



WILD TIMES

September 2016 Edition 56

The monster May-hem

WILDCARE FRIENDS OF FREYCINET

All the ingredients of mayhem were present. We had 14 volunteers with a list of jobs filling one A3 size spreadsheet (that part was organised). The teams and vehicles needed to be assigned. Gradually, we sorted ourselves out.

Some of us applied render to the barbeque bricks. I could not bear to watch as they had not looked at the DIY video beforehand. Others went up to Cape Tourville and ran out of paint not once, but twice.

Seven picnic tables were repaired and painted. But it was not all painting. A team cleared an old Department of Main Roads campsite. They counted over 1,000 cans, huge numbers of broken beer bottles and rubbish that filled several large tip trucks. They left the car bodies!

Another team walked the coast from Bicheno to the southern end of Friendly Beaches, removing sea spurge and its cousin, caper spurge. After that, they badly needed a drink, so we all went to the pub for a meal.

Thistles and psoralea were removed from several areas, including around the Saffire sewerage pond. Well, they do contribute handsomely to the work of WILDCARE Inc!

Most of the infrastructure around the Visitors Centre was then refreshed in preparation for to the centenary celebrations, held 27-29 August.

And ... PWS put on a great barbie at Honeymoon Bay. Thanks guys. We love you, too.

Below: The view from Cape Tourville.

Bottom: The job with a million dollar view – painting the decking at the lighthouse.



In this issue

WILDCARE faces New board members

New WILDCARE group Doctors Rocks

Weed control Furneaux Bass Strait Islands

The Nut threatened plants Stanley

Stuck in the mud Pittwater & Orielton Lagoon

Smiths Lagoon threatened plants

Yorktown working bee Yorktown



Malcom MacDonald
CEO

Getting to know the faces behind WILDCARE

CEO report

Friends of the Penguin Cradle Trail

It is a delight to report that another marvellous donation of \$20 000 has been received from The Patricia Dukes Foundation. These funds will be utilised in stage 2 activities at the Penguin Cradle Trail, involving placement of directional signage along the trail and improved safety for walkers. Volunteer and Greencorp labour will be participating, providing direction and upskilling for those involved. Congratulations to President Greig Clarke and his Branch team – your donor is well pleased with the results of your hard work in stage 1.

Strategic plan

Since the existing strategic plan expires at the end of this year, the Board of Management has recently participated in a strategic planning day, please see the article in this edition of Wildtimes.

Call for contributions to the 2016 Annual Report

Yes, it's already that time of year again! All Branches are now invited to submit interesting items on their activities and projects for inclusion in the 2016 Annual Report. Newsy items in Word format, complete with photos and captions, are requested on or before the end of September. Please contact me if you have questions or need help.

Your co-operation in responding early would be much appreciated and avoid that mad rush at the end of the year.

Sally Simco has recently been appointed to the WILDCARE Board of Management. She is a keen bushwalker and kayaker and volunteering with WILDCARE suits her interests in learning about the natural and cultural history of remote areas of Tasmania, while making a contribution to conservation projects. Sally, and her husband Michael, first took up WILDCARE volunteer positions as Cape Bruny Lighthouse Caretakers and Observers in 2013. Since then, they have been involved in numerous WILDCARE projects, including weed eradication on Deal Island, sea spurge removal on the West Coast (SPRATS), Friends of Freycinet working bees, and the Orange-bellied parrot Program (2014-16).

Sally is involved with the Ulverstone Coast Care group and the volunteer track-worker program at Cradle Mountain National Park. She is a member of the newly formed WILDCARE Friends of Cradle Mountain group. Sally has also been a member of the North West Walking Club for 36 years. Sally completed the Landcare for Teachers program, designed by the University of Tasmania and was appointed to the WILDCARE Board in April 2016. With an interest in 'Emerging Opportunities', Sally will be working towards improving WILDCARE opportunities for all sectors of the Tasmanian community, in a time of changing conservation issues and technological advancement.



