



FoCC Incorporated Spikey News



Linking the community with Woookarung and the Canadian Corridor
April 2023 Issue Number 98

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1. Friends of Canadian Corridor Incorporated

Present

Guest Speaker – Professor Susan Lawrence

La Trobe University,
Department of Archaeology and History, Melbourne,
Australia

“Water races and sluice fields”

7pm Wednesday May 17th

At the Eureka Centre, Stawell St,
Eureka

The Woookarung Regional Park is home to a large number of alluvial gold mining sites, mineshafts and adits, water races, dams, and sluice fields, all associated with mining. The relics have remained relatively untouched and unknown to mining historians. Ballarat East and Woookarung Regional Park has 30 kilometres of water races, 7 sluice fields, 4 dams and associated water races, supplying water to local quartz crushers and to the Sebastopol Whitehorse diggings via the Mt Helen Reservoir.

Professor Susan Lawrence of La Trobe University, Department of Archaeology and History, Melbourne, is the co-author of the book "Sludge", the story of how gold mining impacted on Victoria's waterways. Susan will be talking about how the water races began, how they were constructed, by whom and when, and how the goldfields water races set the rules and scene for irrigation water licensing relevant to this day.

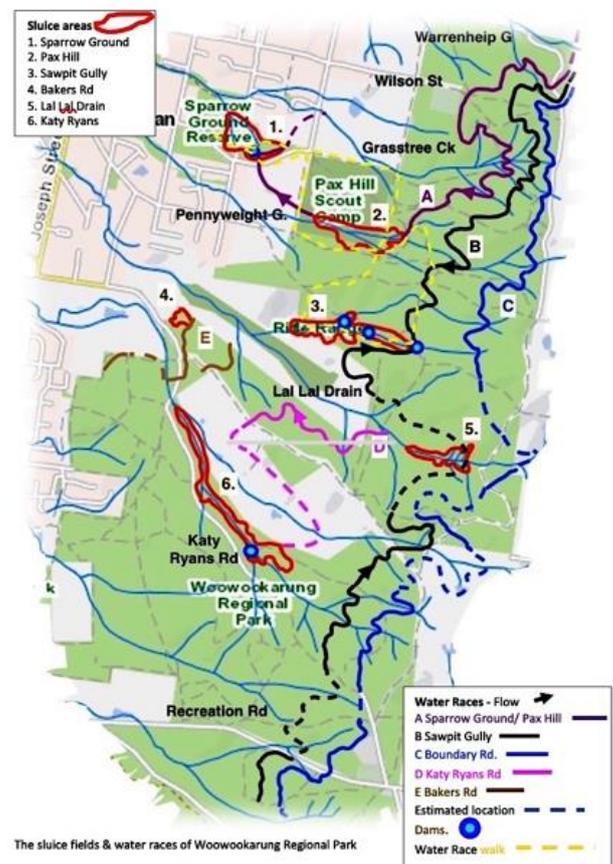
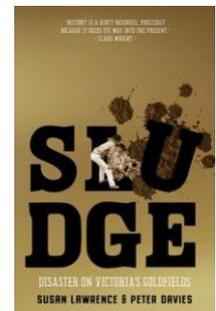
Tickets

This event is ticketed, free, however bookings are required. Donations are welcome and can be made here or on the day.

Tickets are available from Try Booking at:

<https://www.trybooking.com/CHXZH>

This event is proudly supported by the Parks Victoria Volunteer Growth Fund.



FoCC water race map image 2022

2. Mining Water Race walk

Woookarung Regional Park water races,
diggings and sluice field pop up walk.

Venue: Sparrow Ground Rotunda, Spencer St,
Canadian

10am to 4pm May 20th 2023

10am to 4pm May 21st 2023

The trail is well sign posted and has information boards at mining sites in Woookarung Regional Park.

Simply turn up and FoCC personnel will be at Sparrow Ground to provide advice and assistance.

The walk is 5.6 km (2 hours approx) along gravel roads and undulating bush tracks. Walkers are urged to wear solid footwear, warm clothing and carry water and food if required. There are no facilities along the trail.

