

WILDTIMES

Issue 34
April 2009



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Newsletter of WILDCARE Inc

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

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Goodbye 'Sodden Loddons'

The muddy 'sodden Loddons' may be no more, if proposed construction of 6.2 kilometres of new track on the Frenchmans Cap Track proceeds as part of a new management plan for the track.

The Frenchmans Cap Walking Track Management Plan 2009 was produced to provide strategic direction for the track's upgrade over the next 10 years. Its development resulted from businessman Dick Smith's donation to the WILDCARE Gift Fund of \$100,000 per year for the next 10 years, to fund track improvements. Mr Smith, a regular visitor to Tasmania, made the donation following his visit last year, which included walking the Frenchmans Cap track.

The Tasmanian Government agreed to match his donation with a commitment of \$50,000 each year for 10 years.

The 23 kilometre track from the Lyell Highway to the summit of Frenchmans Cap is used by approximately 1000 walkers each year.



PWS Ranger Stuart Graham at the 'sodden Loddons'

This plan will now be used as the foundation for a funding bid to the WILDCARE Gift Fund. The work would begin following the WILDCARE Gift Fund Board's funding approval.

...continued on page 2

Still Wild About Writing

The WILDCARE Tasmania Nature Writing Prize, the international prize for outstanding nature writing, is on again this summer. Since its beginnings in 2003, the prestigious biennial prize has attracted over 200 entries from writers all over Australia and overseas. In aiming to lift the profile of nature writing, it helps put words and actions together in the cause of caring for our world.

Writers are vying for:

- First Prize of \$5,000 in cash plus an airfare to Tasmania; a 2 week residency in a national park; and publication of the piece in ISLAND magazine and WILDTIMES.
- Two Runner-up awards of \$250 each, plus publication of their entry in ISLAND magazine and WILDTIMES.

By the time this article goes to press entries will have closed for the 2009 prize. In fact we have received over 130 entries for Australia and overseas.



Orange Bellied Parrot image, produced for the prize publicity by artist Bradley Trevor Greive.

...continued on page 2

...Goodbye Sodden Loddons from page 1

Two of the Parks and Wildlife Service's most experienced track management staff, Grant Dixon and Stuart Graham, prepared the plan.

Grant said that the certainty of funding for the next 10 years provided the scope for 'doing the job properly'.

The plan identified that extensive works on the track were undertaken between 1985 and 2005, with more than \$800,000 spent on track works in the past 20 years, but that major problems such as active erosion, still occur in some extensive sections of the track.

Grant and Stuart spent a total of 17 days during three field trips in October and November compiling an inventory of the existing track and options for stabilisation and repair. This information has been collated into the comprehensive plan which includes an assessment of the location, condition, values and usage of walking tracks and major walking routes in the Frenchmans Cap area.

Its major recommendations include: completing stabilisation of the

highland sections of the existing track (including the Irenabyss track) and construction of 6.2 kilometres of new track in a re-route of the entire Loddon Plains-Philps Lead section of the existing track. Construction in two stages would allow for it to be opened sequentially.

Grant said the option of a new route through the Loddon Plains-Philps Lead section examined a range of factors including environmental impacts and future maintenance requirements.

"This new track would compare favourably in terms of construction and be much cheaper in terms of future maintenance costs as compared to the alternative of hardening the existing track," he said.

Late News: Following adoption and publication of the report PWS has submitted a works program for the period to the end of this financial year (to July 2009) to the WILDCARE Gift Fund committee and the first payment from the Fund to PWS is likely to be made in July.

Liz Wren, PWS

...Still Wild About Writing from page 1

However WILDCARE members can still be involved by:

- Volunteering some time to help administer the prize,
- Taking part in a special WILDCARE nature writing workshop with the winner, and
- Submitting your own entry and spreading the word for the next prize, the more entries the better!

Tasmanian-born Bradley Trevor Greive is an international best selling author & illustrator of books such as *The Blue Day Book* and *Priceless: the Vanishing Beauty of a Fragile Planet*. When he heard about our prize, he was so impressed he donated his own hand-made, felt illustration of an endangered orange-bellied parrot, which was used (in colour) on the entry form. Thanks BTG!"

More information about the prize is available on-line at www.wildcare.org.au, or you can ring Peter Grant on 6233 2665. This year's winner will be announced during the '10 Days on the Island' festival on 4 April 2009.

Look for the winning entries in the next *Wildtimes*.

Peter Grant (WILDCARE member & Manager Interpretation & Education with PWS)

WILDTIMES publication schedule

Issue #	Article Submissions Due	Publication Date
35	1 July 2009	August 2009
36	1 November 2009	December 2009
37	1 March 2010	April 2010

Submissions to Wildtimes Editor at wildtimes@wildcarea.org.au



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Grant Success for Tamar Island Wetlands

Volunteers at Tamar Island Wetlands Centre, a branch of WILDCARE Inc, are keen to landscape the area around the Centre's car park by planting a selection of Tasmanian native trees, shrubs and ground flora.

Having discovered that a grant of up to \$1,000 is offered each year by the Australian Plant Society Tasmania Inc. to volunteer organisations, Wetlands Centre Volunteers President, John Duggin submitted an application.

As the project proposed by the Wetlands Volunteers complied with the conditions set down by The Australian Plant Society, the grant was awarded to the volunteer group. Dick Burns, President of APS. Tas. Inc. travelled to Launceston to make the official presentation in November. A small group, consisting of Parks

and Wildlife Staff, Wetlands Centre Volunteers and Plant Society Members was present.

Donna Stanley from Parks and Wildlife introduced Dick, who explained that the grant is available each year to volunteer organisations and schools, with applications to be submitted by July.

