

Opportunities for working together, better!

Wild & Open Space *WILDCARE* Conference & AGM 2001 24th & 25th March, 2001

Come to this year's *WILDCARE* Open Space Conference — an opportunity to share ideas, thoughts, set directions & discuss issues together. All *WILDCARE* members, Parks and Wildlife staff, Nature Conservation staff, and Cultural Heritage staff are invited to attend.

Saturday 24th

Conference opening

Opening address — Kim Evans, Secretary DPIWE.

Keynote address by Andrew Smith, *WILDCARE* Chairperson.

Morning Tea

Wild and Open Space

Setting the timetable followed by 45 minute discussion/presentation sessions.

This is your opportunity to put forward and discuss any *WILDCARE* issue you feel passionate about, on the theme of 'Opportunities for working together, better'. All topics raised will be placed on the timetable for discussion. Members will elect which session to participate in. There will be space for up to a total of fifteen 45 minute sessions running concurrently over three timeslots.

More information about how *Wild & Open Space 2001* will work, follows.

Lunch

BBQ provided.

Annual General Meeting

Afternoon Tea

Discussion sessions continued

Conference Dinner

A meal at one of the local restaurants

expect costs up to around \$25.

Sunday 25th

Field Trip — walk around the Lake with Lyle Rubock. Lyle is a very active member of *WILDCARE*, member of the Cradle Friends and dedicated Hut Warden at Cradle Mt. We will have a rainy day substitute ready if necessary.

Discussion Sessions
Continued if required

Conference close around midday

Who is it for?

Wild & Open Space 2001 aims to bring together all who are currently involved or interested in caring for natural and cultural heritage. This includes *WILDCARE* members and their families, state government staff including managers, rangers, nature conservation specialists, cultural heritage officers, environmental managers & planners.

Wild & Open Space 2001 is especially for those who have a passion for working and learning together in the cultural and natural environment.

How will it work?

Wild & Open Space 2001 will be highly interactive and participants will have the opportunity to lead a workshop or discussion on a topic within the theme — "working together, better". Think about where your passion lies and come prepared to share it with others. All participants will be able to choose which sessions they attend.

Everyone is welcome!

The conference format will include a mixture of presentations, workshops,

displays, round table/round tree discussions, informal gatherings, outdoor events, walks and field trips. *Wild & Open Space 2001* will be informative, stimulating, enjoyable, reflective, interactive, inspiring, and relaxing because it will deal with the interests you feel need to be discussed in the way you want to discuss them.

Accommodation

A list of accommodation available in Cradle Valley ranging from the very budget and camping to the not-so-budget can be found in this edition. Please contact accommodation places direct to make your booking,

Register

Please fill in and send the enclosed registration form to the *WILDCARE* office. If you have any questions, please call the Chairperson, Andrew Smith on 6233 2836.

We look forward to seeing you there!

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WILDTIMES

Newsletter of *WILDCARE* Incorporated

Community Partnership Section, Parks & Wildlife Service
GPO Box 44A Hobart 7001

Ph 03 6233 2185 Fax 03 6223 8308 E-mail: wildcare@dpiwe.tas.gov.au



Semaphore Challenge and *WILDCARE* King & Queen of the Mountains

Two years ago, the Mt Direction Restoration Committee Inc., (the first affiliated CARE group) established the Semaphore Challenge to promote the group's activities and to raise general awareness of the system of semaphore stations which used to signal shipping movements within the Tamar Estuary. As part of its overall commitment to encourage use and care of Tasmania's wild places, *WILDCARE* agreed to sponsor a section of the race in 2000 and to present a perpetual trophy to the fastest individual male and female runner to complete the three mountain legs of the event.

Saturday 11th November 2000 dawned wet & bleak — just lovely weather for a run down the Tamar Valley. That's what 6 teams of intrepid boaters & runners thought when they began at 11:15am from the Low Head Pilot Station.

The overall race consisted of a running leg from the Pilot Station to the top of Mt George then down into George Town where a speedboat & skier took over for the section to the Hillwood jetty. At Hillwood, another running leg covered the trek to the top of Mt Direction & return. Because of safety concerns due to the large amount of debris washed into the

upper reaches of the estuary, the final boating/skiing leg to Home Point was abandoned. The runners, however, gathered at Home point for a massed start for the final running leg to Windmill Hill & return.

WILDCARE volunteers (including the Chairman, Vice Chairman & Secretary) assisted as marshals for the final running leg to ensure that all runners obeyed traffic regulations (not

crossing roads against a red light etc). Additionally, members of the Mt Direction Group coordinated the Hillwood running leg.

The Vice-Chairman presented the trophies to the winners after the Chairman chickened out. Unfortunately, no one had a waterproof camera to take any photos.

The King of the Mountain is Andrew Flanagan in 1hr 10 min 55 sec. The Queen of the Mountain is Rachel Nation in 1-14-31. Both are from the Launceston Athletics Club.

Richard Hammond,
Vice Chairperson

About Schouten Island and the weed control program — 19-25 March 2001

Schouten Island is at the southern end of the Freycinet National Park (& peninsula), divided by Schouten Passage and forms the south eastern end of Great Oyster Bay.