A walk booklet will be available at the start. The booklet and the provision of information signage along the walk has been gratefully provided by a Community Support grant from Central Highlands Water.

Gold coin donations welcomed.

More info: focinfo@gmail.com



FoCC walk map 2022



This walk and signage is proudly sponsored by Central Highlands Water.

3. FoCC General Meeting – “Recording flora and fauna”

A general meeting and workshop on how to record flora and fauna observations and input into I Naturalist and the

Victorian Bio Atlas, was held at 7pm on April 26th at Earth Ed Centre, Olympic Avenue, Mt Clear.

The well attended meeting discussed the purpose and how to monitor and record flora and fauna.

Many thanks to our three presenters:

Joel Ellis – explaining the value of spotting and recording flora and fauna on the online medium “I Naturalist”.

Jackson Cass – Outlining the CSIRO four-year koala local monitoring program which began in February this year.

Siobhan Heenan – explaining her new Koala DNA study which is now underway. See the next article below.

A very informative evening with all our guest presenters being under 30 years old.

4. Koala scat collecting research program

"Koala spotters Wanted!"

Can you help Siobhan collect Koala scat across Ballarat?

There is currently amazing work being done in the Gippsland region of Victoria with profiling koala populations and learning about their genetic diversity. We are trying to find remnant indigenous populations of koalas that will be essential for the conservation of the species!

In an effort to find these groups, they are extending their search to Western Victoria and we are calling on citizen scientists to help!

Siobhan is attempting to find Koalas around Ballarat in the hopes of collecting some scat (poo!) for DNA analysis. If you spot a koala anywhere in the Ballarat region and surrounds it would be amazing if you could let her know!

Scat is best collected by tweezer or tooth pick. Human handling can damage the DNA.

Siobhan is hoping koala spotters will call her and arrange for a collection.

Contact Siobhan on:

siobhanheenan@students.federation.edu.au or her mobile - 0437420865"



Collected in the safest possible way to avoid contamination.

Koala scat 15th April, Cnr Boundary Rd and Greenhill Rd.

Image courtesy Siobhan April 15th 2023.

The location of any koala scat found will be recorded on the FoCC Koala spotting record as well.

Siobhan is in her third year of studies at Federation University (Bachelor of Environmental and Conservation Science). Siobhan is undertaking a research project focussing on the collection of koala scat for DNA analysis. The research is to compare DNA samples from the Mornington Peninsula area and other Gippsland populations. The idea behind the work is to expand on the collected data with samples from Western Victoria. Many populations of koalas in Victoria are descendants of translocations from French and Phillip Islands and have significantly low levels of genetic diversity.

5. The “Bunny Trail” at the Recreation Rd Bushland Reserve

The installation of the bridge and trail approaches on the “Bunny Trail” on the old Ballarat to Buninyong Railway at Mt Clear has now been completed.



The installed bridge and safety rails. Image: April 4th 2023.

Ballarat based engineering contractors, Lloyds Engineering constructed the bridge and installed it, right beside the original 1889 wooden bridge on the trail. The bridge was funded with a \$34000 grant from the Community Bank of Buninyong Community Investment Program.

The opportunity to extend the “Bunny Trail” to Mt Clear occurred when a small bush block with 300 metres of old rail embankment and a bridge, was put up for auction by the Victoria Government in October 2019. Successful representation to local member Michaela Settle MP by the Friends of Canadian Corridor about the possibility of having the rail embankment as a rail trail, saw the auction postponed.

The Friends developed a comprehensive “Bunny Trail” plan and worked with the City of Ballarat to purchase the land for community use.

Similar discussions were undertaken with Community Bank of Buninyong to fund the trails biggest repair item, the

bridge. The plan opted to place a new bridge beside the old bridge thus maintaining the heritage values inherent in the 1889 bridge works.

April 4th working bee

Was held 9am to 11 am on Tuesday April 4th at Recreation Rd to complete the installation of bollards and safety barriers plus tidying up of pine saplings, logs and trail preparation.