Ian Ross is a new WILDCARE board member. Ian grew up in Brisbane, studied architecture at QUT, and is a Registered Building Designer in Tasmania. He worked in Papua New Guinea from 1977 to 1979, and met and married his wife in Port Moresby. Ian was introduced to bushwalking in his teens, was a member of the Brisbane Bushwalkers Club for 25 years and Public Relations Officer for Federation Mountain Rescue for five years. He first visited Tasmania in 1971 to walk in to Lake Pedder before it was flooded, climb Frenchmans Cap, and walk the Overland Track. He developed a passion for nature and landscape photography which has continued to the present day.

He has been a WILDCARE member for many years, but has been actively involved with Friends of Tasman Island and Friends of Melaleuca in particular in recent years, taking part in working bees and using his practical building skills. Ian believes that volunteering creates social capital that enriches our community, and sees WILDCARE as a significant facilitator of volunteering in Tasmania, that deserves wide support by both our State Government and the Tasmanian public.



New *WILDCARE* group at Doctors Rocks

WILDCARE FRIENDS OF DOCTORS ROCKS

The Doctors Rocks Conservation Area is located five kilometres east of Wynyard. It is a long, narrow coastal reserve approximately seven kilometres long and features a geological feature called 'Doctors Rocks', which protrudes into Bass Strait. The coastal strip is predominantly rocky but there are a couple of small stretches of sandy beaches.

The Doctors Rocks Conservation Area is home to a significant number of little penguins, with large groups on the immediate western and eastern sides of Doctors Rocks itself, and smaller pockets of penguins along the whole conservation reserve. The little penguins have no difficulty in traversing the rocky terrain to get to their nesting areas, but significant numbers utilise the sandy beaches as access points from the water to the foreshore nesting area.

Many shore and sea birds, such as pied oystercatchers, red-capped plovers, pacific and sea gulls, and of course, the little penguins and shearwaters, are seen in the reserve. Ringtail possums, bandicoots, rabbits, water rats, wallabies and tiger snakes also live in the conservation area.

The small community of Doctors Rocks (approximately 20 residences) can be found at the junction of the East Wynyard Coastal Road and Bass Highway. A new housing subdivision is being constructed at the western end.

Doctors Rocks is well known locally as a very popular fishing spot and it is not unusual to see people fishing off the rocks and from boats during the warmer months for squid, Australian salmon and shark. In recent years, there has also been significant interest amongst locals in gold panning.

A steel mesh fence has been constructed along sections of the reserve, where significant numbers of penguins nest within metres of the East Wynyard Coastal Road and Bass

Highway, to prevent the penguins straying onto the road. But there are still several kilometres of the reserve bordering on the Bass Highway that is still to be fenced and every season there are a number of penguins killed on the road.

The Wynyard Landcare Group have made an important contribution in extending this penguin fence and arranging for the existing fence to be maintained every couple of years. Most of the Doctors Rocks Conservation Area is classified by the Waratah Wynyard Council and Tasmania Parks and Wildlife Service (Parks) as a 'No Dog' zone. However, in recent years, the little penguins have extended their colony zone westwards into a 'Dog off the Leash' area.

The concept of operating little penguin tours at Doctors Rocks started several years ago, through an initiative involving Waratah Wynyard Council, Parks, a local person with extensive experience with little penguins who had worked with Parks, the Wynyard Visitor Information Centre and local accommodation operators. Doctors Rocks has only been a conservation area for a couple of years and is managed by Parks; prior to that it was a coastal reserve managed by local council.

It was decided to amalgamate all interested parties and create a WILDCARE group called the 'Friends of Doctors Rocks Penguins.'

The philosophy of our group is based around working closely with Parks to maintain the conservation area particularly as habitat for little penguins.

