

OCTOBER TO DECEMBER 2022



# INTO THE STREAM

Official Newsletter of the Australian Trout Foundation



**All the the best for the festive season and for the New Year to all our members and friends. Many thanks for your support in 2021 in Victoria and WA**

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## From our President

Working together, the ATF did manage to get a number habitat projects underway, plus a good deal of preparation and planning for 2022 events. The trees for trout project at Nariel Creek was the largest for the year with fantastic support from a big platoon of volunteers who engineered a fun work place whilst getting the job done to a high standard. It would be great to have the same gang plus some additional volunteers when we return to plant approx. 6,000 seedlings along the Nariel and Thowgla Creeks in May/June 2022.

### Trout Abundance

The rains have been very kind to our waterways recently and the trout have spawned accordingly with young of year fish in abundance.

It appears that the majority of our wild trout streams have better than average trout numbers and those anglers who have timed it right between the numerous mini floods have done extremely well.

### Forthcoming Projects & Events

With the easing of Covid restrictions the ATF has once again been able to ramp up planning and implementation for several important projects that have been on hold over the last 18 months. Although not yet fully implemented plans and actions are well under way for Rubicon River access, Steavenson River access, Regional Wild Trout Fishery Promotion webpage, a Troutfest on 14 May 2022, installation of active temperature telemetry on priority streams, brochures for safe handling of trout, climate impact, environmental care and ATF information and stocking regimes for Autumn.

## Rubicon River

An access trail has been planned along the Rubicon River from Tumbling Waters to Camp Jungai in partnership with GBCMA (Goulburn Broken Catchment Authority), Rubicon Outdoor Education Centre and the ATF. Several stiles will be installed along this route to enable full access and a track cleared to make access easier. We have initially ordered 5 stiles with an additional 8 to be purchased in due course. AGL have also promised to assist financially in riparian restoration.

Decisions regarding where this will occur will be made in the new year. Volunteers for planting will be required. Stay tuned. a little bit of body text



*New stiles for the Rubicon river*

## Steavenson River

Further access is planned for the Steavenson River. Unused Public Roads should provide access but, in some cases, have been locked and signed as 'no access'. Negotiating this access is a delicate matter given the controversy surrounding crown land river frontage access policy. However, negotiations have resumed, and greater access should be achieved over time from some of these public roads. We have been liaising with the local DELWP regional manager and will map out the desired access points in question. The ATF will publish these access points when negotiations have been completed. With GBCMA, we are planning to instal 5 stiles at various fences to enhance access as soon as practicable.

GBCMA are now in final negotiations with one landowner which should result in a planting day for 2,000 native trees, shrubs and grasses in 2022. This will mean more volunteer work in the Autumn.

## Ovens River

The foot and bike path from Harrietville to Bright is nearing completion. This huge project has been undertaken by the Alpine Shire whose contractors have been carrying out the works. A number of ATF members and anglers have commented on a couple of sections where the weed control works removing willows and blackberries denuded the riparian zone of vegetation.

We have referred these and our concerns to NECMA Managers who acknowledge that the remedial and vegetation works are urgent and the ATF will ensure that the best possible job will be done to restore the shade and to entice the terrestrials that trout love best. It's a short to medium term problem that will be rectified by revegetating with selected native trees, shrubs and grasses, providing shade and attracting terrestrials to enhance the food chain. In addition, the zones will have the benefit of blackberry and willow removal.



*Bright - Harrietville bike path with with denuded riparian zone*



### Jacks Hole in-stream and riparian project

The ATF is planning number of new projects for this coming calendar year, starting with this in-stream and riparian project on the Ovens River at Jack's hole, Bright. If you are up that way, the project is about 200m below Jack's hole, which is located at the end of Tyntynder Lane running off the Great Alpine Road.

A big swamp gum fell across the river and paved the way for a beneficial waterway and fish restoration project. The ATF first met Scott McDonald and Andrew Heafield (Pres Alpine FF) at the location, followed by our ATF N/East Delegate Brian Eddy..



*Fallen swamp gum, Jack's Hole*

The ATF proposed that Alpine Fly Fishers would submit a proposal for an RFL Intermediate Grant (approx. \$45k), which Brian will manage on behalf of Alpine Fly Fishers and the ATF. Brian Eddy initiated and managed the extremely successful Frosty Corner habitat restoration project on the Ovens at Harrietville a few years ago.

The project includes the installation of 27 logs with root balls attached, plus 3 huge boulders. See the site photos expertly taken by the renowned photographer, TG. NECMA will contribute \$13k which will cover the initial cost of swinging the swamp gum around and pinning it in along the bank.

We still need to confirm the number of native trees, shrubs & grasses which will planted along the riparian strip and include that cost in the grant submission.



