



**RESPONSE FROM PETER HAWKER
CHAIRMAN - FIELD & GAME AUSTRALIA**

JULY 13, 2021

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ENVIRONMENT
AND PLANNING COMMITTEE

Inquiry: Inquiry into ecosystem decline
Hearing Date: 17 June 2021

Question from Ms Bath (page 11)

HEART MORASS, AND IT IS A TRULY AMAZING TRANSFORMATION FROM A DESOLATE SORT OF PLACE TO AN ABUNDANCE OF WATERFOWL AND ALL SORTS OF SPECIES AND A BEAUTIFUL PLACE TO BE. IT MIGHT BE HELPFUL, BECAUSE WE ARE NOT GOING TO GET OUT THERE, TO PROVIDE SOME BEFORE AND AFTER PICTURES FOR US

BEFORE



AFTER



Read more about the Heart Morass Wasteland to Wetland report in Appendix 1

Question from Ms Bath (page 11)

A LIST OF SOME OF THE OTHER VICTORIAN SITES THAT YOU HAVE—SO A BIT OF AN UPDATE OF WHAT OTHER AREAS YOU RESPOND TO AND LOOK AFTER

- Hird Swamp (Ramsar-listed, part of the Kerang Wetlands)
- Johnson Swamp (Ramsar-listed, part of the Kerang Wetlands)
- Dowd Morass (Ramsar-listed, part of the Gippsland Lakes)
- Reedy Lake (Nagambie)
- Kanyapella Basin (near Echuca)
- Lake Borrie (Ramsar-listed, part of the Port Phillip Bay Western Shoreline, and Bellarine Peninsula)
- Reedy Lake (Geelong – Ramsar-listed, part of the Port Phillip Bay Western Shoreline, and Bellarine Peninsula)
- Macleod Morass (near Bairnsdale)
- Hospital Swamp (Geelong)
- Gunbower Island and Gunbower Forest (Ramsar-listed, near Kerang)
- Gaynors Swamp (near Rochester)
- Lake Buloke (near Donald)
- Lake Wellington (Sale)
- Jack Smith Lake (Sale)
- Heart Morass and Sale Common (Sale)
- Emu Plains Reserve (Balnarring)
- Pyramid Creek Swamp
- Murtnaghurt Lagoon (near Geelong)
- Lake Eppalock (Bendigo)
- Hawkstowe Park (Epping)
- Plenty Gorge Park (Epping)
- Clyde Bank Morass (Sale)
- Lake Coleman (Sale)
- Tucker Swamp (Sale)
- Longford Wetland (Sale)
- Dutson Downs Waste Disposal Farm (Sale)
- Tower Hill (Warrnambool)
- Lake Eppalock (near Bendigo)



Mrs McARTHUR - additional questions received after the hearing

CAN YOU GIVE THE COMMITTEE SOME BRIEF INFORMATION OF THE SCHOOL EDUCATION PROGRAMS RUN BY FIELD AND GAME AUSTRALIA, AND THE VALUE THEY DELIVER IN EDUCATING CHILDREN ABOUT THE VALUE OF ECOLOGY AND MAINTAINING HABITATS?

Field & Game Australia, and Wetlands Environmental Taskforce (WET) have collaborated with Bug Blitz Trust to provide educational program for school children and introduce them to wetlands, and its inhabitants.

Bug Blitz field days provide students of all ages with educational experiences away from their regular school environment. Up to 50 field days are held throughout Victoria each year with locations chosen to suit specific learning requirements.

A typical Bug Blitz field day operates on a rotational timetable through a series of different activities. Field rotations give teachers choice to focus on a topic- bugs, birds, botany, issues, reflections - and take ownership of the learning direction.

Field days focus on learning about scientific processes such as rapid biodiversity assessment - a technique pioneered by Bug Blitz patron, Dr E. O. Wilson. Participants learn how to sample macro-invertebrates, survey ground bugs through trapping and collection, test water quality, undertake species counts, digital data collection, and other

scientific techniques used to gather evidence to assess and monitor the health of the environment.

Students have experienced their first encounter with snakes during Bug Blitz field days, identified bird species, set up nest boxes, and feeding trays. They have played the didgeridoo, attempted some indigenous dance moves, tasted honey, and made their own bird nests. Children are encouraged to use digital microscopes, cameras, computers, websites, and field guides to expand their knowledge and understanding of the natural world.

Field days are supported and facilitated by scientific experts including entomologists, ecologists, and botanists. Other guidance comes from artists, parent helpers, student teachers, and passionate environmental supporters. Data gathered in the field by students has resulted in some exciting and rare findings. The interchange between scientists and students in identifying rare and potentially unknown species is an example of how the Bug Blitz program contributes to our collective knowledge and to the development of citizen science.

Mrs McARTHUR - additional questions received after the hearing

HOW HAS THE WORK OF THE GEELONG FIELD AND GAME ASSOCIATION, AT CONNEWARRE AND ELSEWHERE, CONTRIBUTED TO IMPROVING THE WETLANDS HABITAT? HOW CAN THAT BE OBJECTIVELY MEASURED? ARE YOU WORKING WITH ECOLOGISTS AND OTHER ACADEMICS TO STUDY THE RESULTS?

The first and most important thing is, we have created, since 1980, the infrastructure to enable water management. We have also created a building and workshop that enables research and education of the inhabitants of the wetland.

We have artificially increased nesting opportunities through the installation, maintenance, and monitoring of traditional Field & Game nest boxes and more currently, WET Hen Houses. We have worked in conjunction with CCMA (Corangamite Catchment Management Authority) to develop and deliver an appropriate water management plan.

As an association, we have been able to lobby for and gain the support of corporate sponsors. With this support, Geelong Field & Game's member volunteers have recently created the Beretta Observation Trail to enable the wider community to experience the wonder of our wetland environment. In addition to these, we also conduct bird surveys, weed management, pest control, rubbish removal, and water monitoring. We have also collaborated with leading academics for research and data monitoring.

- Prof. Marcel Klaassen - Alfred Deakin Professor and Chair In Ecology at Deakin University. He leads a team of students in trapping, banding, and GPS tracking waterfowl, including ducks, native pigeons, etc. He also assists in monitoring bird activities throughout the course of time
- Prof. Brian Hiller - Associate Professor of Biology/Wildlife at Bemidji State University in Minnesota, USA. He advises on topics around nesting success and survival rates of ducks, parrots, and other nesting birds
- Prof. Grahame Webb - Director at Wildlife Management International Pty. Limited and Adjunct Professor at Charles Darwin University
- Prof. Graham Hall - Wildlife biologist and Adjunct Associate Professor at The University of Queensland. He is helping us doing additional research on Blue-Winged Shovelers. He also has advised us for the head and wing sampling project and additional research on captive ducks to measure growth rates

Mrs McARTHUR - additional questions received after the hearing

HOW DOES THIS CONTRAST WITH THE WINTON WETLANDS PROJECT, AND DO YOU FEEL ANY LESSONS CAN BE LEARNED AS TO WHICH MODEL IS MOST LIKELY TO PROMOTE HEALTHY ECOSYSTEMS?

