



Summer # 7

February 2022



Rob Duncan (Autumn 2021) —he will be missed

note from the president—*Peter Jacobs*

Welcome to the newsletter for Summer 2022...in this edition I'd like to start by acknowledging again the work and dedication of our Vice President Rob Duncan, who sadly died last November. We miss him greatly from Landcare and more so as a good friend. And of course a big welcome to our new project officer Wendy Grant, who will take the planning and organizing pressure off our volunteers. We are in the process of establishing a permanent base for our equipment and materials at the Men's Shed yard in Bright which will be great.

We are also starting to build a productive partnership with Sustainable Upper Ovens (SUO) by coordinating some of our activities with those of SUO, especially around building climate resilience in nature and 'nature based solutions'. 2022 is going to be very busy for UOVLG!



Amazing summer growth due to unseasonably high rainfall in January

project update

With all the existing plantings around the Ovens-Buckland (stages 1 & 2) and Germantown Streamside Reserve growing so well there continues to be a need to keep up with site maintenance; removing and/or straightening guards, weeding, spraying and replacing dead trees.

Bushfire Recovery; Threatened Species: Bec (Alpine Nursery) reports there has also been excellent germination of the Omeo Gum seeds collected by the UOVLG in the Upper Buckland last autumn.

2022 will see quite a lot of work around weed control and Omeo Gum seedling planting around Beveridge's Station (Upper Buckland) where this rare species grows.

We are also very hopeful that our Threatened Species and Fire Community Event will take place at Dingo Dell, Mt Buffalo NP on 30 April.

A number of grant applications have been successful allowing for another 3 exciting new projects to go ahead with the assistance of our new project officer, Wendy.

Ovens Buckland Stage 3 will continue weed control and restoration near Ovens/Buckland Rivers confluence with the involvement of the Porepunkah Primary School in Junior Landcare and planting along the Ovens River adjacent to the school 'plantation' site.

Murray Darling Healthy Rivers will involve weed control (contract) and new plantings between Bright and Germantown.

Living with Deer will involve UOVLG working with landowners (rural and town) learning how to reduce the impacts of feral deer. We will run field days with experts on a range of topics.



Aviya—working hard removing guards

We acknowledge the Taungurung and Dhudhuroa Traditional Custodians of the land on which we work and learn and pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.

trees & shrubs

snippets of interest from the Upper Ovens Valley (& elsewhere)



While these forests will recover from fire, climate change is making fires more frequent and this is leading to local loss of Snow Gum

'Citizen science' field trip investigates loss of Snow Gums

by Cam Walker (Mountain Journal February)

Friends of the Earth recently held its first [citizen science fieldtrip](#) to map areas of Snow Gum forests in the Victorian mountains. These forests are largely protected in national parks but are threatened by climate driven fire regimes and dieback, which is caused by a native beetle.

We checked sites on the northern end of the Dargo High Plains, which is roughly south of the Hotham ski resort. We visited areas that have been burnt multiple times in recent years. This has resulted in the death of many parent trees, and then loss of the seedlings and resprouting that happened after the first fire. We were pleased to see that, after two mild and wet summers, seedlings have finally started to grow in sections of these burnt forests. [Read more of this post](#)



Dingo or a Dog? From Peter Jacobs

This dog was found beside our gravel track in extremely poor condition. I noted 'Erect ears, broad head, tail and colour suggest a strong dingo like appearance'.

A number of DELWP experts have had a look but provided no definitive answer to whether it is a dingo, dingo hybrid or a dog—do you have an opinion? Regardless it is interesting to think these important native apex predators are around.



Healthy dingo
The Conversation



As I walked up a gully behind my place an area the deer still frequent, I was dismayed to see a favourite clump of tree fern badly attacked with ongoing eating. I would suggest that these tree ferns will ultimately perish if not protected.

