

"The News" for pictures

The EAST GIPPSLAND News

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FOREST TOURS POPULAR

FOREST VISITOR SURVEY

The Forests Commission will be carrying out a visitor survey in the forest areas of East Gippsland during the summer holiday period.

Questionnaires will be handed out at selected localities in the Lakes Entrance, Bruthen, Nowa Nowa forests in order to collect information on likes and dislikes of the people visiting these forests.

As little of this type of information has been gathered in the local area, the Forests Commission is asking for the co-operation and understanding of all people who are approached during the survey.

Mr David Buntine, of the Forests Commission, said today, "We will try and cause the minimum of inconvenience to the people surveyed. The questions have been designed for ease of answering but allow plenty of opportunity for additional comments."

"A considerable amount of time and money now goes into catering for the recreational needs of the forest user and we have a responsibility to the public to expand our role in this field," he said.

In the past, provision of the occasional table and barbecue has been adequate but with the recent increase in forest users, more feed-back is needed on visitor needs and attitudes.

"Information, such as we hope will come in from this survey will play a major part in determining the type and nature of future forest recreation developments.

"Although detailed questionnaires will only be distributed in the Bairnsdale area, all Forests Commission employees in East Gippsland have been asked to note visitors in the forest and record some basic data.

"This less detailed survey will provide information on the more dispersed uses of the forests and will be used to extend the detailed study," Mr Buntine concluded.

Do the parents of children who went home with green paint on their clothes on Tuesday night know where the children came in contact with the paint? The owner of holiday flats in Eastern Beach Road knows

The Forests Commission has announced a new and expanded program of "Forestours" for January.

This follows the overwhelming success of the Lakes Entrance tours earlier this year.

Although the bulk of the tours will operate out of Lakes Entrance, a limited number will also be available from Marlo.

A spokesman for the Forests Commission said today, "This year we have catered for over 850 people.

"As the interest generated is showing no signs of lessening, we believe these tours are becoming a feature of a holiday in East Gippsland. The Forests Commission will do its utmost to continue the tours and extend the range of topics covered."

"People holidaying in the local area for one or two weeks rarely want to spend all of their time on water or beach-based activities. More and more of them want variety while on their holiday and as a result are turning to the forests, particularly those close to holiday centres.

"We have noticed a rapid increase in usage of the roads and picnic facilities in the Nowa Nowa and Bruthen forests. These are the forests within pleasant driving distance of Lakes Entrance.

"These tours allow the opportunity for the holiday maker to do better than just follow a tour brochure map from point "A" to point "B".

They allow the opportunity of a leisurely and enjoyable but mildly educational excursion into the forest.

All of the tours are designed to fit in with the atmosphere of the holidaying season and none are high powered scientific studies of forestry techniques although all the guides are experienced forest officers."

The January tours from Lakes Entrance will be held every Wednesday morning.

On each occasion the participants will be able to select from a range of tours designed to cover various aspects of forestry.

Tours will commence at 9 a.m. from the Esplanade at Lakes Entrance, half a kilometre east of the footbridge.

They will be on the basis of a free drive-yourself convoy system, under the guidance of local forest officers. No prior enrolment is required, but participants should not be late, as previous experience has meant that limitations have to be placed on the numbers going on some tours.

Single half day tours will be held from Marlo on the mornings of January 10



and 24, leaving the Marlo store at 9 a.m.

January's tours will include visits to the Nowa Nowa Forest Office, sawmill inspection, research trials, a fire tower, sleeper cutting, logging operations, the Stony Creek wooden trestle railway bridge, a nature walk, plus inspection of fire fighting techniques and forest regeneration techniques.

All tours will end at a picnic/B.B.Q. area for those who have come with their lunch.

Details on the tours are available from any of the local Forest Offices or Tourist Information Centres.



FOREST TOURS WILL AGAIN BE HOLIDAY FEATURE