Schouten Island was first developed around a coal mining industry with a busy community being established by the 1840's including over 60 convicts as labourers. Farming leases were taken out on the island from the late 1800's until the 1960's. During that time, land clearing for pastoral grazing was undertaken on the northern and western sides of the island. These cleared areas today are the sites of the main weed control problems on the island. Gorse is the main woody weed sparsely scattered across three areas around the island.

A 10 year long P&WS weed spray program preceded the recent cut and swab effort to control the Gorse on the island. Last year was the third successive year of systematic cut and swab control of large numbers of Gorse plants utilising approximately 20 voluntary persons each year. Follow up inspection of the worked areas indicates that we have a very good rate of kill after three years of cut & swab.

Our task is reducing year by year, however ongoing control and monitoring will be essential for many years to come to satisfy our wish to eradicate the weed from the island.

Three known areas of gorse infestation will be visited during the 7

days on the island. The northern and western infestations have largely been controlled, however some finishing work and monitoring will be required in these areas. An infestation on the southern side of the island will best be accessed by the transfer of people by boat to Sarah Ann Bay.

We should have 5.0 effective days in which to attack ("gnash") the gorse — particularly if we can get away early on the Monday morning. Being that we are heading over to Schouten Island in mid — late March there should be daylight time after each days work for some local exploration or lazing on the beach of this beautiful island. We will organize an afternoon climb of Bear Hill during the week.

At this stage Pete Lingard (P&WS Ranger, Swansea) and Greg Stewart (East Coast Regional Weed Strategy Coordinator) will supervise and coordinate the week long program. Please contact Pete or Greg for any further information or to confirm your interest in joining us on this program. Participants will be chosen on a first in — gets in basis.

Contact: Pete Lingard on Ph: 6257 8844 or Email: petel@dpiwe.tas.gov.au or Greg Stewart on Ph: 6375 1218 or Email: gstewart@bodc.tas.gov.au

Looking forward to having you join us.

Pete Lingard
Parks & Wildlife Ranger, Swansea

The Tasmanian Trail Association

requires a minute
taker for their
meetings held on a
Thursday afternoon
every second month
in Hobart.

If you are able to help
out, please call
Chris Boden on
0419 370 528

Lady Barron Falls Track “Adopted”!

We had said that we were willing to adopt the track from the campground to Lady Barron Falls (in the Mt Field National Park) and finally the day had arrived. Nine adults, three children and ourselves had replied that they would assist with a working bee on this track. It was a fine and warm day and after introductions by Jo Field, the Adopt-a-Track Facilitator and Keith Berry, the Ranger responsible for work on the track, we had morning tea. That got everyone interested and after a short talk about safety precautions we were ready to start work.

There were three seats to be set into concrete in appropriate locations

Bob Wyatt and Keith Berry (Ranger) removing wire mesh on the Lady Barron Falls walking track.



along the track and two family groups were soon digging holes and mixing cement. Others armed themselves with rakes to clear the track of leaf litter, loppers to clear overhanging ferns and branches and fire rakes to clean out gutters along the track. Wire netting, that had become a tripping hazard on a bridge, was removed ready for replacement. There was time for lunch in between all this work!

The track was quite busy and we were asked by some people were we Rangers working on the track and most were surprised that we were all volunteers. Visitors from Western Australia praised us and hoped that the woodchippers would soon be stopped from exploiting native forest

in Tasmania and an American couple were delighted with the work we were doing and wished us well. There was no sign on the track to say who we were but that will be attended to in future. We laughed at one suggestion amongst ourselves that we were all employed on Work Orders for our misdemeanors!

Well, the job was not finished until the paperwork was done, so it was back to the new Mt Field Visitor Centre to record what had been achieved and discuss what work was still required. While this was being done afternoon tea was on the menu of course. We had done much more than Keith and his assistant Rob had thought we would do in the day.

Many thanks to those **WILDCARE** members who attended and we hope to see you again on our next working bee, or on a track you might decide to “adopt”!

Bob and Phyl Wyatt
Track Caretakers

As a result from discussions with **WILDCARE** volunteers and the Track Caretakers of Lady Barron Falls track (prompted by the volunteers being mistaken as Work Orders candidates!), it is planned that Track Caretakers and other **WILDCARE** volunteers participating at working bees, whale rescues, etc. will be supplied with high visibility vest with the **WILDCARE** logo on the back — so that there will be no mistaking us!

New Walking Track for Maria Island

Tasmania certainly has something special to offer with its unique natural areas that we can enjoy in so many ways (which I’m sure I don’t need to tell readers about!). After moving from Sydney to Tassie last year I had the opportunity of taking advantage of this uniqueness by becoming a **WILDCARE** member when I purchased an Annual Parks Pass.

I had heard a lot about Maria Island from various people — so when an Adopt-a-Track project was advertised for on the Island I thought “...I’m there!”. So off I went on a little Maria Adventure. Every step of the way opened my eyes wider to the special

features that belonged to the area. Arriving on Friday afternoon it was difficult to decide what fun to have first — fishing, snorkelling, bushwalking, learning about the natural history of the area. Snorkelling was a certain winner allowing us to take in the magnificent kelp and sea grass beds of the Maria Island Marine Reserve.

Staying in accommodation — provided by Parks for casual staff and Greencorp groups — we met a couple of the other volunteers, students from Tasmania and America both studying aspects of natural resource management and soaking in the tranquillity, history and natural beauty

of the area. Not too much time for talking as we had an early start and a big day ahead of us.