Previous recipients were Bridgewater High School and the Understorey Network. He then presented the cheque to John, who explained that the project will be undertaken in two stages.



John Duggin accepts the grant cheque from APS President Dick Burns

The first stage will be to plant the area between the car park and the Wetlands and the second stage to plant around the car park itself. Tasmanian indigenous species will be used in both stages.

John Duggin

Maatsuyker Volunteer Caretakers Celebrate Anniversary.

A celebratory dinner was held in Hobart recently to mark the tenth anniversary of the Parks and Wildlife Service managed Volunteer Caretaker Program on Maatsuyker Island.

About 50 caretakers and Friends of Maatsuyker Island gathered at Irish Murphys to renew old acquaintances and reminisce.

When the labour intensive original light on the island was replaced with a modern, solar powered beacon in the mid 1990s the Australian Government management agency Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) downgraded the lightkeeper presence and eventually handed management of the island to the Tasmanian Government and hence the Parks and Wildlife Service.

Soon after, the island was added to the Southwest National Park and is now part of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area. Apart from the heritage values of the light station which include the light tower, three houses and various other buildings and infrastructure the island has many important natural values.

The island is an important breeding habitat for seabirds, none more evident than about 2 million shearwaters (or mutton birds) but also small numbers of the rare Soft Plumaged Petrel.

Maatsuyker Island is home, at least for part of the year, to three species of seals: Australian and New Zealand Fur Seals, and more rarely the Southern Elephant Seal.

The island is also a place of significance to the Tasmanian Aboriginal community.

The Volunteer Caretaker Program was designed as a means of maintaining a fulltime presence on the island after the departure of professional lightkeepers. Caretakers have been on the island for periods of three to six months and combine their PWS duties with weather observations for the Bureau of Meteorology.

Any WILDCARE members interested in more details of this program should contact Pip Gowen,

PWS Regional Volunteer Facilitator at PWS Huonville on (03) 6264 8463 or pip.gowen@parks.tas.gov.au
Craig Saunders

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New WILDCARE CAREs Groups

Since our last issue we can report that new community conservation groups across the state are realising the advantages in joining the WILDCARE family and are signing up as new WILDCARE Community Action in Reserves (CAREs) groups.

Here is a brief introduction to six new groups.

Friends of Millingtons Beach

We are a group of WILDCARE members living in the beautiful town of Orford (1hour drive north east of Hobart) interested in caring for our coastline.

We focus most of our attention on Millington's Beach, a wide sweeping sandy beach with low dunes behind. Our primary concern is weed eradication and re-establishment of the native vegetation along the dunes. We will be having regular working bees in the New Year (2009) after successfully applying for Caring for Country Coastcare Funds to assist our activities.

Friends of the Franklin River

Franklin Gordon Wild Rivers National Park, part of the Tasmanian World Heritage Wilderness Area. The Franklin River was the subject of one of Australia's great environmental debates that eventually resulted in the area being declared a National Park and World Heritage Area. This beautiful wild river is still a magnet for white water adventurers and wilderness lovers from all over the world.

We are volunteers committed to caring for the Franklin River and its National Park. We will be removing weeds along the River banks, maintaining walking routes and camp sites and promoting the spectacular values of the area.

WILDCARE Deslacs

The beautiful Cape Deslacs Nature Reserve and Pipeclay Lagoon are on South Arm, east of Hobart. These reserves are of particular importance to migratory and local sea birds.

We have a great time caring for these important coastal reserves - mapping and removing weeds, educating the public (particularly about migratory birds), foreshore habitat rehabilitation, feral animal control planning, bird counts and litter and flotsam cleanups. (see separate article in this issue)

Jericho Heritage Centre

We maintain a small museum relating to the history of Jericho and the surrounding midlands area of Tasmania. We provide tours by appointment, maintain the church building, curate the historical museum, and care for the grounds of the church. Members with trade skills, an interest in history, are avid historic researchers, like meeting and talking to visitors from far and wide or simply love caring for heritage buildings are all very welcome to become involved in what we do.

We operate from St James Church, a lovely heritage building located in Jericho, on the old midlands Highway, and part of the Heritage Highway Experience.

Friends of Woodvine

Woodvine Nature Reserve is property bequeathed to the Parks and Wildlife Service near Forcett in Southern Tasmania. The property includes an old farm house, some outbuildings, cleared paddocks and native vegetation. It has significant natural and cultural values.

This new group will work in partnership with PWS to implement a catch up maintenance plan for the buildings, address weed issues and conduct mapping and flora surveys

Friends of Melaleuca

Friends of Melaleuca has been formed to work in partnership with PWS and private lease holders to assist with maintenance of buildings and other infrastructure and natural values in the Melaleuca vicinity.

So

If you are interested in joining any one of these new groups and perhaps joining in on the many new projects then update your membership details on the WILDCARE website. See our article in this issue 'Getting the Most out of your WILDCARE Membership'

Craig Saunders

Tasman Successful Again

The Friends of Tasman Island (FOTI) recently returned from another successful expedition to continue conservation work on the island.

Nine people, including PWS ranger Alena Hrasky, former PWS general manager Bob Tyson and a previous light keeper, embarked on an eight-day volunteer working bee to Tasman Island, part of Tasman National Park.

"Funding for the trip was secured through an Envirofund grant, to seek out and eradicate introduced species of weeds to the island," FOTI member and Arts Tasmania program officer David Edgar said.

David reported that weeds were identified, pulled, dug up or poisoned.

"Much work was also done caring for the three houses and oil store including installation of a new water storage tank."