The objectives of this group include:

- offering tourists and local visitors an opportunity to see Little penguins in their natural habitat during their breeding season (September to April)
- provide non-intrusive viewing opportunities and interpretive talks according to established practices
- observe and report on the behaviour of Little penguins
- report on any changes to the physical environment of the area due to natural weather events
- engage in clean-up and general maintenance of the area
- regularly maintain the penguin fence and install artificial penguin nests, sometimes called 'concrete igloos'
- report to relevant authorities any inappropriate behaviour observed in the conservation area.



Weed control in the Furneaux Islands

WILDCARE FRIENDS OF BASS STRAIT ISLANDS

Our WILDCARE group have organised and run 2 more successful and enjoyable fortnight-long weed control working bees in the Furneaux Islands this year.

Between May 23rd - June 5th a party of 10 volunteers completed the huge task of ridding the Wybalenna Historic Site, a very significant area of Aboriginal land managed by the Tasmanian Land Council, of all boxthorn. The completion of primary control work on this weed here and at the adjacent muttonbird rookery area at Settlement Point, an area under the jurisdiction of PWS, represents the culmination of much dedicated FoBSI effort over a 5 year period.

The work mapped below represents >3000 person hours, the removal of over 130 large to very large boxthorn bushes, both isolated and in gnarly thickets, and total coverage of around 145 Ha.

The weather during our May-June working bee was at times wild with lots of heavy pouring rain and strong winds but we were able to continue to work productively throughout, even luckily finding 3 days of sufficiently calm seas and fine conditions to boat out to 9 of the outer islands on which our group had already completed primary boxthorn control. Revisiting gorgeous wild uninhabited Cat, Storehouse, Sentinel, South Pascoe, Wybalenna,

Rabbit, Cairn, Isabella and Chalky Islands means we conducted the vital work of follow-up weed survey and removal across approximately 120 Hectares of off-shore Conservation Area. At low tide one day, 2 FoBSI volunteers also waded across to Bird Island, just off Settlement Point, to conduct follow-up weed checking and control on this 1.5 Ha islet.

FoBSI has also run another 10 person working bee (July 23rd-Aug 5th) which continued the task of freeing beautiful Roydon Island, just off the west coast of Flinders Island, from its massive invasion of boxthorn. Over two-thirds of its 39 Ha are now boxthorn free and the crew who went there reported many nesting pairs of Cape Barren Geese as well as the presence of huge numbers of (very noisy) little penguins.

Our working bees this year were funded through many sources and with the much appreciated assistance of diverse groups, organisations and individuals. While most of the costs of running the Roydon trip could be covered out of a single grant from Landcare Tas, the rollcall of thanks for the resources allowing us to conduct the Wybalenna and outer islands working bee is long and varied.

The cost of transporting volunteers to and from Flinders was funded by 2 small grants obtained from the WILDCARE Board of Management. Herbicide

(Roundup used judiciously and sparingly for 'cut&paint' of cut stems) plus fuel for chainsaws and driptorches were funded out of an equipment grant from NRM North. Accommodation and transport was provided by Mark Baldwin. Food costs were kept to a minimum through edible donations by many Flinders locals: David and Jason Bellinger (potatoes and pumpkins) Dave Freer (locally sourced meat and fish), Flinders Island Olives (organic live oil), Rachel Dallas, (fresh greens), Norm Hunt and Kelly Devlin, (ducks) and the Flinders CWA (fresh herbs and vegetables). Funds to cover the remaining food costs were donated by the Furneaux Landcare Group, Tree Action Group community plant nursery, Flinders CWA, together with additional donations by some of the participating volunteers themselves.

A one thousand thanks to all involved!