Our mission was to construct a track for visitors to the Island, to walk from the Oast House ruins to the Painted Cliffs, creating a circuit through Blackwood, dry sclerophyll forests and willows planted by the Island’s previous inhabitants. The Painted Cliffs (patterned sandstone cliffs created by wave action) are one of the most popular features on the Island surrounded by rock pools containing a range of different coloured sea anemone and other marine life. The track was constructed using gravel that was compacted between one by three inch timber edging secured by timber pegs.

Beginning the day’s work, we met



Wildcare member, Tim Baker and Alex Fichtel, USA student who has been actively involved in USA trail maintenance load up gravel for other volunteers on the Oast House Ruins — Painted Cliffs walking track.

some were great at barrowing gravel, others had the technical expertise to take the lead, whilst others offered mirth and merriment. But we all had a common purpose in contributing something back to our natural heritage that gives so much to us. Certainly, one of the best ways to get to know an area is to work in it. The Maria Island Adopt-a-Track project gave us insight into management issues that the Park faces incorporating environmental and social aspects of the area. Future plans for this track involve providing interpretation of this cultural significant area and continuing the length of the track.

That night our hard work was rewarded with a BBQ and a cool beer and I tell you, barbies involving abalone and squid are hard to beat!

Schouten Island "Gorse Gnashing" Project, 2001

What:

The 4th successive year of a cut and swab control program being held on Schouten Island (Freycinet National Park) to control the spread of Gorse (*Ulex europaeus*) on three known locations around the island.

When:

Monday 19th to Sunday 25th of March, 2001.

Who might participate:

Any interested persons, Wildcarers, Coastcarers or others who would like to visit Schouten Island and help out with this important project.

How to be involved:

Contact the project coordinator Pete Lingard to secure a place on the boat ferry to and from the island. Be prepared to assist with cut and swab control of gorse for about 6 hrs each day then explore the island or relax on the beach after each days work. See additional information below for more detail.

Phone: 6257 8844

Fax: 6257 8845

Email: petel@dpiwe.tas.gov.au

Address: Parks & Wildlife Service, Nth East District Office, 9 Noyes St, Swansea, TAS 7190.



Putting in the last load on the new circuit walking track from the Oast House Ruins to Painted Cliffs, Maria Island, November 2000.

other members of our team of ten from the Hobart Walking Club who had been walking and working as volunteers on the Island for many years. Everyone contributed different skills to achieving our objective —

The next day, because we had worked so well the previous day, involved finishing up and welcoming the first users of our first-grade top-notch track to cross. Everyone was satisfied. Now, fishing, snorkelling, walking? We

Eaglehawk Neck Backpackers



Close to:

Cape Raoul, Cape Hauy and Cape Pillar (Highest sea cliffs in the Southern Hemisphere), walking tracks. Tasman National Park
Eaglehawk Neck
Ph: (03) 6250 3248

settled for a guided tour in the four wheel drive from Lionel (the PWS Ranger in charge of the project) taking us around the Island to the remoter areas telling stories about different people who had lived on the Island and their activities and the good

fishing spots.

Unfortunately, it all ended too soon. Looking from the ferry to the Island as we were leaving I certainly had different feelings about the place then when I first arrived. I had learnt a lot about the operations of the Park and

it's features as well as contributing to it's sustainable development. Thanks to everyone involved for making it such an enjoyable weekend and I hope to see you all "down the track"!

Linda Overend

Adopt-a-Track in action in the Steppes State Reserve

It was a crisp, cool Saturday morning in late October 2000 when an erstwhile group of WILDCARE volunteers met at the Steppes Homestead on the Lake Highway to commence construction of 'The Steppes Walk'. The Steppes Homestead and Steppes Sculptures are located about 35 km north-west of Bothwell and the drive from Hobart takes approximately 1.5 hours. On this particular morning, an overnight snowfall left a beautiful white mantle of snow over the Central Plateau and the early morning drive up was magical as we climbed steadily up to the Plateau.

On arrival, we were met by the Adopt-a-Track Facilitator — Jo Field, Parks & Wildlife Ranger (Liawenee) — Mike Cousins, Rob Boyes — a highly experienced trackworker with PWS, and a diverse group of volunteers

& Phil Wyatt who drove all the way from Hobart just to provide us with a very welcome hot cup of tea and cookies! Bob & Phil are well known in Hobart Walking Club circles and have a particular affinity with the Steppes and they were clearly

The crisp mountain air, the quickly melting snow, and the call of the currawongs and parrots added a touch of magic to the area. However... the time had come to begin work!

The group divided into two teams... one to tackle the art of rockwork with Rob Boyes and the other, led by Jo and Mike, to form the track by slashing vegetation, removing tree roots and other debris. Rob had



With snow still on the ground, **WILDCARE** volunteers warm themselves before setting off to work (October 2000).



Volunteer (Scott O'Leary) checking his work on the rock path being installed along sections of the track. Weekend working bee in October 2000, as part of Adopt-a-track program.

including Jeram from Lachlan, Robert from West Hobart, Scott from Golden Valley, and Robyn and myself from Hobart.

Our first meeting was made even more memorable by the appearance of Bob

delighted to assist in the launch of this project.