For the uninitiated Tasman Island is formidable, accentuated by frequent wild weather, steep cliffs rising out of the ocean, a relatively flat surface on top, a lighthouse, three houses and rare species of flora and fauna.



Volunteers inspect old Haulage cart on Tasman Island

"We were treated to magnificent sunrises and sunsets, explored some spectacular parts of the island, marvelled at the steep cliffs, endless sky and sea, viewed whales frolicking, sea eagles soaring and seals lounging."

"All in all much walking, wandering and work was done, but much more is in need of doing as the island sits mostly alone nowadays."

If you are interested in getting involved with the Friends of Tasman Island you can contact them via the contact on their WILDCARE website.


Liz Wren, PWS

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WILDCARE'S Weed-Whacking Wilderness Warriors

Sea Spurge Remote Area Teams, affectionately known as SPRATS, have completed another season of weeding in the southwest with spectacular results. After two summers of beach weeding, the SPRATS have removed virtually all mature sea spurge plants from Pennerowne Point to Cockle Creek – around one quarter of Tasmania's coastline. SPRATS have also achieved a substantial reduction in marram grass in the southwest.

In the 2008-09 season SPRATS comprised 42 volunteers who contributed the equivalent of 572 days work toward the project. Nine remote area teams, who spent between 8 and 14 days in the wilderness, covered the coastline between Cape Sorell (Macquarie Harbour) and Cockle Creek (the start of the South Coast Track).

Project planning is critical to the success of SPRATS given the logistics, communications and OH&S issues of remote area work and the need to most efficiently allocate volunteers to cover the extensive project area. Nearly one hundred days work was involved in project planning, including complex transport logistics involving buses, boats, helicopters and light aircraft. Dividing the coastline into operational sectors and allocating appropriate sized teams to each sector is important to achieve effective coverage of the whole coast. This requires extensive local knowledge and relies on the data collected in

previous years.

Detailed and precise information collected in preliminary surveys and in the first full SPRATS season in the summer 2007-08 has been invaluable for planning the latest weeding expedition. SPRATS teams record location of weed sites (using GPS), along with a site description, details of the number and age of weeds, the treatment used (e.g. herbicide or hand-pulling) and time taken to weed the site. This not only allows teams to easily find the sites in following years but also provides useful data to determine how effective the efforts have been.

For example the number of adult sea spurge plants is reduced by an average 99% after 3 years of weeding and the number of seedlings has been reduced by 90%. However we are only getting minor reductions in the time taken to weed sites, mainly because most of the sites are small and still need to be inspected.

Forty-five clumps of marram grass have been found on the southwest coast and these have been treated using three different techniques. The most effective approach appears to be digging the marram grass out but due to the extensive roots this is much slower than applying foliage to the leaves.



SPRATS aims to remove invasive beach weeds from the entire 600 kilometres of southwest wilderness coast. An important part of the World Heritage wilderness value of southwest Tasmania is that there are very few non-native species. Sea spurge and marram grass not only compromise the naturalness of this area, they compete with native plants, change the profile of sand dunes and smother sandy areas used by beach-nesting birds such as the Little Tern, which is an endangered species.

The work undertaken by SPRATS over the past two summers has been made possible by a Commonwealth Government Envirofund grant. A Caring for our Country grant will enable SPRATS to continue their mission next summer. The volunteer group works closely with Parks and Wildlife Service in planning and implementation.

Nick Fitzgerald

WILDCARE assists with Redefining Tasmanian Trail

The Tasmanian Trail opened in 1997 as Tasmania's only long distance multi-use trail providing a valuable resource for people seeking to ride (horses, bikes) and walk in natural settings ranging from the Latrobe on the North West Coast to Dover in the south.

In early 2008 the Tasmanian Government adopted a Trails Tasmania Strategy recommending that the Tasmanian Trail Association review its existing pathway to enhance the opportunities for users to access additional services, attractions and pathway surfaces.

The Association has undertaken a preliminary review with fieldwork now being carried out to enable the Association to effectively satisfy the Government request.

A grant made available by WILDCARE Inc.

will fund an investigation of opportunities to improve the Trail through the development of new and/or alternative pathways particular in the mid section of the long distance trail – from near Poatina to Ouse. Preliminary desktop research supported by limited fieldwork indicates Bothwell could become a key feature in a redefined trail.

The Tasmanian Trail Association is complementing this project through its participation with the Kingborough and Huon Valley Councils in the development of a proposal for a Regional Trail from Hobart to Dover: the southern third of this trail would utilise the Tasmanian Trail pathway. This major new trail would consolidate existing tracks and trails into a linear facility closely linked to Tasmania's capital city.



A redefined Tasmanian Trail would offer walkers and mountain bike and horse riders with new opportunities, to be offered by the Trail and its links to alternative pathways, communities and their services and unique attractions.

Many more people in the future will gain access to trails closer to their communities – these tracks and trails will deliver recreation, tourism and transport benefits.

Further information is available from Peter Fehre, Hon. Executive Officer, Tasmanian Trail Association; Phone (03) 6229 9666, Mobile 0418 500 402, email Peter_fehre@yahoo.com.au or website www.tasmaniantrail.com.au

What's happening on Deal Island?

- a newsletter to FoDI Members

Life on Deal has been frantic with lots of things happening to bring change to the island (thanks to caretakers Janet and Glenn).

Life off Deal has been just as frantic with the committee members working just as hard at fund raising, grant chasing, calendar selling and promoting the needs of the island to anyone who would listen. Below is a list of the "happenings".

The dogged perseverance of Area Manager Extraordinaire Wayne Dick has brought about the signing of a contract to install a remote power plant on Deal.

