

Hamilton-Wannon Rail Reserve excursion, 18 May 2013

Rod Bird

Background

On Thursday 16 May Heinze de Chelard and Rod Bird presented a talk with photographic images of flora and landscape features and discussed the environmental values of this railway reserve and its potential for recreation. A Rail Trail will open up the rail reserve for the public to enjoy travel (for fitness or relaxation) through a fantastic rural countryside where they can also see remnants of native vegetation that still exist on many parts of the reserve. In 2003-04 flora surveys were conducted on behalf of the *Hamilton-Coleraine Railway Reserve Management Committee* (for their amended Management Plan) and added to since then (see HFNC web site).

On Saturday 18 May, John & Glenys, Rod & Diane, Dave & Lyn, Ross, Jane & Jerry Chin met at 9 am at the Visitor Centre and proceeded to Bochara Station Ground. There we met Hilary and Louise.

We walked along sections of the Rail Reserve between Bochara and the Wannon River, with some car-shuffling to enable this to happen (see next page for a map of the rail trail).

- We assembled at Bochara Station Ground and had a brief look at the Legless Lizard information board and grassland on the reserve that runs east to the Glenelg Highway crossing (55 native flora sp.). Then we left most cars at the station ground while the ‘walkers’ strolled to McKinnon Ck (2.05 km; 16 native flora species) and on to Russell’s Rd. Those in 2 cars drove to Russell’s Rd and walked back to McKinnon Ck (0.48 km; 31 native flora sp.) to see the crossing site where the long bridge had been.
- The ‘walkers’ continued from Russell’s Rd to Sandy Creek Bridge (2.83 km, 58 native species) and on to S Reed’s Rd (0.94 km; 89 native flora sp.). Those in cars walked back to the Creek to meet the ‘walkers’. We pulled some seedling *A. longifolia* along this section. We saw patches of the garden weed *Oxalis purpurea* towards the bridge. This Unit has the best flora on the entire reserve and control of weeds is vital. After morning tea at S Reeds Rd the walkers continued to Nigretta Rd (1.75 km; 78 native flora sp.), noting that several calves had broken through the old southern fence. *Amyema pendula* was also noted (a new record for that unit).
- At Nigretta Rd we found the *Triodia scariosa* (Porcupine Grass or Spinifex) that Lionel Elmore found in about 1965. Its extent has seemingly not changed in that time. This spine-tipped species is an extreme outlier, not seen elsewhere in the district. It grows on both sides of the road about 20 m north of the rail crossing. Everyone walked down to the Wannon Railway Bridge (0.52 km; 73 native flora sp.) along this sandy unit that supports a rich heathland ecosystem, including *Calytrix teragona*, not seen elsewhere in the district.
- Ross, Jerry and Jane continued their walk to the Wannon Falls Scenic Reserve (about 2 km). Others drove to that site for a picnic lunch by the river. We then transported people back to their vehicles at Bochara and returned home at about 3 pm.

Photos show start (Bochara Station Ground) and end (Nigretta Rd crossing to Wannon).



First stage for proposed Hamilton-Coleraine Rail Trail – 2013

Balkins Rd crossing to Wannon-Nigretta Rd on the rail reserve