After initial introductions, a detailed briefing on the structure of the program and this particular project from Jo and Mike, we drained our tea cups, bid farewell to Bob & Phil and walked the route of the proposed track, which had already been taped by Mike, to see what we needed to do to bring this project to fruition.

The Steppes Walk is around 800m and will link the historic Homestead with the Steppes Sculptures, an interesting collection of large rock sculptures created by the well known sculptor, Stephen Walker. The track passes through typical Central Plateau country of dry sclerophyll forest with many large old eucalypts, some boulder strewn sections and light scrub. On walking the track for the first time, we noted evidence of earlier logging activity with many large stumps scattered throughout the bush and evidence of a former logging track leading to an old sawmill.

compiled some notes on the principles of using rocks for track work and he spent some time demonstrating the basic techniques which we were able to put into practice for the rest of the day. It was slow work... clearing the pathway, selecting the right rock, digging out to establish a firm base, placing the rock and then tamping around the edges to ensure that it was

The next working bees at the Steppes State Reserve are schedule for 7–8 April and 16–17 June 2001. For more information contact Park staff at Liawenee Field Centre on (03) 6259 8148. As part of the 2001 Heritage Highway Promotion, the Steppes Homestead will be open for public viewing on Sunday, 11 March. Make a day of it — come and view the old homestead and the wonderful work **WILDCARE** volunteers are doing.

WANTED:

Volunteers to assist at the **WILDCARE** stand at Agfest 2001 (3-5 May). The focus of **WILDCARE's** stand this year will be on the Adopt-a-Track Program — Jo Field (Adopt-a-Track Facilitator) will be in attendance all three days.

Please contact Jo on 6336 5454 or email Jo.Field@dpiwe.tas.gov.au if you would like to attend and assist.

firmly set in place... and then clearing around the area to restore it to its natural state as much as possible by removing any dislodged rocks and dirt. Rob was a delight to work with... his extensive knowledge and experience of track work quickly earned him the title of 'guru' and he kept us amused with his never ending pearls of wisdom... such as 'every pebble started life as a stone', 'every rock has its place' and 'a weed is a plant in the wrong place'!

The other crew worked tirelessly slashing vegetation, trimming fallen trees with a chain saw, removing any large rocks and limbs from the track, chipping out protruding roots, filling holes, gathering up and dispersing any cut vegetation out of sightlines and generally shaping the track.

It was a solid and satisfying days work broken with a stop for lunch and of course a tea break around the Steppes campsite. After packing up the tools, we all headed off to Liawenee where Mike had arranged warm and

comfortable accommodation for us and a wonderful BBQ dinner. We were joined by 'the locals' and enjoyed a very relaxing evening, the highlight being what was apparently a rare appearance of the nimble footed Mike on the dance floor!

Needless to say, we all slept very well that night and next morning returned to continue constructing the track. We worked solidly until mid afternoon and then walked the length of the track to review the progress we had made. As we gathered up the tools and cleaned up around our work sites, there was a feeling of pride and satisfaction amongst all of us... not only had we learnt some new skills, enjoyed two days working beneath the elements in a beautiful part of the Tasmanian bush, and made some lasting friendships, but we had also contributed significantly to a project that will provide an ongoing opportunity for many Tasmanians and visitors to experience this unique part of the Central Plateau, to learn something of the history of life at the Steppes and to savour the beautiful natural environment of the area in relative comfort.

Our next working bee took place over a weekend in late December and while only three of the original group could attend, we were joined by another

volunteer all the way from Japan, Ishikuro. We worked solidly until lunch on Sunday continuing the rockwork, track clearing and filling holes with gravel. We constructed an opening in the fence at the Sculptures thus making it possible to walk from one end of the track to the other.

We were delighted with the progress we had made and before stopping for a well earned lunch, we reconnoitered the track and discussed with Mike future track improvements and planning future working bees.

The Adopt-a-Track Program is an excellent initiative and I encourage everyone with an interest in the outdoors to consider becoming involved... more volunteers are needed! The benefits from being involved are significant... you have the opportunity to learn new skills, to meet new people with sympathetic interests, to discover and explore new places in Tasmania, to experience the satisfaction of working as hard as you wish in the outdoors and finally, to have the satisfaction of contributing to community infrastructure that will be there for current and future generations to enjoy!

Alfred Merse
Track Caretaker

Track Caretakers — Recognising these special individuals

Although the Adopt-a-Track Program has only been running since July 2000 — with trial working bees in National Parks and on Reserves throughout the State running since October 2000 — I have had immense pleasure designing this Program.

One of the most pleasurable experiences is the volunteers I meet at the various trial working bees. It's so wonderful working with enthusiastic people who share a similar "love" that

I have — maintaining our State's walking tracks.

A large proportion of the volunteers are ardent bushwalkers (some from recognised walking clubs). It's also great to see a number of individuals who don't necessarily call themselves "bushwalkers" who equally value walking tracks.

The Adopt-a-Track Program is a volunteer program that enables the community an opportunity to become actively involved in maintaining

Imagine drowning under a paper pile?

PWS Park Entry Clerks are in DESPARATE need of being filed — or at least the mountain of park pass renewal notices do!

If you have some time to spare organising Nanette and Leah(!) into piles (i.e. admin assistance in the form of setting up a filing process) please contact them on (03) 6233 2621.

