Wetland Week 2014.

Following on from our World Wetland Day event in February, it has come to our attention that Australia’s wetlands don’t get nearly as much attention as they should considering our dry climate and something should be done to remedy it.

World Wetland Day is held in the drying cycle for most Southern Hemisphere wetlands and we think it would be good to celebrate our wetlands when they are at their finest.

With this in mind we have decided to promote a new Wetland tradition on the Mornington Peninsula, Wetland Week, to be held in September during Biodiversity Month. This year between 15th and 21st. Though this is still a new idea taking shape and may take time to gain momentum we hope to gain the Mornington Peninsula Shire and other authorities support to get it going.

As a group we will hold a small wetland event on Saturday 20th September to educate the community on wetlands and in particular our very own Tootgarook Swamp which is rapidly gaining recognition from authorities and the community alike as we discover more and more fascinating facts about this special spot.

So note this week on your calendar in September and take a bit of time out of your week to do something with a wetland theme. Visit a local wetland, volunteer with a wetland group, do a wetland activity with the kids or come along on Saturday for a guided wetland tour with a local ecologist.

So keep your eye out for more information on our upcoming day and hopefully the beginning of a new wetland tradition on the Mornington Peninsula.
Shire Swamp Strategy Progress.

Things might seem quiet in the Shire on the Swamp front but plans are moving afoot within and the Tootgarook Swamp it would seem is going to be the winner in all the progress.

The Shire has been gradually working on tightening the planning and overlay regulations within the Swamp catchment to provide greater protection for the sensitive area and as of 25th August a plan will have been presented to Council at the Council Meeting and more than likely be passed unanimously.

The plan for Tootgarook Swamp planning future includes the following major changes to be completed in 3 stages:

- Rezone existing public land or municipal land to an appropriate Public Park and Recreation Zone (PPRZ) or Public Conservation and Resource Zone (PCRZ)
- Rezone existing developed land (Village Glen Retirement Village) from Special Use Zone – Schedule 4 – Recreational Development (SUZ4) to General Residential Zone (GRZ) consistent with the zoning of surrounding residential land
- Apply the Environmental Significance Overlay – Schedule 17 – Streamline (ESO17) to Drum Drum Alloc Creek, adjusting the Overlay from its current position on Planning Scheme maps to an amended position which ensures that the centreline of the ESO17 is also the centreline of the watercourse
- Extend the Environmental Significance Overlay – Schedule 17 – Streamline (ESO17) to include the full length of Drum Drum Alloc Creek from Boneo Road through Hiscocks Road to where it connects with Chinamans Creek
- Apply the Environmental Significance Overlay – Schedule 17 – Streamline (ESO17) to a currently unnamed ephemeral creek that flows from the Tootgarook Wetlands between Tern Avenue and Elizabeth Avenue, Rosebud West
- Apply a new Environmental Significance Overlay – Schedule 30 – Tootgarook Wetlands to a broader area of the Tootgarook Wetlands ecosystem where significant flora and fauna have been recorded as well as areas cultural and geological significance
- Apply a new Special Building Overlay Rosebud Industrial Estate (SBO) to the Rosebud Industrial Estate to better manage the drainage of this area
- Apply a Design and Development Overlay to the Rosebud West area, generally between Boneo Road and Truemans Road where there is limited infrastructure
- Apply a new Vegetation Protection Overlay – Schedule 3 – Wetland Environ Vegetation (VPO3) to the Rosebud West area that will be covered by Design Development Overlay 22
- Rezone all or part of the existing Council owned land at 40 Colchester Road, Rosebud West from Industrial 3 Zone (INZ3) to Public Conservation and Resource Zone (PCRZ)
- Rezone land at 9 St Elmos Close, Rosebud West from General Residential Zone (GRZ) to Special Use Zone – Schedule 11 – Tootgarook Wetlands
- Rezone part of the land at 92 Elizabeth Avenue from General Residential Zone (GRZ) and Special Use Zone – Schedule 4 – Recreational Development (SUZ4) to Special Use Zone – Schedule 11 – Tootgarook Wetlands
- Apply a new Local Planning Policy/Local Area Plan – Clause 22.22 – Tootgarook Wetlands Ecosystem to the whole of the Tootgarook Wetlands catchment and the Rosebud West area between the Rosebud Hospital and Truemans Road

These changes represent a massive leap in the protection for the Tootgarook Swamp and though many of these changes will take time and lots of work and community consultation to implement they will go a long way towards securing the swamps future.

