The Norman Wettenhall Foundation



Eleventh Annual Report 2007

www.nwf.org.au



Maintaining the vitality of Australia's environment

An environmental organisation, the Norman Wettenhall Foundation's objective is to support projects that enhance or maintain the vitality and diversity of the Australian natural living environment.

Since its inception 10 years ago, the Foundation has funded projects ranging from supporting local communities to maintain or restore habitat; to the production of education kits; and the publication and widespread dissemination of research information essential to species preservation. Projects that involve collaboration with a number of partners across a region are of special interest. These multi-stakeholder projects are the ones we believe are most likely to have a long term effect and to most widely spread knowledge and understanding.

The Foundation developed a Work Plan in 2007 which objectives are:

1. The restoration, rehabilitation and retention of agricultural landscapes in southeast Australia.

2. Developing self-sustaining landscapes in keeping with contemporary issues; e.g. the triple bottom line (social and economic, as well as environmental).

3. Building the resilience of communities and developing their capability to retain, restore and live within the limits of their natural environment.

4. Optimising community collaboration in recognition of the importance of people living within landscapes, ensuring any environmental vision or plan is as inclusive as possible.

5. Undertaking landscape research in collaboration with communities, identifying the scientific knowledge necessary to achieve their objectives, and then facilitating a community education strategy to pass on that knowledge.

Annual Report designed by Beth Mellick and printed by Black Rainbow (www.blackrainbow.com.au) using 100% recycled paper and 100% vegetable-oil based inks

Front cover image by Max at Map Creative (www.mapcreative.com.au)

Chairperson's Report Chairperson's Report

Since starting some six month ago, the Foundation's new **Executive Officer Beth Mellick** has spent much of her time scoping existing projects involved in landscape restoration in a wide circle around Castlemaine in central Victoria. Why Castlemaine, you may ask? Because that's where the NWF office is now located, making us one of the few environmental foundations actually located within the landscapes that we are focused on conserving. Connecting to country, I suppose you could call it.

As you know, we are seeking under the NWF Work Plan to become involved with existing ecological restoration projects of degraded agricultural land in south-east Australia. Beth, supported by NWF trustee Geoff Park, has been visiting clusters of people and projects, looking for ways we could facilitate them in their efforts to collaboratively create environmentally healthy landscapes that can stay the distance.

Building long term resilience into our landscapes from the bottom up is how we have come to look at the Foundation's role. Because if we don't start at the bottom, transforming the skills, knowledge and resources available to rural communities, then they are likely to continue living and working against Australia's natural environment, rather than with it. Our role, we believe, is providing the resources so communities can develop a vision as to how they in, say, a generation's time, could optimise biodiversity and move to living sustainably within their particular ecosystem patch.

The traditional route followed to 'save the environment' calls for the removal of people and their replacement with reserves/ parks. But every reserve/park is part of an ecosystem in constant flux, and no matter how large, is affected by plant and animal pest species invasion; fire, drought and other natural disasters; roading, visitation, neighbours and other human impacts – all of which require human management and intervention.

We have to move beyond the crude, short term fix of expelling humans from landscapes to the next level of creating a cultural shift in human behaviour and consumption of resources. Difficult as that route may seem, only then will we ensure our children enjoy a richly biodiverse future.

Soon the NWF Work Plan will be put to its first test. Beth has brought together a cluster of over 30 landholder and environmental groups with whom the Foundation has agreed to work – but I'll let her tell you about that in her Executive Officer Report.

On the grantmaking side, the Foundation paid out almost

\$160,000 during financial year 2006/07 and total assets rose to \$4.5 million.



Examples of funded projects follow, along with a complete list of distributions.

Guidelines are at the back of this report, as well as being posted on our website (www.nwf.org.au) along with past annual reports, the Work Plan and supporting documents, and transcripts of the Norman Wettenhall Memorial Lecture series.

This year's lecture is tied in with the Foundation's focus of how can we create resilient landscapes for the long haul.

Donations to the Norman Wettenhall Foundation are tax deductible and this year, for the first time, we acknowledge our donors. From small things, big things grow.