This will consist of an array of solar panels, a bank of batteries and a back up generator to maintain charge in the batteries should the sun not meet ITS contract. This will be installed in the next few months and will provide 24-hour power.

A small, 4x4 Daihatsu utility truck from the secretive Lachlan Valley was airlifted to Deal from Flinders Island to replace the "yellow monster". Again Wayne performed the miracle and now caretakers can drive around in a dry,

warm vehicle with seat belts and a radio. Pure utopian conditions. This vehicle is also provided with a set of very strict instructions. The Noddy car did not slip from the sling and plummet into the ocean on the return trip as was the popular held belief.

A variation in the existing envirofund project grant has allowed the purchase of fencing material to improve the compound fence to assist in preventing wallaby access to the East Cove hillside.

A successful application with the 2008 Volunteer Grant Program will see the purchase of a pull behind Tow 'n' Mow slasher mower. This mower is a 16HP two-cylinder mower and will greatly enhance the caretaker mowing schedule.

The Deal Island calendar fundraising program has been a great success with a sell-out of this year's edition.

This shared project with Friends of Tasman Island will continue next year with the Goose and Swan Island lighthouses being represented. The magnificent "TEAM" must be congratulated for their efforts and a special thank you to Shirley and 40°



Friends of Deal Island

South who have already put together next year's calendar.

A working bee is being coordinated for April to repair the fencing, to replace the guttering on the fuel and paint stores and on the superintendent's house, to install the plaque on the aircraft crash site, to cut back the trees near the lighthouse and a dozen other tasks.

The volunteer list for this working bee is already oversubscribed but at least two bees per year are planned so watch for future listings.

The FoDI Annual General Meeting is also being planned sometime in the next three months so keep a watch for the notification.

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DAGs Complete Margate Track

Two weeks before Christmas and even while contractor Gary Witzerman and his team were digging, trenching, benching, pouring concrete and contemplating the next steps, the walkers were already coming through.

In early December 2008, Margate's Derwent Avenue Group (the DAGs) got final Kingborough Council approval for track and associated works to allow for the extension of the Dave Burrows Walk. See DAGs Receive Tas Community Fund Grant in Wildtimes 32, August 2008 for the background.

During November the final steps had been taken to allow the work. An Engineer's Report on the bridge/boardwalk construction had been provided to Council and a contractor had been through the site to make safe a number of dangerous, overhanging and hung-up trees.

So, despite high tides, strong wind, and a burst of heavy rain most of the track and boardwalk were completed by Christmas. With the last of the decking yet to be done, it became a minor challenge for walkers to negotiate the joists and bearers for some of the distance, but the walkers kept coming.



Kees and Chris Hendriksen from Schonenbuch, Switzerland on a leisurely stroll across the new boardwalk

In early January it was all done.

And the DAGs are now getting on with the rest of the list – getting signs up (Council are very kindly providing some, others will be made with TCF funds), starting a rehabilitation program for the bush that makes up this coastal reserve, discussing reserve and track use with Margate Primary School, seeking Nomenclature Board approval to naming the reserve following on from their agreement to name Tramway Creek and continuing with regular caretaking tasks in all parts of the reserve.

DAGs are making arrangements for an official opening of the extended

track – this is targeted for Saturday 2 May during the 2½ Days in Margate festival.

But the DAGs are not resting on "their" patch. Group Convenor Dinah Jones has been invited to join a Friends of Margate (FOM) delegation to meet with senior Council staff to discuss options for providing a walking track from the end of the Dave Burrows Walk through to the Dru Point Centennial Park.

The track is being well used already and this is extraordinarily pleasing. We even caught some international visitors on the track recently.

Gordon Bain

WILDCARE Gift Fund Donations

The following generous donations to the WILDCARE Gift Fund have been received since our last edition:

Donations of more than \$1,000

Globalmark

Donations of between \$100 and \$1,000

Phil Wyatt, Chris Arthur, Ingrid McGaughey (Rehabilitation Tasmania), The Pearce-Riddell family in memory of Maisie Mary Conley of Lilydale, Wayne Binns

Donations up to \$100

Helen Callaghan, Jacqueline Thomson, Dr Terry Whitebeach, Vladimir Lisitsin, JD Ostenfeld, Andrea Holmes, Sarah Barr, Eerin Marshall, Sophie Prosser, Andrew Smith



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Volunteering and getting the most out of your WILDCARE membership

Volunteering and Getting the Most out of your WILDCARE Membership

I have many requests from WILDCARE members wondering how to get more information about taking part in the huge range of volunteer opportunities offered by our groups and partner agencies such as the Parks and Wildlife Service (PWS) and Dept of Primary Industries and Water (DPIW)

In the past WILDCARE has used ordinary mail to advise members of volunteering opportunities (we called them 'call-ups') according to preferences listed on the back of their membership form. These days this practice has been largely discontinued because of the cost and the limited office time available to process call-ups

Instead, these days we are relying almost entirely on advice to members via the internet, either by advertising generally on the WILDCARE website www.wildcaretas.org.au, or by email to members.

To get timely advice of volunteering opportunities these days we therefore recommend that you firstly keep a

close eye on the Calendar of Events on the home page of our website. Click on the dark green link near the top of the home page. Note that some events on the calendar will be for members only and so you will need to log in to get details.

Some groups may choose not to advertise their working bee or event on the Calendar and instead circularise directly to their membership, or even a small part of their membership, depending on any special qualifications required.

So, to get these notices you need to ensure you are on these membership lists. Each WILDCARE group has a membership list maintained by the member data base. You can put yourself onto the list of any group, choose as many as you like, by firstly logging in as a member.