Though Ramsar listing is not a priority at this point in time, it is not completely written off rather continued research over the medium term and the development of a Wetland Strategy and LandUse Management Plan (catchment based) will put the Tootgarook Swamp in a stronger position for a Ramsar nomination in the longer term and earn the time necessary to secure the support of landowners and public land managers (including DEPI and Melbourne Water) which is critical.

Looks like the Council is going to be very busy over the next year and more and Save Tootgarook Swamp Inc, will be there the entire way offer information, advice and support to enable them to get the best results possible for the Tootgarook Swamp.
Many of you are likely already aware by now that the development application which was due to go before VCAT has been withdrawn.

This is good news for the swamp as it has been given a temporary reprieve from this threat and hopefully with the Council now strongly in favour of the Tootgarook Swamp’s protection we might be able to avoid coming against this proposal again.

We would like to extend our many thanks to all of our members for their support as we prepared to defend this development as a group at VCAT. Though we were unable to present the submissions which we had so thoroughly worked on we learned a lot preparing them and they may still come in handy should we face anymore development proposals.

As a group we have also extend our gratitude and thanks to the Mornington Peninsula Shire for the extensive and thorough effort to which the staff had clearly put into preparing a defence for this valuable part of Tootgarook Swamp from an inappropriate development.

We are encouraged for the future of the Tootgarook Swamp knowing the Council see's the same values in the area which the community cherishes and desperately wants to preserve.

Though a VCAT defence is no longer necessary, we at Save Tootgarook Swamp Inc. believe this provides the Shire with an excellent opportunity to seek further protection for this particular parcel and potentially avoid any more expensive legal defences for the site.

St Elmos was one of many threats currently facing the Tootgarook Swamp's future and though this one is temporarily off the agenda we still have many encounters to face before the swamp inhabitants can breathe easy again but rest assured Save Tootgarook Swamp Inc isn’t ready to stop now, not when we’ve just begun to make progress.
New Endangered Bittern sightings.

The sightings of rare birds in the Tootgarook Swamp has taken a turn for the better following the Southern Emu Wren report with multiple sightings of up to what may now be four or more endangered Australasian Bitterns.

Delighted bird watchers carrying out the monthly Birdlife survey have been given a rare glimpse of this secretive and enigmatic bird who holds a special place in our cultural past with the Bunyip myth largely being attributed to this bird thanks to its mournful booming call which echoed over the land on a still night.

Sadly the Australasian Bittern’s status as Endangered is a result of a 50% decline in numbers and it’s still falling. The population is now estimated to number not more than 1,000 mature individuals and is probably between 247 and 796 Australia wide. In Victoria, estimates are only 86-248 birds. The larger difference between numbers is a result of our inability to locate these crafty birds at the best of times.

All this means the preservation and protection of the Tootgarook Swamp is all the more important so the Australasian Bitterns will always have a home here.

Historic Aerial Photo’s.

Earlier this year we came across some old aerial photography of the swamp and through some investigations have discovered that a number of aerial shots over the swamp over the past have been taken.

Further investigations put us in contact with a photomapping service online where we could order negatives of the aerial shots.

So we are now pleased to inform the group that we are in the process of purchasing some very old and valuable information on the swamp’s history which has never been seen before.

Through these photo’ s we will be better able to understand the swamp’s seasonal and historical functionality, it’s past vegetation history and the changes that have taken place since.

Such information will be invaluable in deciding the best course of action for the management of Tootgarook Swamp both now and into the future.

We look forward to sharing these photo’s with you soon.
Southern Rural Water Groundwater Atlas

The Port Phillip & Western Port Groundwater Atlas was launched on 18 August 2014 and we encourage you all to take a look at it.

The atlas provides comprehensive and easy-to-understand information about the groundwater cycle and aquifer layers, how groundwater is used in the region, and how it is managed and more importantly the most detailed look at the Nepean Peninsula’s groundwater system ever undertaken.