Gib Wettenhall Chair

Special thanks for donations of \$500 or over:

Brian and Diana Snape, \$10,000 AJ Myers, \$5,000 Dame Elisabeth Murdoch, \$1,000 Mr and Mrs L Morgan, \$500 Carrick Chambers, \$500

Executive Officer Report Executive Officer Report



I've had a fantastic year with the NWF, meeting interesting people and learning more about biodiversity and natural resource management. The Board of Trustees have been supportive and enthusiastic and I thank them for their time, help and mentorship.

My work has included administering current grants, processing new grant applications, preparing papers for Trustee meetings, organising the workshop and Lecture, attending conferences, and making visits to landscapes, organisations, landholders and projects.

With Trustee, Geoff Park, as my guide we began scouting around Victoria looking for landscapes and communties who are interested in taking part in large-scale landscape restoration projects. And we found one!

Landscape Restoration

The NWF presented the Friends of the Box-Ironbark Forests Inc. with a cheque for \$30,000 which they will auspice for around 30 different, active environment groups. In the short term, this

project will involve the employment of a project worker to map information about the environment in the Mount Alexander Shire. The worker will draw together all the groups and ultimately produce a 'biodiversity blueprint'. This blueprint will be the first step in working towards creating wildlife corridors and protecting biodiversity across the shire.

This cheque from NWF is only the start. The vision is for a long-term project that has the capacity to expand over shire borders and involve a diverse range of groups and agencies. The Foundation **Trustees are looking** forward to watching this project unfold. I will be a member of the Reference Group which will direct the project. But now I begin to search for another project in another landscape in SE Australia.

Workshop

In October we held a workshop called "landscape restoration - creating long term resilience" which allowed successful landscape restoration project holders the chance to share their stories with other project holders, agency staff, and landholders.

Speakers included Ray Thomas from the Regent Honeyeater Project in the Lurg Hills, Doug Robinson from the Grey-crowned Babbler Project and Susan Sleigh from the Longwood Plains Biodiversity Project near Euroa, and Rae Talbot from the Yarriambiak Biolinks Project in the Hindmarsh Region.

Project Visit

In late August the Board of Trustees, myself and our families took part in some revegetation activities in one of the projects we fund. It was a fulfilling experience and encouraging for me to see I have a Board that is willing to push their sleeves up and get dirty.

Annual Report and Website

I hope you enjoy reading this Report. Also take a look at our new website. We extend our special thanks to Andre` for volunteering to re-do the site and I look forward to keeping it alive with updates and news.

Elizabeth Mellick Executive Officer

Top: Lindsay Ezard (DPI St Arnaud), Beth Mellick and Peter Morrison (DSE, Bendigo)

Middle: Presenting cheque to the President of the FOBIF: Myself, Doug Ralph (FOBIF), Mount Alexander Shire Mayor Jim Norris, Marie Jones (FOBIF) Bottom: Planting day for the Regent Honeyeater Project

Financial Financial Boot 2007 Report 2007 CALANCE SHEET AS AT 30 JUNE 2007

INVESTMENTS	\$
Shares and notes quote on prescribed stock exchange (Cost \$2,103,655)	3,805,271
Market Value as per Australian International Financial Reporting Standards (AIFRS)	
TOTAL INVESTMENTS	3,805,271
CURRENT ASSETS	
Cash and Cash Equivalents	605,862
Trade and Other Receivables	109,403
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	715,265
NON-CURRENT ASSETS	
Other Assets - office equipment	4,555
TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS	4,555
TOTAL ASSETS	4,525,091
CURRENT LIABILITIES	
Unearned Income	3,018
Trade and Other Payables	3,752
TOTAL LIABILITIES	6,770
NET ASSETS	4,518,321
ACCUMULATED FUNDS	
Capital Gifts	1,561,974
Capital Profits	1,015,475
Retained Earnings	239,256
Reserves on Revaluation	1,701,616
TOTAL ACCUMULATED FUNDS	4,518,321
INCOME STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2007 REVENUE	
Donations/Gifts Received	19,139
Income from Investments	526,531
TOTAL INCOME	545,670
TOTAL GENERAL OPERATING EXPENSES	46,298
NET PROFIT FROM ORDINARY ACTIVITIES	499,372
Distributions (Grants to Individuals and Institutions)	156,075
UNDISTRIBUTED INCOME	343,297

