



# Rat Tales

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Web: [www.ballarat.com/bushwalking](http://www.ballarat.com/bushwalking)

E-Mail : [ballaratbwc@yahoo.com](mailto:ballaratbwc@yahoo.com) (General correspondence)  
[rat\\_tales@hotmail.com](mailto:rat_tales@hotmail.com) (Newsletter articles)

*Ballarat Bushwalking and Outdoor Club*

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## MOSSBED REHABILITATION ANYONE?

JANUARY 25 — 27

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**B**ushwalkers in General are an active (some might even say pro-active) bunch, and the group that assembled at Alpha Lodge in Falls Creek on the evening of Friday 25<sup>th</sup> January 2008 were no exception.

These 26 environmentally minded walkers hailed from far and wide, representing a variety of bushwalking and outdoors clubs. Those represented included: Ballarat Bushwalking and Outdoors Club (BBOC) (11 members); Maroondah Bushwalking Club (3); Walking Club Victoria (3); Border Bushwalking Club (4); Victorian Mountain Tramping Club (VMTC) (4); and Strezlecki Walking Club (1).

I am sure that despite being very enthusiastic, the majority of volunteers had little idea of what activities awaited them on the Saturday and Sunday mornings (and that was despite many, many briefings from Steve Robertson on the Friday evening AND Saturday morning!), they just knew it had something to do with rehabilitating something worthwhile in the Alpine area that we all love.

Little did we all know!

Names were very carefully mixed up and allocated to workgroups so that the 11 members of BBOC did not overwhelm any of the working parties (a difficult task given our numbers and the personalities of the said members- well, perhaps one member in particular!). These groups of approximately 10 members went bravely into the Alpine wilderness very ably accompanied by some very helpful PARKS employees, who assisted us to find our way to our very important jobs (a quick report from each of the Saturday groups appears shortly). Needless to say, they also made us work very hard for our supper (that would be a lunch that was very kindly put together by Leora Robertson and a couple of our working volunteers, and delivered to us in the field- this meant that we didn't have to leave our work for very long- very thoughtful of them really!). The rain after lunch meant that some of us even got to finish slightly early (although if there had not been thunder and lightning I think we would have been out there still- our officer was intent on getting as much of our task done as

we could- my feet were already wet from the stream, so what was a little rain?).

Saturday evening saw us joining together to have a shared BBQ (yet again organized by the intrepid catering team from lunch). Steve didn't let us down- he DEBRIEFED us then, and also asked a couple of us to get up and say a few words- The Border Bushwalking Club President gave a very good presentation regarding how her position had been involved in many changes and permutations over the last few months, and despite being full of my own self-importance, I managed to keep my speech very short (you could hear the sighs of relief in the background from my fans!).

Much wine, conversation and munchies followed, with some of getting to bed much later than others. Sunday dawned much too early, but we soldiered on and into the tasks that others had been performing the previous day (we swapped to give us all a change). Our Parks officers kept us on the straight and narrow, and got as much work out of us before lunch as they could, because they knew that we all had to return to our real lives on the Sunday afternoon!

From all reports, it appeared that the majority of we volunteers really enjoyed the opportunity to not only put back something into the environment that we have spent so many hours walking in, but we got to meet some lovely people from clubs that we may not otherwise have known existed.

Following are some snapshots of the work groups written by representatives from various clubs working in various groups over the weekend.....many thanks to the authors of these- they were put on the spot at very short notice and performed the task with little complaint despite fatigue from the day's work!

Group 1.

Mossbed Rehabilitation (Anne – BBOC)

“Our group of 10, lead by our friendly ranger Iris, spent the day fruitfully by removing Sallow Willows from the moss beds in the Rocky Valley Dam area. We worked in pairs- one with a “round up” stick to dab the freshly

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cut ends of the plant, and the other cutting the willows off with the secateurs. Very small Willows were carefully pulled out by hand. A thunderstorm passed over in the afternoon. By the end of the day we had filled the back of Iris's ute with large garbage bags of Willows."

Group 2.

Yellow Hawkweed (Ira- Border Bushwalking Club)

"Our ranger (Elaine) drove us up to near Wallace's Hut, where she sat us down in a beautiful meadow of many flowers-nearly all yellow! Here we examined pictures and photos of our targeted enemy- Yellow Hawkweed!!!! This is a garden escapee with huge potential to rapidly invade and overtake the High Plains. Then we walked and walked, examining many yellow flowers, but fortunately did not find one single target plant (in some ways to our disappointment). Other flowers were found and their beauty enjoyed- as were the views. The lightening show was in the distance, and we remained dry till the very end."

Group 3.

Basalt rock removal (Margaret- VMTC)

"Under the guidance on Anne (our ranger), we headed towards Mt Nelse, where we relocated Basalt rocks- this entailed removing them from a creek, dropping them in

the trailer, and taking them back to the quarry from whence they originated. The reason was that they are now considered as "Geomorphic weeds", and deemed no longer necessary to serve as barriers along the run-off from a mossbed further upstream- they will be replaced by shore barriers if necessary. We hope the landscape will return to its natural state". Many thanks go to BWV, Steve and Leora Robertson, Parks Victoria, and all the volunteers who worked their b%^#\*s off to get the jobs done over the weekend.

We all look forward to being involved in many other conservation projects in a variety of settings in years to come.

Gretta Hope  
Environment Officer