



Minutes of Monthly meeting, Raywood GC, 8 pm Wednesday 24 May 2006

1 Welcome and apologies

The meeting commenced at 8:15 pm.

Present: Ian Rankin, Mal Brown, Phil Dyson, Shaun Quayle, Prue Borschmann, Saide Gray, Paul Sens, Judy Sens, Tim Johns, Rob Comer, Don Brown, Ken Wellard, Lindsay Cail, James Williams, Darren Kerr.

Apologies: Howard Perry, John Toll, Adrian Hocking, Tim Barden, Lynda Cartwright, Stuart Ayson, Megan Ayson, Marg Dack.

Motion: "That the apologies be accepted." Moved James Williams. Seconded Lindsay Cail. Carried.

2 Minutes of previous meeting held 26 April 2006

Motion: "That the minutes of the meeting held Raywood Golf Club, 26 April 2006, be accepted as a true and accurate record of what took place at the meeting." Moved Tim Johns. Seconded Ian Rankin. Carried.

3 Business arising

• New Member Kit

Ian Rankin reported that the new member kit is still under development. The kit will be available in both electronic and hard copy format, and will include a current member list.

• Chainsaw course

Ian Rankin reported that BRIT will run a chainsaw operator's course from 6-9 pm on 5 and 7 September, 2006 plus two Saturdays 9 am - 4 pm. Ian will follow up.

• Farm Forestry familiarisation tour

James Williams reported on the NUFG tour to the Otway Agroforestry Network on 11 & 12 May. See Attachment 1.

• Seed Orchard

Ken Wellard advised that *Acacia stenophylla* is the priority species around which a funding proposal should be developed to establish a seed orchard. NUFG is yet to identify an appropriate funding source for such a proposal. Nevertheless a funding submission should be developed based on what NUFG wants to achieve and then this can be matched to funding sources.

• Discussion re success of Kamarooka Project

The meeting identified the following success factors for the Kamarooka Project:

- Integration of group member skills.
- Cooperation of land managers.
- People despise 'salt' and therefore salt reclamation is seen as visionary.
- People providing positive solutions. People making a difference. It has grassroots appeal.
- The trees are in the ground, they are growing and the landscape is visibly changing.
- It is a very empowering project.
- It is a focal project for NUFG.
- The site is recognised as an excellent education resource, with many students visiting the site.
- The project grew out of the lack of support for low-rainfall farm forestry. The funders supported an integrated approach that is now helping NUFG to demonstrate the viability of low-rainfall farm forestry.
- Kamarooka is one of the best examples of salt reclamation in eastern Australia.
- Kamarooka is supporting NUFG in its other ventures. We are building on Kamarooka.

4.1 Correspondence in

- Our Community Easy Grant News.
- 'Farm Forestry - trees at work' classroom and fieldwork activities for secondary level students. Prue Borschmann to get 12 copies for NUFG members to encourage use of the resource in local schools. Also see website www.dpi.vic.gov.au/privateforestry/schoolsed
- City of Greater Bendigo, Digging the Dirt, Survey of Group Support.
- VFF Farm Tree and Landcare Association Group membership renewal form 2006/07.
- Draft copy of the Loddon Shire Weed Management Strategy. (Mal Brown to provide comment).
- Registration brochure, information and briefing notes for speakers at the International Landcare Conference, Melbourne, 8-11 October 2006. For more information visit: www.internationallandcareconference2006.com.au

4.2 Correspondence out

- Minutes of April meeting
- Ian Rankin biography, 250-word abstract for conference paper, and speakers agreement in relation to Ian's presentation to the International Landcare Conference, Melbourne, 8-11 October 2006.
- Thank you letter to Andrew Stewart (Otway Agroforestry Network) for showing NUFG members around his property at Deans Marsh.

Motion: "That the correspondence be accepted." Moved Lindsay Cail. Seconded Phil Dyson. Carried.

5 Reports

President's report

Ian Rankin also reported on the successful NUFG member's tour of the Otway Agroforestry Network on 11 & 12 May. (See James William's report, Attachment 1).

Treasurer's Report

Rob Comer submitted a detailed report for the last month of activity.

Motion: "That the Treasurer's report at 24 May 2006 be accepted and that accounts received be approved for payment." Moved Rob Comer. Seconded Tim Johns. Carried.