The contrast between the projects delivered at both the Heart Morass (Sale) and Connewarre Wetlands (Geelong) in comparison to the government's Winton Wetlands project is vastly different.

At FGA sites, we have developed and delivered a significant transformation. The Heart Morass has been transformed from a wasteland, barren piece of land that had salinity issues was worn down from a century of grazing and in desperate need of attention. The transformation over the past 10 years has now seen the Heart Morass recognised for the beautiful habitat that it is; with over 50,000 natives trees planted, 20 tonnes of invasive carp be removed, and seeds of over 50 natives plant species collected for revegetation. This transformation was not funded by the government but delivered wholly by FGA member-volunteers for the community.

In comparison, Winton Wetlands has had \$20 million spent on it with \$9 million to build a cafe, created a situation to produce films, painted dead trees mounting to vandalism. No pest control, water monitoring, no habitat rehabilitation, in fact, more damage to habitat and made it only an eye candy without much positive impact to the environment and ecosystem.

FGA approached the Winton Wetland Management Committee in 2019 to offer support and deliver projects at the site. This offer was rejected. (Appendix 3).

There are many lessons that have been learned that could assist Winton Wetlands. The most obvious is community engagement. There is a lack of community ownership and engagement at Winton. There is no reason why the hunting community and other community members could not come together to improve the site, increase habitat, provide weed and pest control at a fraction of the current costs. Develop community and school projects (Bug Blitz) and at the same time look to attract visitors to the wetlands and support the regional economy.

We would argue that the demonstrated FGA model has worked at both large and small wetlands. We have a proven track history (Nationally) to obtain community engagement, deliver projects that allow passionate and dedicated volunteers the opportunity to restore and maintain wetlands. Our passion is in habitat restoration, the floored argument that we only undertake these activities so that we can hunt ducks is redundant as most of the wildlife that prospers from our activities are not game birds. We have seen an influx of species use the wetlands for breeding, for micro-organisms to flourish, and most importantly the community to enjoy. All these activities promote healthy ecosystems. Hunters are the real conservationists who not only talk the talk but walk the walk.

Mrs McARTHUR - additional questions received after the hearing

DO YOU KNOW OF ANY CONSERVATION WORK DONE BY GROUPS OPPOSED TO DUCK HUNTING?

- Waterfowl counts are conducted by many groups opposed to duck hunting including but not limited to Birdlife Australia
- Tree and native grass (revegetation) planting by various Landcare groups around the State and Trust for Nature

For the most part, those groups opposed to duck hunting show a lack of any depth in actually understanding wetland ecology. So-called conservation efforts tend to be sporadic, ill-conceived, and short-lived. None of the groups opposed to hunting show any sort of long-term commitment to actual conservation of wetlands or fauna of any kind, not to mention ducks.

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FGA CEO, Dean O'Hara and Sale Field & Game branch member, Simon Webster at Winton Wetlands



Sale Field & Game branch members maintaining nest boxes at Lake Wellington



Geelong Field & Game members at the launch of the Beretta Observation Trail at Connewarre Wetland Centre



APPENDIX 1

HEART MORASS WETLAND

THE WETLANDS ENVIRONMENTAL TASKFORCE TRUST

ABN 42 150 070 738

HEART MORASS PROJECT



WASTELAND TO WETLAND



HEART MORASS

The Heart Morass Restoration Project was officially launched on March 16th, 2006 by the Hon. John Thwaites, Minister for Water, Environment and Climate Change.

HISTORY

THE VISION

To develop the Heart Morass Wetland as an icon within Australia and internationally. Iconic status will be achieved through the enhancement of biodiversity, water quality, and recreational and social values within the Heart Morass; and through its contribution towards the health of the Gippsland Lakes. The partners recognise the importance of the Heart Morass and its association with the broader Gippsland Lakes wetland system.

The Heart Morass Restoration Project highlights the Wetlands Environmental Taskforce's (WET) long-term commitment to wetland conservation.

In the 1950s hunters under the leadership of the then 'Victorian Field and Game Association' lobbied the Victorian Government to levy duck hunters for the purchase of wetlands across the state.

The legacy of that far-sighted policy resulted in the establishment of 180 state game reserves throughout Victoria today. Not only did this initiative of hunters provide a network of wetlands across Victoria at a time when the drainage of farm land meant a huge reduction in wetland habitat, it also became the catalyst for the practice of public land being set aside for conservation purposes.

Government once drove the initiative on wetland conservation; however, 60 years later this is no longer the case. Thus Field & Game Australia took the initiative to form the WET Trust to provide a vehicle for funding the acquisition, rehabilitation and maintenance of Australian wetlands.

The Heart Morass project is the first such project.

HEART MORASS BY THE NUMBERS

1,349 HECTARES

9 YEARS OF RESTORATION BY FIELD & GAME AUSTRALIA MEMBERS AND CONSERVATIONISTS

50,000 INDIGENOUS TREES PLANTED

20 TONNES OF CARP REMOVED

SEEDS COLLECTED FROM OVER
50 PLANT SPECIES FOR REVEGETATION

“There wasn’t a national parks system until 1966 in Victoria. There was no land reserved for wildlife. It was the duck shooters who imposed a levy on themselves that really preserved the first land in Victoria for wildlife”

- Tim Flannery

Source: Interview with Paul Barclay, ABC Radio, December 3, 2012

PROCUREMENT

The Heart Morass is located at the mouth of the Latrobe River, near Sale. It was settled in about 1841 but like many wetlands it had been drained, cleared and managed for beef and dairy production.

The rehabilitation of the morass is a joint initiative of a stakeholder group consisting of Field & Game Australia, Bug Blitz, Watermark Inc. and the West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority.

Funding for the land purchase has come from the members and branches of Field & Game Australia, and the Hugh Williamson Foundation. The property purchase was undertaken by the WET Trust’s Public Fund.

The purchase and rehabilitation is restoring the wetland to a place of national significance for waterbirds and other wetland-dependent flora and fauna.

The partners are committed to achieving a balance between enhanced environmental, cultural, social and economic values within the Heart Morass.

Management decisions will be made within the context of contributing towards improving the health of the broader Gippsland Lakes wetland system and achievement of icon status for the Heart Morass wetland.



Wasteland

2007



Wetland

2012

STAGES

STAGE 1 2006

819 ha \$1.2 m

STAGE 2 2010

302 ha \$570 k

STAGE 3 2013

233 ha \$440 k

HEART MORASS - THEN AND NOW



WET'S ROLE

WET's purpose is to purchase and conserve wetlands for the benefit of all wildlife. It is also there to showcase hunters as conservationists and environmentalists to the broader community.

One of the greatest ever opportunities for wetland conservation arose in 2004 – a major portion of the Heart Morass was up for sale.

This initial parcel of land consisted of wetland and surrounding river and redgum plain, worn down by 100 years of stock grazing and damaged by saltwater intrusion. Restored, the Heart Morass has become a jewel in the crown of Victoria's wetlands.

SUPPORTERS RALLY

As a Trustee of the WET Trust, Field & Game Australia called on its members across the country to raise funds for the purchase of the Heart Morass.

In 2006, after long negotiations, WET purchased the first parcel of 819 hectares of the Heart Morass. Field & Game Australia members invested over \$450,000 and the Hugh Williamson Foundation invested an even higher sum.

