

Spare

---

---

# News of Friends of Grasslands

---

---

Volume 6 Issue 8

November 1996

---

---

## **Annual General Meeting**

**11.00 am 8th December, Environment Centre.**

The annual general meeting for Friends of Grasslands will be held on the 8th December at the Environment Centre, Kingsley St, Acton at 11.00 am. This meeting will be used to elect new office bearers and determine the future directions of FOG. Please come and show your support for FOG. This is a great opportunity to meet other FOG members and have your say about what activities FOG undertakes. It is also the chance to get more involved in the running of FOG. If you won't be attending the meeting, please provide apologies to Sandy Kay Ph: 253 3320.

## **The Temperate Grassland Project in South Australia**

**Vicki-Jo Russell, Threatened Species Network (SA)**

South Australia's temperate grasslands are on the verge of extinction. The State once had around one million hectares however less than a third of one percent remains.

The remaining grasslands are home to five nationally threatened plants and another 30 species of significance in South Australia.

The World Wide Fund for Nature - Australia has funded two major surveys of native grassland and grassland sites in South Australia in the last 5 years. The latter survey, conducted by Michael Hyde, entitled "Temperate Grasslands in South Australia - their composition and conservation status", was recently launched in Adelaide in August and is available for \$25.00 from WWF in Sydney on (02) 299 6636.

In 1994 WWF received funding from the Save the Bush Fund to implement the major recommendations from these two reports. One of the key recommendations was the appointment of grassland extension officers in each of the major grassland regions to promote conservation of significant remnants.

Project Officers will be employed to discuss grassland conservation with a variety of landholders, including local councils and owners of private property. Information about native grasslands and their protection will be provided along with assistance with key activities such as planning and protective fencing.

Information packages will be produced in cooperation with other organisations such as the Australian Conservation Foundation and distributed to land owners, tertiary institutions and stakeholders.

For further information contact Vicki-Jo Russell (08) 2235155.

### **Eastern Gas Pipeline**

An independent Commission of Inquiry/Panel has recommended conditional approval for the Eastern Gas Pipeline. As was reported in the Pipeline Report (Issue 8) the Commissioners stated they are ...”satisfied that there are no environmental, biophysical, social or economic grounds which would preclude approval of the proposed EGP pipeline development”. Other conclusions reached by the Commission include:

- ◆ The evidence does not indicate serious or irreversible environmental damage is likely to occur using the Nowra route.
- ◆ It is unlikely that there will be a loss of diversity or ecological integrity at State or Regional level and only minimal short term losses at the local level. Securance of objectives in this regard is assisted by conditions and management plans recommended by the commission/panel directed to:
  - minimising vegetation and habitat clearance
  - minimising potential impacts concerning habitat fragmentation, loss of wildlife corridors, wildlife barriers, edge effects, stream crossings, weeds, feral animals and soil erosion.
  - pipeline route changes and/or construction methods to avoid environmental sensitive locations; and maximising use of easements, encouraging revegetation, protection of wildlife corridors, weed control and fauna protection.

Source: Pipeline Report Issue 8, October 1996.

## **Living Grasslands of Canberra and the South-East region. Conference Program**

### **Saturday 9th November**

- 9.00 Professor Jamie Kirkpatrick - Grassland overview
- 9.30 John Benson - Conservation of native grasslands in New South Wales
- 10.00 Mike Snoad - Grassland restoration
- 10.30-11.15 - Morning Tea
- 11.15-11.45 - Sandie Jones - Grassland Fauna
- 11.45-12.15 - Kim Pullen - Invertebrates in grasslands
- 12.15-1.30 - Lunch
- 1.30-2.00 Isobel Crawford - Identification
- 2.00-3.30 Bus trip to Barton Cathedral (Sarah Sharp, Isobel Crawford, Rainer Rehwinkle, Colin Hocking). This will include identification in the field and biodiversity assessment.
- 3.30 Afternoon tea at the Botanic Gardens
- 4.00 Seed Harvesting