Total Grants 2006-2007

Trust for Nature (Victoria) - Mr Elgin Swamp and Snape Reserve Bird-banding and Monitoring Project	\$5,000
Loddon Murray Community Leadership Program - Loddon Murray Community Leadership Program 2007	\$1,000
Monash University - Enhancing conservation management of the indigenous Australian squirrel glider through understanding evolutionary history and effects of human-induced habitat fragmentation	\$20,000
Calivil Creek Parnership Pty Ltd - Water for wetland	\$2,865
Central North Field Naturalists - Leave logs for frogs	\$1,295
Australian National University - The Hooded Parrot project	\$4,400
Trust for Nature (Victoria) - Northern Plains Nest Box Project	\$9,250
Wildlife Conservancy of Tropical Qld - The Buff-breasted Button Quail conservation project	\$10,000
Grampians Community Health Centre - Friends of the Grampians, beyond the smoke 2007 exhibition	\$4,200
Euroa Environment Group - An evaluation of the effectiveness of on-ground habitat works in conserving the grey-crowned babbler	\$11,000
University of Melbourne - Determining the effects of seagrass fragmentation on fish species	\$4,135
Australian National University - The response of birds to the fire regimes of mulga woodland in Central Australia	\$5,000
Regent Honeyeater Project - Habitat restoration for threatened species in the Lurg Hills	\$20,000
Rushworth Community House - Rushworth festival of birds	\$4,800
Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority - Capturing educational opportunities from the Goulburn and Broken River environs in the Shepparton-Mooroopna area	\$9,500
Balnarring Primary School - Balbiroo community wetlands	\$1,200
Tamborine Mountain Landcare - Corridor revegetation project	\$8,200
Marine Discovery Centre - Marine interpretive signs for the SALA festival	\$5,000
Tasmanian Department of Primary Industry and Water - Garden for wildlife	\$6,080
Inland Rivers Network - The biodiversity and values of the Darling River and plains	\$6,700
Royal Botanic Gardens - Monitoring a potentially weedy fungal hitchhiker	\$6,450
Foundation for National Parks and Wildlife - Recovery of Weddin Bush Stone-curlew population	\$5,000
National Parks Association of NSW Inc - Community biodiversity survey project	\$5,000
TOTAL	\$156,075

Annual Lecture Annual Lecture 2007

creating landscape resilience for the long haul

Most of the land in south-east Australia is privately held, and if we are to reverse the inexorable creep of degradation, we will need behavioral change – a cultural shift towards custodianship, rather than macho domination and conquest of this country's land and its animals.

These are among the preoccupations of the NWF's strategic plan. For this year's Memorial Lecture on 22 November. we enlisted three speakers to explore not only how we establish large scale landscape restoration projects, but also maintain them for the long haul. How do we build resilience, both in a biodiverse and community sense?

The first speaker Keith Bradby is the Director of Gondwana Link, where a collaboration of groups are working together to achieve a 1000km long band of connected and resilient country across south western Australia, within which people and nature can co-exist productively. He addressed 'The challenges of being appropriately audacious.'

Bradby asserts, "Only if we achieve conservation action at an unprecedented scale, speed and effectiveness, do we have any chance of retaining the Australia we love."



The second speaker, Andrew Bennett, agrees that the extent and rapidity of landscape change in Australia poses new challenges for conservation in the 21st century. Studies of wildlife in rural environments emphasise the need to adopt a large-scale and long-term perspective in developing strategies for nature conservation.

An Associate Professor at Deakin University, Andrew Bennett leads a research group with diverse projects investigating land use, landscape change and the conservation of native wildlife.

Ted Lefroy has a PhD in agroforestry and is Director of the University of Tasmania's Centre for Environment. He examined the forces shaping the changing face of rural Australia, and how they help or hinder our efforts to restore and regenerate Australia's natural ecosystems. They include shifts in demographics, commodity prices, farming practice, Australia's trading partners, climate, and perhaps most importantly, the changing values of rural and urban populations and how they are influencing our relationship with the natural world.

