

Tootanelup Cultural Engagement and Survey Event: 14 Sept 2023- Notes from the Field

Acknowledgements

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Supported by



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Present:

- Elders- Ezzard Flowers, May Penny, Frank Krakouer, Caroline Narkle
- Rangers- Shaun Hodgson, Ta-leah Flowers, Robbie Miniter, Frederick Warren
- Archaeologist: Paul Greenfeld and Larry Blight
- South Coast NRM: Justin Benson
- Green Skills: Basil Schur
- Green Skills Volunteers: Andrew and Angela Dickinson
- Basil Schur (Green Skills)

INTRODUCTIONS

Frank Krakouer

- We are modern Noongars.
- 16 x brothers and sisters M + B Cranbrook.
- Noongars roamed the land
- Wants a chance to speak. They have seen the past. Would like to see elders have more say.

Ezzard Flowers

- Large group of Noongars in Mt Barker. Following freshwater resources. Travelled from Denmark to Carrolup, and along the Blackwood.
- Just finished studies at Curtin re: community.
- Connection started in 1980's when he came out the other side as a Stolen Generation survivor. TAFE enabled him to engage with elders – not much talking, just listening.
- Working with other agencies helps us strengthen our spirit – connects us with our families 'moort'. Our spiritual connection.

May Penny

- Lillian May Penny (*Toolien*) chair of Tambellup Aboriginal Association. Named *Toolien* after her grandmother. Noongar name. Grew up in Kendenup.
- Culbong – William – Smith
- Her grandmother was 'Queen Anne' people came from up north for spears. She was their contact and knew when they were coming.
- Mother/ father stoked the fire through the night.
- The bush is a healing place, a comforting place to visit. The bush is a beautiful garden.
- When passing through another persons area they would let them know.
- Movement from Busselton to Mt Barker. Culbong and Smiths from this area. Walked and camped to Albany. Shepherding from Busselton to Hopetoun. Her dad born in Lake Poorarecup 1919? Taking wood out to Kendenup
- Start of white man's boundaries- some would let you through, others would shoot you!
- A scout would go ahead and light a fire. When it was out you could sleep on top (build shelter)
- Her father walked across country to Busselton
- Lake Poorarecup - Sunday school picnics, sand dunes and fresh water, blue water that looked like Middleton Beach today.
- Has changed today including plants.
- Aboriginals used to use sharp sticks for taking guts out of the roo for meat (or Karda)
- Marri Sap for infected sores and as medicine for upset stomachs. Boil bark with gum in water and strain. Mix it with something as it is bitter ie. Yoghurt.
- Joyce Windsley made a turtle (out of Gilford grass) inside a shell. She also made a baby on the breast sculpture. May would like to trace these.

Caroline Narkle (from Culbong family)

- would like to find some history



At BOGGY LAKE

May

- Yate woodland. We would have passed through this area hunting as nice open country.
- Grew up in Kendenup and visited this area.
- Gilgies and turtles here (near the yates)
- used to have big thunderstorms to keep the land moist.
- maybe children could have carried stones here whilst hunting gilgies.
- medicines and wood here.

Frank

- When they camped here they came for the water.

Ezzard

- This site would have been frequently visited by clan groups camping at different sites.
- The lake provides other food sources.
- Resources here for making resin.
- Families camped in different regions moving from Mt Barker to Boyup Brook.
- Families camped away from the water because they knew animals used it.

- Camping sites were also a place for healing and learning.



WETLANDS

Frank

- Trail from Mt Barker to Busselton
- Interested to look at place today
- Aboriginals moved together
- Noongar country belongs to all Noongars

Ezzard

- Connecting culture and environment
- "Looking over the lake and sitting silently allows us to reflect"
- This place would have not been a 7/11, but a big supermarket

May

- Mays family visited swampy
- Yate country the ground was always moist so lots of turtles and turtle eggs. When May arrived she started scanning the ground for nests.
- Aboriginal people moved. Didn't travel too far in a day. Same family members were born in different places.



SUMMARY

Ezzard

- Acknowledging that the place was an important food place.
 - If we want culture to continue, we need to transfer knowledge so we can protect and preserve.
 - A day of engaging with the bush classroom, of connecting
 - If you look at access, fire would have been important. Ash would purify the water. The landscape is unique and what we see now is because of fire.
- Noongars never started a bushfire. The smoke takes off first so the animals know they can take off. They need a slow fire so they can still breathe.

Robbie

- Remove fuel from the base of trees
- Give control to elders. They know what to do.
- Women clear a patch of ground as a safe place for the kids.

May

- When we see that salt has taken over, it breaks my heart. You can barely hear a bird, and one time the bush was full of them.
- Its good to see what we've got left is so beautiful, you can only imagine what it was like.

Caroline

- Get younger generation out in the bush with the elders. For this to happen, community has to run well.

REFLECTIONS

Robbie

- Got to know what the elders are thinking
- Reflections on the past

Ezzard

- Objective for site:
 - o cultural learning + training
 - o Transfer of scientific knowledge with Elders
 - o Certification for young Noongars
 - o Meaningful collaboration
 - o Cultural awareness – women's and men's business

Frank

- Noongar involvement in community and towns

Caroline

- Wants knowledge passed down to younger generation.

Lillian May

- Australia is best.

Rangers

- Good chance to catch up with elders.
- Burning, young ones need to step up

Take home messages towards a cultural engagement plan for the Tootanellup Wetlands (Preliminary notes)

The elders present indicated strong support for;

Fire

The wetlands and area would be a valuable place for applying cultural burning practices.

Education

The area provides a valuable place to bring Noongar families and children to learn in a bush classroom setting, including about bushtucker, bush skills and so on.

Caring for Country

Support for land management practices, including feral fox and cat control and support local biodiversity.

