



FoCC Incorporated Spikey News



Linking the community with Woookarung and the Canadian Corridor
May 2023 Issue Number 99

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1. "Water races and sluice fields" presentation



The development of gold mining water races and sluice fields was the focus of a presentation by noted academic and author Professor Susan Lawrence at the Eureka Centre on Wednesday May 17th 2023.

File image

Professor Lawrence provided the story of how water races developed in Victoria to efficiently mine gullies for gold. The water washed huge amounts of clay and gravel away leaving the gold behind.

Professor Susan Lawrence is acting Co-Director of the Centre for the Study of the Inland and a Professor in the Department of Archaeology and History. Her expertise is in the physical evidence of the recent human past and she is internationally recognised for her research on mining, rivers, and British colonisation. Susan's 2019 book 'Sludge: Disaster on the Victorian Goldfields' (co-authored with Peter Davies) was shortlisted for the Prime Minister's Literary Awards.

"Sludge" is available for sale at the Eureka Centre.

The presentation was made possible by a Parks Victoria Volunteer Innovation Fund Grant.



2. Mining Water Race walk

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

Over one hundred walkers braved the cold and wet weather on the weekend of May 20th and 21st to participate in the mining water race and sluice field walk.

The trail was 5.5 km in length and featured 29 stop points along the way. Information signs were located at each mining or water race site along the way.



Walkers on the holding dam in Sparrow Ground next to an information sign. Image: 21st May 2023.



Walkers beside the Sluice Gully and sign in Sparrow Ground. Image: 21st May 2023.

The Woookarung Regional Park hosts around 30 kms of water races, 7 sluice fields, 4 dams and numerous diggings. The pink ribbons marking the track will stay in place until Monday 12th June after which they will be removed.

The walk was proudly sponsored by the Central Highlands Water - Community Support Project.



3. FoCC June General Meeting

The next FoCC June general meeting will be held at the **Earth Ed Centre, Olympic Avenue, Mt Clear at 7pm on Wednesday June 21st.**

The guest speaker will be Mr Haydn Swan talking about the unique geology of the Canadian Corridor and Woookarung Regional Park in particular.

Haydn Swan is a lecturer in Geology at Federation University based at Mt Helen. In addition to working in education, he has worked in the mining sector in both exploration and mining roles, in every state and territory of Australia. Haydn has also worked in various roles in the federal public service, both within Australia, and New Zealand.

Haydn's area of expertise is mineral exploration and geochemistry, and being a keen runner and mountain biker, he has some 30 plus years' experience exploring Woookarung.

Everyone is welcome.

4. Koala scat collecting research program continuing

"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!

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. 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 collected on the 10th May 2023 in Mt Clear. Image: Courtesy Siobhan
The location of any koala scat found will be recorded on the FoCC Koala spotting record as well.

5. The "Bunny Trail" at the Recreation Rd Bushland Reserve unofficially opened

The unofficial opening of the trail was celebrated with a sausage sizzle on site on Saturday Morning 13th May 2023. Seventy people of all ages turned up to celebrate the trail being open for use.



How the Courier saw the sausage sizzle. Image: Courtesy of the Ballarat Courier, Thursday 18th May 2023.



On track: Cyclists Jeff Rootes, Gary Bunn, and Rob Loveband travel over the new bridge which was funded by Community Bank Buninyong. Photo: EDWINA WILLIAMS

Image: Courtesy of Ballarat Times 19th May 2023

Bunny's missing link is completed

BY ERIN WILLIAMS

A SECTION of the former Buninyong railway line has been brought to life, thanks to a community group.

The 250 metre section of the Bunny Rail Trail was unofficially opened on Saturday following a three-and-a-half-year project.

Friends of Canadian Corridor have created the new section to connect Mount Clear to Woovookarung Regional Park, where there was previously no link.

The new link was made possible after Eureka MP Michaela Settle convinced the Victorian Education Building Authority to stop the auction of a vacant property so the community group could build the new trail along the old rail trail's embankment.

The City of Ballarat bought the land and Community Bank Buninyong provided \$34,000 to complete the trail. A landowner then donated



Friends of Canadian Corridor treasurer Peter Darveniza on the Bunny Rail Trail's new bridge at the Recreation Road Bushland Reserve, Mount Clear. Picture by Kate Healy

40 metres of private land to complete the link.

