**FRIENDS OF THE ROYAL NATIONAL PARK INCORPORATED**

**MINUTES OF THE GENERAL MEETING**

**Held on Thursday 28th April 2022 at 4.00pm via Zoom**

**Meeting opened:** at 4.04 pm

**Chairperson – Basil Ellis Minutes – Dave Robson**

**Committee Members present**

Basil Ellis (BE), Ian Hill (IH), Ralph Cartwright(RC), Dave Robson(DR), Diane Townley (DT), Neville Bethe (NB), Dave Croft (NPWS Rep)

**Apologies**

John Arney(JA), Peter Donley(PD)

**General Members present**

Tony Larkin

**Acknowledgement of Country**

Basil gave the Acknowledgement of Country.

**Presentation on Feral Scan (Fox Scan) by Emma Sawyers**

**(presentation is available on For Youtube channel** <https://youtu.be/O_jUTxNXNQ0>)

* The Feral Scan app allows recording of feral presence, signs, controls.
* Fox Scan is one of the options in the Feral Scan app as are the recording of deer, feral cats, wild dogs, wild pigs etc.
* In the app you can record the location, number of animals etc
* Control measures are automatically recorded as private, all other entries are marked public unless you make specifically tag them as private.
* The sightings of foxes recorded in the app show a much larger number in the urban environment of Sydney than in the Royal. There was much discussion as to if that was due to the higher number of humans in the urban areas recording the sightings or the greater prevalence of foxes in those environments due to the easy access to shelter and food (e.g. garbage, dog bowls) in the urban environment.
* All the committee members and Dave C in NPWS were keen on using the app to record sightings in future.

**Park Report – Dave Croft**

* The extended wet period has had a big effect:
  + Garie Beach Road closed with 1 metre slippage on half the road
    - NPWS are looking at potentially getting helicopters for urgent work required at the Surf Club project.
  + McKell Rd slippage being controlled by traffic lights.
  + Wattamolla Rd closed due to rock slide on the walking track down to the beach.
  + Large washout on Curra Moors firetrail has been repaired.
  + NPWS have stopped driving on firetrails to avoid damaging the trails.
  + Track trimming stopped until after the rains.
* Warumbul Rd work appears to have been done well.
* Intent to asphalt the Garrawarra Farm Rd. Unsure if this will be completed in this financial year.
* Volunteer work - Patsy relayed that the use of FoR website is working well.
* Contractors are working at Bonnie Vale, Jibbon and Yeramba Lagoon.
* Aerial deer culls:
  + Due to inclement weather the recent aerial cull could only fly on 2 days out of the planned 3. Good numbers were culled in the 2 days. Other aerial deer culls are planned for this year.
  + It was encouraging that in areas where there had previously been large numbers of deer culled there were only very small numbers sighted this year….i.e. the deer do not appear to be quickly repopulating culled areas.
* Koala survey work is moving from planning to the action stage with audio recorders being setup, trail cameras being setup, drone surveys being planned.
* Hazard reduction is on hold due to the weather, staff are writing up burn plans.
* Werrong Track is closed due to washout. Unsure when it will be fixed, it is obviously lower priority than other rain created issues.
* MTB tracks:
  + They have been closed for all but 3 days in the last 7 weeks due to the extensive rains and potential damage to tracks from riding while they are wet.
  + Compliance has been good. When occasional people have posted their rides they have been piled on by other riders telling them they were idiots and damaging the tracks.

**Treasurer’s Report**

* $7366 in Westpac bank account and Paypal account.
* 1 new financial member.
* One new major expenditure $540 for Greater Sydney Landcare for insurance which is help under Ralph’s name as Treasurer/Public Officer,

**Correspondence**

* Julie Keating wrote to Dave Robson (FoR) and Gary Schoer (NPA) informing that Fisheries had determined that they would not agree to use some of the spoil of the imminent dredging of Port Hacking to replenish the high tide roost used by migrating shorebirds. Julie requested both organisations ask their members to contact their local State members to ask them to reverse this decision. FoR agreed and emailed all our members. NPA members on the committee had not received anything on this matter so the NPA members on our committee will follow up with Gary Schoer.

**General Business**

* Discussion of the suggestion from Patsy Nagle that FoR run more “fun” activities to grow membership. Two of the suggestions were agreed by the committee to be of interest:
  + Photography. We would need a good photographer with a passion for the Royal to lead these activities. Dave will explore with contacts in the local photography clubs.
  + Heritage walks. Ralph will explore with Judith Carrick and John Arney if they are interested in leading such a walk.

Some of the other suggestions were not of interest or we are already doing them. In regard to getting interesting speakers Dave Robson will contact Jason Luke (a local naturalist and photographer) to see if he is interested in presenting on reptiles and amphibians of the Royal.

* Linnane Society – Field Guide to the Royal National Park:
  + We no longer hold stock. 2000 copies were originally printed, the society intends to update the material and print a further 1000 copies.
* Discussion on the new volunteer framework for the park:
  + FoR website will continue to be used for the booking system for volunteer activities. NPWS VIP has not proven to be viable quite yet.
  + We are promoting with Patsy and Mel that we should enhance the current model by starting local groups that just focus on their local area. Jibbon is an ideal candidate for this approach.
* Dave gave an update on our work at Red Jacks Pt and Middle Rill
  + General agreement that the focus of FoR on two sites (Middle Rill and Red Jacks Point) was working well. It was giving the participants a sense of accomplishment.
  + At Red Jacks we have cleared a huge mass of Cassia (Senna pendula) sufficiently to uncover the remains of a large building on the site. Really good stonework 3 metres high maybe 12 metres long.
  + Next activity at Red Jacks is on Friday 6th May. Dave will take lots of before/after photos (obviously too late for many of the before shots). Note this will be the last chance to pick all the Senna pods for this year so we need many hands.

**Meeting closed:** at 6.05 p.m.

**Next Committee Meeting**

* Thursday 26 May, 2022 at 4pm via Zoom

**Next General Meeting**

* Thursday 23 June 2022 at 4 pm via Zoom