To do this:

- Click on the little box on the right hand side of the home page labelled Members Only Log In Click Here
- Enter your user name which is the email you supplied us with on joining

- Enter your password which is your current year membership number
- Click the LOGIN box
- Click on Manage Contact and Membership Details
- Scroll down to near the bottom Preferred Groups
- Control click on as many groups as you wish
- Click at the bottom Submit Membership Update

When the project managers for the groups are sending out notices to their group by email via the WILDCARE database you will now be automatically on their list!

Stand back and happy volunteering!

Craig Saunders

Quick and Easy Membership Renewal for 2009

All 2008 memberships expired on 31 December 2008.

You can renew your membership for 2009 now.

Simply complete the details below, including payment details and post to WILDCARE Inc c/- GPO Box 1751 Hobart 7001.

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Credit Card Number			
Credit Card Expiry Date			
Cardholders Name			
Cardholder Signature			
Cheque/Money order	Attached (Please make cheques payable to WILDCARE Inc)		

WILDCARE supports WILDSC'OOOL Trial

Some years ago WILDCARE Inc developed a partnership concept called WILDSC'OOOL that aimed to train volunteers to assist schools to provide environmental education in the classroom, to promote environmentally friendly school grounds and to undertake environmental volunteering at local reserves, national parks and Land for Wildlife properties.

Until recently funding for this project was not available but in September 2008 the Community Programs Section of Parks and Wildlife Service decided to "...develop and support a robust network of trained voluntary environmental educators to partner with schools to deliver in-class, in school ground and in-reserve environmental education focusing

on awareness, understanding and action." PWS proposed to adopt the name WILDSC'OOOL and base the program on the original WILDCARE WILDSC'OOOL concept.

Parks and Wildlife Service is now intending to trial the program in the Northwest in the 2009 school year, with a limited number of selected schools.

The intention, with support from the PWS Regional Volunteer Facilitators and Interpretation and Education Unit staff is to;

- provide environmental educator training for WILDCARE volunteers,
- develop suitable support materials
- form a regional WILDCARE group (WILDSC'OOOL Environmental

Educators – Northwest), and

- develop and support the partnership between schools, WILDCARE volunteers and PWS to provide environmental education and environmental action opportunities.

In support of this proposal the WILDCARE Board of Management at its December 2008 meeting provided a total of \$2,000 to support a trial program at 2 schools in the North West in 2009

Further Information on this exciting new program is available from PWS North West Regional Volunteer facilitator Stephen Mansfield at Stephen.Mansfield@parks.tas.gov.au
Craig Saunders

WILDCARE Deslacs: Caring for Clifton

Why we care ...

The Cape Deslacs Nature Reserve, Clifton Beach Conservation Area and Pipe Clay Lagoon Public Reserve are located between the shores of Fredrick Henry Bay and Pipe Clay Lagoon. These three reserves enclose a diverse range of coastal ecology approximately 22 km southeast of Hobart.

The Cape Deslacs Nature Reserve contains a rookery of short-tailed shearwater (*Puffinus tenuirostris*) that is closest and most easily accessible to Hobart, approximately 19,800 burrows. This is an important tourist attraction and educational site. A small rookery of Little Penguins (*Eudyptula minor*) is under threat and considered vulnerable. Cats are a major threat to penguin and shearwater colonies. Weed species that threaten the reserve as a wildlife refuge include *Pinus radiata*, *Pinus Macrocarpa*, pampas grass and Spanish Heath.

The popularity of the adjoining Clifton Beach Conservation Area poses threats from dogs, the introduction of weeds, dune erosion at access points, littering and vandalism. The extensive Clifton Beach dune field consists of primary, secondary and tertiary dunes adjacent to sea stacks and sea caves. The Cape Deslacs cliff top dune is a rare feature of state significance and the headland bypass dune on Cape Deslacs is considered rare in Tasmania and has only been described in one



Spectacular Cape Deslacs with (inset) WILDCARE Deslacs members and PWS Field Officer Mark Monks

other area.

The Pipe Clay Lagoon Public Reserve is a very significant refuge for migratory and wading birds that is surrounded by samphire flats. This area is under threat from soil degradation, feral oysters and samphire destruction by vehicles.

How we care...

WILDCARE Deslacs are a local group that started at the end of 2008. We aim to raise awareness and engagement with the community to build a resilient and adaptive coastline. We seek to involve the community in identifying environmental issues and implementing practical responses.

Our first working bee this year focused on the removal of pine trees in the Cape Deslacs Nature Reserve. We estimate that we removed at least

250 small trees at this time – but there is much more to do and we are going back on Sunday 5 April to reclaim more land for native species.

We are also working with the Pipe Clay Coastcare group, based in Cremorne, to look at initiatives that cover the whole of the bioregion that forms a catchment to Pipe Clay Lagoon.

Do you care?

Clifton Beach is an important place for the many Tasmanians who come to enjoy the beach and other natural features. We encourage visitors to join our group and help care for the place we all love so much. Just go to www.wildcaretas.org.au/pages/groups.php and click on the link to WILDCARE Deslacs. To find out more about our upcoming working bees telephone 6248 9346 or email im4jp@netspace.net

Elizabeth Shannon



Parks Staff I've Worked with...

(This is the first of several articles written by Bill Forsyth in his own inimitable style about Parks staff he's worked with over the years. As one who has worked with Bill on several trips I can only say that anyone who has met and worked with him is indeed very fortunate!! ...Editor)

I'm doing this in short bursts. Reason being, I'm not into at the moment writing articles on Microsoft Word and then cutting and pasting to email. Some things I have written at length previously and have lost due to running out of log-in time. So here goes!

