



Event: Wandoo Wanderer Woodlands Wildflower Educational Trek.

Where: DPaW managed Estate, PVS Hills District, Wandoo Woodlands NP.

When: Sunday the 30th of August 2015.

Start Time: 9:00am

Finish Time: 4:30pm

Purpose: environmental awareness education program, not for profit effort.

Event report by Geoff Couper.

Participants:

1. Event organiser: Joy Mack-Heaven;
2. Environmental scientist and educator: Tony Roupheel;
3. Trips leader: Geoff Couper;
4. Tail end Charlie; Jeff Hemsley.
5. Sofia Couper;
6. John Cardew;
7. Maureen Cardew;
8. Ray Masters;
9. Peta Roberts;
10. Grant van der Helder;
11. Erin van der Helder;
12. Terry Wilson;
13. David Peck;
14. Tim Mitchell;
15. Gerry Ligtermoet;
16. Jennifer Ligtermoet;
17. Peter Mack-Heaven;
18. Debbie McSwiney;
19. Lyn Hemsley;
20. Grace van der Helder;
21. Isabelle van der Helder;
22. Ben Mitchell;
23. Heath Mitchell.

Many apologies if I've left anyone off the above list. Please let me know and I'll add you on at a later date.

Member vehicles:



All arrived at the Lakes Roadhouse almost on time and for those arriving a tad earlier managed to get a nice warm coffee down purchased from the Lakes Roadhouse.

The rain held off for the morning and when all arrived we had a bit of chat to let everyone know what was to be expected for the days outing.

Tony gave a great outline of the days precedings which gave us a very good start.

Jeff elected to take rear position at the tail end of the convoy momentarily changing his name to Charlie which meant less confusion because we had a Jeff and a Geoff at either end of an 11 vehicle convoy.

The track route that Tony was so, so kind to pass onto me to plan the trip was very easy to follow, basically the convoy was going to do a rather large figure 8 through the woodland picking up various points of interest along the way.

We placed Tony in the middle of the convoy for a couple of reasons, the first one being that everyone would be able to hear Tony's commentary whilst in transit and secondly so when we stopped members didn't have to walk the full length of the 11 vehicle convoy, I think the methodology worked a treat.

Joy invited a friend whom had travelled out from England and this was her first real exposure to Australian bushland and at the end of the day I overheard her say (when questioned of course) that the English have nothing like we have within the Wandoo Woodlands, it is a very special area particularly being so, so close to a Capital City.

Our first stop was to air down tyres to conditions, terrain type, then onto the second stop POI just adjacent to the Helena River, more like a creek though.

Quite a variety of plant species here where Tony explained the different kinds of trees within the Park, particularly with reference to the variations of Wandoo. Tony even brought along some great books as references and guides in helping identify what we were all looking at, at a later date.



Tony's commentary was quite educational and enlightening which prompted a fair amount of chatter and feedback from the members which was great to see.

Back into convoy and moving right along, Tony suggested I take a short cut and do the gentle climb to the top of Mount Talbot? Or was that Talbot Hill?! Found a nice open area with a view I thought would make a great spot for a morning tea break.

After morning tea a gentle stroll into the bush again only to be watched over by a Black Cockatoo up on a branch whilst Tony continued to address the members on the significance of this fragile and very unique ecosystem. He also spoke to us about aspects of Aboriginal heritage and European Explorers, even explained in detail some geological theories about the kinds of rocks found and formed in the Park, very educational indeed.



Back to the vehicles, pack up morning tea and back into convoy.

Oh and thanks for all the extra's like that Apple and Cinnamon cake Joy ;-) Wow!

Slight challenge getting up the hill out of where we stopped for morning tea but no one seemed to have any drama's getting out, all very capable and responsible 4wdriver's this mob and really happy with that too.

Where ever there is mud it's like a magnet to the young ones and the smiles tell the story. What a great photo Joy?



Grace, Isabelle, Ben & Heath

Next stop was really very nice as lots of wildflowers out but nowhere to park the 4wd's up but on the 4wd track itself. Sorry motorbikes, luckily none came past.

Again Tony addressed the group with some great informative commentary on one specific tree on the corner as we turned right. Off in to the distance past this solitary tree was a ray of colour spread across the ground into the distance, well worth the drive just to check this out.

Not going to let too much out of the bag in terms of what the tree is, why? Because no one will come out again next year, right?



Next stop was to be lunch break at the Defor Wetlands and unfortunately I didn't take any photos here due the fact that the wetlands have become a bit of an eye soar, it is in serious need of some TLC to get it back to what we have all witnessed earlier in the day.

Why are the wetlands in such a poor state? It's alleged that unsustainable vehicular movement around the perimeter of this very sensitive ecological wetland has restricted water runoff into the centre of the wetlands. If the wetlands are to recover, to get it back into the same kind of condition as the Little Darkin Conservation Wetlands then something, needs to be done.

Responsible 4wd drivers via the peak bodies have the resources and man power to offer in a voluntary capacity in an effort to assist in a solution with the direction and support of the land managers being the Department of Parks and Wildlife (DPaW).

I really didn't want to portray all the bad areas that have been so badly affected by ignorant misuse; I'd rather promote how it should be like out there and what I hope most people want to head out there to see which I would hope is not a dust bowl.

The Little Darkin Wetlands is in much better condition as you can see by the photo below.

So much wildlife at Little Darkin compared to Defor such as frogs, birds, all kinds of critters.



This was to be our last stop as a complete group before moving further south. A couple of vehicles peeled off from convoy at the next turn and headed out via Yarri Road as we doubled back towards West Talbot Road. Yes, we were now running behind schedule, sorry about that.

One more stop just off Darkin River next to a small quaint little Dam. Very nice bush walks here to explore deeper into the bush and apparently it's quite a special walk too.

The members that live South of the River headed to the Brookton Highway whilst the rest of us Northerners continued on to do the full loop as planned by Tony's suggested trip notes. Tony peeled off momentarily but caught up with us as we aired back up at the T junction of West Talbot Road.

Yes, it was a great day, hopefully enjoyed by all, the weather great, fantastic company, just a great way to spend a Sunday, just a shame the Eagles went down to the Crows.

More photos can be seen from the front page of our website www.trackcare.com.au.

Many thanks to all those that came out as without you guys this event would not have happened.

A special thanks to Joy, Tony and Jeff.

Cheers.