Ongoing deer impact From John Atkins Harrietteville 1/2/2022

Both Jenny Showers Harrietteville and I (John) at different locations noticed in early spring deer attacking the new growth of Tree ferns. This was the first time I had encountered tree fern being targeted, eating new fronds right back into the centre of the fern, those along the river at my place have recovered as the deer moved back up onto the mountains around us.

Is this a new development in deer learning in their habitat what is eatable? They do not appear to be tackling other ferns at this point, other than destroying them in their wallows. I don't need to tell those who frequent the bush what significant damage is being done to certain species changing whole ecologies, I am one who believes we are still low down on the population curve and antidotally see increased activity each year. We have not arrived yet at the overseas experience of deer numbers exceeding food capacity, so conservatory I believe what ever damage we currently see will increase with population growth in the years ahead.

I had grown up over two hundred tree ferns which I had plan to place back along the river and in other suitable areas, however now I question whether the exercise is worthwhile or would require significant permanent fencing beyond my capabilities. Whilst there has been some targeted shooting in the National Park on the eastern side of Harrietteville there is none in our state forest on the western side, also I believe at least around us there has been less hunting maybe due to Covid. However, these practices do not appear to reduce the overall population growth and a wonderful spring and summer will ensure high survival of this year's young.

I, like most observers of deer, have much comment to make but am frustrated that numerically we do not appear to have answers to a fully control their numbers in the expansive National Parks and State Forests?



Fern damage in wallow



[Nest Box Tales](#) from Ovens (Network) Landcare Newsletter Feb 2022

Over 300 of our native species in Australia use tree hollows—114 of our native bird species use tree hollows, the majority for nesting purposes. Some bird species, including Masked Owls, Sooty Owls, Australian Owlet-Nightjars and White-Throated Treecreepers also roost in tree hollows year-round. Native mammals are also heavily dependent on tree hollows, for sleeping during the day or to raise offspring. Of Australian native mammals, 83 species use tree hollows. These include bats, possums, gliders, and ground-dwelling mammals that climb such as quolls, native rats, dunnarts, phascogales, numbats and antechinus. Numerous reptile and amphibian species also use tree hollows.



[Nest Box Tales](#) is a fantastic website voluntarily created by Alice McGlashan, and there is an accompanying [Facebook Group](#) for anyone to join and share stories and learn from other's experiences, about nest boxes and tree hollow using native wildlife across Australia.

Check out all the different nest box designs available to download, and learn more about recommended materials and installation tips.

(Ed Note: reproduced from Network newsletter as there is plenty of community interest in nest boxes, design and placement)

[Orchids are a great indicator of environmental health](#) ABC News



An Albury based artist Ms Jakovac was hiking along a steep walk on Mount Buffalo "thinking and dreaming" when she saw it. The **elusive elbow orchid** - only about 10 centimetres tall, as thin as a needle – found after 11 years of searching local hills and mountains.

The executive director of science at Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria, Professor David Cantrill, said that although south-eastern Australia was a particularly biodiverse hotspot for these types of terrestrial orchids, they were often **very small and inconspicuous**. Recent rain has led to a fantastic season for Victorian orchids, of which there are about 400 species across the state.

Professor Cantrill said the elbow orchid was a "sexually deceptive" species with its unique shape an ingenious method to attract pollinating wasps. The female of this particular wasp is flightless, so they climb up onto a blade of grass and emit pheromones to attract the flying males.

"These orchids mimic that. That elbow looks like a wasp hanging on the side of a blade of grass and so it attracts the male in. "The elbow then bends and the pollen is attached to the wasp, so then it gets carried to another flower and enables pollination. It's a very complicated but very clever system."

The elbow orchid also relies on fungi to germinate its seeds and grow.

"So if any of those things are disrupted, then [the orchids] are unable to persist in the environment."

What's happening in Upper Ovens Valley?



Planting and Maintenance Days—green

Market (3rd Saturday every month)—brown

Community forums & Committee meetings (2nd Tuesday every month)—dark brown

what's coming up?: a lot!