Bob and Bernie installing the safety rails. Image: April 4th 2023

The Community Bank Buninyong gifted the FoCC a set of “Community Gold” gift cards to give away to friends participating in FoCC activities. Volunteers at the April 4th FoCC Working Bee at Recreation Rd received “Community Gold” cards. We thank the Buninyong Community Bank for supporting this project.



FoCC volunteers with “Community Gold’ card. Image: April 4th 2023



Note: The “Bunny Trail’ bridge and trail on the Recreation Rd Bushland Reserve was funded by the “Community Bank Buninyong” Community Investment Program.

April 19th working bee

A “Replas” recycled plastic table, bike hanging rack, information signs and earthworks for the rest spot at the trail entrance is being funded by a Victorian Government “Living Local” grant awarded in 2022. The base for the table was installed on April 19th 2023.



Bob and Hayley smoothing off the table's concrete base. Image: April 19th 2023.



Earthworks at the trail entrance. Image: April 18th 2023

6. **Bird of the Month XIX (April 2023)**

Common Bronzewing (*Phaps chalcoptera*)

Did you know, in Australia, there are 22 native Australian pigeon/dove species? The local representatives in Ballarat total three: the Crested Pigeon, Common Bronzewing, and Brush Bronzewing. As a common inhabitant of Woowookarung Regional Park, and other forests, the Common Bronzewing is most befitting of this month's BotM focal species!

Many locals would have encountered the Common Bronzewing – perhaps in their backyard/garden, streetscapes, or ‘Wookie’ Park itself. But have you taken a closer look at the iridescent greens, bronze, blues, purples, and reds on its wings? Pastel tones of greyish pink on the neck/breast, white eye shadow, pink feet, and (in the male) yellow cap/forehead and purple crown – all add up to an understated yet stylish package! Males and females have subtle but noticeable differences, with males having richer tones than the duller females.



Adult male Common Bronzewing. Image credit: Indra Bone.



Adult female Common Bronzewing. Image credit: Rob Loveband

Widely distributed across the continent, where it is endemic; Common Bronzewings, in the Ballarat context inhabit forests, woodlands, and acacia thickets. The species is common, and sedentary (i.e. non-migratory, present year-round) or locally nomadic.

The species occurs solitarily, in pairs, or small parties. Common Bronzewings feed on seeds/grain, and may congregate underneath seeding wattles. Wary in disposition, when startled, Common Bronzewings ‘flush’ (i.e. flush = take flight suddenly) with a clatter and audible wing whistles.

Common Bronzewings breed all-year round if conditions suit, but otherwise predominately July–January. The nest is an underwhelming dish of twigs/sticks, supporting clutches of two eggs. Nest sites vary from low down to 20m high. Alternatively, disused nests of magpies, ravens or coughts may be adopted. Both parents share incubation and feeding duties. Hatchlings are naked, and young are fed a special milk-like substance produced in the crop (i.e. crop = a pouch-like digestive organ in the lower throat).

The vocalisations of the Common Bronzewing have been described as a ‘slow, resonant “who”’ or ‘monotonous “oom”’. They also have a display call of ‘short, soft “who-, hoo-hoo”’. Low-pitched humming is how this columnist would best describe the call. Head-bobbing while perched

is a characterful idiosyncrasy that may endear bronzewings to onlookers.

Next time you wander through Woowookarung Regional Park, or another bushland patch, don't forget to look and listen out for the humming call, wing whistles, head-bobbing, and beautiful iridescent flare of the Common Bronzewing!

Author note: FoCC Committee member and co-admin of FoCC's Facebook and webpage, Joel Ellis is the resident bird nerd, amateur Powerful Owl researcher, and editor of FoCC's (co-funded) 'Indigenous [Species] of Southern Ballarat' trilogy of brochures. Joel has studied birds up to Honours degree level, interns as an ecological consultant (ornithologist), and is a member of BirdLife Australia (Ballarat branch).

7. Park Works

Parks Victoria have been busy during autumn upgrading facilities, repairing damaged areas and closing 4WD tracks around the Red Hill and Grasree Creek area.

The works are part of the Fern Loop and Cherry Ballart Trails development in the north of the Park.



Bollards and fencing on Red Hill. Image: April 15th 2023.