WILDCARE Members Database

Looking for computer literate volunteers who can assist with the important task of inputting **WILDCARE** member subscriptions into the MS Access Database, on an ongoing basis. Experience in database entry is not necessary — training will be provided.

Please contact Andrew Smith or Chris Leitch in the Community Partnership Section on (03) 6233 2836 (Andrew) or (03) 6233 2867 (Chris).



Phyl Wyatt.

walking tracks and other activities associated with track use, on an ongoing basis, in National Parks and other Reserves throughout the State.

Individuals can participate in advertised working bees or by taking on the role of Track Caretaker, working in partnership with the Park staff responsible for their adopted

track.

Between December 2000 and February 2001, 8 **WILDCARE** members have “signed up” as Track Caretaker for a variety of tracks throughout the State. Without these special individuals (and the others who follow) this Program will not continue.

I’d like to take this opportunity to thank a particular couple who recently adopted a section of the Lady Barron Falls track (between the campground to Falls) in Mt Field National Park — Bob and Phyllis Wyatt. A few of the other Track Caretakers have also had the pleasure of meeting and working with Bob and Phyl.

Both born and raised in Hobart, married in 1954, Bob and Phyl have a long “history” of involvement in volunteer activities including Girl Guide movement; Members of Australian Plant Society, Hobart

Walking Club, Tasmanian Historical Research Association. They are still very active people — walking and cycling on a regular basis; indulging their 2 lovely grandchildren. Participating in various programs their son (PWS Track Team Manager) has been involved in setting up — including the Tramping Trials on the Central Plateau where Bob and Phyl were caterers for the day (and something about liters of pumpkin soup spilling through the car...!) They also catered for the first Adopt-a-Track trial working bee (end-Oct 2000) at the Steppes State Reserve — and boy! Wasn’t the hot tea and bikkies appreciated by all on the first day of the working bee, with snow still on the ground!

Thank you, Bob and Phyl! Others and myself look forward to working with you both “on the track”.

Jo Field
Adopt-a-Track Facilitator

Revamping Detention Falls Track

Losing a loved one is, to say the least, hard to handle. That’s why when my family and I saw that the Detention Falls track was closed [mid-2000] to the public and the signs removed, we were greatly saddened.

When our family received the *Hands On* magazine and read a **WILDCARE** Adopt-a-Track working bee was being organised to improve the track, we were very keen indeed. We couldn’t bear to see the Falls track closed. What a shame to have such a wondrous work of nature and not to have people experience its peaceful, majestic beauty.

On the day of the working bee, 12 volunteers and professional trackworkers, gathered to discuss what was to be done and started working on the new track. The old track was deemed quite hazardous for the unwary as you could end up at one of two spots from which to view the Falls: at the top where you would have to stand dangerously close to the edge to see the water tumbling down; or down the bottom near the pool which is a steep descent, to stand on slippery rocks trying to look up through the spray. Both spots have their dangers. Once we lost our faithful dog —

Caramel — over the Falls as he tried to cross the stream after us [reference to “losing a loved one”]. On another occasion we almost lost my little brother when climbing down to the bottom of the Falls. Luckily my friend saved my brother as he was falling!

The new track is a vast improvement and will make the walk more of a leisurely stroll, instead of having to worry constantly about tripping over! There will also be a viewing platform with railings so even children will be safe. In my opinion, the platform is an improved perspective from which to view this amazing sight. It is set back, giving a great overall view of the Falls — ideal for photos.

I think everyone who participated on the day enjoyed themselves — I certainly did! Besides meeting some great people, I felt like we were helping the environment by encouraging people to stay on the track. Maybe it will open a few more eyes as to how special the untouched



PWS Trackworker Steve Overton, carrying out maintenance work on Detention Falls track.

parts of the world are and the need to look after our environment, to keep “little pieces of heaven” like this safe.

Geb Taylor

Geb’s family own a property bordering the Detention Falls Reserve. I would like to thank Geb, his family and the other **WILDCARE** volunteers who attended the initial working bee last November.

Further work was intended for the track in February 2000, but due to fires on King Island this work has been delayed. Volunteers interested in participating at the next working bee can contact Jo Field, Adopt-a-Track Facilitator on (03) 6336 5454.

Maria (Island) memories

Out of the 10 WILDCARE volunteers who participated in the Maria Island Adopt-a-Track weekend working bee in November 2000, 7 have been coming to the Island for over 6 years, involving themselves with other volunteer works (predominantly on the houses on the Island). As a result of many chats during the weekend, it was requested that this group submit an article for the WILDTIMES, recapturing the events over the years. Hopefully, Trauti Reynolds (the groups deputised "scribe" will continue to regale us with this special group of people's endeavors in future editions of WILDTIMES this year...!

It was agreed that David would try to get a group of interested people together to do the work on a voluntary basis. The plea was made through the Hobart Walking Club monthly circular and in December a group of 10 were driven to French's Farm for the first time.

We were equipped with every sort of tool and material we might need, tents, food and a lot of good will and humour. It was instantly obvious that this house needed more than a little TLC. Broken windows, paint peeling off the roof and walls, in the space where the veranda used to be weeds grew hip-high, and the interior in places vandalised with graffiti.