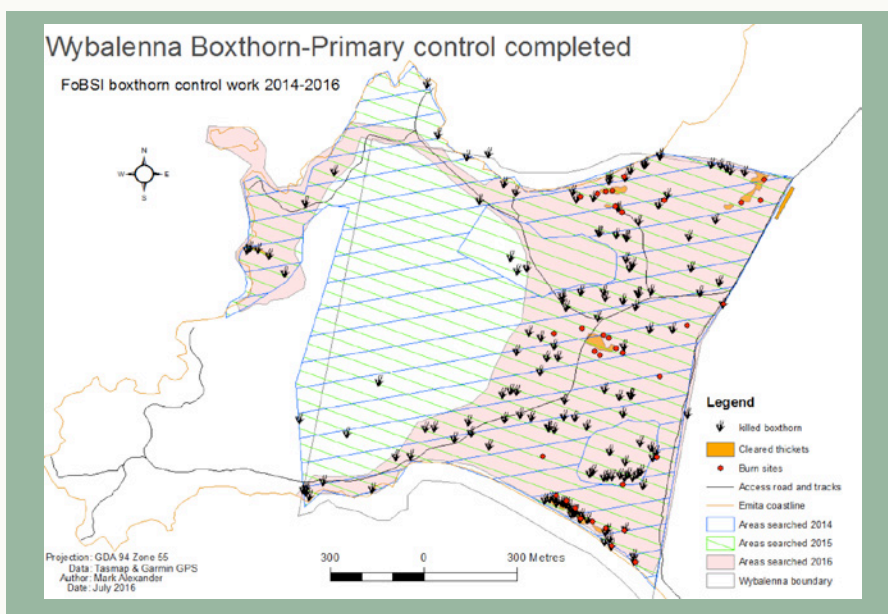


Wybalenna waterhole now it has been cleared of Boxthorn.



10 hard-working volunteers sitting where once all was boxthorn as the last of it burns down to nowt but ash in the foreground.

From Left: Lizzie Cole, Bill Harvey, Mark Alexander, Jean Jackson, Kat Hopkins, Henk Broelsma, Sieglinde Hopkins, Meredith Burgin, Kate Hansford, Craig Dandeaux



Leucochrysum albicans at The Nut

THREATENED PLANTS TASMANIA Story by Phil Collier

The purpose of this trip was to repeat the census of *Leucochrysum albicans* that was previously completed in 2009.

The previous census identified ten sites where the population of plants was counted or estimated, with a total count of nearly 5000 plants.

Our survey visited nine of the ten sites; site 8 was too scrubby to approach to check on the previous record of one plant. We extended site 5 to a nearby rock outcrop where we located 11 plants.

In stark contrast to 2009, our total count in 2016 was 42 living plants. The full report for the trip analysed rainfall for the previous six months at Stanley, and found that rainfall was 25% less than the previous record low rainfall over the same period during the past 150 years of records. It seems likely that the extremely dry conditions are responsible for the lack of living plants, especially as many plants occur in dry rocky places with shallow soil.

The report recommends another field trip in 2017, hoping for better rainfall and a recovery in plant numbers.



Above: Intrepid volunteers searching for *Leucochrysum albicans* at the nut in Stanley

Below: *Leucochrysum albicans* (photos by Robin Garnett)



Smiths Lagoon

THREATENED PLANTS TASMANIA
Alison van den Berg

Weeding at Smiths Lagoon, Conara, February 2016

The aim of this field trip was to follow up on our previous efforts in removing woody weed species from this Midlands wetland site, home to at least 12 threatened flora species.

The lagoon is on private property covered by a conservation covenant under the Tasmanian Nature Conservation Act 2002.

Among the threatened flora species at the site is the EPBC-listed *Xerochrysum palustre* (swamp everlasting), and the largest known Tasmanian population of the endangered *Schoenus latelaminatus* (medusa bogsedge), as well as several ephemeral plants restricted to wetlands in the Northern Midlands.

The target weed of the day was *Crataegus monogyna* (hawthorn), which was treated on a previous trip in 2011. Our eager group of 5 volunteers, were led by Dr Richard Schahinger on a very warm February day. We covered the whole lagoon and were able to locate all of the previously treated shrubs. It was very satisfying to see that many of the hawthorns had died completely, and those that did show signs of regrowth were struggling, and were treated once again. Very few new plants were recorded. Hopefully we will find the lagoon free of Hawthorn on our next field trip scheduled for 2021!

