

APRIL TO JUNE 2021



INTO THE STREAM

Official Newsletter of the Australian Trout Foundation

From our President

ATF PRESIDENT TERRY GEORGE

Covid-19 has derailed some plans of the ATF in the most recent lockdown. The ATF had joined forces with Fishcare and the Broken Goulburn Catchment Management Authority to plant out some tree on a section of the Goulburn River below the Weir. However with new restrictions imposed in early June this planting had to be postponed

On a better note, this newsletter contains an article on the initial planting of 3,500 tree in the Nariel Valley. This project was a partnership between the ATF, North East Catchment Management Authority, Corryong Angling Club and VFA. Ten thousand trees were planned to be planted but the number was restricted due to fencing issues. The planting was so successful that there is clamour from farmers to finish the job in spring with another 6500 trees to be planted.

The Monaro Acclimatization Society have an article in this newsletter. The MAS has much in common with the ATF and we share a vision for a sustainable trout fishery. Happy reading for this month.



Photo: courtesy David Anderson Nariel Tree Planting Day 2021

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Nariel River Trees for Trout

During the week of the 15th to 22nd May approximately 30 people gathered in and around Corryong to plant trees along the Nariel Creek to assist in the restoration of the creek after the 2019-20 bushfires.

A joint operation was carried out which included the North East Catchment Management Authority (NECMA), the Victorian Fisheries Authority (VFA), Corryong Angling Club and the Australian Trout Foundation (ATF). Planting volunteers came from the local area as well as the greater North East and Melbourne, all coordinated by the ATF.

Andrew Briggs (commonly known as Briggys) planned the operation to coordinate with significant in-stream stabilisation works on the Nariel funded out of Bushfire Recovery funds. A total planting of 10,000 trees is planned over the next 12 months, season dependent. Approximately 3,500 trees were planted over four days of planting, mostly by a more elderly brigade of planters, although the average age was lowered on the Sunday with participation from some local families and their children.



Some of the planting team in action (Photo courtesy of David Anderson)

All the planters were grateful for the two augers that were utilised for the creation of planting holes. Big Dave was the standout digger, handling the petrol-driven auger for a number of days. It was difficult to tell which was going to wear out first, Dave or the auger. Brad also supplied an electric auger which certainly accelerated the plant rate over the four days. "Big Dave" was quoted as saying that his wife (ex) had said to him that he may not be that bright, but he sure can lift heavy things. To top off a sterling performance Big Dave won the meat tray in the Corryong Hotel on the Wednesday night. We think he was going home to eat it in one sitting to replace the energy he used over the time

Briggys was a master of coordination and certainly managed to look busy all the time coming and going, setting up the lunchtime BBQ and sourcing vegetarian sausages for fussy eaters. Unfortunately, no camera was present when Briggys was spotted actually planting a tree. Some still dispute the claim that he did! Mick, Briggys's stand-in on the Wednesday excelled with not only sourcing vegetarian patties to complement the meat fare and operating the BBQ, but also distributing and planting trees. This should not be seen as a reflection on Briggys, who operated under the delegation model of leadership. We were all glad to follow his lead!

On the Wednesday planting, Choco suggested that since there was three members of the VFFA volunteering that we should erect a sign saying, "This planting undertaken by the VFFA". Others from the planting team suggested good naturedly that gratuitous recognition should be discouraged!



Some of the planting team in action (Photo courtesy of David Anderson)

Many friends were made, and fun conversations had in the pub at night. One conversation undertook a serious study into what constitutes a "shitload" of anything. It was determined that the crew had planted a "shitload" of trees, meaning anything over 3,500 trees constituted a shitload. It was agreed a huge collection of salvageable logs collected in the Nariel Valley constituted a shitload, while Neal Bennett confirmed that NZ fishing guides suggested anything over ten fish a day meant you had caught a shitload of fish. A red herring introduced into the conversation suggested a truckload was more than a shitload but this should be discounted due to the fact that it was not possible to load all the aforementioned the logs in the Nariel Valley onto one truck. All agreed a truckload was far more definable than a shitload, only dependent on the size of the truck.

A couple of days fishing was possible for those interested, with two celebrated anglers heading over to the Gibbo River on the Thursday and catching far more than a shitload.

