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## Groups loving the Trail

In recent months there has been an increase in the number of groups coming to East Gippsland specifically to ride the trail, and yes, ride, because they are typically on two wheels. The most encouraging aspect is that they are coming from NSW and the ACT, but with significant numbers from Melbourne, including school groups.

Over the Queen's Birthday weekend a 28 strong group from Melbourne spent three days in the area. They had dreary weather but at least on the Saturday morning as they headed across the Nicholson River bridge they were a happy crowd.



### Good News!



**Finally! Installing the story boards at Orbost.**

*More next issue and on the web-site.*

Interesting media coverage was generated by the trouble they had getting bikes to Bairnsdale on the V/Line train. Despite efforts to improve this problem it persists.

Time for some high level intervention?

Thanks to the Bairnsdale Advertiser for this support.

*Michael Oxer*

## 1990 law

Bicycle helmets became compulsory in Victoria on 1 July 1990. By law, Victorians must wear a helmet that has been approved to Australian Standards.

The law applies on roads, bike paths, bike lanes, shared and segregated footways and in other public places such as recreational parks and car parks.

Therefore it is compulsory to wear an approved bike helmet on the East Gippsland Rail Trail.

**Janice Preston**



## Cycle Pink Was A Splash Of Colour !

On Sunday April 3 about 125 riders chose the 25 Km round trip to Nicholson as part of this cancer treatment fund raising promotional event. Nicholson River Bridge was a revelation to many, who were trying the trail for the first time.



**Michael Oxer**

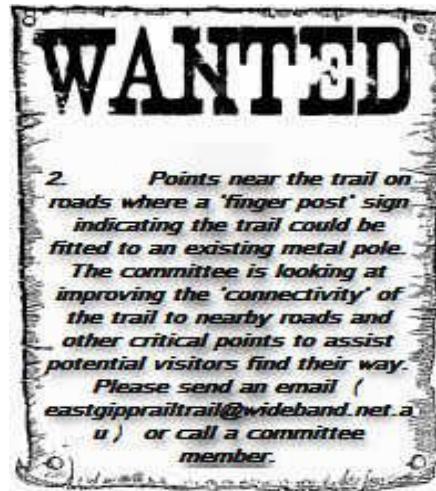


## Sharing The Trail Story With Neighbours

A detail of the management plan produced in 2008/9 was to provide a newsletter to the nearly 300 fence line neighbours. The committee has now prepared the first edition and with assistance from the Shire Council to handle the mail out, looks forward to the local community having a better understanding of the issues and challenges involved in looking after and promoting this public asset. Work is also in hand to prepare a map of the trail reserve as a PDF stored on a CD. It will include topographical detail and the boundaries of properties next to the Reserve. This will be available free to trail neighbours.

## Shire Council tackles a trails strategy

It is good news for the rail trail that the Council has begun work on developing a strategy for dealing with trails, of all descriptions, across the Shire. In preliminary discussions it has become obvious that the rail trail can play a very central role in knitting together a wide spread network of trails for recreational use.



The Nicholson River Landcare Group have used a Catchment Management Authority grant to carry out an important re-vegetation project east of the bridge, mainly on the north side. The group descended on the slopes beside the pathway on Saturday June 4, following up on several months of preparation work by the trail committee with help from Bairnsdale Community Correctional Services (BCCS) work crews. A new side track has been installed, following the route of the old railways service road. Work is still in progress to open a pathway access on the south side, with a 'goat track' link under the eastern abutment of the bridge. This will open a 700 metre loop, taking visitors through the new planting area and offering stunning views of the timber bridge structure. A seat is also being added to improve this interesting part of the trail.

*Michael Oxe*

## Landcare Action At Nicholson Bridge Site



## Council Steps In To Seal The Access Path At Bruthen



A critical link from the trail to the footbridge leading to Main Street has been rebuilt and sealed by the Council, including the ramp off the trail pathway. The next major project is to install a new path from the trail between the tunnel and the Tambo Bridge, to provide access via the historic eastern footbridge to Main Street and right past the front door of Bullant Brewery.

A quote of \$11,500 has been offered for this project. If it is to proceed it will require considerable effort to raise funds.

*Michael Oxer*

## Please be seated.....

With assistance from the volunteer efforts of the Rotary Club of Mitchell River (RCMR) who build the concrete and timber seats which are being added to the trail, and because of generous donors, three more locations now boast a seat for visitors to pause a while and take in the view or take a breather on their trail trip.



*Michael Oxer*



The latest additions are: east of Nicholson River at the Landcare re-vegetation site (in recognition of the Landcare effort); half way between Swan Reach Road and Giles Street at Wiseleigh with great views across the Tambo valley (*In memory of Clare Bateman*); (*See pic. at left.*)

and east of Preston Road at Newmerella ('Rosies Seat'). (*See pic. above.*)

Another memorial seat will be installed at Sarsfield Rd, Nicholson in the near future. More seats are being prepared by the RCMR, available for a donation of \$240.

## In for the count

Four more counters have been installed at key points on the Trail, making a total of eight. The counters are an essential tool and the only way in which any realistic evaluation can be made of visitor activity on the trail. Counts at the Bairnsdale entrance and at Nicholson include many very local and short trips but the records obtained closer to Orbost give a better picture of the longer distance trips, typically by bicycle riders.

