



# **FRIENDS OF BAW BAW NATIONAL PARK INC.**

## **NEWSLETTER NO. 41 NOVEMBER 2020**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

2020 was our first full year with Adam Van Baalen and Gabby Browne as our contact Rangers and while we had limited opportunity to interact with our rangers, it was valuable in developing our relationship. This newsletter is unfortunately beginning to sound like a broken record with a significant number of our activities cancelled due to our land managers being involved in bushfire duties and then all volunteer activities cancelled because of COVID-19.

Due to the President being unavailable for the AGM at the last minute, Vice President John Sunderland presided over the AGM. The AGM was held on Wednesday 21 October 2020 via the online meeting app Zoom.

### **2. AGM**

Elections for a new committee were conducted on 21 October 2020

The following office bearers were elected for 2020-21:

President: Peter Maffei  
Vice President: John Sunderland  
Secretary: Ben Aalbers  
Treasurer: Tim Clarke  
Committee Members: Darold Klindworth, David Hood and Eileen Laidlaw

Thank you to the returning committee members and welcome to David Hood our new committee member. David for many years has been a regular on our volunteer working bees and like all of us is a regular visitor to the plateau.

### **3. COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT**

A meeting of the Committee of Management is planned for Thursday 19 November, most likely again via Zoom but we are hopeful that it could be face to face within the prevailing COVID restrictions. A draft program has been prepared for the meeting, it will include all the old favourites and hopefully a few new activities.

Typically, our program will include:

- Blackberry removal
- Guided wildflower and ecology walk
- Major track maintenance
- Water bar clearing
- Track signage replacement (subject to funding)
- Leadbeater possum project (Adam Van Baalen to investigate the next steps)
- Guided snowshoe shuffle
- Guided walk to the hidden huts of the plateau

Once the program is finalised it will be distributed to members and supporters.

#### 4. ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED

The reports from each of the activities conducted throughout the year are attached below.

##### **Blackberry Removal—Mushroom Rocks**

**Date: 5 December 2019**

Robyn, a first time blackberry removal volunteer provided this report.

This was my first experience on a blackberry clearing activity with Friends of Baw Baw and I wasn't sure what to expect. Lots of clambering over rocks and scrambling down steep hills off track, lifting the runners to find the base of the plant so that it can be correctly chopped and treated and hopefully not grow back—or pulled out by the root if you were tempted. All the time hoping there were no snakes down there.

I got pretty dirty and stretched a few muscles that hadn't been used for a while but found it to be a very rewarding day.



## **Guided Wildflower and Ecology Walk**

**Date: 11 January 2020**

After a string of hot days, we couldn't believe that chilly temperatures were the order of the day. The temperature of 9oC at the start had us reaching for our jackets, gloves and beanies as we strolled towards the summit of Mt St Gwinear, stopping along the way to admire and discuss the flora and learn about the Baw Baw Frog from our entertaining leaders John Davies and Greg Hollis.

We were also joined by Parks Victoria Rangers Adam and Gabby, and all that came along enjoyed the day. A mix of informative discussion, plant ID and great social banter. You just have to take my word for that last comment --- or come along next year.

We had 29 walkers on the event. Parks Victoria regulations stipulate that above 30 participants you must apply for a permit to hold an event in the National Park. We limit the number to 30 and offer preference to first time visitors.



## **AAWT - Mt Erica Rd to the Tyers River Camp Ground**

**Date: 13 February 2020**

A small group of volunteers walked this section of the Australian Alps Walking Track as it had been reported that a number of trees were down across the track. With chainsaws in hand the group made short work of the offending trees. But not the one pictured.

However, a recent report received by the FoBB indicates that another large tree has fallen across the tracks near the side track to the Erica Weir. This has been reported to our contact Ranger. The FoBB has offered support to clear and remove this tree.



## **Australian Alps Walking Track – Major Track Clearing Event**

**Date: April 2020**

Event cancelled due to the cessation of volunteer activities due to COVID-19. This is the second year in a row that our major track clearing event has been cancelled. Bill Lay has reviewed his records and advises that the last FoBB volunteer activity in the Stronach Camp was 19-20 March 2010.

## **Friends of Baw Baw – Snow Shoe Shuffle**

**Date: 18 August 2020**

Event cancelled due to the closure of the national park due to COVID-19.

## **Water Bar Maintenance**

**Date: March 2020**

Water bar maintenance is one of those tasks that if kept on top of is relatively easy to maintain. Essentially, we clear wooden drainage trough of sand and silt that builds up over the year. Keeping the water bars clear is an important feature in allowing rainwater and snow melt to run off the paths and prevent erosion. A small team with hand tools was able to clear the water bars from Jeep Flat Track to the Rock Shelter.

This is a rewarding activity with obvious tangible results for your efforts. Watch out for next years event.

Photos are from a previous year.



## **Missed Opportunities**

Given our restricted access to the national park a number regular activities have had to be postponed. None are more obvious than the condition of the wonderful Beech Gully Nature Trail which leaves from the Mount Erica / Mushroom Rocks carpark. This family friendly walk is anything but now.

With plenty of volunteer activities to be carried out in the national park and lots to catch up on we hope to see many of our members and supporters out in the parks in the near future.

