

Southern Grampians Plan for Nature 2023-2033 – draft Nov. 2023

Comments from Hamilton Field Naturalists Club on one aspect of the draft.

Appendix 3: Environmental Volunteers:

HFNC is concerned that the people who wrote this report have little understanding of what Field Naturalists clubs do. Thus they describe HFNC 'type' as 'recreation/nature experience'. This is not relevant to the subject matter and is an insult to our club. The very establishment in 1958 of the HFNC was to advocate for retention of adequate reserves of the natural environment. In all the years that followed, HFNC has been strenuously involved in activities to conserve and restore the natural environment.

Our efforts differ from that of other Landcare Groups in this area who operate on farm land, do not work on public lands and many do not plant trees indigenous to their particular landscapes.

I have summarised below some of the works that HFNC has done over the past 40 years.

Tree planting on public lands

- Mt Napier – planting the bald summit with adjacent indigenous trees in 1985-86
- Wannon Scenic Res in 1990-92 – area on east side that had been a pine plantation was planted with local tree and shrub species from adjacent areas
- Telecom 1993 Optic Fibre line restoration – we planted 555 local indigenous trees on 20 disturbed sites on the Glenelg Highway from Hamilton to Wickliffe.
- Lake Linlithgow – in 1985-86 and 1992-93 plantations of local species were established on the east bank. That was followed up in 2003-2006 when several hundred more local species, including Drooping Sheoak, Sweet Bursaria and Silver Banksia, were planted in concert with Parks Victoria revegetation of the remaining banks of the lake.
- Kanawalla Rail Flora Reserve – after removal of some 100 large pines in 2003, HFNC has replanted hundreds of local indigenous trees up to 2023 (particularly Silver Banksia, Drooping Sheoak and Manna Gum) on this 1.5 km-long station ground/reserve.
- Yatchaw Rail Reserve – local plains Silver Banksia were grown from seed from survivors and seedlings planted in 1982. More planting was done, in conjunction with Friends of Forgotten Woodlands in 2022.
- Parklands at Hamilton – HFNC assisted with planting of areas there.
- Lake Hamilton – HFNC grew seedlings from local indigenous species and these were planted in the early stages of work at the lake.

Weed control on public lands

- Fulham Streamside Reserve – work from 2008-2023 controlling Cape Tulip and other weeds by herbicide-wiping on the western heathland area (this involved 2-3 visits each year)
- Nigretta Flora Reserve – work each year from 2009-2023 controlling African Weed Orchid (AWO) and other weeds (2-3 visits each spring)
- Nigretta Falls Scenic Reserve – work each year from 2009 to remove AWO and other weeds from this reserve
- Four Posts Streamside Reserve – work each year from 2016 to remove AWO from this reserve
- Kanawalla Rail Flora Reserve – work several times each year from 2002 -2023 controlling garden and agricultural weeds on this large linear reserve.
- Wannon Flora Reserve – annual visits most years from 1960 to 2023 to control weeds. In 2020-2023 this involved a very large project funded through Landcare Vic (and supported by SGSC) to remove *Acacia paradoxa* from the reserve.

Environmental surveys on public lands

- Botanical surveys of Wannon River Reserves and frontages (1986 to 1992 and sporadically thereafter to 2020 – some 50 areas were surveyed – this was used by the LCC to base the case for Flora Reserves and Streamside Reserves in the area
- Bird surveys – especially the Lake Linlithgow seasonal surveys conducted annually from 1983 to 2023 - were used to have 'Hamilton Lakes' (Linlithgow and adjacent wetlands) identified in the National Directory of Important Migratory Shorebird Habitat as one of 6 priority sites for Victoria. (2021)

- Geological surveys – the late Ken Grimes performed many such surveys and made his information available to the public.
- Mammal Surveys – HFNC has conducted surveys at Mount Napier State Park and Bear State Forest and has made the results available to the public.

The projects mentioned above do not cover all of the environmental works conducted by HFNC.

We request that the Shire amend the misleading statement in the Draft Plan for Nature 2023-2033 relating to HFNC, replacing the words ‘Recreation/Nature Experience’ with an appropriate description that captures the relevant part of our activities. That description might be ‘Caring for the Natural Environment’.

We also believe that the Landcare Groups would be more appropriately described as ‘Caring for Agricultural Landscapes’

Much of our work is set out in our website in the ‘Publications/Information’ folder:

<https://www.hamilton-field-naturalists-club-victoria.org.au>

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18 Feb 2024