The week was not only a great win for the bushfire recovery effort and the environment, but also very enjoyable for all those who participated. Many thanks to Briggsy for his great organisational effort (notwithstanding the above commentary) and for all those who participated as volunteers. We only have 6,500 to go. Stay tuned for further invitations to make a difference with the ATF Trees for Trout program.



Briggsy at work with the team. (Photo courtesy of David Anderson)

Spotted Tree Frog Project

On the Weekend of April 30 -May 2 the ATF and other volunteers headed up to Eildon to help out with the project to recover the endangered spotted green tree frog. The intent was to reduce the number of non-native fish above the Whites Creek barrier, thus removing one of three threats to this critically endangered species, the other threats being climate change and the chytrid virus.

It is felt that the removal of one of the three threats will provide accurate data as to the possibility of recovery for the species in a controlled and limited environment . Around 19 people attended including 12 volunteer anglers.



Approximately 70 fish were caught and removed on this weekend. Further fish removal and release will be undertaken by electro-fishing.

Some fish were retained for research into temperature tolerance for salmonoid species in warming climate. The rest were released by the VFA below the White's Creek barrier and into Eildon Pondage. The ATF have been strong supporters of this recovery project since its inception and we will follow the science with interest.



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ATF Upcoming Events

Warrnambool Fish Habitat Workshop:
Saturday September 11, 2021
Deakin University, Warrnambool.

Cobungra Bushfire Restoration Project
Spring 2021

Riparian restoration and access for the
Rubicon and Steavenson Rivers, Spring 2021.

WA NEWS

SFFAC HIT THE GROUND RUNNING

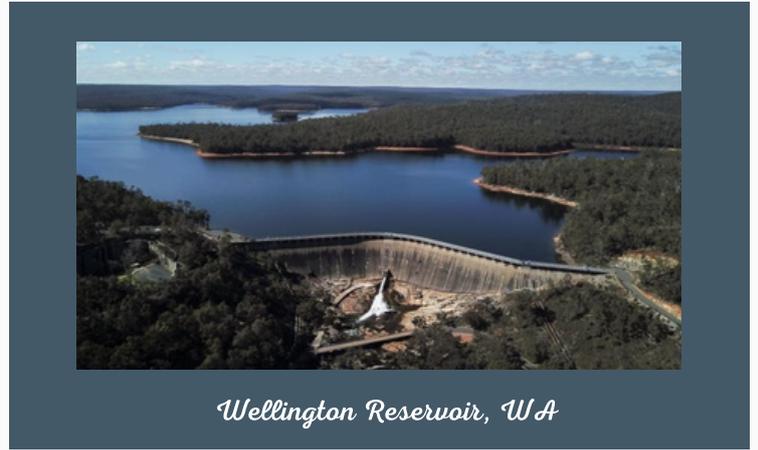
The Southern Forests Freshwater Angling Club has recently been formed and is already busy working on a project in the Pemberton District. The old MacCullum Smith trout ponds which date from 1941 were one of several serious attempts to establish a trout rearing facility in the district. They were built at a time when many construction materials were in short supply and both ingenuity and skill were required to build the ponds. The SFFAC are working with Bruce Williamson and the Pemberton Visitor Centre and the Pemberton Heritage and History Group to restore the ponds. The ATF WA Branch will also assist in busy bee weekends when appropriate. The old ponds will be an important part of a heritage trail in Pemberton



Pemberton Trout Ponds as originally conceived

FISH STOCKING

Our trout fishery in the southwest is dependent on stocking to maintain a large enough head of fish in our streams, rivers and impoundments to ensure anglers have a good chance of catching fish on a regular basis. The state hatchery at Pemberton has done a magnificent job over many decades stocking rainbows and browns. The WA Branch of the ATF is represented on both the Freshwater Fisheries Reference Group (FFRG) and the WA Inland Fisheries Resource Advisory Council (WAIFRAC) and we have been working through these groups with Fisheries to review the stocking program. The number of fry produced for stocking has been reduced based on evidence that many of the sites on streams where fry were traditionally stocked in November each year are now dry the following February due to reduced average rainfall.