### **Sunday 10th November**

- 9.25 Opening and welcome to Day 2
- 9.30 Dr. Ian Garrard - Politics and Legislation
- 10.00 Clive Thomas - Community grasses project
- 10.30 Rainer Rehwinkle - Grazing and grasslands
- 11.00 Leon Horsnell - Bush regeneration
- 11.30-11.45 - Morning Tea
- 11.45 Bus leaves for afternoon field trip for picnic lunch to Gungahlin (Award winning reserve), Umbagog Park and Majura field firing range.
- 4.15 Afternoon tea at ANBG including farewell address from Edwina Barton (past FOG president)

### Good News, Golden Sun Month

Friends of Grasslands prepared a submission for the New South Wales Scientific Committee regarding the nomination of the Golden Sun Moth (*Synemon plana*) as an endangered species on the Threatened Species Conservation Act. The nomination has been supported, and awaits further public comment before the species is listed in the Conservation Act. This is great news for the conservation of the Golden Sun Moth. Well done to Naarilla Hirsch for all the hard work in getting the submission prepared. A summary of the findings of the scientific committee are listed below.

1. *Synemon plana* is found in naturally treeless grassland, and occasionally in secondary grassland, dominated by *Danthonia carphoides*, in the ACT and NSW and by other *Danthonia* spp. in Victoria.
2. Adult moths are active from about mid November to early January and only live a few days. Males fly rapidly in the heat of the day but females remain relatively immobile. They are unable to feed or drink and must mate and lay eggs rapidly. Eggs are laid between the tillers of *Danthonia*

(Wallaby Grass) or between tillers and soil. Larvae feed on underground parts of *Danthonia*. The length of the larval stage is unknown but the most likely estimate is about two years. The larvae remain underground and pupate underground after preparing tunnels to the surface, through which the pupae can escape. The pupal stage probably lasts for about 6 weeks.

3. *Synemon plana* is currently known from five sites in Victoria, seven small and one large site in the ACT and a single site in New South Wales.

4. Museum records show that the species was more common prior to 1950 and the original range may have been from near Bathurst, south to central Victoria and west to South Australia.

5. The number of authentic, location specific, records from NSW is very small.

6. There has been a severe decline in the area of the habitat occupied by *Synemon plana*. The habitat is threatened by agricultural practices, invasion by exotic weeds and from housing development.

### **American Grasslands, similar patterns to Australia**

Grasslands represent the largest vegetation type in North America, covering about 15% of the land area. Prairies are the grasslands found in the central part of the North American continent. The word "prairie" is from the French word for a meadow grazed by cattle. It was applied by the early French explorers to the vast inland area of North America that is mostly devoid of trees and covered instead by with waving grasses and a wide variety of colourful flowers in various shades of yellow, pink, white and blue.

In a similar situation to Australia, American grasslands have also undergone a severe decline. In about 50 years the extent of the prairie was reduced from 22 million acres to just over 2000 acres which remain today, less than one-hundredth of one percent.

In another similarity, prairie reserves tend to be mostly small, with less than 17% of reserves greater than 10 acres in area. Some of the best places to see original prairies are in former pioneer cemeteries that were created on the original prairie landscape.

**Source: World wide web: <http://www.prairienet.org/tallgrass/tgp-01.htm>**

**FOG Membership now totals 80 financial members**

**Executive Committee Contact Details**

**President:** Sandie Jones  
8/3 Bonrook St HAWKER ACT 2614  
phone: (06) 2546759

**Convenor:** Naarilla Hirsch  
30 Chillagoe St FISCHER ACT 2611

**Secretary/Treasurer & Membership Officer**  
Sandy Kay  
26 Templeton St COOK ACT 2614  
phone: (06) 253 3320

**Submissions Coordinator:** Alison Elvin  
13 Frankland St HOLDER ACT 2611  
phone: (06) 288 6001

**Field Trip Coordinator:** Dave Mallinson  
76 Bacchus Circuit KAMBAH ACT 2902  
phone: (06) 231 4327

**Other Committee Members**

Janette Hannan  
111 Florey Drive MACGREGOR ACT 2615  
phone (06) 254 3060

Phil Hurle  
10 Fraser Place Yarralumla ACT 2600  
phone (06) 285 4231

**Conference Sub-Committee**

Susan Theron  
17 Batman St, BRADDON ACT 2601  
phone (06) 247 9964

Jan Gough-Watson  
RMB 1025 BUNGENDORE NSW 2621  
phone (06) 238 1654

Sandy Kay  
26 Templeton St COOK ACT 2614  
phone: (06) 253 3320