We got to work immediately. It was a very hot day and the volunteers who

had attacked the roof began to fry and sizzle — but the sea wasn't far for a cooling swim. We had a wonderful time working within a happy and cooperative group, joking and chatting. Paint was stripped, the roof water-blasted, windows replaced, new paint applied, interior walls washed... Rangers came and went over the couple of years and 5 working bees that it took to finish the job. To round it all up the weeds were removed and a new veranda constructed.

As we were coming to the end of the restoration at French's Farm, we were driven further south to Robey's Farm. There we found the roof of the building peeled off like the lid of a can [of sardines]...Thank goodness! We'd have another job to come back to!

To be continued...

David & Trauti Reynolds

Part 1 — Restoring Houses on Maria Island: Volunteers at Work

It all started in 1994 when David met Ian Marmion, who was then senior ranger on the Island. Ian mentioned that there were a few old farmhouses in the south of the Island that needed repair.

See you around Allison

WILDCARE's Secretary for the last 12 months, Allison Wing, has unfortunately finished her traineeship time with the Department and therefore has also left the position of WILDCARE

Secretary (The position is provided as in-kind support to WILDCARE by the Department).

Allison made an outstanding contribution to WILDCARE over her time as Secretary, and her enthusiasm and ability will be sorely missed. In the position of Administration Support Officer for the Community Partnerships Section Allison also supported the Landcare, Landcare Marketing, Bushcare, Land for Wildlife, Coastcare, World Heritage Area and Adopt-a-Track Programs and was part of the team that put together the Departmental Conference on Natural Resource Management last year. For those of you who are involved in those programs, you will have seen Allison's work with the Hands On magazine, to which Allison contributed a huge organisational effort. While Allison's achievements were many, perhaps the pinnacle of her efforts came with the organisation and running of the **WILD Edge Music Festival** at Strahan. Allison provided the primary diving force behind pulling together a very complex, innovative, exciting and successful weekend on the edge of the Wilderness. She also assisted with last years WILDCARE Conference and AGM at Low Head and has been responsible for pulling together WILDTIMES. In keeping with her strong commitment to WILDCARE,

Community action in Mt Field National Park

In early December 2000, 11 WILDCARE members attended the inaugural meeting of the Mt Field CAREs group at Mt Field. Ranges of possibilities were discussed for participation in park management at Mt Field, with a great deal of interest shown in the Adopt-a-Track Program and in volunteers working with the newly appointed Visitor Centre Co-ordinator.

If you attended the meeting, or were unable to but are registered with Mt Field (or would like to register for Mt Field) and are interested in taking on the role of President/Co-ordinator of the CAREs group, please contact Mark Pharaoh, Senior Ranger, Mt Field National Park.



Allison hasn't disappeared and in fact put in extended time as a volunteer Camp Warden at Freycinet National Park over Christmas, camping at Wineglass Bay and dealing with walkers and other visitors to the area. In terms of other things lined up, she will be departing on March 6th for the United States on a study tour funded by an grant from the Harry Holgate Memorial Tourism Award, presented to an outstanding young person in the

area of tourism. Allison will be looking at examples of community generated environmental and cultural events, in a similar vein to the WILD Edge Musical Festival. Allison has also been awarded the Clarence young citizen of the year award, with her work with **WILDCARE** forming an important part of her impressive resume. I, and many other people (staff, Board of Management members and volunteers) wish Allison

all the best with wherever her talents take her. Good luck!

Andrew Smith
Chairperson

PS. I am happy to report that Kathryn Gatenby, Admin Officer with DPIWE has been nominated by the Department to take on the role of Secretary, at least for the time being. Welcome aboard Kathryn!

Living with Wildlife

Living with Eagles and Hawks

Tasmania is home to 13 species of birds of prey, all of which are native. These include some of Australia's most spectacular species, such as the majestic wedge-tailed eagle and the white-bellied sea eagle. Several of our birds of prey are threatened with extinction. Some also occasionally come into conflict with landowners. It is vital that any protective measures that landowners take do not place these birds at risk. Remember, all of our birds of prey are wholly protected by law.

The following notes are provided to identify ways of overcoming these problems and ensuring that these magnificent birds continue to survive.

Roles and values

Birds of prey are among the most important forest predators. They:

- are a stabilising influence. Without such predators prey populations fluctuate, in effect controlling themselves by overpopulation, starvation and disease.
- promote survival of the fittest by selectively preying on deformed, weak or sick animals. Thus, they assist with bush hygiene.
- eat many introduced pests.
- are indicators of environmental health. Because they are predators at the top of the food chain they accumulate certain agricultural chemicals from their food and can act as an early warning system for pollution.
- provide enjoyment for many people who find them a source of pleasure and inspiration.
- Like all native species they have the right to exist in the wild.

Wedge-tailed eagles

Ever since Europeans settled in Australia, wedge-tailed eagles have been accused of attacking and killing almost anything from horses to honey-eaters. In some States bounties were paid for their destruction and a total of about 20 000 were slaughtered per year in the mid 1960's.

Today, despite legal protection and changing attitudes, the wedge-tailed eagle remains vulnerable to extinction.