It all started for me when I first went with friends walking the Overland years ago. There were a couple of places; I thought to myself, that I would like to spend some time there. They were Waterfall Valley and Windemere. Lo and behold, soon after I heard about the Track Warden Scheme. Promptly Joined WILDCARE and talked to Hank Schenkell, who was at that time, Senior Ranger at Cradle.

Hank originated from New Zealand. He had spent some time as a Hut Warden on tracks in NZ. He thought a similar scheme could be started in Tassie, and in particular on the Overland. He discussed this matter with Ranger Cathie Plowman. It got off the ground with WILDCARE assisting. As a matter of fact, that was how Hank met his future wife. She was walking in NZ with a friend. Met Hank and so it went on.

When I first went in as a Warden at Waterfall, Hank came in a couple of

days later to show me the ropes. There were Trackies working on the Barn Bluff track. I was expecting Hank to come down the track to Waterfall. Instead he arrived from the direction of the Old Waterfall Hut. He had seen the Trackies and dropped over the lip of the Cirque down into Waterfall. We shared a cup of coffee in the Hut, along with some small biscuits, like ginger nuts, sent to Hank by his mother in NZ. We talked about the program for a couple of hours and away he went back to Cradle. That was my initiation to the scheme.

Cathie Plowman came into the picture by arranging the roster for the program from people that she knew. Cathie was a very experienced Ranger and had worked in the SW on the South Coast Track. I remember she told me that she and another Ranger was walking the Track, came to the Lagoon, took one of the row boats for a row up the Lagoon towards Precipitous Bluff

(Bill continues in a second email to me some days latereditor)

I started to tell you about Cathie Plowman, but before I do, and there are lots to tell about Cathie. One wonders why a person with Cathie's experiences has been let go by PWS? More of this later.

Back at Waterfall in the early days of the Track Warden Program we didn't have Summer Rangers - only one. A female, can't remember her name.



Bill's Favourite Spot – Waterfall Valley Hut

But she processed the whole of the Overland from Narcissus to Windemere. Some times she would wander over to Waterfall to say good day. At other times, we would go to Windemere to clean up about once a week ,as well as over to Scott Kilvert.

Another extra we did in those days, was to bring in with us sterilized sample bottles. The purpose being to take water samples, three in all. A sample from the creek east of the Hut. Also a sample from the creek down by the Old Hut and finally from the main creek at the bottom of the valley. We would then walk these samples to Kitchen Hut, to be met by a ranger who would then take them out to be placed on the bus to the laboratory at Prospect. The results were never that hot. Hank had a theory that the water, anywhere in the Park would be OK up until we had heavy rains. All the gunk would then be washed into the creeks and so cause the harm to sensitive stomachs. We would do this periodically about twice a week sometimes.

Hank had another serious happening, along with Bob, when they were flying over and into Waterfall and the pilot misjudge when to bank out of the Valley. Consequently, the aircraft crashed up under the lip of the Cirque. No one was injured but Bob was shaken up. Parts of the aircraft remained over the years, and you could see it if you new where to look. At Hanks' farewell when he left to work in the Northern Territory he was given a piece of wood from the aircraft (dashboard, I think) as a memento.

Hank is now an Operations Manager for the Parks Service in NT, based at Kakadu, and the family lives in Darwin.

Now back to Cathie.

To be continued...

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WILDCARE volunteers' annual attack on weeds at Lake St Clair

Three WILDCARE volunteers who can't seem to get enough of weeding in Tasmania's remote areas spent four days on weed patrol at Lake St Clair in January.

Volunteers Erik Lindblad, Mike Bowden and Ian Haworth were back at Lake St Clair for their fourth summer weed blitz on roadsides and other weed hot spots.

Ranger Barry Batchelor described the volunteers as all 'retired gents' who have also participated in other remote weed programs such as Schouten Island and the West Coast weed program SPRATS (Spurge Remote Area Team).

The volunteers tackled weeds in a number of locations including:

- Orange hawkweed removed from roadsides near Mt Arrowsmith and Derwent Bridge.
- Foxglove and hypericum removed from roadsides near Mt Arrowsmith
- Montpelier broom removed from Pumphouse Point, and English broom from Derwent Bridge
- Spear thistle removed from St Clair Lagoon dam and Lyell Highway shoulders, especially near Shirley's Pool and Wombat Glen.
- Weeding of regrowth from helipad near Derwent Bridge



Volunteers Erik Lindblad, Mike Bowden and Ian Haworth with Alex Dudley at Lake St Clair

- Weeding of regrowth from around visitor centre and staff accommodation
- General cleaning up around Lake St Clair and roadsides in Cradle Mountain- Lake St Clair and Franklin-Gordon Wild Rivers National Parks.

Barry said that the control of orange hawkweed is a significant achievement as the weed has the potential to be quite invasive.

"If the weed spreads via Griffiths Creek and the Surprise and Franklin

Rivers, it could possibly threaten the World Heritage Area values and its detection and control would be much more difficult in these remote areas."

The Parks and Wildlife Service provided accommodation and a thank-you barbecue for the volunteers.

Liz Wren, PWS



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Our First WILDCARE Assignment

(Volunteers' Personal Account)

Our first assignment as volunteers with WILDCARE was to carry out the annual survey of walkers who have completed the Overland Track walk from Cradle Mountain to Narcissus Hut, Lake St Clair. The survey, completed for Parks and Wildlife was done over three days as a valuable tool to obtain the feelings of the walkers as to many aspects of the walk, environment and parks facilities.

As avid bush campers we went well prepared and took enough supplies for three weeks instead of three days, forgetting that we had to carry it all. However we arrived at Narcissus Hut on the ferry after being given help and advice by ranger Barry Batchelor and set ourselves up in the Rangers' Hut.