Phil Dyson - Kamarooka Project Update and NUFG website

Phil Dyson tabled a detailed report of his activities relating to the hydrogeology at Kamarooka. Phil presented an updated hydrograph on all bore readings and a list of tasks completed in relation to the NUFG website. See Attachment 2.

Tim Johns - Hand Held Pruning Equipment, Farm Forestry and Apiary

Tim reported that he is still working through the permits required for signage on the Calder Hwy at Leichardt to promote NUFG. The aim of the signage is to tell people more about the site. Phil Dyson suggested that with this type of information it is important that we develop member pages on the website.

6 General Business

• Website sub-committee

Volunteers are needed for a website sub-committee to review the current content, support Phil Dyson and to provide new content for the site. Ian Rankin and Shaun Quayle expressed interest in the sub-committee. The sub-committee will hold its first meeting at the Raywood Hotel prior to the 28 June AGM and monthly meeting. All NUFG members are welcome.

• Prue Borschmann

The meeting welcomed back Prue who outlined her new role with DPI Epsom to look at the socio-economic affects of farm forestry in the region. Prue outlined in more detail the curriculum resource 'Farm Forestry - trees at work' and reported on the Central Victorian Farm Plantations Field Day held 16 May. A publication 'Productive Trees - healthy landscapes' is available from David Fiskin, Executive Officer, Central Victorian Farm Plantations. Phone (03) 5341-7759, Mobile 0419 873 436.

- **Saide Gray**

The meeting welcomed back Saide who further outlined her research into land use change, which is supported by the CRC for Plant-based solutions to dryland salinity. Saide is looking at social impacts, family impacts and key issues such as sustainability, farm forestry and organic agriculture. Saide expressed an interest in conducting a group interview with NUFG members in the near future.

- **NUFG equipment register**

Lindsay Cail is custodian of a range of planting and plantation management equipment that NUFG members can borrow. Contact Lindsay for loppers, poti putkis, kidney trays etc. A full list of the equipment available will be sent out with the June minutes.

- **Form pruning day and BBQ at Kamarooka**

NUFG will hold a form pruning day and BBQ at Kamarooka commencing at 9am on **Sunday 18 June**. All members are welcome. Bring your own loppers or secateurs. BBQ lunch will be provided.

- **Website of the month**

Members are encouraged to look at the focus given to sugar gum on the smarttimbers website: www.smarttimbers.com.au

- **Shaun Quayle presentation**

Shaun gave an informative and entertaining slide presentation of his time in Namibia during the mid-1990s.

Namibia is located in the south-western part of Africa between latitudes 17° and 29° south. The vast majority of the country has an elevation in excess of 1000 metres above sea level. Annual rainfall ranges from less than 50 mm along the coast and in the south to 700 mm in the north-east. Rainfall follows a summer cycle falling between November and March, and the temperatures range on average from a mean daily maximum of 34 - 36°C for the warmest month to a daily minimums of 2 - 10oC for the coldest month. These environmental conditions are similar to the drier parts of northern Australia.

The Australian Tree Seed Centre at that time managed an AusAID-funded forestry project that aimed to strengthen the capacity of the Namibian Directorate of Forestry (DoF) through training. The two-year project commenced in June 1995 and provided a range of training opportunities from undergraduate courses to field training and study tours.

At the time of Namibia's independence in 1991, the country had a critical shortage of trained staff in the forestry sector. So the project set out to address this shortage through a number of training/support programs with a primary focus on upgrading the country's 12 forest tree nurseries.

Shaun was appointed for two years under the Australian Volunteers Abroad (AVA) program of the Overseas Service Bureau to help organise the work in Namibia. Based at Rundu in the north-east of the country, his work included standardising nursery methods, encouraging use of smaller plants at the time of planting, improving potting medium, evaluating nursery containers, record keeping and preparation of a manual.

7 Meeting closed at 10:30pm.

8 Next Meeting

2006 Annual General Meeting and June monthly meeting.

Raywood Golf Club, 8pm Wednesday, 28 June 2006.

Attachment 1 - NUFG Tour of Otway Agroforestry Network 11 & 12 May 2006

A report by James Williams

We departed Bendigo Thursday morning and headed for Rowan Reid's property at Deans Marsh. We travelled via Melbourne and Geelong, although Trevor Barker did detour via Colac.

