

Connecting Country Background

Friends of the Box-Ironbark Forests Inc. (Mount Alexander Region) and the Norman Wettenhall Foundation Project

Norman Wettenhall Foundation is a philanthropic trust whose objectives are to support and encourage research, education and recording of all aspects of Australia's natural environment.

www.nwf.org.au

Recently a phone call to FOBIF from the Executive Officer, Beth Mellick, of the Norman Wettenhall Foundation (NWF) led to an initial meeting on 4th April 2007 of some local environmental groups with Beth seeking an expression of interest from the local community in future landscape restoration.

This then led to FOBIF being provided with a set of maps of Mount Alexander Shire (MAS) showing Native Vegetation Conservation Significance and Threatened Species, Current Land Use, Planning Scheme Zones and a relief map.

The need to collect information about the current status of the environment in the shire became obvious and the first steps could be to:

- record environmental projects- who is doing/has done what, where and when (perhaps using overlays?)
- access current status of Vegetation Protection Overlays and Environmental Significant Overlays from MAS
- record historical overlays of conservation efforts
- record a recreation use overlay (including GDTA/shire/CDNHP tracks)
- record indigenous perspective and cultural values
- record areas of natural regeneration (blind boundaries?)
- access MAS's Road Management Strategy (when completed) in terms of roadside values.

Where do we go from here?

A public meeting is being organised for interested groups/people to be part of the next stage of the process - this stage of information gathering is an interesting and involved process and would form a project on its own. A steering committee/reference group could oversee the development of a working document using overlays showing what needs to be done where and who can do it!!