The most interesting thing about the whole survey, apart from the environment and peaceful existence, was talking to the many people who had completed the walk and the look on their faces when they laid eyes on Narcissus Hut. The positive stories and experiences told to us as well as written on the survey sheets did our hearts good.

The fact that we did not have one

complaint or refusal to do the survey told us that all walkers just wanted to tell someone "they did it" and enjoyed the experience more than anything they had ever done.

To see the families, one with a young fellow of seven years of age, come bounding in as if they had conquered Mt Everest as a family, was a revelation and a picture to behold as tired as they were, and the smiles were enormous, arms in the air and hugs all round.

In hindsight, we now wish that we had taken photographs of all walkers on arrival at Narcissus Hut but realised that it could be an intrusion at the end of a long walk, so we were just happy to talk to them and complete the survey forms.

At the end of the day over our sausages and beans shared with the flies big enough to carry the plate away, we enjoyed talking to some of the walkers who were staying overnight at the hut before walking back on the Lakeside Track to Echo



Brian Hard at work on the Narcissus Walker Survey

Point and said to ourselves on more than one occasion what fabulous stories there would be from walkers from all over the world.

Like all good things the survey came to an end and we can only thank the WILDCARE organisation and Parks and Wildlife whose rangers not only do a great job, especially the track rangers, but are great people to talk to. To all WILDCARE volunteers we have never met and the team who run it all, thanks heaps and keep up the good work.

Amanda McNeair and Brian Butler (WILDCARE Volunteers).

Editor's Addition:

It's great to read Brian and Amanda's account of their experiences as first time WILDCARE volunteers. The pages of this magazine are full of accounts of our many wonderful projects written by event organisers. All good stuff of course but it would be great to have more stories written by ordinary (are they ever really ordinary?) volunteers.

How did you find out about your program? How did you get selected to participate? How did you enjoy the experience? Will you be volunteering again soon?

As an incentive to future contributing we will in future offer a significant prize from our soon to be released WILDCARE merchandise pool to any ordinary volunteers who are published in the magazine. I look forward to receiving your contributions.



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WILDCARE Summer Programs

With this summer drawing to a close it's worth reporting on several very successful programs that WILDCARE has been part of this season and will more than likely be on again next year. If these programs appeal to you then make contact and an early application for next season:

Waterfall Valley Hut Warden Program

This program provides volunteers, usually two at a time, at Waterfall Valley Hut, the first overnight stop on the Cradle Mountain to Lake St Clair Overland Track. Volunteers meet and greet walkers as they arrive at the hut, and provide help with their gear and getting settled in to the hut. The program provides invaluable assistance to those many walkers who may be experiencing their first extended overnight walk. Volunteers usually spend 10-14 days at the hut, are accommodated in a small staff room in the hut and have much of their 'dry stores' carried in by helicopter at the start of the season.

Contact PWS Regional Volunteer Facilitator Stephen Mansfield at Stephen.Mansfield@parks.tas.gov.au for more information

Cockle Creek Campground Host Program

Now in its third year this program provides opportunities for volunteers, usually in pairs, to provide a visitor information service for a broad range of visitors to this site at the southern end of the road and entrance to the Southwest National Park. Volunteers are accommodated in the comfortable PWS Staff Quarters and spend the day both in the office and around the campsites helping visitors with those hundreds of small enquiries that help make their stay pleasant.

Contact PWS Regional Volunteer Facilitator Pip Gowen at Pip.Gowen@parks.tas.gov.au for more information

Orange Bellied Parrot Recovery Program

This program provides opportunities for volunteers at two sites: Melaleuca in the Southwest National Park and Birchs Inlet in the Franklin Gordon Wild Rivers National Park. At each site volunteers monitor activities (nesting, feeding, migrations) of the rare Orange Bellied Parrot and report to scientists with DPIW conducting the Recovery Program. Volunteers usually work in pairs and spend 14 days at each site.

Contact Shane Pinner on Shane.Pinner@tafe.tas.edu.au (Melaleuca) or

Bevis Dutton on Bevis.Dutton@ses.tas.gov.au (Birchs Inlet) for more information.

Schouten Island Caretaker Program

Volunteers, again in pairs, provide a visitor information service for visitors to this island at the southern end of Freycinet National Park. Accommodation is camping with all equipment provided by Parks and Wildlife. Transport is provided in the PWS workboat and volunteers normally stay for 14 days. A great place to spend 2 weeks if you like the sea, sand and sun of Tasmania's east coast in summer.

Contact PWS Volunteer Facilitator Caroline Shemwell at Caroline.Shemwell@parks.tas.gov.au for more information.

Narcissus Walker Survey

This shorter term program (3-4 days) provides volunteers at the last overnight



Cockle Creek Campground Host Barbara Gasparovic shows German visitor Karoline Kremme the best spots


stop on the Cradle Mt – Lake St Clair Overland Track to interview walkers on their experiences of the track. Invaluable information is passed on to the track managers to assist with their decisions in managing this jewel among Tasmania's wilderness assets. Accommodation is provided by PWS in the Rangers Hut close to the public walkers' hut at on the Narcissus River at the northern end of Lake St Clair.

Contact Ben Clark, PWS Visitor Research Officer at Ben.Clark@parks.tas.gov.au for more information.