After coffee and lunch (provided by Rowan) Marg Dack joined the group for a guided tour of Rowan's farm. We inspected various timbers milled on the property and Rowan showed us willow prepared to be made into cricket bats. The 150-acre property consists of undulating country with a semi-permanent creek running through it. The farm is extensively sown to trees and features a range of species - not all are natives. A highlight was the Californian redwoods, which despite a slow start are now growing rapidly.

In summary, Rowan's farm was very interesting and he has certainly not been bound by any set ideas about what you could grow. Whilst I would question the commercial viability of the farm it is quite clear that Rowan uses the farm for research purposes and to further the farm forestry cause.

Next we inspected Andrew and Jill Stewart's property, only ten minutes drive from Rowan's farm. This is a commercial property running sheep and cattle and has incorporated trees for forestry into the landscape.

Andrew has rehabilitated a degraded area and planted watercourses and creeks to timber. Andrew and Jill have also incorporated two commercial plantings - one of pine and the other blue gum for pulpwood - into the landscape. The pulpwood was a commercial arrangement with a blue gum company on a ten-year growing arrangement.

This property was a highlight for me as the Stewarts had incorporated a number of the benefits of plantations into the farming operation while maintaining and improving their profitability. They had also clearly increased the capital value of the property. 13 per cent of the farm has been planted to trees for multiple purpose forestry outcomes.

Overnight the group stayed at Penny Royal farm where James and Trevor BBQ'd a lovely meal provided by Ian and Mal and washed down with a lovely wine. Rowan and two overseas guests who were working on the Reid and Stewart properties joined us for the meal.

The next day we arose to bacon and eggs thanks to Mal, Ian and Tim, and then departed for Colac - even though Trevor and Tim had been there on their detour the day before.

Peter Hirth's sugar gum provenance trial demonstrated the importance of selection of the right species. However, the outstanding aspect for me was that our trees on the Northern Plains were clearly outperforming these ten-year old sugar gums despite our drier climate. Shaun Quayle indicated that the slow growth rates we were observing near Colac could be an issue of soil on the basalt plains.

The next site was Andrew Marshall's biodynamic farm 'Spring Plains' at Shelford. Andrew had two sites - one a provenance trial of *Eucalyptus occidentalis* and the other a species trial. Again the performance of the trees and species was less than I expected and gave me renewed confidence in low-rainfall farm forestry.

In summary, from the sites we visited it is clear to me that rainfall is not the limiting factor in tree growth in these areas and other issues such as soil type, temperature and sunlight should also be considered.

After lunch at Meredith, we made a final visit to Chris Roe's property at Trentham. His three plantations demonstrated excellent growth and were a real showpiece. Annual rainfall of 1000 mm, depth of soil and good preparation had clearly resulted in exceptional growth. Three to four year-old trees were over six metres tall and up to 30 cm in diameter. Finally we headed home with our weary homesick President barely able to peer over the dash.

See photos of tour at www.nufg.org.au

NUFG Report Hydrogeology and Website Development Portfolio May 2006

Phil Dyson

Hydrogeological matters

1. Completed the May 2006 watertable survey across the Kamarooka project site and produced graphics for the results.
2. Completed field calibration of the electronic rainfall logger.
3. Downloaded the first data set (three weeks) from the rainfall logger and confirmed the instrument is functioning as it should.
4. Developed the data handling and plotting routines for managing electronic rainfall data.
5. Successfully applied for a copy of the DPI State Groundwater Database on the basis that the groundwater information is required to better service NUGF and other groups.
6. Participated in Project Exec meeting in early May.

NUFG Website Development

1. Developed and uploaded a page for the May 2006 vegetation survey (data supplied by Ian Rankin).
2. Updated and uploaded the groundwater monitoring page to include the May 2006 records.
3. Developed and uploaded a page for 'assorted NUGF group photos'
4. Developed and uploaded a page of images from the NUGF tour of Deniliquin plantations
5. Developed a new page for NUGF web statistics (graphics supplied by Mal Brown)
6. Uploaded minutes from NUGF April 2006 meeting
7. Provided some support to BIFFN re website establishment questions.