Now, nearly 10 years after the first wetland changed hands, the work of WET supporters, hunters and conservationists is clear to see.

The Heart Morass is a significant project. It is one of Australia's largest and most demanding environmental activities involving the aggregation of 25 parcels of land and the input of six major stakeholders.







THE PROJECT PARTNERS

BUG BLITZ

FIELD & GAME AUSTRALIA

WATERMARK INC.

WEST GIPPSLAND CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY

Work to restore the project is managed under a Memorandum of Understanding between Bug Blitz, Field & Game Australia, Watermark Inc., and the West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority.

This unique partnership, which also includes the Hugh Williamson Foundation, brings together groups that are committed to the wetland being established for community education as a model of sustainable use, including recreational hunting during the prescribed seasons.

Extensive site restoration works have been undertaken, including establishment and repairs to water control structures, noxious weed removal, vermin eradication and tree planting. Other works have included fencing and extensive revegetation of native plants.

Years of incorrect watering regimes had resulted in a high salt level and acidic soil. This has now been lowered by several freshwater flushing events to a productive and manageable level where the revegetation of the area can be successful. Ongoing monitoring of flora, fauna and general biodiversity along with land management continues to be undertaken by Field & Game Australia volunteers and the project partners.

Combined with the effects of natural growth and regrowth, this has seen a spectacular transformation of the wetland.

Members of Field & Game Australia have banded together and have held many working bees to assist with the Heart Morass rehabilitation project. The West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority has supplied technical expertise, advice along with scientific support, research and monitoring.



APPENDIX 2

The CONNEWARRE WETLAND CENTRE - Geelong & The HEART MORASS RESTORATION PROJECT - Sale Bug Blitz Field Days 2019

Supporting students to achieve learning goals in STEM, VCCA
and AusVELS Science.



Contact:

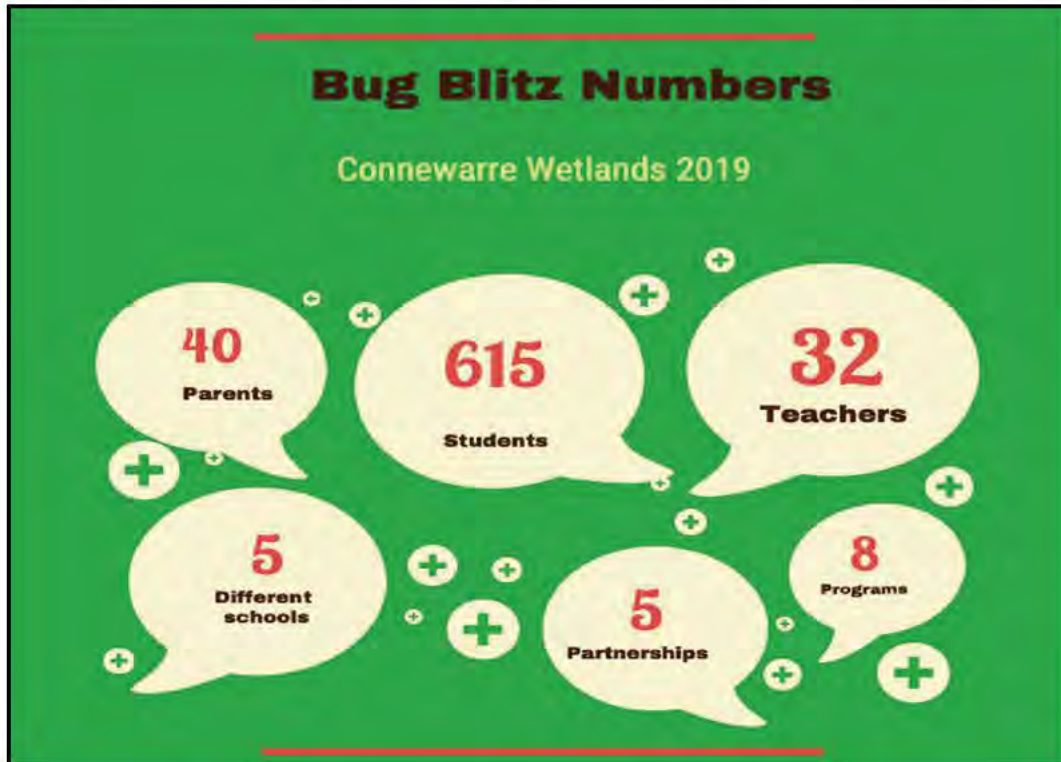
Trent Leen - WET Trust - [REDACTED]
Dr John Caldow - Bug Blitz Trust - [REDACTED]





Bug Blitz Trust is a project initiative of the Hugh D. T. Williamson Foundation in association with Museum of Victoria, Narmbool (Sovereign Hill Museums) and the E. O. Wilson Biodiversity Foundation.

“Where Science, Art, Language, Technology, Math and Civics collide”



2019 proved yet again, to be a very successful year for Bug Blitz at the Connewarre Wetland Centre. This year, we held eight separate field events with five different local schools. Our program was diverse and ensured that students actively engaged with the wetlands. The partnership with the WET Trust and Geelong Field & Game provides a base for children, their teachers and families to explore and appreciate their local habitat; brings awareness to the Field & Game message of ongoing wetland conservation.

- **615** Students - Foundation (85) Year 1 & 2 (285) Year 3 & 4 (95) Year 5 & 6 (150).
- **32** Teachers from
- **5** Schools Our Lady Star of the Sea Primary School (4 events)
 Oberon Primary School
 Oberon South Primary School (1 event)
 St Francis Xavier Primary School (1 event)
 Barwon Heads Primary School (2 events).
- **40** Parent volunteers
- **5** Partnerships WET Trust
 Geelong Field & Game
 Corangamite Catchment Management Authority - River Detectives
 Eco-Logic
 Martin Lagerway Entomologist.
- **8** programs



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The Program



Each field event commences with an Acknowledgement of Country; then each student is equipped with a pair of gaiters. After a welcome and safety talk, Field & Game introduce the students to the property and provide an engaging Dog Retrieval Display, that is always enjoyed. This year, the program provided a diverse range of hands-on activities, including:



- **Meet the Arthropods & conduct a Rapid Biodiversity Assessment** - Use nets to discover what terrestrial invertebrates live in the wetland and taste **edible bugs**.
- **River Detectives** - Find out what Macroinvertebrates live in the water.
- **Ducks of Victoria Trail** - Use binoculars and field guides to identify ducks in th wetlands and make duck calls.
- **GPS Trail** - Use GPS to locate hidden natural treasures in the wetlands.
- **Engineer your own Birds Nest** - Using clay and natural materials.
- **Wetlands Sensory Nature Hunt** - Touch, colour, sounds and taste.
- Create a **Fingerprint Invertebrate Badge**.
- Make a **ceramic Bird and Nest**.
- Make a **creative clay insect** using natural materials.
- Paint a **Badge Huntsman** to take home.
- Paint a **Chestnut Teal** to take home.
- Paint a **Pink-eared duck**.
- Paint an **Eastern Rosella** to take home.



