Environment Strategy Submission

MEG made a submission to the Yarra Ranges regarding their Draft Environment Strategy. On the whole we were generally pleased with the broad and strategic document but felt that the lack of specific targets/actions can lead to inaction. Our submission included some recommendations for minor changes that provide more specific targets. It also acknowledged that the Strategy addressed climate change in more of an adaptation manner, with less focus on reducing emissions which we consider unsatisfactory.

Wildlife Camera

Graeme Lorimer purchased a wildlife camera on behalf of MEG. It is currently having technical issues and will hopefully be back up and running soon.

Other matters

A big thank you must also go to Len Cox for covering the cost of the venue for our AGM and officiating at

the election of office bearers.

Also a big thank you to the Yarra Ranges Shire Council, particularly Sarah Fowler, Jess Bailee and their colleagues in the environment department. They have supported MEG throughout the year, have helped organise some of our events and have kindly printed our newsletters, fliers and other material.

And most importantly a very big thank you to our Members. Thank you for renewing your membership subscriptions each year and for contributing donations. Without your support our group wouldn't exist, so thank you.

Membership Renewal

Thank you very much to those of you who have renewed their MEG memberships. We really appreciate your continued support - without you, our group won't exist.

If you haven't already renewed your membership, we urge you to do so. By renewing your membership you will:

- receive MEG's "Spinulosa" newsletter four times a year;
- be kept up to date on local environmental issues;

- receive reminders of upcoming events you may be interested in; and
- increase the advocacy of the group.

You don't need to participate in the events organised by MEG – a silent membership will keep you informed of local issues and increase the vocal power of MEG.

We really hope you'll renew your membership so we can work together to protect and enhance the natural environment and amenity of Montrose and surrounds.

Upcoming Events

Spring Bird Survey

Ornithologist guide: Ken Harris

When: Sunday 15 November 2015, 2:30 pm to approximately 4 pm.

Where: Butterfield Conservation Reserve, corner Old Emerald Road and Monbulk-Emerald Road, Monbulk.

BYO: Sunscreen, binoculars and bird identification book (not essential).

See page 2 for more details.

MEG Christmas Party

Come join us for a picnic and social catch up.

When: Saturday 12 December 2015, 12pm.

Where: Wicks Reserve. Enter from Basin-Olinda Road, The Basin.

BYO: Picnic lunch, drinks, chair, sunscreen.

See page 2 for details.

Friends of Bungalook Conservation Reserves

Meet 9:30 am, 2nd Saturday of the month. Meet at the end of Ormond Place, Kilsyth. Contact Graeme Lorimer after hours for details on 8711 3474.

14 Nov, 12 Dec 2015, 13 Feb, 12 March 2016

Friends of Heathfield Creek Reserve

Meet 10am, last Sunday of the month. Meet on Belvedere Drive near Richards Road. Contact Claire Thomas 9728 2290.

29 Nov 2015, 28 Feb, 27 March 2016.

Thompsons Road Area Community Fireguard and Landcare Group (TRAC)

Meet 9:30 am, 1st Saturday of the month, at the corner of Old Coach Road and Browns Road, Montrose (or wherever the sign there directs you). Contact Chris Morgan 0438569251 or Farida Mackrell 97619334

7 Nov, 5 Dec 2015, 6 Feb, 5 March 2016

Spinulosa Newsletter Enclosed from the Montrose Environmental Group Inc.

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