Ramsar Progression.

Mornington Peninsula Shire Council at a recent update on the Tootgarook Wetland Strategy presented to Councillors indicated that progression towards a potential Ramsar nomination is still ongoing. Though it was acknowledged that Ramsar recognition requires considerable further work.

Briefs have been prepared for two distinct projects; one for the mapping of native vegetation types and threatened fauna and the second for a cultural heritage study. Expected to be undertaken during the course of 2013 and completed by calendar year end these projects will assist in the preparation of the Tootgarook Wetland Strategy.

Discussions are also progressing on the design and establishment of an environmental monitoring framework/program, which, if completed, could also be included in a Ramsar nomination. It is intended to seek expert advice to identify long term environmental targets.

Before proposing Tootgarook Wetlands as a site for nomination, an initial assessment of whether the site meets one or more of the Ramsar listing criteria is to be undertaken. The listing cannot proceed unless the site meets at least one criterion out of the nine listed criteria.

Final recommendations passed by Councillors unanimously will see; further consult with Indigenous Australians, including Traditional Owners who have rights and obligations for the site, industrial landowners and occupiers, recreation and tourism operators in the catchment (e.g. golf courses, camping and caravan parks) and market gardeners/farmers in the catchment.

(Continued on page 2).

On the 25th of May two endangered freckled ducks made an appearance at the northern end of Tootgarook Swamp.
GRANT KNOCKBACK

Despite all our best efforts to obtain some protection for the areas of the Tootgarook Swamp that are not protected in the form of some federal grant monies, we were unfortunately unsuccessful.

Though it should be noted that this seemed primarily due to the fact that carbon sequestration within known peat swamps is largely an unexplored area in Australia despite it being recognised on a global scale, indeed even by the Ramsar UN body for which we are signatories.

Sadly the idea of Blue Carbon has only recently been put forward to our government and even that is only accounting for mangrove estuaries and other marine environments not swamp peat lands which are still facing unprecedented levels of loss due to draining, forestry, agriculture and development, making them the most vulnerable of all wetland types.

Due to peat lands being formed over thousands of years they hold obscenely large amounts of carbon collected over time and stored in the soil layers. Once disturbance occurs through the above mentioned practices the carbon is released into the atmosphere causing large scale rises in emissions. Basically thousands of years of stored carbon can be released in days and continue to be released until spent, adding huge spikes to the carbon in the atmosphere which at current levels is already higher than is normal for the planet to function properly.

Save Tootgarook Swamp Inc. can only hope that as blue carbon takes a larger role in climate change reversal that peat lands will one day join the ranks of other blue environments set to see more permanent protection for the future and in the meantime we will continue to strive for a brighter future for the long suffering Tootgarook Swamp.

Read more about peatlands at www.wetlands.org

http://www.wetlands.org/?TabId=2737

First Sighting of a Pink Robin (female) in the Swamp at Browns
After a long awaited period Council has finally formally established the two Tootgarook Swamp Committees which will help pave the way for the next stage in the future of the Tootgarook Wetlands, hopefully for the betterment of the environment.

The first committee to proceed was the, Strategic Working Party with representatives of the following agencies: Melbourne Water; South East Water; Southern Rural Water; Environment Protection Authority (Victoria); Victorian Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE); Vic Roads; Victorian Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD); Trust for Nature; and Western Port Biosphere Reserve. Since forming it has met several times to discuss the future direction of the Tootgarook Swamp.

The second committee was finally selected and formed in April as now known as the, Stakeholder Advisory Committee and consisting of 19 community representatives.

Save Tootgarook Swamp Inc. is represented on this committee by group President Cameron Brown, who is loudly giving voice to the swamp issues which threaten the fragile site.

The first meeting was held on 16 April where members were finally introduced and some initial thoughts and ideas were voiced to proceed with into latter meetings as a strategy for the swamp is formulated.