The Annual Lecture is a memorial to Founder, Norman Wettenhall, and is a collaboration with Trust for Nature and Birds Australia.



Transcripts of the lectures can be downloaded from www.nwf.org.au

Report on Distributions made by The Norman Wettenhall Foundation for the year ended June 30, 2007

Regent Honeyeater Project Habitat restoration for threatened species by connecting the Lurg Hills

2007 is the 13th year of the project. The Foundation has been a longterm supporter of this project and has again awarded the group with \$20,000 to continue carrying out habitat restoration works. Over 900ha of wide, species-diverse fenced corridors have been hand planted on farm land, connecting isolated pockets of remnant vegetation in the Lurg Hills. Community education activities are carried out with school children who have made nest boxes and participate in inspections.

The Regent Honeyeater Project aims to retain and restore mature Box-Ironbark habitat, rather than simply planting out paddocks, thereby creating a robust refuge for native wildlife in the predominantly agricultural landscape of north-east Victoria. The project focuses on creating wildlife corridors to connect bush areas containing significant species such as the Regent Honeyeater, Grey Crowned Babbler, Squirrel Gliders and Brush Tailed Phascogales. Threatened species and planting survival rates are closely monitored and reports to landholders, supporting groups and community members are regularly produced.

Tamborine Mountain Landcare Mapping future regeneration corridors

The Tamborine Mountain Landcare group aims to define future regeneration corridors based on a complete map of the waterways on Tamborine Mountain in south-east Queensland. A grant of \$8,200 was awarded to the group to put towards mapping all watercourses, springs, soaks, wetlands and recharge areas on the mountain.

The final map will be in a computer format and made available to the local community throughout the Beaudesert Shire.

Top: Building next boxes for Regent Honeyeater Project Middle: Planting on Regent Honeyeater Project Bottom: International university students volunteering as a part of the Conservation Volunteers Australia "Australearn" programme for Tamborine Mountain Landcare.



Foundation for National Parks and Wildlife Controlling foxes is a boon to biodiversity and agriculture

Fox control activities are promoting the recovery of the Bush Stone-curlew population in the area adjacent to the Weddin Mountain National Park by increasing the area of continuous Bush Stone-curlew habitat.

The Norman Wettenhall Foundation gave \$5,000 to be used in educating local landholders about the dual biodiversity and agricultural benefits from extending Bush Stone-curlew habitat. The project also builds on existing community efforts, gathers data while trialling habitat recovery actions for the benefit of the whole species, and researches into long term options for habitat recovery that will benefit all native fauna in the area.

Inland Rivers Network Producing information about the Darling River's internationally significant wetlands

The Foundation contributed \$6,700 towards this project by the Inland Rivers Network. It aims to build the capacity of regional communities to protect and enhance the valuable ecosystems and wildlife that exists within the Darling River and its plains. This will be done through education and the production of a reference paper, colour brochure, and website update.

The Darling Riverine Bioregion contains four internationally significant wetlands. It hosts huge bird breeding events, critical wildlife refuges during dry periods, a host of threatened species, and migratory birds that have travelled from as far as Siberia and Japan.



Top: Bush Stone-curlew crouching (photo: Ralf Regeer) Middle: Macquarie Marshes northern Nature Reserve (photo: Amy Hankinson) Bottom: Goanna, Macquarie Marshes (photo: Amy Hankinson)



The Northern Plains in Victoria's north-east form a landscape that has been extensively modified for agriculture. Old trees and their hollows that once housed native wildlife have become increasingly rare.

A grant of \$9,250 was made to Trust for Nature, so it could involve key land owners in providing homes for arboreal mammals using nest boxes. Two focal species are Squirrel Gliders and Brush-tailed Phascogales and the project aims to provide information on these species as well as engage the community in practical wildlife conservation.

Australian Centre for Biodiversity Analysis, Monash University Patterns of genetic diversity and the effects of fragmentation on the Squirrel Glider

This project seeks to understand historical patterns of genetic diversity and the effects of recent, human-induced habitat fragmentation on a member of Australia's unique fauna – the Squirrel Glider.