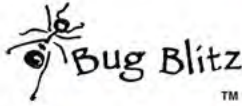


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“Where Science, Art, Language, Technology, Math and Civics collide”



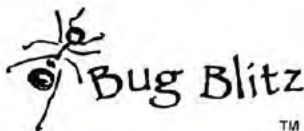
The Timetables



Bug Blitz with Our Lady Star of the Sea
Coonewarre Wetlands Geelong
Wednesday 27th March 2019
85 Foundation students



ARRIVAL	ACTIVITY 1	ACTIVITY 2	RECESS	ACTIVITY 3	ACTIVITY 4	LUNCH	ACTIVITY 5	DEPART
9.15am-9.30am Put on gaiters	9.45am - 10.20am WELCOME Geelong Field & Game to introduce with a brief history of the Coonewarre Wetlands & Why Wetlands are important. Dog Retrieval Dispalpy WET Trust 35 min	10.25am - 11.00am Rapid Biodiversity Assessment of the Terrestrial Invertebrates that inhabit the Wetlands, and Meet the Arachnids! Dr John Caldwell 35 min	11.05am-11.25am (20 min)	11.30am-12.05pm River Detectives Find out what Macroinvertebrates (water bugs) live in the Wetlands. Dierdre Murphy River Detectives 35 min	12.10pm- 12.45pm Wetlands Observations & Nature Hunt -Touch - Colour - Sounds -Taste Erin Nowak 35 min	12.50pm-1.20pm (30 min)	1.25pm- 2.00pm Make a Bird and Nest with well known Ceramic Artist Ann Ferguson Ann Ferguson 35 min	2.05pm-2.15pm GOOD-BYE Removal of gaiters
GROUP 1	WELCOME Dog Retrieval	Bug Catching		River Detectives	Wetland Observations		Make a Bird & Nest	
GROUP 2		Make a Bird & Nest		Bug Catching	River Detectives		Wetland Observations	
GROUP 3		Wetland Observations		Make a Bird & Nest	Bug Catching		River Detectives	
GROUP 4		River Detectives		Wetland Observations	Make a Bird & Nest		Bug Catching	
<p>A project initiative of The Hugh Williamson Foundation in association with Bug Blitz™ Trust, Museum of Victoria, Narmbool (Sovereign Hills Museum Association) and the E. O. Wilson Biodiversity Foundation. In partnership with Coonewarre Wetland Centre and Our Lady Star of the Sea.</p>								



Bug Blitz with Oberon PS and Oberon South PS
Connewarre Wetland Centre - Geelong
Tuesday 6th of August 2019
85 year : 70 year 5/6 and 15 year 3/4 students



ARRIVAL	ACTIVITY 1	ACTIVITY 2	RECESS	ACTIVITY 3	ACTIVITY 4	LUNCH	ACTIVITY 5	DEPART
9.15am-9.30am Put on gaiters	9.45am - 10.20am WELCOME Geelong Field & Game to introduc with a brief history of the Coonewarre Wetlands & Why Wetlands are important. Dog Retrieval Dispalpy WET Trust 35 min	10 25am - 11.00am Meet the Arachnids Rapid Biodiversity Assessment of Terrestrial Invertebrates Taste Edible Bugs Dr John Caldwell 35 min	11.05am-11.25am (20 min)	11.30am-12.05pm River Detectives Find out what Macroinvertebrates (water bugs) live in the Wetlands. Kirsten Lees CCMA River Detectives 35 min	12.10pm- 12.45pm Ducks of Victoria Bird Trail Use binoculars/field guide to find 12 sp - cies of Victorian Ducks Bird sounds Erin Nowak 35 min	12 50pm-1.20pm (30 min)	1 25pm- 2.00pm Paint a lifelike Badge Huntsmen spider wall hanger, using fine brush techniques , guided by an artist Jen Jones 35 min	2.05pm-2.15pm GOOD-BYE Removal of gaiters
GROUP 1	WELCOME Dog Retrieval	Rapid Biodiversity Assessment		River Detectives	Ducks of Victoria Bird Trail		Paint a lifelike Badge Huntsmen spider	
GROUP 2		Paint a lifelike Badge Huntsmen spider		Rapid Biodiversity Assessment	River Detectives		Ducks of Victoria Bird Trail	
GROUP 3		Ducks of Victoria Bird Trail		Paint a lifelike Badge Huntsmen spider	Rapid Biodiversity Assessment		River Detectives	
GROUP 4		River Detectives		Ducks of Victoria Bird Trail	Paint a lifelike Badge Huntsmen spider		Rapid Biodiversity Assessment	
<p>A project initiative of The Hugh Williamson Founda ion in association with Bug Blitz™ Trust, Museum of Victoria, Narmbool (Sovereign Hills Museum Association) and the E. O. Wilson Biodiversity Foundation. This event is In partnership with Wetlands Environmental Task Force (WET Trust), Field & Game Australia and the Corangamite Catchment Management Authority</p>								





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“Where Science, Art, Language, Technology, Math and Civics collide”



Bug Blitz with Barwon Heads Primary School
 Connearre Wetlands Geelong
 Tuesday 29th & Wednesday 30th October 2019
 75 (150) Year 2 students



ARRIVAL 9.15am- 9.30am WELCOME Put on gaiters	ACTIVITY 1 9.45am - 10.20am Geelong Field & Game to introduce and provide a brief history of the Connearre Wetlands & Why Wetlands are important. Dog Retrieval Display WET Trust 35 min	ACTIVITY 2 10.25am - 11.00am Meet the Arthropods! and Conduct a Rapid Biodiversity Assessment of the Terrestrial Invertebrates that inhabit the Wetlands. Dr John Caldow 35 min	RECESS 11.05am- 11.25am (20 min)	ACTIVITY 3 11.30am-12.05pm River Detectives Find out what Macroinvertebrates (water bugs) live in the Wetlands and make an assessment of the water health. River Detectives 35 min	ACTIVITY 4 12.10pm- 12.45pm Paint a Chestnut Teal Duck with local artists Jen Jones. Display as a pop-up art installation and then take home. Jen Jones 35 min	LUNCH 12.50pm- 1.20pm (30 min)	ACTIVITY 5 1.25pm- 2.00pm Clever birds! Engineer your very own birds nest with natural materials and birds beak game. Erin Nowak 35 min	DEPART 2.05pm- 2.15pm Reflection & GOOD-BYE Removal of gaiters
GROUP 1	Whole Group Activity Dog Retrieval	Rapid Biodiversity Assessment		River Detectives	Paint a Chestnut Teal		Clever birds	
GROUP 2		Clever birds		Rapid Biodiversity Assessment	River Detectives		Paint a Chestnut Teal	
GROUP 3		Paint a Chestnut Teal		Clever birdst	Rapid Biodiversity Assessment		River Detectives	
GROUP 4		River Detectives		Paint a Chestnut Teal	Clever birds		Rapid Biodiversity Assessment	

A project initiative of The Hugh Williamson Foundation in association with Bug Blitz™ Trust, Museum of Victoria, Narmbool (Sovereign Hills Museum Association) and the E. O. Wilson Biodiversity Foundation. In partnership with Coonearre Wetland Centre and Barwon Heads Primary School.