A lot of positive communication came out of the initial meeting despite not all committee members seeing eye to eye on the swamp future. Discussion was held on the issues facing the Tootgarook Swamp which will need to be addressed as part of forming a strategy as well as how the future should be different from the past?

Questions such as, what are the key issues and opportunities facing the Tootgarook Wetlands? And what actions need to be taken and by whom to enhance and protect the Wetlands, were also addressed in discussions with a varying range of ideas and comments.

Some positive concluding decisions to come out of the meeting was the decision for Council to investigate the possibility of working party and Stakeholder Committee representatives having meetings to exchange information and jointly collaborate on strategies of significance for the Wetlands Management Plan, especially at crucial key parts of the strategy formation. A plan which is essential if the strategy is to move forward smoothly.

Currently arrangements for a site tour as part of a committee induction is in the works and we look forward to being able to show other committee members just what it is about the Tootgarook Swamp that’s makes it so deserving of our protection.

Save Tootgarook Swamp Inc. is proud to represent our members in this council endeavour to find the right path for the Tootgarook Swamp and its precious inhabitants.

Early morning winter mist over the Tootgarook swamp is like traveling back in time, as it obscures many buildings in the background.
The story is a ripping yarn, the tale having been passed on by witnesses to the long passed event, no official account exists though considering the in continuity of early Victorian newspapers it doesn’t mean it wouldn’t have been newsworthy. In the early 1840’s, the southern part of the Mornington Peninsula (the Nepean Peninsula) was held as large stock runs with, John and Dr Edward Barker at Cape Schanck, Maurice Meyrick at Buoneyyang¹ (Boneo), and Edward William Hobson at James Purves, Tootgarook.

In 1842 John Barker had returned to England and his brother Dr Edward Barker had taken over the running of their land near Barra bang creek. (Edward Barker was a surgeon who gave up medicine for the land but later returned to be on the surgical staff at Melbourne Hospital).

It was while his brother John was in England that a disagreement between Edward Barker and Maurice Meyrick led to a pistol duel, which took place at a location that seems disputed from different sources, one account has it to occurred on one of the ‘cups’ near the turn off to the present Cape Schanck Lighthouse², whilst another account states the scene of this duel was a few miles on the Sorrento side of the spot at which the Cape Schanck lighthouse was afterwards built³ and a third report states it as taking place at Desailly’s waterhole, on Boneo road.⁴

I personally favour another site, that being the actual location of the waterhole, (actually spelt De Salis⁵) located on Maxwell road, off Boneo next to the edge of the start of the Cups and a few miles from the Cape Schanck lighthouse, and the southernmost extent of the Tootgarook Swamp, for it was this waterhole which formed the catalyst of the dispute leading up to the duel.

(Continued next page.)

¹. From the spelling on G.D. Smythe’s Map of 1841 (spelling before the grant is Barkers, later spelling is of Boniyong is after Barker has the pre-emptive right instead of Meyrick).
³. The Argus Saturday 17 October 1931 page 4
⁴. Environmental History for the Mornington Peninsula Shire Council DRAFT ONLY SEP 2008 Mornington Peninsula Shire.
⁵. From the spelling on M. Callanan’s Map of 1863 Special Lands Parrish of Wannaeue County of Mornington.
The tale goes on to describe the removal of a natural object that is the cause of this dispute. It appears that some of Barker's men had removed either sand or had stripped bark from a wattle at De Salis waterhole. Or for those interested in European history, W.T. Jackson gives an account of the Barker - Meyrick duel, which was occasioned according to Thomas of the protectorate, by Barker's cutting down a magnificent oak tree, the first in the district, in the dry creek which was the boundary between the two runs, an oak tree which Meyrick painted, the painting being sent home to England. Dr Barker was a stutterer; the account casts him in an unfavorable light. One would assume it was an indigenous Drooping She-oak tree in the latter account.