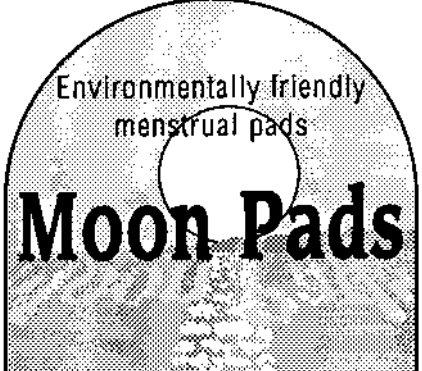
Some landowners believe that wedge-tailed eagles pose a threat to lambs and kids. However, studies have shown these fears to be unwarranted. In 1970, for example, the CSIRO published an analysis of the cause of death of over 12 000 lambs in several States. Although up to 34% of dead lambs had been at least partly eaten, only 2% of lambs born had been actually killed by predators such as eagles. More importantly, only 2.7% of dead lambs would have survived if a predator had not attacked. Exposure to bad weather and miss-mothering were the most important causes of death.

Studies in Tasmania show that in sheep grazing areas, rabbits, hares, brushtail possums and wallabies are the most important prey, although a great variety of animals are eaten dead or alive, from cormorants and echidnas to snakes. With rare exceptions, eagles simply do not create an economic problem.

When a farmer suspects livestock has been killed by an eagle, wherever possible, the Parks and Wildlife Service will organise post mortems. We have found that 85% of seemingly healthy lambs killed by eagles were already sick with lumpy kidney and/or

pneumonia and may have died anyway. If a post mortem is not possible you can see if an eagle has attacked the lamb by skinning back the head and shoulders and examining the presence and degree of bruising. If the lamb was alive and active there should be considerable bruising where the claws penetrated. No bruising means it was already dead; little bruising means it was near death.

- Make a realistic assessment of the possible damage. Is it really as great as first envisaged?
- Submit carcasses to the Department of Primary industry and Fisheries or



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the Parks and Wildlife Service for examination.

- Eagles are easily scared off by humans. If possible, move stock closer to people. Goats especially benefit from this and provide some shelter for their kids. Scarecrows can work well if backed up by shooting to scare. If you do this, please remember, you must have a permit from the Parks and Wildlife Service, so you cannot be accused of shooting at the birds.
- Notify the Parks and Wildlife Service. We can help.
- If serious stock losses persist we can trap the offender(s). Usually they

WANTED Handy Volunteers

To help construct two picnic tables (Hobart metro area) & to assist in the erection of a picnic shelter at Ouse in the Derwent Valley.

Both projects are to enhance the Tasmanian Trail by providing facilities at campsites.

For details please ring Chris Boden on 0419 370 528 or 6244 2491 AH.

are young birds not holding territories and they can be moved. However, in several decades of managing this problem we have only had to capture a few eagles.

- Keep poultry near habitation and provide shelter. If they are truly valuable they shouldn't free range in risky areas.

Why there is concern for the eagles survival?

Our wedge-tailed eagles have been isolated for 10 000 years from their mainland counterparts and have become a separate subspecies. With naturally low numbers they have little genetic insurance, and continued pressure means they have been declared endangered.

There are a number of problems facing eagles in Tasmania. One is habitat destruction through forestry operations and land clearing which is removing the type of forest eagles need for nesting. Needless persecution, mainly by vandals, is also a problem as is accidental collisions and electrocution by power lines.

There are only about 100 pairs of wedge-tailed eagles successfully breeding each year in Tasmania. They use very traditional nests almost

always in very large eucalypts sheltered from the wind. They are very shy nesters and will often desert their nests if disturbed by land clearing, particularly early on in the breeding season, which is August to December. Breeding eagles need over 10 ha of surrounding forest especially uphill of a nest tree. Try and leave this amount, try to postpone development until the breeding season is over and follow Forestry Tasmania's 'Forest Practices Code'.

Shooting, poisoning and trapping are also serious threats. About 8% of adult eagles are illegally killed each year. This is critical considering that the total adult mortality should be only 5%. The illegal poisoning of scavengers can easily kill eagles and other wildlife. Fortunately, eagles are quite resistant to 1080 poisoning and should not be harmed if the prescribed mixing procedures are followed during legal poisoning operations.

In Tasmania about 40% of pairs are on private land, 40% in State Forest and only about 20% on reserved or Crown land. Obviously a large proportion of the population are at risk from the threats mentioned.

Problems with hawks

Once juvenile hawks have left the care of their parents in summer/autumn they enter a period where they must quickly perfect their hunting skills or starve. During this time domestic birds can seem very attractive. Free-range chickens can be like a neon 'take-away' sign for these inexperienced hawks. Once hawks discover such an easy supply of food they can be very persistent.

Review — Derwent River Wildlife Guide

So many of the Tasmanians who live on or near the Derwent River are fascinated by the exciting wildlife ecosystems it supports. Up until recently, there have been few handbooks specifically dedicated to this area — especially set out in such a user friendly manner. The Tasmanian Environment Centre has just recently published a new guide written and researched by Veronica Thorp dedicated wholly to the Derwent River.

This new pocket size full-colour guide is packed full of useful and interesting information to help you identify and care for wildlife both in the Derwent and on its shores. It has a colour-coded index outlining all the main species, starting with flora ranging from subalpine woodland

to sand dunes, with the second half dedicated to fauna, covering invertebrates, fish, frogs, reptiles, birds and mammals. It also contains maps covering from the upper reaches in Wyatinah and Lake St Clair through down to the river mouth.

