



Wildcare Friends of Melaleuca

President's Annual Report (23 Sep 2021)

I am pleased to present this report on FoM's achievements during the year. We currently have a membership of 202 (Wildcare webpage). We are fortunate to have an active membership comprising willing volunteers with diverse and useful skills and enthusiasm, all working together to care for this place that we all love.

Projects

Thanks to Wildcare for once again supporting our annual working bee last March with a Tasmanian Nature Conservation grant of \$2000 towards airfares, freight and clean-up. A very successful week.

In Progress – Mining Heritage Trail: October 2019 I sent a proposal to PWS for our Mining Trail project. Ranger in Charge Ian Marmion has completed the necessary RAA for this, and the proposal is now with another level in PWS going through the approval process. Jeremy Hood requested an Interpretation Plan which I wrote during August and it is now on his desk. There is a funding opportunity through Arts Tasmania's Cultural Heritage and Roving Curator Programs and we are currently going through the application process. (Applications close on 11 October.)

Claytons – Memorabilia: Last October Chris Creese made a list of small suggestions that could enhance the homely feel of Claytons and make it more closely resemble how it was during Win and Clyde's occupancy. This project was taken up with enthusiasm (see story in Wildcare News) and the results have met with very positive feedback from visitors.

1948 Airstrip survey project: During the working bee Mitch and Duncan made a preliminary investigation to find the exact location of the emergency runway built for take-off of the DeHavilland Dragon that was engaged in aerial survey work. The story of this plane is told in the museum through interpretation and exhibit of a smashed propeller. In March a few spots were unearthed where the cord-wood is still visible. Mitch has liaised with the Lands Dept and purchased a 1961 hi-res aerial image showing the runway, which we hope will help to pin-point the on-ground location.

Sponsored projects:

Roaring 40s Kayaking sponsored some furniture. The famous giant picnic table for Claytons (kindly made by Dave and Kim) was quite a large item to ship to Port Davey. Also two Ikea Pello chairs for the museum. New member Sally Errey organized the order and sponsored the delivery to Hobart. These items, packed and in knock-down form, were shipped to Port Davey on board *Georges Bay* (thanks Bob and Sue). Four stools for the museum were also sponsored by Roaring Forties and purchased by Peter and Robyn Marmion and are now in the museum. Roaring Forties sponsorship is such a help and very much appreciated.

Melaleuca bushwalkers huts interpretation: This project, planned over two working bees, was approved by PWS in March. The panels are now printed and ready to go. Naturally we accepted very readily the amazing offer of sponsorship in-kind for graphic design by Lea Walpole and sign fabrication by Red Arrow. The panels consist of a history panel for each hut and two landscape

images of Melaleuca Lagoon, one by Greg Hodge and the other by Stephen Anstee, one for each hut. The panels are wrapped and ready to ship on our boat next time we go around the coast.

A gift: We have also received a gift! Sisters Stacey Gordon and Jennie Bryant donated an oil painting of Caroline Rock painted by Deny King in 1980. They picked up the painting at an op-shop in Victoria a few years ago after reading *King of the Wilderness*. Both wished to return the painting to its original home where people can enjoy it. Thanks Helen for managing this lovely donation.

Training

FoM funded several volunteers to complete Brushcutter training in January. This session was instigated and organized by Rob Banfield, run by TAFE trainer Garry Owens and hosted by Mel Jack. Thanks Mitch, Rob, Mel. Mitch was put to work on the brushcutter during our working bee.

Working bee

FoM's working bee held between 10 -18 March 2021 was a great success, thanks the support from Wildcare's \$2000 Nature Conservation Fund grant, and especially to the energetic and skilled team. Freight via fishing boat *Jean Nichols* arrived on 7 March and the crew, very capable caretakers Scott and Lisa, PWS staff and FoM already at Melaleuca had a busy couple of days unloading. It was great to welcome new Field Officer Steve Locke to the team, a very strong and capable person with a Master 5 marine certificate. We had 18 volunteers this year including 4 new recruits. A number of volunteers arrived by boat (a big \$ saving) and some by air. As well as our routine tasks (brush-cut fire-breaks; electrical test and tag; fish-oil program; gravel paths; drains and weeds), we achieved a number of major jobs during the week. One I will mention here is the rescue of Rallinga Mine's control cabin which was teetering on the edge of a steep bank. (See full report on website Files.)

