

FLASH FLOODING HITS BUCHAN CAVES RESERVE - FEBRUARY 2012

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In February earlier this year, Buchan Caves Reserve was hit by flash flooding from a severe thunder storm that occurred in the late afternoon. Over 70 mm of rain fell in the Fairy Creek catchment area causing the water level in the creek to rise quickly, breaking its banks flooding car parks, the main access road, staffing facilities and the adjacent work sheds - damaging stored material, carpets and electrical equipment.

Although the caves were unaffected by the event, roads, car parks, and bridge abutments throughout the reserve suffered undermining and scouring. Service lines in one area were left exposed, creek banks and bridge abutments damaged. The strong winds with the event caused damage to a number of the heritage trees throughout the reserve affecting day visitor areas and walking tracks.

New and old tree material washed in from the Fairy Creek catchment blocked culverts and made a significant mess. The camping area was generally unaffected although some campers chose to leave early the following day. As a result the Fairy Cave was closed for a number of days due to inaccessible road conditions and the lack of visitor facilities.

Just what the Buchan operation needed as we were hastily preparing for the Easter holiday period ahead.

Ranger staff, with assistance from local excavation contractors and staff from the Department of Sustainability and Environment, "knuckled in" and achieved a massive amount of repair and replacement work over a five day period to allow the commercial business operation to return to normal.