Jumping spider



Snail



Neosparassus



Pupae case of a moth



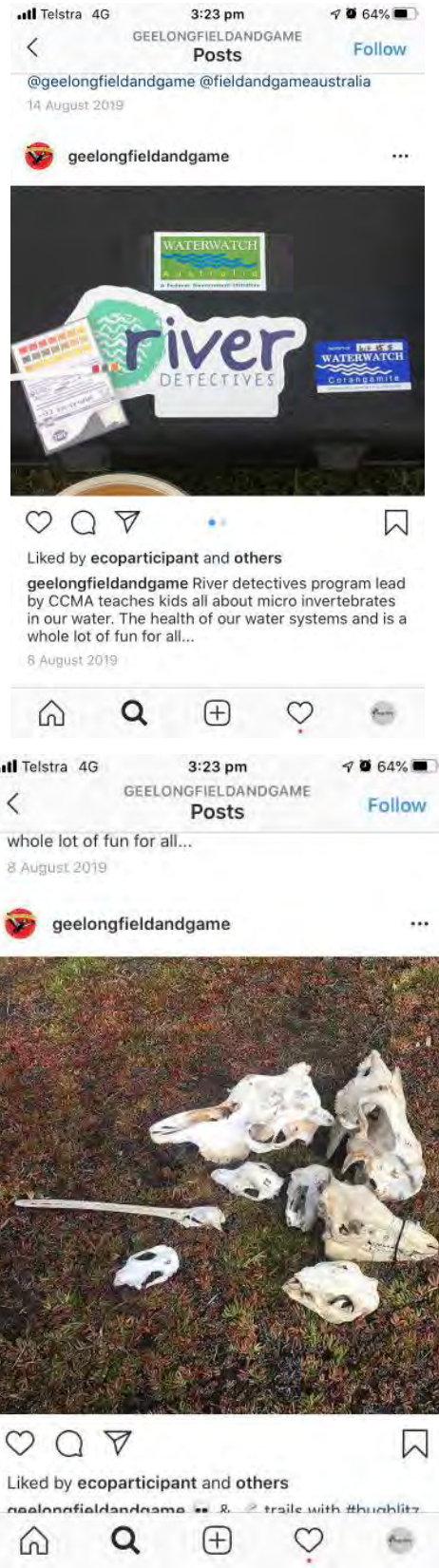
Some of the invertebrates found at the Connearre Wetland Centre in 2019



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“Where Science, Art, Language, Technology, Math and Civics collide”

Media





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Feedback

30th October 2019

Hi John,

Thank you again for a great day last week! We have had many parents talking about how their kids were raving about the day.

All students have written letters to say thank you and give you some feedback about the day and we also have a little write up going into the next school newsletter.

Many Thanks,

Amelia Bourke
St Francis Xavier Corio

Morning John,

I was talking to my brother who is also a teacher last night. He mentioned that he took his grade 3/4 students to your Bug Blitz Experience in Connewarre the other week and they loved it.

Thanks,

Lauren McManus
Barwon Heads Primary School





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“Where Science, Art, Language, Technology, Math and Civics collide”

Bug Blitz would like to thank all our partners, facilitators, schools, students and Geelong Field & Game for their continued support in believing the importance of allowing children to discover, play and learn in and about nature. We look forward to working again at the Connewarre Wetland Centre in 2020.

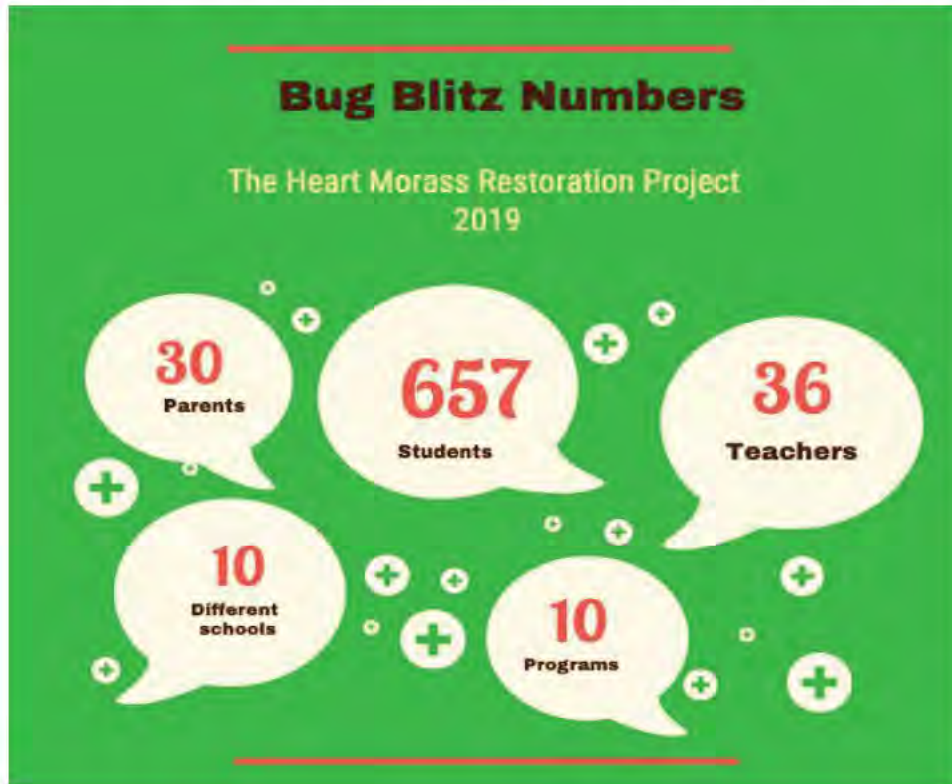




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“Where Science, Art, Language, Technology, Math and Civics collide”

The Heart Morass Restoration Project



In 2019, Bug Blitz held 10 programs at the Heart Morass Restoration Project. Our audience varied from Kindergarten children, all the way up to participants from The University of the Third Age (U3A). 340 year 7 students participated in the Fish ‘n’ Trips program, which hosted some new additions to the program, such as Electro-fishing and handling/tasting of Eels. The U3A Bus tour of the property was a huge success, with 49 species of birds identified

- **657** Students - Kindergarten (**22**), Foundation - Grade 6 (**215**), Year 7 (**340**), Year 11 (**40**), University of the Third Age (**40**).
- **36** Teachers from
- **10** Schools
 - Sale College (2 events)
 - Catholic College Sale (2 event)
 - Gippsland Grammar (2 events - senior and junior campus)
 - Longford pre-school (1 event)
 - Araluen Primary School (1 event)
 - Wurruk Primary School (1 event)
 - University of the Third Age (1 event)
 - Loch Sport Primary School & Seaspray Primary School (1 even)
- **30** Parent volunteers
- **10** Programs



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The Program



- **Fish 'n' Trips** - Electro Fishing demonstration, Waterwatch, Fish Casting, Aquaculture Eels and Native Fish, Carp Autopsy.
- **Gippsland Grammar Year 11 Biology** - Terrestrial Invertebrates and Waterwatch
- **Araluen PS** - Hands on Reptiles, Leaf Press, Eco-Warriors, Meet the Arthropods.
- **Longford Kindergarten** - Macroinvertebrates, Paint a Pink-eared duck, Terrestrial Invertebrates, Playdoh press, Eagles nest, Bone Discovery Trail.
- **U3A** - Gunai Kurnai sharing, Macroinvertebrates, Carp Autopsy, Live Bugs, Dog Retrieval Display, Bird Watching, Paint a Sacred Kingfisher, Lunch provided by the Hunting Ground from locally sourced produce and Local Wine Tasting.
- **Wurruk Cultural Day** - Indigenous Art to be displayed in the Children's Maze, Eco-Warriors, Meet the Arthropods, Macroinvertebrates, Make an Earth Ball.
- **Loch Sport and Seaspray** - Meet the Arthropods, Macroinvertebrates, Sound scapes of Nature.
- **Gippsland Grammar year 3/4** - Birds of Prey, Plant Life Cycles, Rapid Biodiversity Assessment, Waterwatch, Snakebuster.