As part of the project, a bridge near Recreation Road has been installed next to remnants of an old wooden railway bridge.

Friends of Canadian Corridor secretary Jeff Rootes said the project was an example

of the community coming together to build something.

He described the new section as completing the jigsaw of the Bunny Rail Trail, which connects Mount Clear to Ballarat Station.

"It's about bringing different groups and encouraging different people who

are working with common goals," Mr Rootes said.

While the trail is ready and safe to use, it requires 100 metres of topping, drainage works, signage and an entrance fence.

The railway trail will officially be opened in 2023. **People & Places, page 10**

Ballarat Courier 18th May 2023

Community Bank
Buninyong

B Bendigo Bank

The "Bunny Trail" at Recreation Rd has been made possible by the welcome grant of \$34000 for the construction of the trail and the centrepiece bridge.

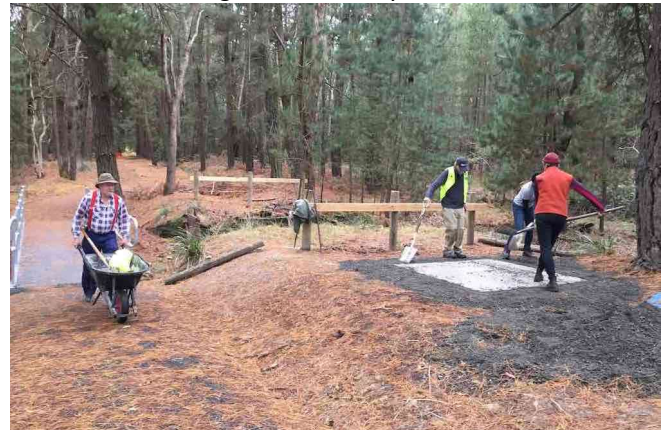
FoCC May 2023 Spikey News



Robin testing the trail on his unicycle. Image: 7th May 2023

6. Bunny Trail works

The installation of the Bunny Trail Rest Spot facilities was the focus of working bee on 4th May 2023.



Volunteers preparing for the table. Image: 4th May 2023.



Testing the newly installed rest spot picnic table. Siobhan, Jo, Gayle, Bernie and Peter. Image: 4th May 2023

Track drainage, forming and topping.

On Monday 22nd May 2023 contractors, Aussie Soils installed two piped drains under the trail at the northern

end. Then applied 60 meters of fill and topped with blue gravel to create a firm surface across a boggy zone. The track works will ensure the trail stays dry even in winter.



Newly topped Bunny Trail. Image: Courtesy of Crackers, 22nd May 2023.



Drainage pipe and fill construction. Image: Courtesy of Crackers, 22nd May 2023.

The Bunny Trail is now open with walkers and cyclists using the trail daily.

Future works will be the installation of the front fence and side fencing where required plus removing the rest of the pine saplings within the reserve.

The FoCC has applied for a Landcare Grant to restore the vegetation along the creek. If successful these works would occur in winter 2024.

7. Bird of the Month XX (May 2023)

Scarlet Robin (*Petroica boodang*)

Take it from this author, there are few experiences as surreal as viewing through binoculars for the first time a marvellous male Scarlet Robin. This bird will have you murmuring to yourself: 'How is it even possible for nature to produce such an exquisite, vivid red?!'

A small (12-14cm) songbird, Scarlet Robin is Ballarat's most common red-breasted robin, and one of two robins (alongside Eastern Yellow Robin) known to occur at Woookarung Regional Park. Scarlet Robins are sexually dimorphic (meaning males and females are visually distinguishable). Males have a black head, throat, and upperparts; a scarlet red breast and upper belly; and a large, white forehead patch, wing bars, and lower belly. Females and young birds are grey-brown where males are black, have a watered-down orangey red breast, and a reduced forehead patch.



Left: Adult male Scarlet Robin. Right: Adult female Scarlet Robin. Image credit: Rob Loveband.

Scarlet Robins occur in singles or pairs, inhabiting forests and woodlands (e.g. Stringybark eucalypt communities). The species forms permanent monogamous pairs that defend a territory year-round. Males advertise the territory by singing from a conspicuous high perch.