The data is being used to build a better understanding of seasonal activity and the overall trend in use. To date the readings

indicate a gradual rise in activity, at least at the first four sites.

It will take nearly two years to begin establishing the use patterns and trends at the new locations, which include: east of Stephenson Road (Nicholson); west of Bruthen; west of Nowa Nowa; and east of Preston Road, Newmerella.

**The count network on this trail is the most comprehensive of any rail trail in Australia.**



## Meeting dates for 2011

Aug 14	AGM	Bruthen
Nov 14		Nicholson



**Further information contact secretary,**

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Check out the web-site at:

<http://eastgippslandrailtrail.com/>

The **AGM date is Sun Aug 14th** at Bullant Brewery

Bruthen at 12 noon for a meal and the meeting at 1pm.



The name Nowa Nowa is aboriginal, meaning "mingling waters", and is situated where the Boggy Creek meets the 22 km long salt arm of Lake Tyers. Thomas Stirling first took up the Nowa Nowa run in 1869. He later selected two hundred and ninety acres about 8km down Lake Arm and made camp on Boggy Creek, at the site of the only fordable place on that creek.



**Boggy Creek Railway Bridge** was constructed between 1912 and 1916 in time for the opening of the Bairnsdale to Orbost rail line. Crossing Boggy Creek presented a difficult engineering challenge with its fast-flowing stream which often carried much timber debris at great velocity that could damage the bridge piers. Engineers at Boggy Creek were understandably impressed by "the number of large trees" that they observed deposited below the proposed bridge site.

**Next issue: The maize cribs at Mossiface.**

Their solution to that problem resulted in a unique and complex bridge of 17 spans, a remarkable contrast to other Gippsland railway bridges. The bridge design utilises solid concrete piers, timber-trestle piers based on concrete, driven timber-pile piers, iron plate girders, steel joists and timber beams. All of this supports 63 metres of curving timber deck. The huge wrought iron girders (18.23m) over the main channel were recycled from the North Eastern Railway.

Boggy Creek railway bridge is tall and impressive because of its complex construction - some true timber-trestle piers based on concrete and some timber pile piers. It reflects many aspects and several eras of Victorian Railways technology.

Today, although the bridge is no longer part of the trail, it contributes much to Nowa Nowa township's identity. The Boggy Creek Walk (1.4km) is an easy stroll taking you past the bridge to the Gorge Lookout.



**Read "Wooden Wonders" by Don Chambers for an interesting exploration of Victoria's timber bridges.**

## WANTED

**The Rail Trail Committee is looking for the following information and volunteer interest.**

### **1. Bicycle hiring options.**

To be added as a specific information source to the Transport page on the web site. Details about any bicycle hiring business, including types of bikes, charges, hours etc, within easy reach of the Trail (including Lakes Entrance).

Bicycle hirers will be most welcome to join as a Business Friend (if not already).

### **2. Someone interested in learning about the counter system now installed on the Trail.**

Management of the eight counters involves monitoring the locations, bi-monthly downloading of the stored data, and review and analysis of the data.

### **3. Setting up a media archive.**

Since the Trail was launched in December 1998 we have been accumulating a variety of media cuttings and other memorabilia and records of events etc. The Committee is looking for a volunteer with some interest and skills in cataloguing and storage of this type of material.

***Please contact Michael.***

***email: [eastgipprailtrail@wideband.net.au](mailto:eastgipprailtrail@wideband.net.au)***

## WALLABIES

Along the East Gippsland Rail Trail, particularly early morning and late afternoon, keep your eyes peeled for a glimpse of a wallaby or two.

The Swamp Wallaby also known as the Black Wallaby has back fur which is dark brown to black and the belly fur which is yellow to a strong reddish orange. A faint light yellow to light brown cheek stripe may be seen if you are close. The paws, feet and tail are dark through to black. The tail is long and held straight out behind the body when hopping and the general gait is to keep the head low to the ground.



The male Swamp Wallaby may reach 21 kg and the female 15kg.



The Red-necked Wallaby also known as Bennett's Wallaby has back fur which is grey-fawn grading to a bright reddish brown patch on the neck and the rump. The undersides are white through to pale grey. Light cheek and hip stripes are visible but indistinct. Red-necked Wallabies are of similar size to Swamp Wallabies.

The male Red-necked Wallaby is larger than the female ranging from 15-27 kg to female's 11-16 kg.

The two species are largely separated by the Red-necked Wallaby's preference for the ecotone between dense and open vegetation and the Swamp Wallaby's preference for dense vegetation.

The wallabies like the larger kangaroos are predominantly grazers. They share a similar body form and habits to the larger Kangaroos and are often found in the same area as Grey Kangaroos which may also be sighted on your journey.

<http://www.rootourism.com/fsheet67.htm>

[http://www.fourthcrossingwildlife.com/swamp\\_wallaby.htm](http://www.fourthcrossingwildlife.com/swamp_wallaby.htm)

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Swamp\\_Wallaby](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Swamp_Wallaby)

<http://www.rootourism.com/fsheet32.htm>

DPI Tasmania

Janice Preston