Wellington Reservoir, WA

Reducing the fry production has meant it is possible to hold fewer brood stock. Ponds have been freed up to produce more yearling fish. This year the hatchery produced 40,000 yearlings, a significant increase on previous years. There has been a decision by Fisheries to now permit fish to be stocked into the Preston River and into Wellington Reservoir. Trout anglers have been lobbying for decades for regular stocking of Wellington which is by far the largest irrigation reservoir in the southwest. The ATF is working with other stakeholders to develop Wellington into one of our best trout fisheries.



A Golden Anniversary

WA Fisheries have advised that 2022 will be the fiftieth anniversary of government management of the Pemberton Hatchery and they are keen to develop a calendar of events during the year to celebrate the history and current work of the hatchery. The ATF has suggested several activities, events and publications as part of the celebrations, and we will be working closely with Fisheries and Recfishwest during the next few months to develop a program for next year. So, watch this space!

BLACKWOOD RIVER GUIDE

Preparation of the new Guide to Trout Fishing on the Blackwood River is underway. The guide is the third in the series and is funded by a community grant from Recfishwest. We are targeting a public release date for Troutfest at Lake Moyanup later this year.

Monaro Acclimatization Society News

This article is supplied by Steve Samuels, President of the Monaro Acclimatization Society, an organization dedicated to the sustainability of the Monaro trout fishery, this includes the Snowy Mountains. MAS has much in common with the ATF.

As President of the Monaro Acclimatisation Society, I aim to communicate to the broader angling fraternity on the things we do in and around the Snowy Mountains fishery. I am pleased to be invited to contribute to the ATF Newsletter for this issue.

The biggest project on the books of the MAS for the last four years has been the Snowy Hydro 2.0 Project. This project is a pumped hydro scheme that recirculates water between Talbingo Dam and Tantangara Dam in the Snowy Mountains to produce green electricity. When the plan was announced the MAS became concerned that redfin perch could be pumped from Talbingo Dam up into Tantangara Dam which is redfin free



Talbingo Reservoir and pumping station

The MAS Executive decided to take a novel approach when the plan was announced. We decided to chase an offset for the potential of redfin incursion into Tantangara Dam. After four years of negotiation and consultation the MAS was successful in gaining an offset that requires Snowy Hydro to invest \$5 million for the building of an expanded facility within the Gaden Trout Hatchery to allow for 200,000 trout to be grown out to yearling size for stocking. The money from Snowy Hydro now allows bigger trout to be stocked in waters that have or might get redfin in the future

The drought of last year bit hard and many of our better streams were depleted of fish when the waters ceased to flow and warmed up to lethal temperatures. The members of the MAS gathered at the Gaden hatchery in the spring of this season, collected their fish and headed off to stock the streams of the region.

MAS plays an important role in the stocking and re-stocking of the rivers. Each year our members contribute their time, vehicles and fuel to make sure rivers are populated with trout for the angling public. If we are lucky to get a few good wet years, then the rivers will return to good fishing, but I have this nagging thought that the dry years are getting more frequent, and this will be a challenge for our stocking in the future.

There was the exceptionally good mud-eye hatch this year in Lake Eucumbene and Jindabyne.

Appropriately, the rainbow trout responded with substantial weight gains. Fat and fit rainbows would take to the air and then run off to the backing at every hook-up.

The spawning season arrived with the fish in excellent condition. There was a good run of spawning brown trout in the Eucumbene River by late May. Some impressive fish were caught, and many were released. The MAS has done a lot of work over the last 10 years to get rid of the cowboys



Autumn fishing on the Eucumbene River

who camped on pools and took vast bags of spawning trout. Our work with NSW Fisheries and the local police has seen anglers who now attend the run being more respectful of other anglers and the fish. Brown trout are not stocked in Lake Eucumbene. If our brown trout run is abused, we run the risk of depleting their numbers. All of us who value this must ensure we contribute to looking after the resource, especially during the vulnerable time of the spawning run.

The trout season has now closed, and the rainbow trout are yet to run, but we are hopeful for a strong run in the Eucumbene River.

While Covid-19 has put us all on alert, there has been some relief for those who come and fish the region and for the future of the fishery.