Bug Blitz Trust is a project initiative of the Hugh D. T. Williamson Foundation in association with Museum of Victoria, Narmbool (Sovereign Hill Museums) and the E. O. Wilson Biodiversity Foundation.

“Where Science, Art, Language, Technology, Math and Civics collide”

Feedback



Today I had one of the best days of my teaching career. We took the Longford Preschool children to participate in the Bug Blitz Program at the Heart Morass. So interesting, engaging and interactive no-one wanted to go back to kinder. Ticked all the boxes. Thanks to all our helpers: Jaclyn, Mel, Michelle, Abi and Jess and to Esso's Bright Futures Grant 😊



“Today was one of the best days of my teaching career”

-Sue-Ellen Jackson (Longford Preschool)

“U3A loves Bug Blitz.”

“The day was planned with great precision to a timetable that enabled us to meet interesting and knowledgeable people who allow time to ask questions and take photos.”

“The day brought immense enjoyment to us all.”

“Always an active and engaging experience. The students were very enthusiastic about finding creatures.”

-Sharon Ray (Araluen PS)

Thank you for the most magnificent day!

All our children and staff had a wonderful time and learnt new things.

I truly thank you for all your work, to make this day successful.

Kind Regards

Gayle Coleman Wurruk Primary School.





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“Where Science, Art, Language, Technology, Math and Civics collide”

Bug Blitz Trustees

Mr. Martin Carlson OAM - Chairman
Mr. David Ward - Treasurer
Dr. Ken Walker
Professor Philip Batterham
Mr. Brett Dunlop
Dr. John Caldow - Program Director

BUG BLITZ PATRON
Emeritus Professor Edward O. Wilson

“If we were to wipe out insects alone on this planet, the rest of life and humanity with it would mostly disappear from the land. Within a few months.” E. O. Wilson

CONTACT

Mr. Martin Carlson OAM
Chairman
Bug Blitz Trust

[REDACTED]
P. O. Box 9329, Sale, 3850
[REDACTED]

Dr. John Caldow
Program Director
Bug Blitz Trust

[REDACTED]
P. O. Box 9329, Sale, 3850
[REDACTED]

The Bug Blitz public fund is listed on the Register of Environmental Organizations and is entitled under the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997 item 6.1.1 of sub-section 30-55(1) to receive tax deductible donations.



APPENDIX 3

Winton Wetland Committee presentation July 2019



Introduction and opening remarks

**Simon
Webster**

Why are we here today?

- Passion
- Tradition
- Location
- Outcomes



Winton Wetland Committee presentation July 2019



Dean O'Hara

Field & Game Australia
Chief Executive Officer





Production Boiler maker welder Environmental Student Farm Government Director Chef
Fitter Account Tradesman Agronomist Contractor Technical
Company director Land Project Manager Truck
management Paramedic worker industry Accountant Bricklayer
Self
operator Mining employed Senior Technician
Executive Construction Broker Electrician Salesman
Plumber Nurse Farmer Firefighter Manager owner
Engineer Gardener Sales Dairy Public servant years
Truck driver Medical practitioner driver Manufacturing Builder
train driver Carpenter Warehouse Consultant Health Retail Scientist
Teacher project management Officer motor mechanic Mechanic Operations
supervisor trade Building Mechanical Engineer Labourer office worker
business owner Police Professional Technical officer business Boilermaker



18,000 members



60 years of active conservation



Knowledge and skills



Highly engaged, safe and reliable



**3000 Field & Game Australia
members live within easy
reach of Winton Wetlands**

Partnerships



THE HUGH WILLIAMSON FOUNDATION





Heart Morass Restoration Project



Heart Morass Restoration Project

A decade
of constant
progress

\$1M plus in
volunteer labour
contributed

Strong community
engagement

Broad support
and recognition

We can make a difference

- Environmental works
- Weed control
- Pest animal control
- Track maintenance
- Water markers
- Nest box program
- Supporting other native species
- Tree planting
- Monitoring (citizen science)
- Supporting indigenous cultural activities and education



Benefits and outcomes

- Infrastructure improvement
- Direct revenue stream (Permits/Café expenditure)
- Indirect support of local economy through visitation/retail
- Economic benefit through increased volunteer labour
- Direct economic benefit through provision of volunteer pest control
- An advocacy partner at Federal and State level
- Positive representation of Winton Wetland through our networks
- Advocacy support including accessing Environmental Water

Proposed hunting regime

- Limited trial
- Specific areas/times
- Trigger points (water level, bird counts including protected species)
- Development of a sustainable hunting plan
- Controlled hunting including option of balloted places
- Potential income generation through hunting access permit
- Compliance with all Victorian hunting regulations
- Education and cooperation with other user groups

Alignment with Winton Wetlands Strategic Plan 2019-2022

- Scientific and environmental research
- The restoration of Winton Wetlands will enhance the communities of the region and the State through increased economic activity
- A real and lasting outcome will be achieved in regard to enhanced biodiversity as well as ecological and archaeological integrity
- Winton Wetlands will become a major focus of local and regional recreation activity

Alignment with Winton Wetlands Strategic Plan 2019-2022

Ecology

- Investing in habitat restoration and developing innovative fauna and flora protection solutions
- Identifying and controlling threats to habitats and native species
- Working with key partners for the strategic management and support of threatened species
- Prioritising strategic re-introduction of native species
- Facilitating research and knowledge sharing
- Strengthen partnerships with key conservation and scientific organisations

Alignment with Winton Wetlands Strategic Plan 2019-2022

Visitor experience

- Create new and diverse volunteer opportunities to double volunteer participation
- Plan for the future of the site and its valued wildlife by providing more diverse and engaging experiences that complement our conservation values

Alignment with Winton Wetlands Strategic Plan 2019-2022

Community & Regional Partnerships

- Work with key partners to plan for and improve driving, walking and cycling links – enhancing accessibility and connection with the natural environment
- Scope and implement technologies that will act as key location differentiators and educational tools
- Future developments to complement preservation of existing habitats and the creation of a legacy
- Create a receptive environment in which partners, agencies and community all engage
- Act as a catalyst for building networks and partnerships.