The grant of \$20,000 will be specifically used for laboratory costs involved in screening 400 samples for microsatellite and mitochondrial DNA markers together with the purchase of 200 nest boxes that will be installed in rural communities by local volunteers.

The Australian Centre for Biodiversity Analysis, Policy and Management (ACB) at Monash University has been established to focus on forecasting and analysing alternative ecological futures. The ACB brings together research strengths of many ecologists and conservation biologists in the School of Biological Sciences (SBS) with a focus on landscape and conservation ecology, ecological futures, landscape genetics, freshwater ecology and invasive species biology.

Top: Squirrel Glider in nest box (Photo: Jim Blackney) Middle: Newley-made nest boxes by Trust for Nature (Photo: Jim Blackney) Bottom: Squirrel Glider (Photo kindly provided by Lochman Transparencies, Perth, WA)



Wildlife Conservancy of Tropical Queensland Recovery plan for the Buff-breasted Button Quail

Originally earmarked for the development of sugar cane, the Mareeba Wetlands reserve was created in 1996 from water leftover after passage through the Mareeba Dimbulah Irrigation Area. Managed by the Wildlife Conservancy of Tropical Queensland, it now extends across a series of 12 inter-connected lagoons, creeks and channels, which weave their way across the 5000 ha site, attracting rich and diverse birdlife including osprey, sea eagles, black swans, magpie geese, brolgas, whistling ducks, pelicans, pink-eared ducks and the Jabiru.

A grant of \$10,000 was made to support a research project for the Buffbreasted Button-quail to enable a full species recovery plan to be drawn up for the bird. Global population numbers are as few as 500 adults so a comprehensive recovery plan is essential.

Central North Field Naturalists Leave logs for frogs

The Central North Field Naturalists produced a brochure called 'Leave logs for frogs' in 1995 which has proven a valuable educational resource. The Foundation awarded a grant of \$1,295 in order for the group to update and reprint the brochure.

This group is based in northern Tasmania and is dedicated to producing materials for the public. The brochure encourages people to leave logs, fallen branches, leaf litter and other organic matter on the ground in order to break down, as well as provide essential habitat for frogs, birds and invertebrate biodiversity.

Top: Wildlife Conservancy of Tropical Queensland team surveying in the rain (Photo: Kathy Howard) Middle: Wildlife Conservancy team member Carol with finch (Photo: Lisa Collins) Bottom: Brown tree frog, *Litoria ewingii* (Photo: Sarah Lloyd)



Mt Elgin Swamp and Snape Reserve Committee of Management, Trust for Nature

Bird-banding and monitoring to track bird populations at two reserves

Mt Elgin Swamp and Snape Reserve are both Trust for Nature (Victoria) owned properties in north-west Victoria, purchased to protect their significant conservation and biodiversity values.

Foundation funding of \$5,000 will go towards bird banding and bird monitoring at both sites. It will involve quarterly surveys where birds will be mistnetted, identified, weighed, measured and fitted with a numbered leg band. During nesting season, audits of nest box usage will be undertaken and young birds in the next boxes will be fitted with coloured bands.

Clifford and Dawn Frith The Bowerbirds – a popular history and natural history

Clifford and Dawn Frith have dedicated much of the past 25 years to studying live bowerbirds in Australia and New Guinea as well as studying scientific specimens in major museums around the world. This culminated in the publishing of an acclaimed academic book on bowerbirds.

This new project sees the Friths self-publish a popular book about the bowerbirds for the lay person. It is accessible, affordable and attractive and aims to raise awareness of this unique bird and its behaviour. The book contains colour photos, illustrations, and reproductions of lithographic plates.

The Bowerbirds – a popular history and natural history was awarded a \$20,000 grant from the Foundation for its publication and printing. It will be available by Christmas.

[note: this grant was approved in the 2006-2007 financial year but the distribution was actually paid out in August 2007 and is not included in 2006-2007 audited accounts and report on distributions.]