4WD eroded track on Red Hill. Image: April 15th 2023



Restoration ground works on top of Red Hill. Local tree and ground cover seed was collected within the Park and spread under the installed matting to promote regrowth.

Image: April 15th 2023

Stepping stones on the Cherry Ballart Trail.

Parks Victoria contractors have installed an innovative crossing on Grass Tree Creek just east of Pax Hill. The crossing makes the trail an all-seasons trail by avoiding what used to be, a big winter bog hole.



Grasree Creek crossing. Image: April 1st 2023



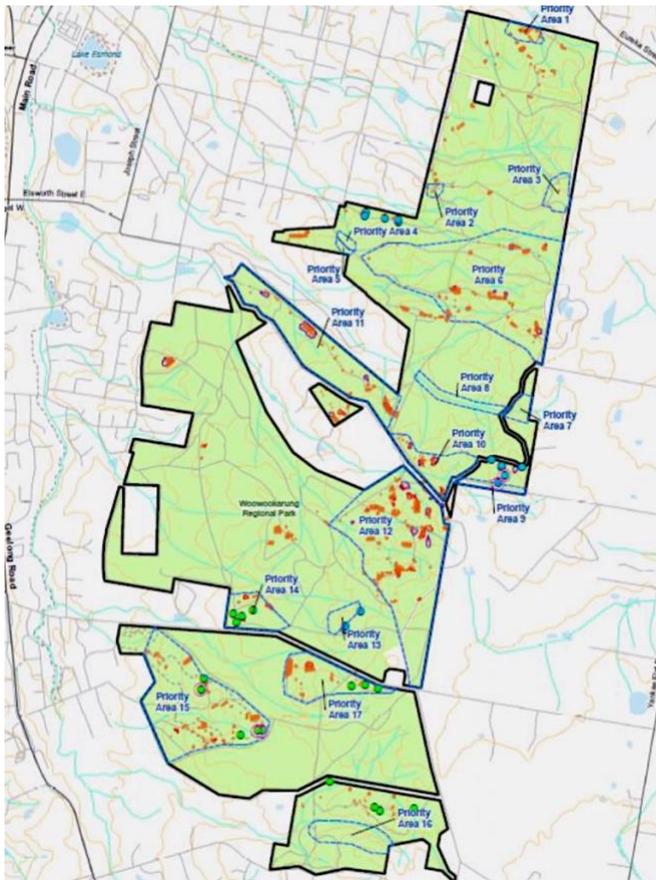
Parks Victoria's new North entrance to the "Bunny Trail" at the Recreation Rd Bushland Reserve. Image: April 24th 2023

Phytophthora and trail works fact sheets

Two fact sheets are now online at:

<https://www.parks.vic.gov.au/places-to-see/parks/woowookarung-regional-park>

The Phytophthora fact sheet has a map outlining the extent of phytophthora (dieback) in grasstrees in the Park.



The phytophthora areas are the red areas on the Map above. Grasstrees affected by Phytophthora (dieback) are evident this year in many parts of the Park.

If you see a grass tree that has turned brown or is on the way to turning brown, that will be Phytophthora (dieback). The disease has been confirmed by testing (see March Spikey News). There is some debate as to whether the spread this year has been assisted by the three wet years in succession. The disease travels via water or wet soil.

8. Specimen Vale Group

Working bees will be held on:

Thursday 11 May

Thursday 25 May

Fortnightly, beginning around 9.30 am, all along the Vale between King St South and Princes St.

We are 'lovingly' working on tucking plants in with a thick blanket of mulch to protect against the forecast 50% chance of El Niño later in the year! And we hope to start planting towards the end of May ... on the advice of Lloyd from the Community Plant Nursery.

More info:

Ellen Scott millie.newington@hotmail.com

Merrie Harvey merrieharvey@gmail.com

9. Koala sightings

October to March is Koala breeding season and peak sightings season, so sightings tend to be less now. They are still there, just harder to spot.

If you see, hear or find scat from a Koala, please send the information containing the when, where, and how to:

focinfo@gmail.com.

