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NEWS



LETTER

ISSUE 22 for SEPTEMBER 2003.

If you have any items about the park for publication please Contact Bill Whitbourn at gempark@netspace.net.au or send them to PO Box 91 Emerald before 24th of the month. View the last 10 issues on [our web site!](#)

EDITORIAL.

The Friends were formed in November of 2001 and incorporated a few months later. In our first year our working Bees included scrubbing the murals, gardening ie. removing weeds and overgrowth and planting new shrubs, ground cover etc. Later working with the park manager on mulching and other planting projects. We did make a difference and some commented on it but it became clear that in spite of our efforts, without co-operation from Council in other areas, a great impact could not be achieved by our group.

Just over a year ago the Friends had a meeting with CEO Don Welch, Operations Manager Brian Foster and our local councillor Graeme Legge, to discuss our (and the communities) dissatisfaction with the state of the park. After hearing us out, Brian Foster said to the group, "Give me six months, I will work on low cost high impact areas and then see what you think" Soon after our new parks officers were engaged and with Brian's support a grand transformation began to take place.

True to his word, Brian managed to produce even more than we'd hoped for in a newly surfaced roadway. The entrance to the bus loop was now dust and bump free. Overgrown vegetation was expertly removed, ornamentals trimmed, bridges cleaned, resurfaced and later rustic fencing installed. Mowing was now frequent providing the broad brush strokes to our picture park. New signs and other infrastructure replacements were made. Many new donated ornamental trees have been planted. An obvious enthusiasm drives our new park officers to keep the place in trim. Visitors now frequently compliment them on their excellent work.

At the time of writing the first of a number of fishing bays are being installed at lake edge. I'm sure these will be a feature for the park in due course. Sadly Brian is moving on, we were disappointed to hear of his decision to leave us. Hopefully the work in the park will continue, while we wish Brian and family all the best for the future.

SOAP & WATER

After several exciting dates, Jim invited Tina over to his house for his idea of a home-cooked dinner. When she sat down at the table, she noticed that the dishes were the dirtiest that she had ever seen in her life. "Have these dishes ever been washed?" Tina asked, running her fingers over the grit and grime. Jim replied, "They're about as clean as good old soap and water could get them." Tina felt a bit apprehensive, but started eating. It was really delicious and she said so, despite the dishes being so dirty. When dinner was over, Jim took the dishes outside, whistled and yelled, "Here, Soap! Here, Water! - Wash Up time!!"

FAMILIAR FACE

I bumped into Ian Baker a perpetual friend of Emerald Lake Park. The plumber invited him over to help identify the whereabouts of some of our long lost plumbing. Ian keeping well, was impressed with the park. Esp. the recent plantings in the Baker garden. Ian pointed out that the garden was laid out with help from Beacon Hills Students.



RESTOCKING THE LAKE

Early in September the lake was restocked with 500 plate sized fish. On the following Sunday many fishermen gathered to try their luck including several from the Pakenham Fishing Club. One youngster had reached the daily limit of 5 but had released them back to the lake and so continued to have fun. We welcome families to come and try their luck as when unsupervised the youngsters, when bored get up to mischief. A parent with an appropriate fishing licence should accompany under age children at all times.

TREE LOSSES

A number of trees were lost due to the wind during the month and a backlog of clearing has developed. This is a constant problem of the season and will no doubt be addressed by our capable parks officers as time permits. Keeping the many kilometers of trails open is a time consuming task but is being handled well by our park officers at present.

PUFFING BILLY

Work on the annual Puffing Billy track clearance and tidying has made a difference around the South Western border of the park. Some tree cutting including a large fallen Messmate on the West side beside the walking trail has created many logs and fire wood for somebody. The South side though is looking much better for this work.

WISHING WELL

Work has begun on restoration of the Wishing Well area. Some painting of the associated structures by our park officers and their assistant Danielle has been possible on fair weather days. The Fat Tyre Flyers track has been removed from the trail junction area. Among other concerns this had aggravated the accumulation of mud across the WW. entrance trail. Closure of the Mountain bike tracks in wet weather and while not being used for events has been put in place. Thanks guys!

WET WEATHER DAMAGE

Although the recent rain is welcome it has had a detrimental effect on our trails. There are many spots that are depressed and so accumulate water, silt and mud. Although draining of these spots has been attempted, a more permanent solution is being considered by our parks officers when time permits.

WEB PHOTO GALLERY

The Friends are currently collecting photographic images for our web photo gallery and development of this will begin shortly. Also we hope to produce some posters of our park for public display by anyone willing to do so. Currently we can print a single A3 size page in color so larger posters will have to be joined before being laminated. If anyone has tried this successfully, or has some ideas on this, please let us know.



NATIVE ORCHID

Late in the month when walking one of our favorite Wombat Trails Heather and I came upon this little orchid. Hillary has Identified it for us as the "Alpine Greenhood." These trails provide fertile ground for these little plants. The Wombat uses this particular trail almost daily and so far has not disturbed the orchid situated close to the edge.

At the time of writing it is about 3 weeks old and is still healthy.

RAINFALL

We had a bumper month in September with a total of 100.8mm on the East side of the park. Surprisingly it does vary from side to side. This figure is up from the previous month and is our second best fall this year. Good snow fall in our alpine regions is no doubt responsible for this. The resulting cooler winter has slowed growth and Spring is a little later this year.



WORKING BEES.

Working bees will be organized in conjunction with our park officers. Suggested areas of weed removal and work in the gardens will be made available. This will help with the co-ordination of preparatory and cleanup tasks and provide a prepared job list for each session.

September work totalled 27.5 Bee hours in spite of some rain, hiccups. Thanks to Peggy Stonehouse, Lee Ferris, Shiela Hampson, Fiona Bridson, Claudia Johnson, Kevin Teasedale and Heather & Bill Whitbourn. Also Thanks to Richard and Jamie for the jobs list and bag collection.

Our October list is designed to prepare a small garden for Planting on Thursday 16th. So we have the Sunday 12th to prepare this by weeding the bed. We will need small hand tools, gloves and forks for this. The weeds will be bagged for removal.

The year is drawing to a close and there are only 5 WB dates left. The last being November Thursday 20th.

WORKING BEE DATES - 2hours only.

October.

Saturday 4th. 9.00am
Sunday 12th. 9.00am
Thursday 16th. 1.30pm

November.

Saturday 1st. 9.00am
Sunday 9th. 9.00am
Thursday 20th. 1.30pm

Don't Forget

December.

Annual FELP BBQ
Saturday 6th. @ 12.00pm.
Boatshed BBQ area.

Note it in your DIARY!

THE NEXT FELP MEETING.

Please note!

The next FELP meeting, will be held on the 1st November at 11.15am in the Environment Center after the Working Bee.



Saturday 4th. October.