*Bank erosion, Jacks Hole*

## Regional Promotional Webpage

Work is almost complete on this webpage project with financial assistance provided by the VFA. A trial period of twelve months will be undertaken for the North East catchment of the Ovens Valley. Angling information, access points, business promotion, including accommodation and food options and emergency services are to be listed in each targeted area. This promotional webpage was meant to be launched in conjunction with the Victorian Government Regional Development Tourism Plan. However, Minister Horne chose to launch this plan at the recent release of stocked fish in Lake Eppalock. A separate launch of the ATF webpage will take place early in the new year, most likely in Bright.

## Troutfest

The ATF has partnered with VFA, Fishcare and Future Fish, to hold a festival of trout on 14 May 2022. This TroutFest will be held at Eildon pondage and will have fish release, Angling tips and instructions and lots of information regarding the trout fishery to celebrate a return to trout fishing after a long hiatus. It will also be a family day with instructors teaching safe fishing practices to young anglers. It is intended also to have a bus to provide transport for tours of Snobs Creek Fish Hatchery during the day. Save the date!

## Water Temperature Telemetry

Discussions have been ongoing with the VFA to prioritise active river water telemetry that could be easily found on the ATF website. The ATF will provide funds from the RFL Large Grant over two years to trial this approach and see if it is utilised by anglers planning a fishing expedition. Information will also be collected to measure the variation in river water temperature over a season and see what impact this variation may have on the fishery. This is particularly acute given the impact of climate change. It may also help target areas for riparian repair to provide shade and habitat and improve the quality of the water and insect life around identified hotspots.

## Brochures

Part of the Wild Trout Strategy Plan is to provide information to anglers in hard and electronic copy informing them of important aspects of trout management and the wild trout fishery. Several brochures are under construction that will reference the safe handling of trout when caught and released, advocate catch and release practice, keep anglers abreast of the latest climate impacts and inform them of the work of the ATF on a broad basis. These publications are funded by the RFL Large Grant provided to the ATF and should be available in the early new year.

## WA News

### Recfishwest Community Grants

Preparation of the new Guide to Trout Fishing on the Blackwood River funded by a community grant from Recfishwest was completed in time for distribution at the 2021 Troutfest. The guide (and our other two guides) can be downloaded from the WA Branch page on the ATF website.

In October the WA ATF submitted three more applications for community grant funding from Recfishwest. We were advised in November that we have been successful with our application for the preparation and printing of a new guide to fishing the Warren River and Lefroy Brook funded in full. Our aim is to have the guide ready in the middle of 2022.

The WA ATF was also successful with an application for funds to construct angler access stiles. Funding was sought for three stiles. Recfishwest was able to support funding for two stiles. These will be constructed over the next few months and are expected to be installed early in 2022.

### Potential Partnership with Alcoa of Australia

The WA ATF branch Vice President Terry Goodlich has been busy in discussions with Alcoa of Australia and a community partnership application has been submitted for funding support for more angler access stiles and to provide signage on the Nanga fish ladder. Just prior to publication Alcoa has confirmed the application was successful.



*WA designed and installed access style*

### **SFFAC news.**

The Southern Forests Freshwater Angling Club continues to build its membership base. The club has been busy on the old MacCullum Smith trout ponds and it has been fascinating to see the remains of the ponds emerge from under the vegetation that had completely overgrown the site. Club members have invested a lot of time in this project with guidance from Bruce Williamson whose knowledge and enthusiasm is the driving force bringing this important historical site back into public view.

The SFFAC has also held a successful inaugural fishing competition for club members at Big Brook dam and plans more of these activities in the future.



*Back country fishing on a Victorian Wild trout stream*

### **Some more good news on fish stocking**

The trout fishery in the southwest of WA 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 continues to do a sterling job of providing yearling and ex brood stock rainbows and browns. While rainbow fry comprise a large proportion of the total fish stocked each year, there are usually no brown fry available. The Freshwater Fisheries Reference Group (FFRG) was therefore very pleased when recently advised by the hatchery that they were able to provide more than 40,000 brown trout fry for stocking this year. The FFRG has made some recommendations on where these fry should be stocked, and the WA ATF will advise of numbers and locations when the stocking has been completed.

### **Christmas Wishes**

The branch committee extends seasons greeting to all members and we trust you will have a happy and safe festive season. The way our rivers and streams look right now suggests we should be enjoying some excellent fishing over these next few months.

### **Breaking News**

In wonderful news a member of the WA ATF, Liam Surridge, has been elected Chair of the Recfishwest Board. This is an important position in the WA Fishery and we congratulate Liam on this prestigious appointment



*Beautiful wild brown caught by Ben Scullin on a recent high country trip in Victoria*



AUSTRALIAN TROUT FOUNDATION

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