- 17 Feb (Thurs)** **Planting maintenance Ovens/Buckland confluence (Telfords)**
- 19 Feb (Sat)** **February Market Howitt Park: Bright**
- 26 Feb (Sat)** **Planting maintenance Ovens/Buckland (Mt Buffalo Road)**
- 8 March** **Committee meeting: 5.30 pm U3A rooms Railway Ave Bright**
- 10 March (Thurs)** **Planting maintenance Ovens/Buckland (Mt Buffalo Rd)**
- 19 March (Sat)** **March Market Howitt Park: Bright**
- 20 March (Sun)** **Planting maintenance Germantown Streamside Reserve**
- 26 March (Sat)** **Sustainable Upper Ovens forum – Nature Based Solutions: Community Centre; Bright.**
- 7 April (Thurs)** **Planting maintenance Ovens/Buckland confluence (Telfords or Mt Buffalo rd: TBD)**
- 12 April (Tues)** **Lachlan Campbell NECMA – Climate Change in the NE (& Committee Meeting)**
- 16 April (Sat)** **April Market Howitt Park: Bright**
- 23 April (Sat)** **Planting maintenance German Creek**
- 30 April (Sat)** **Threatened Species Forum Dingo Dell Mt Buffalo NP**
- 10 May (Tues)** **Committee meeting: 5.30 pm U3A rooms Railway Ave Bright**
- 14 May (Sat)** **Upper Buckland planting: Omeo Gum**
- 21 May (Sat)** **May Market Howitt Park: Bright**
- 21/22 May** **Landcare Victoria forum: Beechworth**
- 28 May (Sat)** **Living with Deer forum—TBC**
- 14 June (Tues)** **DELWP Forest Fire Management (& Committee meeting: 5.30 pm U3A rooms Railway Ave Bright).**
- 18 June (Sat)** **June Market Howitt Park: Bright**
- 19 June (Sun)** **Ovens River planting – Bright to Germantown**
- 12 July (Tues)** **Committee meeting: 5.30 pm U3A rooms Railway Ave Bright**
- 16 July (Sat)** **July Market Howitt Park: Bright**
- 17 July (Sun)** **Ovens Buckland stage 3 planting**



Omeo Gum team looking at potential planting sites (above) & healthy old Omeo Gum (R) — Upper Buckland



Rod did a great job slashing paths through Ovens Buckland planting February 2022



Committee members

President: Peter Jacobs

Secretary: Jeanette McLaren

Treasurer: Simon Law

Mick Donges

Paul Hellier

Yvonne Ward

Jennie Showers

Graham Gales

Aviya Naccarella

Leonie Wyld

Helen Weston

Rod McCracken

Need more information?

Come and meet us to discuss any issues with members of the Upper Ovens Valley Landcare Group at our stand at the Bright 'Make-it, Bake-It, Grow-it' market—held on 3rd Saturday of every month. There are maps, literature and pamphlets available.

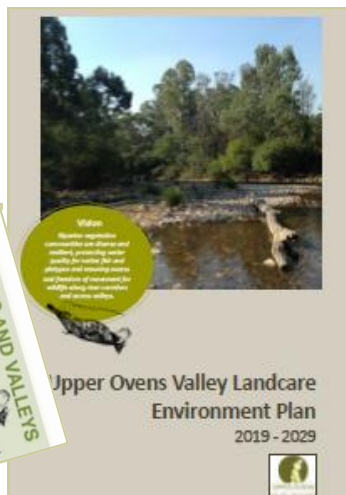
Alternatively go to:

UOVLG website: <https://upperovens.wixsite.com/upper-ovens-landcare>

Upper Ovens Valley Landcare Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/UOVLG/>

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Did you know?

The UOVLG has an Environment Plan that guides our work and a brochure on the values of our Riparian Areas.

They can both be downloaded from our website.

Note from editor

The UOVLG newsletter will come out every season—please send me any snippets or stories of interest, I'd love to hear from you!

Gill Anderson
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