Alignment with Winton Wetlands Strategic Plan 2019-2022

Sustainable future

- Align our commercial activities to our commitment to environmental sustainability whilst maintaining responsible financial management.
- Establish innovative funding sources that enhance project ideas.
- Build funding support for our ecological outcomes through philanthropic and corporate partnerships, public, private and Government grants and other funding opportunities.



QUESTIONS?

About Field & Game Australia

Field & Game Australia (FGA) is the nation's premier voluntary member organisation for conservation, hunting, and Australian Simulated Field clay target sports.

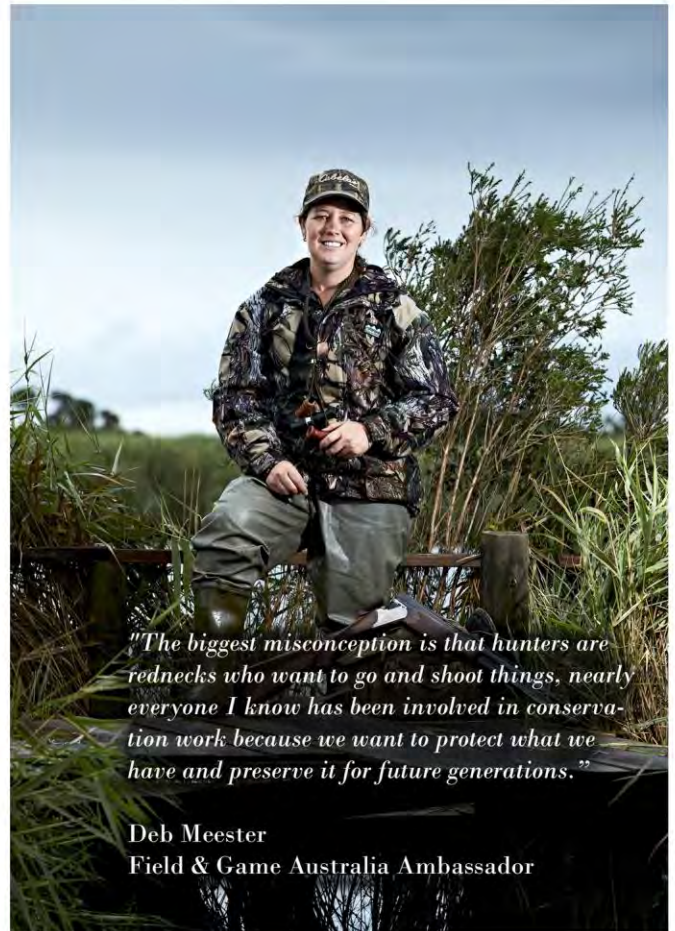
Formed in 1958 in response to declining waterfowl habitat, FGA has always been a conservation body and our 18,000 members continue to contribute in practical ways to wetland conservation, habitat creation, nesting support and predator management.

State Game Reserves (SGRs)

One of the first tasks set for the fledgling Association was to lobby for a licensing system for Victoria's hunters. Hunting licences were introduced in Victoria in 1959, at the cost of £1.

The licensing system raised over £34,000 in its first year (or approximately \$910,000 in today's money). As is still the case, habitat was identified as the biggest issue and funds raised from ongoing hunters fees was used to establish Victoria's network of 200 SGRs. Our members continue to play an active role in caring for these reserves.

Hunting and conservation may appear incompatible at first glance, but with the origins of Field & Game Australia closely linked to wetland habitat preservation, conservation and restoration, it is no surprise that the ethics of sustainable hunting,



caring for our wetlands and ensuring a future for our waterfowl has continued to be our focus.

Wetlands Environmental Taskforce

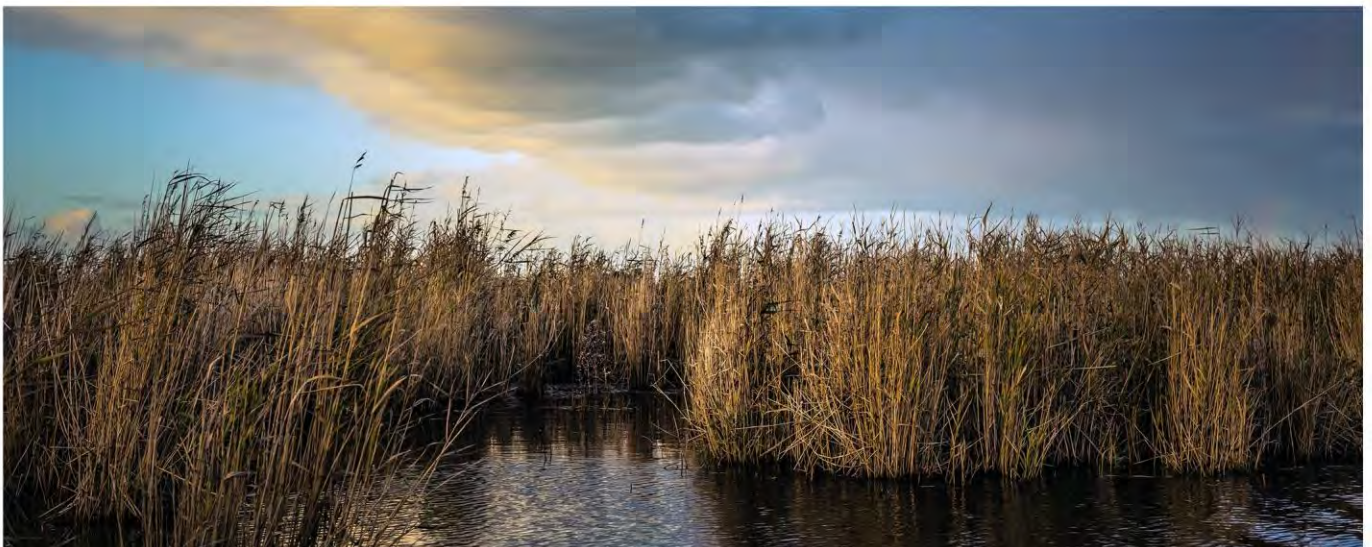
Field & Game Australia formed the WET Trust in 2002 with the purpose of purchasing, restoring and maintaining wetland habitats. With ownership of the habitats comes the full access required to rehabilitate ecosystems and restore biodiversity.

Heart Morass Restoration Project

With rehabilitation comes transformation, none so dramatic as the changes brought about at the Heart Morass, in Gippsland. In 2004, a parcel of 819 hectares of the Heart Morass was up for sale. The land was worn down, depleted by a century of stock grazing, with salinity issues from saltwater intrusion, but it could be made into a diverse and productive wetland again.

The first land purchase was completed in 2006, with two more parcels of adjoining land acquired by WET in 2010 and 2013. Restoration and conservation started with the 2006 purchase, and continues to this day. More than 50,000 native trees have been planted, 20 tonnes of invasive carp have been removed, and seeds have been collected from over 50 native plant species for revegetation.

The project is a partnership with the Hugh Williamson Foundation, Watermark Inc, Bug Blitz and West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority. The property is regularly used by students participating in the Bug Blitz education program, field naturalists, fishers and campers.



Winton Wetlands

Field & Game Australia (FGA) welcomes consideration of a trial reintroduction of hunting on Winton Wetlands.

