

HAMILTON FIELD NATURALISTS CLUB



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28th August 2017

Anne Wilson,
Parks Victoria,
Brambuk, Halls Gap.
anne.wilson@parks.vic.gov.au

Dear Anne,

Thank you for contacting the Hamilton Field Naturalists Club (HFNC) regarding plans to use the Dunkeld Rifle Range as an environmental offset for the works to develop the Peaks Trail in the Grampians (Gariwerd) National Park. Following initial discussions with you by Dave Munro and myself, we discussed this proposal at our HFNC August meeting and have made the following recommendations. Our Club agrees that the Dunkeld Rifle Range would indeed be a suitable environmental offset for the Peaks Trail works.

First and most importantly, our recommendation is that under no circumstances should the Dunkeld Rifle Range be cultivated and replanted with native vegetation. This would destroy the rich diversity of native plants already present that make the Rifle Range worth preserving/conserving. The Rifle Range as it is, and as under the previous decades of slashing to keep the vegetation level low, has a rich and diverse array of native vegetation and is especially rich in native orchids that are visible during late winter and through spring to early summer.

We do not agree that the Rifle Range is an environmental hazard due to the shooting activities held there. We do not believe that there would be any contamination across the length of the range due to build-up of lead shot as the bullets/shot fly across the range to hit targets at the end of the range. However, we do concede that there may be lead contamination at the target end of the range. To assess this possibility, we recommend the use of metal detectors or other means to assess this possibility before any decisions or assumptions are made about addressing this issue. If there is an issue with contamination at this very small section at the end of the Rifle Range we recommend isolating this section (by fencing or capping etc).

As the diversity of the Rifle Range developed through the practice of slashing, we recommend that this practice continue once the Rifle range is incorporated into the National Park. This practice prevents the build-up of taller plants that would compete with the smaller orchids.

We extend our best wishes in developing the Dunkeld Rifle Range as an offset for the works done to develop the Peaks Trail. We would also welcome the opportunity to offer further assistance on this and other projects in the Grampians National Park.

Yours faithfully

Dr Diane Luhrs
President
Hamilton Field Naturalists Club
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