There are nearly 200 photos, diagrams and short explanations on the most common plants and animals (both native and introduced), including where to find them in the valley, seasonal variations, and descriptions.

The Tasmanian Environment Centre sells the Derwent River Wildlife Guide for \$12.95, plus \$1 postage if you would like it sent to you. Call in, or phone them on 6234 5566.

Veronica Thorp



What to do?

- Chickens have natural defences at the sight of a hawk and will squeeze under shelter such as buildings, old cars, bushes etc. Special shelters can be made of planks on logs or bricks. They should be at least 2 m X 2 m and 15 cm off the ground.
- Dogs, broody hens and some roosters can also be good defenders of chickens.
- By far the best defence is to enclose the poultry. Provide at least 1/4 of the pen as solid cover and arrange the entrance such so that poultry can get out of sight. Obviously smaller chickens are more vulnerable, keep penned until well grown. Although aviary birds are rarely directly harmed they can injure, even kill, themselves in panic when attacked. Problems mainly occur when there is a large flight and small shelter. If a hawk lands near the shelter the birds can feel trapped in the exposed end and panic.

Aviary suggestions

- Cover most of the flight or have a roll-on cover handy. If the hawks cannot catch or at least see food they will not stay for long.
- Two layers of mesh 5 cm apart, can help.
- Low power (0.5 or 1 Joule) electric fence wires on prominent perches or around the rim of an aviary can deter hawks and owls from landing (see diagram). Small birds do not earth this wiring and will not get a shock. These wires can repel cats and possums.
- Pigeons can usually outfly hawks so let them take to the air. If they are in the loft lock it — goshawks have been known to enter the loft after pigeons.

Birds of prey other than hawks are not nearly so bold near humans and are rarely such a problem with domestic birds. Often they can be frightened off with loud noises. Please be reasonable. You cannot expect to fully protect free range poultry. If these solutions are not possible and the stock being lost is part of your livelihood, then the Parks and Wildlife Service may relocate the hawk. This is generally successful because offenders are usually juveniles without territories and have no reason to return. However, this is not a long term solution.

Accommodation at Cradle Valley

Thinking of staying overnight at Cradle Valley when you come to the AGM and Conference (24th and 25th March)?

Here are some of the options. You will need to contact them direct to make your booking.

Cradle Mountain Wilderness Village

**** 1/2

Ph. 6492 1018. Fully self contained, microwave, hotplates, TV, private verandah, view of Cradle — \$154/night for 2 people.

Cradle Mountain Lodge

**** 1/2

Ph. 6492 1303. Cabin \$372 double/night, spa cabin \$480 — minimum two nights stay.

Cradle Mountain Highlanders

*** 1/2

Ph. 6492 1116. Spa timber cabins, fully self contained \$88 — \$160.

Cradle Mountain Tourist Park

Ph. 6492 1395. 2 bedroom cabins, 6 berth cabins, backpacker accom., camping \$12-\$65/night.

WILD & Open Space 2001 Registration

Yes! I/We will attend the WILD & Open Space Conference 2001 (see front page for details)

Personal Details

Name/s

Address

.....

Membership No.(s) &

Phone: Hm Mob

Email

(Please note all 'R' and 'P' memberships are valid for attendance at the AGM. 'R' memberships will expire at the end of the conference)

Conference

I will attend on Saturday I will attend on Sunday

Activity Options

I would like to attend the Sunday Walk guided by Lyle Rubock. (Wet weather is Historical Slide Show by John Pickford).

Dining

The Saturday evening meal will be at a local restaurant with prices around \$25.

How many from your party will attend the dinner?

Please return this form completed to:

Andrew Smith, WILDCARE, GPO Box 44A, Hobart 7001

Andrew.Smith@dpiwe.tas.gov.au

Any inquiries, please call 03 6233 2836

Registrations due by 16th March, 2001

Thankyou!

WILDCARE wishes to thank the following sponsors for their support of the **WILDCARE** Fund

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- Brighton Council • Resource Management & Conservation

And the following **WILDCARE** member-discount sponsors

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Moonpads 5% discount

The Possum Shed, Westerway 10% discount on all gifts

(To claim your discount, simply present your **WILDCARE** member card.)

We are looking for other sponsors, both for the **WILDCARE** Fund and as discounters. Know someone who you think might be interested? Why not have a chat to them and suggest they contact **Andrew Smith at Community Partnerships Section** for more details (Ph 6233 2836 — GPO Box 44a Hobart 7001).

Tasmanian Trail Guidebook— **Tasmanian Trail**

This essential guide will give walkers, bicyclists and horse riders all the information needed to travel all or part of the unique **Tasmanian Trail**.

Detailed trail notes cover each stage of the journey, providing concise directions and information on access, campsites and facilities. Distances are given for trips in either direction, while each stage is supplemented with detailed maps.

Planning, safety and environmental issues are all thoroughly covered.

Fascinating snippets of information on the natural and cultural features you will discover along the trail are liberally spread throughout the book.

If you are contemplating a full traverse of the state or just a day trip, this book is a must.

Recommended Retail Price: \$22.00. Order through the **WILDCARE** Office, GPO Box 44A Hobart 7001. Please make cheques payable to The Tasmanian Trail Association.

ISBN 9 318923 009651