Many of our members have fond memories of hunting the original swamps before the creation of Lake Mokoan, and up until the decommissioning of the storage to create Winton Wetlands.

Renewing the connection with Winton Wetlands will invigorate our membership, providing them not only with a place to hunt sustainably but to engage in conservation and community activities.

Our committment to Winton Wetlands

Field & Game Australia is committed to responsible, ethical and sustainable hunting and this occurs safely on many wetlands that are mixed use. We understand that habitat and water are the critical factors in sustaining waterfowl populations and we will advocate for access to environmental water so Winton Wetlands can be managed appropriately.

Our members see conservation activities as a natural extension of their hunting and typical volunteer activities include;

Environmental works

Weed control

Pest animal control

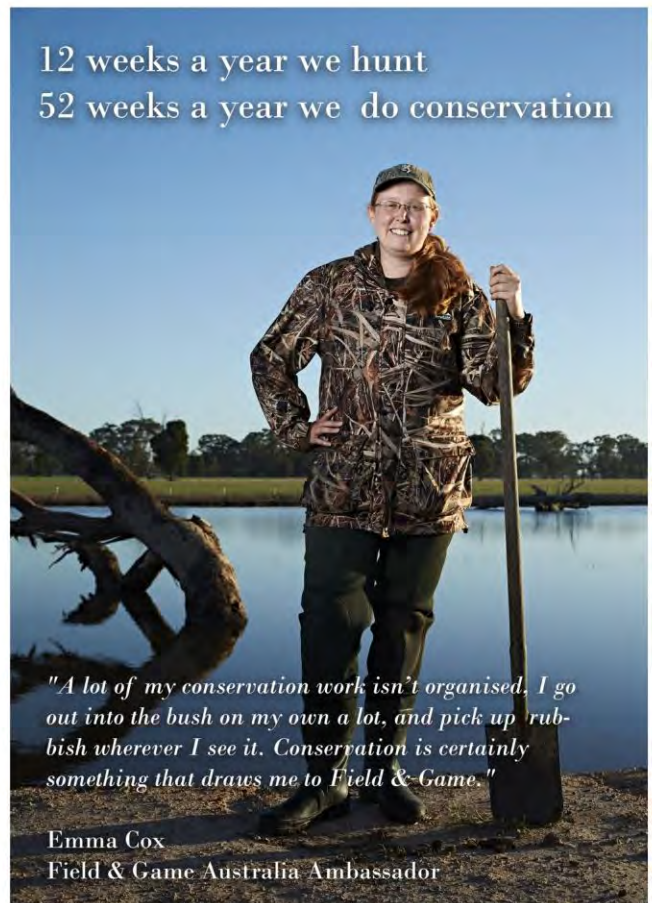
Track maintenance

Water markers

Nest box program

Supporting other native species

Tree planting



Monitoring (citizen science)

Supporting indigenous cultural activities and education

Benefits & Outcomes for Winton Wetland

Infrastructure improvement

Direct revenue stream (Permits/Café expenditure)

Indirect support of local economy through visitation/retail

Economic benefit through increased volunteer labour

Direct economic benefit through provision of volunteer pest control

An advocacy partner at Federal and State level

Positive representation of Winton Wetland through our networks

Advocacy support including accessing Environmental Water

Proposed hunting regime

Limited trial

Specific areas/times

Trigger points (water level, bird counts including protected species)

Development of a sustainable hunting plan

Controlled hunting including option of balloted places

Potential income generation through hunting access permit

Compliance with all Victorian hunting regulations

Education and cooperation with other user groups

Alignment with Winton Wetlands Strategic Plan 2019-2022

Scientific and environmental research

The restoration of Winton Wetlands will enhance the communities of the region and the State through increased economic activity

A real and lasting outcome will be achieved in regard to enhanced biodiversity as well as ecological and archaeological integrity

Winton Wetlands will become a major focus of local and regional recreation activity

Alignment with Winton Wetlands Strategic Plan 2019-2022

ECOLOGY

Investing in habitat restoration and developing innovative fauna and flora protection solutions

Identifying and controlling threats to habitats and native species

Working with key partners for the strategic management and support of threatened species

Prioritising strategic re-introduction of native species

Facilitating research and knowledge sharing

Strengthen partnerships with key conservation and scientific organisations

VISITOR EXPERIENCE

Create new and diverse volunteer opportunities to double volunteer participation

Plan for the future of the site and its valued wildlife by providing more diverse and engaging experiences that complement our conservation

SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

Align our commercial activities to our commitment to environmental sustainability whilst maintaining responsible financial management.

Establish innovative funding sources that enhance project ideas.

Build funding support for our

COMMUNITY & PARTNERSHIPS

Work with key partners to plan for and improve driving, walking and cycling links – enhancing accessibility and connection with the natural environment

Scope and implement technologies that will act as key location differentiators and educational tools

Future developments to complement preservation of existing habitats and the creation of a legacy

Create a receptive environment in which partners, agencies and community all engage

Act as a catalyst for building networks and partnerships.

Rural City of Wangaratta

Wangaratta Government Centre
62-68 Ovens Street
Wangaratta Vic 3677

PO Box 238
Wangaratta 3676

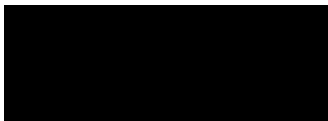
Telephone 03 5722 0888
Facsimile 03 5721 9526
E-Mail council@wangaratta.vic.gov.au
Website www.wangaratta.vic.gov.au



WIM File Number: 019/39928

19th July 2019

Field & Game Australia



To whom it may concern;

RE: Winton Wetlands - Re-Activation

The Rural City of Wangaratta recognises that Winton Wetlands is public asset of regional significance and that it is currently failing to meet the financial and tourism expectations it needs to continue operating successfully. We believe that the Winton Wetlands Committee needs to review and consider all proposals that may assist in turning this once thriving tourism asset around to make it self-sustaining and a financially viable for future generations to continue to use and visit.

To this end the Rural City of Wangaratta supports in principle the proposal of Field & Game Australia for the reactivation of some parts of the Winton Wetlands. We do so, recognising that further research, community and state agency consultation and work needs to be done in finalising this proposal.

Yours sincerely,



Dean Rees
MAYOR
RURAL CITY OF WANGARATTA

Enquiries: Gail Brown - Executive Assistant to the Mayor, Councillors & CEO
[REDACTED]

Our Ref: SF/1600

18 July 2019

Field and Game Australia
[REDACTED]

To whom it may concern.

Winton Wetlands - Game Bird Hunting Trial

On behalf of the Council, I am pleased to offer support to Field and Game Australia's request for the reintroduction of a managed trial of Game Bird Hunting at Winton Wetlands in North East Victoria.

The concept has the potential to energise the community to again be involved and use the Wetlands.

We recognise that Winton Wetlands is a public asset of regional significance and the Mokoan Basin has been the traditional home to recreational hunting and fishing in North East Victoria for generations specifically the townships of Benalla and Wangaratta.

Based on the information and data collected from the trial the Council will determine a way forward, however, to move any further than a trial the Council will be required to undertake community consultation to guide any future decisions about the key asset in our region.

Yours sincerely



**Cr Scott Upston
Mayor**



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