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Treasurer:- Kaye Vaux 098 282037
Twertup Field Study Centre Committee Chairman:- Keith Bradby 098 381129

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING:- The AGM of the Fitzgerald River National Park Association (Inc) will be on Saturday 10th March. It will be at the home of Bill Lullfitz (ring for directions if necessary) and will commence at 2.30pm. As Bill's is fairly centrally located for members who are likely to attend, it is hoped that all will be able to stay for an evening barbecue to which you should bring your own everything.

One of the items on the agenda is to be the formulation of the Association's official policy on the land north of the Park. To aid in this decision making, it is planned to have an excursion into the controversial area on the morning of the AGM. Those interested will meet at the corner of the Old Ongerup Road and Bell Track. The tour WILL LEAVE at 10.30am. The route will be circular so some cars can be left at that corner. A couple of farm blocks will be looked at as will the Ground Parrot study area and one of the new farm access roads. There will be plenty of opportunity for questions and discussion.

OTHER TOPICS TO BE DISCUSSED AT THE AGM INCLUDE:-

(a) Fees for the year. It is proposed that membership subscriptions remain the same, but that course fees be doubled so that the Association is able to offer tutors something towards their petrol and have a little over if a course is well attended for Twertup maintenance.

(b) International Biosphere Reserve WORKSHOP. The workshop would be organised by FRNPA and NPA. Present would be local managers of the region e.g. farmers, NPA; local community, e.g. schools, FRNPA, Lions; and scientific researchers with knowledge of major landscape components of the region. The aim would be to explore the IBR concept and to determine its relevance locally i.e. to convert the label to a pursuable line of action.

DISPLAY BOARD: It has been agreed by members of the executive to go ahead with an idea of A. Chapman of preparing a display to be used at local schools, shire offices and field days. The initial aim will be to heighten awareness and appreciation of local plants. It is hoped to make a different display each year. This year the theme will be plant distribution, concentrating on plants that are limited within the area between Stirlings and Munglinup. Approximately eight good photos will be featured. If you have one that you think may be suitable, could you send or show it to Kaye Vaux or Ken Newbey. World Wildlife Fund is making a splash of International Plants Campaign commencing on 22 March. We hope to be ready to benefit from their publicity.

GEKKO STUDY:- The Gekko Project is now officially under way at last and Heath Bradby found the first gekko during the arthropod weekend. All the equipment is kept in the "Blue Box" in George Duxbury's office. ANY users of Twertup are invited to try their hand at gekko hunting. Collect the box from George (Ranger) on your way in. COMPLETE INSTRUCTIONS are with the equipment. The basic idea is to have fun finding gekkoes and other fauna in the bush at night, and to record data on the biology of three gekko species:-

Diplodactylus granariensis (Wood Gekko),
Phyllurus milii (Barking Gekko),
Phyllodactylus marmoratus (Marbled Gekko).

Their photos are in the box.

What we want to know is whether these species become active at different temperatures to each other and whether they live in different habitats.

No previous experience is necessary. Have fun, have a go.

A. Chapman, Gekko Study Organizer.

BOOK FEATURING FRNP:- "Australia the Beautiful Wilderness" by A. Moulton (text), L. Meier (photographs) is now available. (\$38.95 Wattle Books)

A copy has been purchased with some PCAP funds and placed in the Jerramungup Resource Centre from where it is available for borrowing.

A wilderness area in each state was sought. To qualify, the area had to be remote, free of rubbish and man-made sounds, and to show few signs of human use. As mentioned in the W.A. section, total wilderness experience can never again be achieved as if a day be spent in a natural area, one must take care not to gaze into the heavens at night, space junk being all too visible when far from city lights.

The FRNP was chosen as the W.A. representative, and the authors' guide was Keith Bradby. The job was done in late January, so the flowering season was at a low ebb. Also only nine full days were scheduled. Keith is a little embarrassed as his name and Heather's appear in the acknowledgements. They did offer to read the text on FRNP prior to printing, but this offer was not taken up. This was unfortunate, as many errors were made. Among the photo captions there are nine errors of a botanical nature, many of which can be readily picked up by anyone with some interest in native plants of this area. A brown falcon is labelled a square-tailed kite, and there are also captions to distress geologists, archeologists, and geographers.

The text shows a talent for leaping to conclusions e.g. that flowering plants did exist 3,000 million years ago, A. Moulton being strong on words, but short on research or even checking.. His style is very flowery and may delight some readers while aggravating others. Although the Park rivers are salt, the rainfall is reliable and the Park is always well vegetated. "Salt Desert" seems an inappropriate title for the FRNP, and would not apply should the land to the north of the Park be cleared for agriculture.

I felt that there were too many errors and it lessened my confidence in the rest of the text.

Many of the photos are superb and even haunting. The Kakadu flower photos are exquisite, a wide range of light quality has been captured in the scenes, and some of the close-ups help us discover surprising beauty in the commonplace.

The book also contains a map of each wilderness (with no scale), and an excellent introduction by Dr. Bob Brown of the Tasmanian Wilderness Society. So despite the faults outlined, "Australia the Beautiful Wilderness" is well worth examining. It could spur activity to help preserve Australia's few remaining wildernesses - the sub-title is aptly "our threatened lands". Or the reader may choose to ignore the descriptions of privation suffered by the authors, and experience these places for himself.

ARTHROPOD COURSE:- This was arranged at short notice. Some publicity was organised. Apologies to anyone who was neither notified nor heard the radio announcements. Fifteen students attended the course which was led by recently retired biologist, Peter McMillan. His knowledge of arthropods was very broad though he showed a particular interest in beetles. Twenty one species of jewel beetle were found. Instruction was given on arthropods in general, use of the microscope, insects in the field, preparing insects and other arthropods for display. It was practical and enjoyable. Collecting was done under licence and sparingly. Special extras included the butterfly net ballet, the 11pm tiger snake near the bird bath, recording the first official gekko in the Gekko Study, and Roe's Rock, majestic despite the overcast sky.

TWERTUP IMPROVEMENTS:- The track in to Twertup had been damaged by heavy summer rain. But now George has filled in the worst of the washes and has made some drains which should cut the erosion problem. So Twertup is still accessible to 2WD vehicles.

The back verandah floor has been cemented, a long bench with shelf below has been built underneath the verandah windows, and there is a new bookshelf in the lounge room. There is also a large blackboard. All done and/or organised by K. Bradby and A. Chapman.

Brenda Newbey (Hon. Secretary)