Also, see article 4 above and contact Siobhan:

siobhanheenan@students.federation.edu.au or her mobile - 0437420865"



Koala on the south side of Recreation Rd April 2nd 2023. Image courtesy Peter



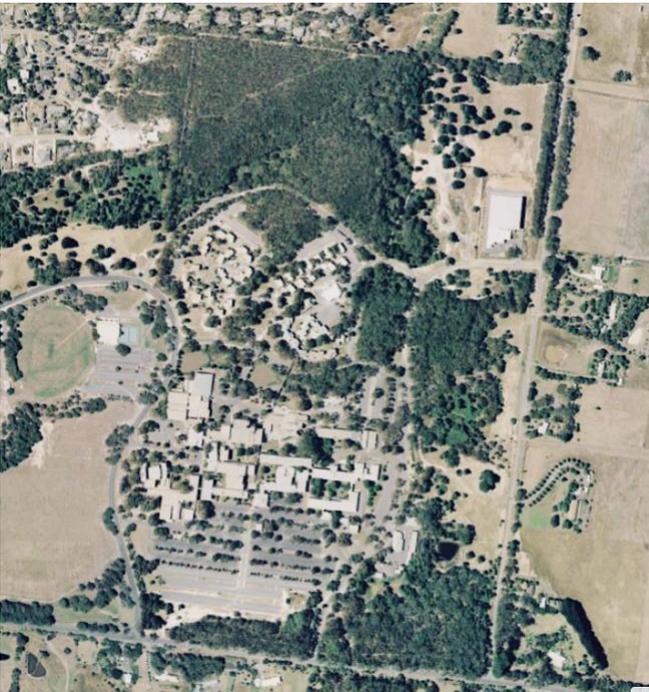
Blackberry Lane Mt Buninyong. Image: Courtesy of Elva, April 8th 2023

10. The changing landscape at Federation University

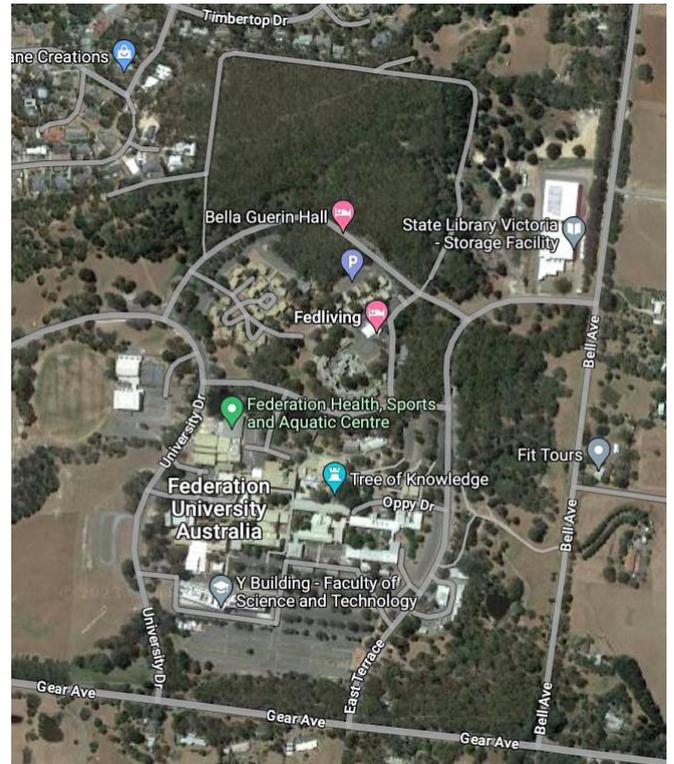
Federation University is located in a leafy forested place. The University grounds are an important part of the Canadian Corridor linking Woowookarung Regional Park to Union Jack Reserve and beyond. The FoCC receives regular Koala reports from the University grounds. However, it was not always a leafy forested site. The aerial images below tell the story over time.



First buildings in a very bare landscape at Mt Helen. Image: 1970



The Universities forested grounds are developing well in 2007. Image: Courtesy CCMA NRM portal.



And today the forested grounds have thickened considerably. Image: Courtesy Google. The Federation track runs around the perimeter of the University and the walk is well worth it. Look out for the original old trees along the track near the East Terrace area. Seed from those trees has created a new forest.