Top: Snape Reserve (Photo: Trust for Nature) Middle: Banksia, Snape Reserve (Photo: Trust for Nature) Bottom: Satin Bowerbird (photo: Clifford Frith)



Euroa Environment Group Evaluating conservation actions to save the Grey-crowned Babbler

The Grey-crowned Babbler is an endangered species of woodland bird in Victoria that has declined in abundance and distribution as a result of habitat fragmentation. This is another long term project involving an icon bird species as the organising principle for landscape restoration.

The group intends to measure seasonal changes in foraging behaviour and breeding success of the Grey-crowned Babbler. This will provide a critical evaluation of the effectiveness of on-ground conservation actions in helping to ensure the survival of the bird. The Foundation has contributed \$11,000 towards this project.

Australian National University The response of birds to the fire regimes of mulga woodland in Central Australia

The Foundation has supplied funding of \$5,000 towards this project for a third year. This grant is to support PhD Candidate Adam Leavesley complete his research on the response of mulga birds to fire in the Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park.

The knowledge gained from this project should inform fire management in the arid zone and contribute to the conservation of mulga birds and their habitat.

His research has shown that there appears to be no benefit to bird diversity of burning in a mosaic of small patches. Each species behaves differently so it is impossible to apply one fire resime that benefits all species at once. His results suggest that fire management for conservation should focus on maintaining suitable habitat for threatened species.

> Top: Grey-crowned Babblers (Photo: Dean Ingwersen) Middle: Splendid Fairy-wren (Photo: Geoffrey Dabb) Bottom: Red-capped Robin (Photo: Geoffrey Dabb)



Guidelines Guidelines

MISSION

The objectives of the Foundation are:

- i. to support and encourage research, education and recording of all aspects of Australia's natural environment
- ii. to build capacity in local communities to effect long-term beneficial change in the natural environment

PRINCIPLES

- Innovative projects are to be encouraged and preferably act as a model for other developments in the future
- The result should have a long-term effect
- Publication of funded studies is regarded as important and will be supported
- Encouragement of individuals, as well as organisations, is possible provided the project is well planned
- Dissemination of information which will benefit the natural living environment

EXCLUSIONS

- Projects concerned with advocacy, buildings, art, general education, social welfare and medical research or health matters
- Capital or endowment funds established to provide a corpus for institutions
- Domestic or international travel, unless critical to the application
- Projects concerned with the rehabilitation or rescue of animals

PROCEDURE

- 1. Your application MUST contain a cover sheet with the following information: name of applicant (contact person), name of organisation, project title, address, telephone contacts, email contact.
- 2. In no more than three pages, applicants are asked to provide a brief description of the proposed project, including:
- i. project rationale
- ii. project objectives
- iii. strategies
- iv. budget breakdown of project costs
- v. level of funding sought
- vi. measures of success

- 3. Where appropriate, the submission should indicate the project's relevance to the local community and provide evidence of local support. Where the project involves a publication, details should be provided on the quantities concerned and intended modes of distribution.
- 4. Graduate students seeking funding should include a curriculum vitae and a recommendation from their Supervisor or Head of Department.
- 5. Please email your application where possible to save on paper. You do not need to send a hard copy. You will receive confirmation your email was received.

The Foundation meets quarterly and advice on each application is issued promptly thereafter.

SUBSEQUENT TO FUNDING

Funded projects are required to provide regular reports, as specified by the Foundation at the time of an offer being made.

Funded projects are required to publicly acknowledge the Foundation's support by, for example, displaying the Foundation's logo on published material or signage.

Where a project's commencement is conditional on other sources of funding, the Foundation's grant will not be released until written confirmation is received of a grantee's success in gaining additional funding.

Grantees who do not proceed within 12 months of receiving grant approval will be required to re-submit.

CLOSING DATES

Last working day of March, June, September and December

APPLICATIONS AND INQUIRIES SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO:

Elizabeth Mellick (Beth) Executive Officer The Norman Wettenhall Foundation PO Box 669 Castlemaine VIC 3450

Tel/Fax: 03 5472 1316 Mobile: 0431 219980 Email: beth@nwf.org.au Web: www.nwf.org.au



Mr Gib Wettenhall (Chairperson) Dr Sarah Ewing Miss Patricia Feilman, AM Mr Geoff Park Mr Ian Sinclair, FCA Mr William Weatherly

Contact Details

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