**FRIENDS OF THE ROYAL NATIONAL PARK INCORPORATED**

**MINUTES OF THE GENERAL MEETING**

 **Thursday 26th October 2023 4pm at the EEC**

**Meeting opened:** at 4.08 pm

**Chairperson- Ralph Cartwright Minutes- Dave Robson**

**Present:** Ralph Cartwright, Dave Robson, Peter Donley, Basil Ellis, John Arney, Neville Bethe, Diane Townley. George Cotis, Peter Currie, Bridget Currie, Peter Kahn, John Whittingham

Dave Croft- Team Leader Rangers (Royal Area)

**Apologies:** Ian Hill, Liz Donley

* Ralph gave the Acknowledgement of Country

**Routine Business**

* Treasurer’s report:
	+ Balance of Westpac account: $8031.32, PayPal: $318.16, Total: $8349.48
	+ Major expenditure: $380.00 for trail camera as part of the Platypus Rewilding program
	+ There are 62 financial members
* Correspondence: email to Ralph from Landcare regarding invasive species. They are conducting a review and are asking if we have any input.
* **Park report – Dave Croft**
1. 2 new rangers
	1. Jason Bishop started this week. He has come from Towra Point and will take over the Bundeena patch from Mishy
	2. Matt Springall will start on 6th November. He has spent 2 decades in Lane Cove national park on invasive weeds. He will take over the Georges River National Park patch and also responsibility for volunteer liaison and management.
2. Other ranger responsibility changes
	1. Anita Zubovic is going on assignment elsewhere and Mishy is taking over her patch
	2. Mel’s patch is going to be managed by a new ranger.
3. Fire trail works are continuing in the East Heathcote to Farnell Avenue area. Temptation Creek is next following which trails around Bundeena/Maianbar will be upgraded. These upgrades are to reach the new standard following the 2019 bushfires. These standards require a certain width of track and regular turning circles.
4. Following the Jibbon Hazard Reduction burn there has been a small 4 hectare burn in the Grays Pt area.
5. Walking track upgrade will be starting soon: Curra Moors track followed by Deer Pool track
6. There is a MTB festival planned for Grays Pt
	1. It will be based at the soccer oval
	2. They have asked NPWS for permission to have races. This has not yet been granted but it is expected that it will be for the currently approved areas of the firetrails and the singletrack (which is of very limited length).
7. Planning for the summer peak season is occurring (traffic control etc.)
8. The contractor who tarred the Garrawarra Farm road is to fix the two large potholes…..this will close the road for a short time.
9. Work is to start on building a shelter at Bonnie Vale that is part of the management plan. The Bundeena Kayak business will be a user of this shelter.
10. Garie Road repair
	1. The setup for the work will be starting in the next few weeks
11. McKell Rd repair
	1. Proposal is for the road to be closed from Monday to Friday from November to mid December. It has been communicated that this road needs to able to be opened quickly in an emergency.
12. McKell Rd carpark repair
	1. More complicated than expected since the land is half RMS and half NPWS
* **Presentation – Port Hacking - Habitat**
	+ George Cotis concluded his presentation that was started at the August general meeting. It was well received by all.
* **Platypus Rewilding**
	+ Acoustic receivers have shown that all 10 platypuses that were released are still active. They have been recorded all over the river system…..both in Kangaroo Creek and even far up the Hacking past Waterfall Weir
	+ Summary of the results of the observations at dawn and dusk taken by volunteers.
		- As at Monday 23rd October there had been 44 observation sessions
		- 20 at Wattle Forest, 11 at Waterfall Weir and 13 at Jersey Springs
		- 1 platypus observed at dusk at Jersey Springs
		- 2 incidental sightings by Ricki Coughlan in the Jersey Springs area…..one at 7am and one at 8am
	+ Analysis of the acoustic receiver data for a week in September has shown that the platypuses are entirely nocturnal at Wattle Forest and Waterfall Weir. But in the Jersey Springs area they have been recorded in the daylight hours of the early morning and late afternoon.
	+ Trail cameras have been placed at Jersey Springs and Waterfall Weir without successful capture of platypus images. We will continue to try to capture images.
	+ A video has been released of the Rewilding conference held in September. This included discussion on the platypus release

https://www.centreforideas.com/article/rewilding

* **Recent Activities:**
	+ Jibbon local bush regen group had its first activity on Monday 9th October. 4 new volunteers attended who were joined by 4 experienced volunteers.
	+ A new site Yenabilli Point was visited for the first time on Thursday 12th October by 4 volunteers…….its a beautiful site but with a corridor of weeds that runs for about 50 metres…..thick senna and plenty of pampas grass.
	+ Middle Rill was revisited on Friday 6th October by 6 volunteers…….we poisoned or dug up at least 70 pampas grass and pulled up hundreds of small cotton bushes.
	+ Birding walk at Wattamolla on 15th Sep ….10 participants……26 species
	+ Botanical Walk at Wises Track on 22nd Sep……10 participants…..120 species
* **Future activities:**
	+ Birding walk at Wattle Forest and Lady Carrington Drive on Friday 27th October
	+ Yenabilli Pt on Friday 10th November
	+ Birding walk (venue TBC) on Friday 17th November
	+ Jibbon local group combined with Bushies on Saturday 25th November
* 2024 Volunteer calendar has been produced as a draft and will be reviewed with the rangers. The FoR activities are similar to 2023.
* Dr Ann Young (Author of a popular book on landforms in the park for sale on our website shop page), to present in person at our February 2024 meeting on the landforms found in the park.

**6.00pm meeting closed**

**NOTICES**

**Next Committee Meeting**

23/11/2023

**Next General Meeting**

22/02/2024