11. Big Pond issues

Spikey News is sent to nearly 1100 subscribers. Every issue has some rejections by recipient's mail boxes. Big Pond customers have the most problems with the usual feedback being "Too much google spam" in the mail box. If you are a Big Pond customer and are only getting occasional Spikey News issues, the problem may lay with how much spam is sitting in your account. The FoCC does resend rejected messages but the problem can be persistent.

12. Busy time on the Dementia Friendly Forest and Sensory Trail

The trail was a very busy place at the Easter and Anzac weekends with over 1000 visitors recorded. Note: Easter numbers were lower due to wet and cold weather whilst the Anzac weekend was warm and flat out.

13. Rubbish dumpers, thieves and vandals

The FoCC encourages Park friends to report track vandals, rubbish dumpers, wood thieves and other suspicious activity to Parks Victoria on 13 1963 or email: woowookarung@parks.vic.gov.au

In emergency situations please call 000. If an offender is spotted, please note vehicle registration details as vehicle identification is most helpful, plus location and details.

14. Useful information

- Parks Victoria Woowookarung email address:

woowookarung@parks.vic.gov.au

- City of Ballarat wildlife information:

<https://www.ballarat.vic.gov.au/me/pets-and-animals/wildlife>

- DELWP wildlife issues reporting information

Report wildlife crime to Crime Stoppers Victoria on **1800 333 000**.

Report any wildlife at immediate risk of deliberate harm or neglect to **136 186**. Other matters relating to wildlife and wildlife management should use the **136 186** too.

The Help for Injured Wildlife tool will help you locate and contact the closest relevant wildlife carers and rescue and rehabilitation organisations to help the injured wildlife. The main point to reiterate is for any matters related to wildlife crime, call Crime Stoppers.

15. FoCC Membership

Membership runs from 1st January to 31st December each year, Membership fee is \$20 per year. Children of members are free. New members after July are credited to the next year. Membership forms are available online or email focinfo@gmail.com

16. FoCC facebook and webpage

www.facebook.com/friendsofcanadiancorridor/

Rob is overseeing the webpage webmaster@focc.asn.au
The FoCC has over 1000 friends following us on facebook and growing. Welcome to all new friends. Feel free to pass on to other friends and press the like button.

17. 2023 Calendar of events

May 17 th	FoCC Forum. "Water races and sluice fields". Guest Speaker – Professor Susan Lawrence - La Trobe University, Department of Archaeology and History, Melbourne, Australia Ticket booking: https://www.trybooking.com/CHXZH
May 20 th and 21 st	Central Highlands Water mining water races and Sluice field guided and pop-up walk. Starting point Sparrow Ground. Open 10am to 4 pm daily.
June 21 st	FoCC General Meeting: Topic Tba
August 6 th	7th Tree planting. Dozed Track area.
August 27 th	Slow tree identification walk. Meet at Dementia Trail rotunda
September	Koala Forum
October (early)	FoCC Sunday afternoon visit to Clarksdale Bird Sanctuary
October 16 - 22 nd	Great Australian Backyard Bird Count
October (late)	8th Annual Wildflower Walk.
November 15 th	7th Annual Meeting
December 1 st	Drinks at the Lookout

The FoCC Spikey News is published on behalf of the Friends of Canadian Corridor Incorporated, Registered No A0097535B. The purpose of "Spikey News" is to link the community to Woowookarung Regional Park and the Canadian Corridor.

The FoCC is a registered Landcare Group with Landcare Victoria Inc and a member of the Yarrowee Leigh Catchment Group. Circulation this issue is to ~~1066~~ 1080 subscribers. Welcome to all new friends.

The update is generally published monthly. Friends wishing to add articles to the FoCC update may do so by emailing focinfo@gmail.com
Feel free to circulate widely including doctor's waiting rooms, work offices, friends and neighbours.

We are proud to walk this land with the Wadawurrung people and all other First Nations people.
Any opinions expressed in the publications are made in by the editors in good faith and do not officially represent Parks Victoria or the FoCC.

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