Page 37 of the atlas includes a brief description of the Tootgarook Swamp environment, its relationship to the aquifer and potential threats to the groundwater dependant environment.

Some interesting facts to come out of the document reveal that;

- The Mornington Peninsula has nearly 3000 privates bores registered and that of those the majority a located on the Nepean Peninsula where the swamp lies. This is over 2000 more bores than neighbouring councils and is likely to be putting much strain on the groundwater dependant eco-systems of the Nepean catchment.

- The estimated total annual value of groundwater usage in the Nepean catchment is as follows, Private bores- $3,072,313, Agribusiness- $3,462,085 and Urban Industrial-$6,131,764. This is a significant economic return and much higher than a lot of other regions.

Given the Tootgarook Swamp is likely to be largely dependant on the Nepean groundwater it will be highly sensitive to over-extraction and with so many bores in operation one must wonder whether this is not already occurring. When the monetary value of ground water is taken into consideration it seems ridiculous to risk damaging or destroying the swamp and that the best course for all water authorities and government bodies is to take all steps necessary to protect and safeguard the swamp so as not to lose the environmental and economic benefits it is so clearly providing.

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

Location of Annual General Meeting.

2014 Annual General Meeting.

It’s been a busy year for Save Tootgarook Swamp Inc. as we’ve continued with our efforts to preserve and protect the Tootgarook Swamp.

Now it’s time to celebrate and discuss our successes and projects of the past year and also to plan out our activities for the next year with our members.

So we’d like to invite all our members to RSVP to join us at our upcoming Annual General Meeting Sunday, 5th October, Vern Wright Reserve, Rosebud West.

Starting at a relaxing 10am until 12noon the morning will encompass a half hour Presidents report of the group’s past and future activities, a quick look at the finances and voting in of our committee members plus questions from audience.

Then we’ll enjoy the company of a Guest speaker (TBC) for half an hour.

Finally concluding with some light finger food and some good company and all just a short drive from the Tootgarook Swamp.
Friends of Tootgarook Wetland Reserves.

There are friends groups right across the Peninsula helping to preserve reserves and important habitat and the Tootgarook Swamp is no different.

Friends of Tootgarook Wetland Reserves is a local Shire sponsored group who works out in the wetlands at currently two sites, Sanctuary Park Bushland Reserve and the artificial community wetland, Tootgarook Wetland Reserve. Both sites are within the swamp catchment and vital to the overall health and wellbeing of the swamp and all its inhabitants, be they plant or animal.

Meeting on the first Saturday of each month they can be seen hard at work removing weeds and rescuing indigenous flora which might otherwise have been lost by overtaking weedy competition. Though it is sometimes hard work they are always out there with a smile happy to contribute what they can back to the environment which they all clearly love. Of course a coffee and a bickie on a cold day following the work is also a welcome benefit.

Weeding isn’t all they do but, raising community awareness and engaging the wider public on the subject of the Tootgarook Swamp and wetland conservation is also high on the agenda. They often have stalls at local environmental and community events and have produced an array of informative brochures on the Tootgarook Swamp for public benefit.

Recently they attended an Official Announcement at the Seawinds Hub for an upcoming project including a Tootgarook Wetlands Reserve Youth Led Design project. Funded through the last of the Community Renewal flexible funds and in partnership with Rosebud secondary College, Eastbourne Primary School and Hands on Learning Australia, the project will engage young people in a design process that will develop ideas for improvements to the Tootgarook Wetlands Reserve area. Led by Co-Design, Friends of Tootgarook Wetland Reserves will volunteer time to work alongside the young people from the local community and share and impart our knowledge and respect for this beautiful area and hopefully form a stronger relationship with them, one which they can build upon over the coming years.

It sounds like a fabulous project and another successful endeavour from the Friends of Tootgarook Wetland Reserves team who, like ourselves, are striving continuously to see the Tootgarook Swamp get the recognition and protection it so justly deserves and take it’s place amongst the other great wetlands and waterways of Victoria and maybe even one day Australia.

If you haven’t heard about them before or want to see what they are up too or find the next event date, check out their Facebook page at https://www.facebook.com/FriendsofTootgarookWetlandReserves
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."

Contact Us

Give us a call for more information about our services and products

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