Volunteers cheerfully tackling the hawthorn



Stuck in the mud

FRIENDS OF PITTWATER
AND ORIELTON LAGOON

On 21 June, 21 willing workers from Friends of Pittwater Orielton Lagoon, The Green Army, and Conservation Volunteers Australia, joined forces to plant 635 tube stock groundcovers, grasses and sedges.

Although it was raining and the mud was thick (adding 5cm to everyone's height) the group stoically stuck (!) to the task. The area had been subject to tunnel erosion and the project aims to revegetate the foreshore where Orielton Lagoon meets Miena Park.

We look forward to visiting the site again in the spring to check on the plants and work on any weeding necessary. Hopefully, it will all be green and gorgeous in the near future!

Thanks to NRM South for organising the event and providing the funding for the plants - particularly Paul Gray and Ruth Osborne. Also, a very big 'thank you' to Sophia Newman for her unflinching efforts in leading the work groups.

Despite the rain and the mud volunteers were happy to do some work to protect this precious wetland.



WE NEED YOUR EMAIL!

To communicate with you between editions of Wildtimes, we really, really, need your email address. We use email to let you know what activities and projects are coming up, when your membership is due, and other important announcements. Please email your name and address (that's how we will find you in the system) to office@wildcaretas.org.au today. Thanks in advance.

Yorktown

WILDCARE FRIENDS OF YORKTOWN

On Monday 25 July, our little band of Friends of Yorktown met for a working bee. Our aim was to check on our heathland area which, over the last two years, we have been supplementing with nursery-grown stock plants. We have had very few losses, which is pretty amazing considering the recent dry spring and summer. We tended some plants which were underwater, straightened up covers, put in more plants, then cut and pasted some cursed gorse and grubbed out some of the marauding Lomandra. For some reason, this sagg thinks it has the right to take over the world, or at least Yorktown, and leave no room for sharing with our other natives, such as the *Patersonia*, *Epacris*, *Hibbertia* and orchids. Work over for the day, we enjoyed a scramble through nearby bush, searching for interesting fungi.

Strategic planning

The WILDCARE Board of Management undertook a strategic planning session recently. The Key Strategic Directions for WILDCARE for the next 3 years are:

1. Fundraising
2. Renewal and relevance
3. Building strong relationships
4. Building effective internal communications
5. Raising the profile in the wider community
6. Reviewing and refining Board practices

They look forward to implementing this new direction across the organisation.

Sally Salier, Bob Tyson, Dave Harris and John Duggan get down to business to plan for WILDCARE.



Thank you to these people for their donations: Tracy Matthews, Saffire Freycinet Guests, Stephen Atkinson, M & D Jex, James Collins, Jacob Wilson, Wayne Gardner, Tracey Bagger, Craig Parsey, Kirk Stanton, Megan Alessandrini, Geraldine Whittle, John Murison, Lyndal Byrne, PG Dukes Pty Ltd, Lorraine Cotter, Robert Brooke, Jen O'Bryan, Jane Forster, Andrea Lewis, Anne Hornby, Sanne Stewart, Tracey Simpson, Andrew Smith, Greg Noonan, Donelle Gadenne, Tricia Sharples, Paul Dowsett, David Clark, Saffire Freycinet Guests, Jane Long, Zena Dempsey, Craig Parsey, RACT, Robert Brooke, Fiona Connolly, Robert Brooke, Heather Grainger, Phillip Wyatt.

Share your story

Send your submissions to wildtimes@wildcaretas.org.au
Deadline for the next issue is 1/11/2016.

WILDCARE Inc

Tasmania's largest incorporated volunteer organisation, caring for wild places, wildlife and cultural heritage.

Post: c/o GPO Box 1751 Hobart TAS 7001
Phone: 03 6165 4230 Fax: 03 6223 8603
E-mail: office@wildcaretas.org.au
Web: www.wildcaretas.org.au