The song has been described as a 'shrill, yet pleasant, cheery, rippling, musical trill, "tirrit-tirrit-tirrit, tirrit-tirrit-tirrit"' or a 'pretty, lilting, "wee-cheedalee-dalee'. Contact calls are characterised as a quiet, scolding or tapping 'tik'. During breeding season (August through January), the female selects a well-hidden nest site (usually 1-3m high) in a tree fork, and builds the nest. The nest is an open cup composed of bark, grass, twigs, moss and lichen, and bound together loosely by spiderwebs. The female incubates a clutch of 2-3 eggs, while the male feeds her. Both parents feed the hatchlings and will continue to do so for some time after fledging.

During non-breeding season (i.e. winter), Scarlet Robins may pairs redistribute to more open habitats, e.g. grasslands and farmland.

The diet of insects is taken usually by means of the 'perch and pounce' foraging method, which involves pouncing down from a low perch on ground-dwelling insects, then quickly returning to a perch to eat. Amusingly, the process is repeated energetically many times over in quick succession.

The species may be considered 'fairly common', but has a 'decreasing population trend' and a conservation status is of 'Secure' (Victoria), and 'Least Concern' (globally). The main threat to Scarlet Robin is land clearing practices, and particularly the removal of understorey.

Next time you wander through Woookarung Regional Park, Union Jack Reserve, or another bushland patch, don't forget to look out for the marvellous Scarlet Robin – and if you can acquire a pair, it is highly recommended you equip yourself with binoculars to get a closer look! You won't regret it!

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).

8. 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 in Hermitage Avenue Mt Clear. Image: 3rd May 2023



At Napoleons. Image: Courtesy of Siobhan, May 30th 2023

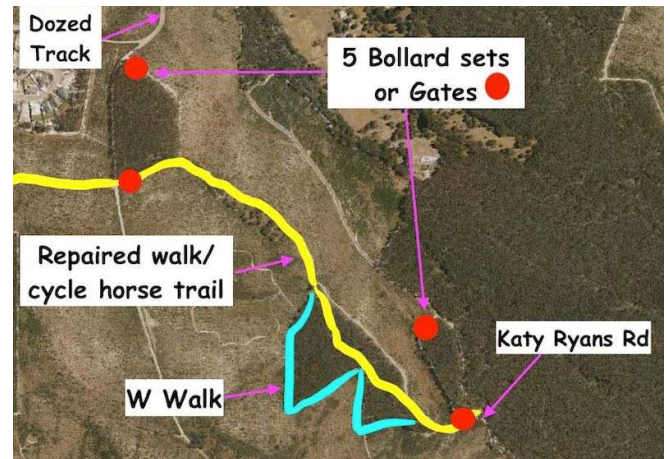
9. Park works

Parks Victoria have rehabilitated the Penny Leaf track in the centre of Park. The track is an important fire management track as it follows a ridge line.

The track runs west from Katy Ryans Rd, past the W walk area to Dozed Rd then onto its junction with Lavery Avenue. (See map below).

Once the repairs are complete, the trail will be another safe and easy walk or ride within the Park.

The track will now be consolidated over winter before any final topping is applied.



Map of the rehabilitated track.



Bobcat at work 9th May 2023



4WD damaged track. Image: Circa July 2020



Same place after trackwork. Image: 17th May 2023.

10. Orienteers in the Park

The Eureka Orienteers are long time recreational users of the Park.

Spotted within the northern end of the Park in April.



Orienteers check point. Image: 1st April 2023

11. Federation University student utilise the Bunny trail as a classroom

Federation University Outdoor education students recently inspected the Bunny Trail as part of their coursework.



Participating students. Image: 10th May 2023



Student cycles using the new Cycle Rack. Image: 10th May 2023

12. Rifle Range industrial site up for sale again

A small industrial portion of the old Commonwealth Rifle Range is up for sale again.

The land for sale is a 5000 sq metre industrial section west of Kline St. The land was originally part of the Rifle Range however it is now on a separate title to the Rifle Range.



For sale sign Elsworth St East. Image: 17th April 2023.

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:

woovookarung@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 Woovookarung email address:**

woovookarung@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

June 21 st	FoCC General Meeting: Topic: Canadian Corridor and Woowookarung Geology Guest Speaker: Haydn Swan.
August 6 th	7th Tree planting. Dozed Track area.
August 27 th	Slow tree identification walk. Meet at Dementia Trail rotunda
September 14th	Koala Forum at the Eureka Centre.
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 ~~1080~~ 1106 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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