Thanks to Ian Marmion, Ranger-in Charge, for collaboration and guidance during the week as well as pre-panning sessions and the necessary RAAs. All volunteers worked hard and put in a combined 994 hours with enthusiasm and camaraderie. Thanks everyone. Thanks Barbara for hosting volunteers in her home and Andrew Boon, Bob Cleary, Ian Johnston and Chas Wessing for freight and transport.

Meetings

Our meetings over the past financial year were all held at the DSS with a meal before the meeting. Last October we held our AGM, when the current committee was re-elected.

Presentations:

October 2020: Photos submitted for panels in the bushwalkers huts.

May, 2021: Working bee. Photos from various participants.

July, 2021; Tony spoke eloquently about the nautical chart that wasn't there, and Peter showed recent stunning images of Port Davey.

We finished the March working bee with a planning meeting for next year's work.

FoM and Wildcare

Thanks to Wildcare team and Board for their ongoing support. They are always happy to assist, discuss issues and answer questions.

Friends of Claytons officially closed as a Wildcare branch in July and FoM has officially incorporated care for Claytons into our working plans. (See story on FoM's News page.)

Wildcare holds regular Zoom chats with members and with branch leaders.

There was a Zoom about grant writing on 13 April. Wildcare's TNCF grant is open twice per year. Wildcare's new funding model, as a registered nature conservation charity, has left some branches concerned about funding for heritage projects and on-going maintenance. There are very few grant opportunities that address this. Consequently, FoM among others, will need to apply for outside grants and independently raise more of our own funds. We organized a meeting with Heritage branches to discuss this (Derek Inglis FoMI, Erika Shankley FoTI, Rob Banfield FoBIQS, Janet and Geoff FoM) and emailed Sharon Smith, Wildcare CEO. She is discussing this with the Wildcare Board.

Wildcare has offered branch leaders participation in Wildcare's membership of Grants Hub. (Joined on behalf of FoM on 1st July.)

FoM and PWS

PWS has instigated a new volunteer registration procedure. Members seem to be managing this quite well. Prior to the working bee we had several planning meetings with PWS working out a Project Plan under the new framework that replaces the Partnership Agreement. This has to be re-written annually. We used this in conjunction with our detailed Work spreadsheet and purchasing list.

Thanks to PWS staff, particularly or RIC Ian Marmion, for the supportive partnership with our group. Recently Pip Gowen (Volunteer Coordinator) and Peter Rigozzi (Heritage Officer) have left the department. We thank them both for their support and interest in our branch activities.

Funding

The donation box in the DKH Museum continues to provide some revenue. Permission for the donation box is written into our MOU with PWS about our use of the building for a museum.

Cards sell quite well in the museum over summer and there is a slow trickle of sales through the Wildcare online shop. Thanks Erika for looking after the latter.

Ian Johnston made a very attractive wooden collection box for Claytons, and this also attracts some revenue.

Otherwise funding comes from grants, sponsorship, donations and in-kind support.

Reporting

Thanks to Erika Shankley for the group's Facebook page.

Wildcare's website News page is a great forum for FoM's stories. We have published six stories on that site during the year. In May, a short report about the working bee and 'Impressions from a new volunteer' written by Glenn Butterworth and illustrated it with his terrific photos. (Glenn also made some video interviews with participants.) Also in May, Jude and Jack Binder, well known in yachting circles, posted their video of a 'Mini-

tour of the DKH Museum'. Two FoM stories were posted in June - 'Treasure Hunt' and 'A Tale of Two Huts' and in August, 'Friends of Claytons: a History and Tribute'.

FoM's FILES page on the Wildcare website offers a site where more formal files can be placed and viewed. Our minutes and reports go here. Also on this page is a pdf of Austral Archaeology's 2004 report on Claytons and a detailed report on the March 2021 working bee, including recommendations to help with planning next year's work.

We appreciate Wildcare's support in awarding us a grant for on-ground work, and for Wildcare's behind-the-scenes office and bookkeeping work. Many thanks to Sharon, Kim, Alex and team.

Thanks to PWS staff, Ian Marmion, Steve Locke, Alan Thurston, Ben Storer for their collaboration, interest and support for our projects. And thanks to committee members and other volunteers who kept FoM active during the year, and especially to Rob Banfield for organising the Claytons work, and Helen for secretarial work. And of course to those trusty volunteers who gave their all at the working bee.

Janet Fenton, President, Wildcare Friends of Melaleuca, September 2021.