One of the accounts goes on to tell that a furious argument started between De Salis who was employed by both William Hobson and Maurice Meyrick, and Edward Barker and that somehow Maurice Meyricks became involved and challenged Edward Barker to a pistol duel, the second known to be fought in Victoria, and what would also seem to be the last fought in the state.

Though whatever the reason we know that something happened to deeply offend at the De Salis waterhole in the Tootgarook Swamp, one would assume due to all accounts having the wrong spelling of the De Salis name, the location had been forgotten.

On the eventful day both parties were nervous so the story goes and secretly wished that the whole affair could be called off, but the 'seconds', more eager than the participants, eventually managed to get them lined up.

Meyrick fired first, his ball whistling past Barkers ear. Barker got such a fright he fired into the air, and, as the story has it, hit a passing seagull while in full flight! All agreed that honour was satisfied, and went off to celebrated at Meyrick's house. (Continued Page 6)
Was the last pistol duel in Victoria at De Salis Waterhole in Tootgarook Swamp? And, who really won?

(Continued from page 5).

Or was it? As mentioned before W.T. Jackson’s account paints Edward Barker in an unfavourable light, and in the following year (1843) after the duel, the run originally held by Maurice Meyrick was taken over by Barker. 12

The Tootgarook Swamp has much history awaiting rediscovery such as, the Tasman Land Bridge, the ‘Kiara Compost Company’, and Walter Hiscocks ‘Australian Gas and Power Co’, and ‘Peninsula Lime and Fertiliser works’, which first put the Tootgarook Swamp in International headlines in 1922.


Annual General Meeting.

All members and the public are cordially invited to attend the first annual meeting of;
Save Tootgarook Swamp Inc.
since its formation last year.

To be held at
Rosebud West Community Hall
20 Eliza street
Vern Wright Reserve
Rosebud West.

Sunday 25th August, 2.00pm til 5.00pm

Tea/coffee/cake refreshments following.

ANNUAL MEETING AGENDA.

Past year achievements.
Treasury report.
Future goals and challenges.
Election of Committee members.

Would you like to write an article for our next newsletter?

The catch it has to be about the Tootgarook Swamp catchment.

Please email your article to
contact@savetootgarookswamp.org
Save Tootgarook Swamp Website Launch.

Following several requests from members and the general public for a one stop shop for all things Tootgarook swamp, we have finally gone with an official website.

Located at www.savetootgarookswamp.org it contains lots of facts and interesting notes about our beloved swamp. You can learn all about the swamp flora and fauna, with a future update planned of photographs of all the endemic flora as well as weeds, to aid in plant identification as well as its history both culturally and heritage past.

There’s tips on what individuals can do to aid the swamp, some ideas that can even transfer to the bit of bush near you even if you don’t live near the swamp, something which we get asked a lot. Save Tootgarook Swamp news and updates are published here so members and those interested can track the group.

One particular highlight is our merchandise page where you can buy all things swampy and show your support for our own piece of the unique swamp environment right here on the Mornington Peninsula.

And of course there is plenty of photos to check out, all taken right here in the swamp. So if you have never seen this special place check out the website for a glimpse of what you've been missing.

The website is also mobile friendly with a matching mobile site for smartphones, any ideas and suggestions to help improve our site are also most welcome.

Have a look at the website at www.savetootgarookswamp.org
Still Get Your Sticker for $1

You can now show your support for Tootgarook Swamp by buying a sticker for your car, workplace, home or any where else you feel like placing it.

Not only do the stickers look great, they are durable and the eye catching design will draw peoples attention.

The stickers are only $1.00 and all proceeds go back to the group, so buy a couple and give some to your friends and family.

If you would like some stickers send us an email with your request and we will organize a suitable pickup/delivery.

Sticker payments or any other donations to aid the group can be made by Bank transfer to

Save Tootgarook Swamp Inc.
BSB 063540
Account No. 10582313

Cheque/money orders also welcome. See postal address opposite.

"This wetland has the ability to provide for the community, with jobs and income potentially forever if looked after, residential homes do not."