Craig Saunders


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WILDCARE Contributes to Cave Safety

Since 2000 Southern Karstcare has been involved in upgrading cave abseil anchors, to improve safety and reduce environmental impacts in Tasmanian caves. To achieve these safety and conservation goals a system for replacing the informal system of bolt placement at pitch-heads with long life stainless steel glue in bolts was devised. [Tasmanian caves are often vertical in nature, requiring the negotiation of vertical drops (pitches) on ropes, which are often secured to steel anchors (bolts)] This was an important step for cave conservation, as it prevented the often unnecessary placement of excessive and short life bolts, which were slowly cluttering the pitch-heads of Tasmanian caves. Over the ensuing six to seven years more than 100 long life bolts were installed in eleven caves. Bolts, glue and installation equipment were purchased with WILDCARE funds and installations were completed by Southern Karstcare volunteers.

Midnight Hole (Mystery Creek Cave, Ida Bay), a popular 'through-trip' cave (in one entrance, out another) consisting of a series of six abseils totalling ~160 m, was the first cave bolted under the project. Two bolts were installed at each of the six pitch-heads in August 2000. In 2005 one of the two bolts



Testing a Newly Installed Bolt at Midnight Hole

on the final 50 m pitch was reported to be 'wobbly'. An inspection showed that this wobbly bolt still passed the standard 5 kN for 5 minutes despite its wobbliness (the bolt is subjected to a force, in tension, of 5 kN for 5 minutes before it can be deemed safe for use). Despite this the degree of movement was considered abnormal and the bolt was condemned, removed and two new bolts were installed to replace it.

In late 2007 there was a case of *déjà vu*. A Police training trip to Midnight Hole reported that the two 'new' bolts had also started to wobble. Again, the bolts were tested (5 kN/5 minutes) and both passed. The cave was closed to the public while cavers and bureaucrats alike scratched their heads and theorised on why,

of the 100+ we'd installed, was it only the ones on this particular pitch that were causing problems. Rolan Eberhard (Land Conservation Branch, DPIW), called in the resident expert, Parks senior engineer, Tim Chappell. Tim visited the cave and a report eventuated indicating that while the exact cause was unclear, it was reasonable to suggest that stainless steel chain and ring assemblies should be fitted at each pitch head to remove any suspected 'torsional' forces that may be being placed on the bolts as a result of the standard method used by cavers to rig the pitches (so that double ropes can be retrieved following descent). The chain and rings would ensure that both bolts would be loaded equally and in the correct direction at all times. An application to WILDCARE to secure funding was submitted and was successful. The ring assemblies were fitted in October 2008, along with the removal and replacement of the two suspect bolts on the final pitch. The performance of the new system is being closely monitored by Southern Karstcare. We live in hope and expectation that we have solved the mystery problem ... third time lucky.

Alan Jackson

WILDCARE Caring for Our Country

Last year (Edition 32, August 2008) we reported on the end of long established Australian Government community grant program Envirofund, and its replacement with the new Caring For Our Country Program.

We can now report that in the first round of grants offered under this program as Caring For Our Country Community Coastcare, WILDCARE had fantastic success, with 6 out of 6 applications successful to receive a total funding of \$130,739.69 (plus GST).

While several of the groups are still negotiating the final level of funding it seems that WILDCARE will be able to commence and/or continue 6 big projects over the next 18 months or so. These projects will include:

Friends of Maatsuyker Island (\$11,791.82) Funding will be used to pay for essential follow up work in the hugely successful environmental weed eradication and restoration of seabird habitat projects ongoing on the island since 2004.

Spurge Remote Area Teams (SPRATS) (\$22,818.18) SPRATS will continue work in controlling beach weeds (sea spurge and marram grass) along Tassie's wilderness coast from Strahan to Cockle Creek. Teams have recently completed a second successful summer of this work.

Friends of Maria Island (\$33,441.82) This project, titled 'Sweeping the Broom' will continue primary control of approximately 60ha of canary broom at the northern end of the Maria Island National Park and conduct monitoring and treatment follow up.

Friends of Marks Point (\$9,273.32) This recently formed group, on North Bruny Island, will work to maintain the natural values of the Marks Point Reserve through providing information to local residents and other visitors to the Marks Point Reserve about the impact of *Phytophthora cinnamomi* (root fungus) on the grass trees and other species on the Point.

Friends of Coningham NRA

(\$32,063.64) This project will rehabilitate coastal woodlands and forests by removing the invasive declared weed *Erica lusitanica* from 84.2 hectares of the Coningham Nature Recreation Area (CNRA). This group has had great successes with this project since formation in 2003.

Friends of Millingtons Beach (\$21,350.91) This new group's overall plan for the Penguin Point and Willyama Beach area (south of Orford) is to upgrade four existing stairways, install one new stairway and two viewing platforms, with all car parks, approaches and pathways strategically linking together.

If you wanted to get involved in any of these projects WILDCARE members can:

- Keep an eye on our events calendar for volunteer call-ups,
- Join the group by nominating it on your members' details page, or
- Contact the group directly via their website contact.

Craig Saunders



Thank you!

WILDCARE Inc wishes to thank the following sponsors for their continuing support, especially...

- Parks and Wildlife Service for providing office space and support for the WILDCARE Office,
- Staff of Parks and Wildlife Service and the Resource Management & Conservation Division (DPIW), local councils and others who work alongside and support our volunteer members.
- The WILDCARE Board of Management, WILDCARE Office volunteers and Group Presidents who all contribute to keeping WILDCARE Inc active, exciting, productive and worthwhile.
- Our members, extraordinary people doing extraordinary things to benefit Tasmania's natural and cultural environment.

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Volunteers Having a Great Time

Future issues of Wildtimes will have a new full colour look, at least for the front and back covers. As an incentive to members to provide good quality images for publication we offer a full years membership to the member who submits the photo(s) judged (by me of course ... editor) as most suitable for publishing in colour.

This photo shows a weed control working bee on the balcony of the Maatsuyker Island light tower in November 2008 and was taken by volunteer caretaker Susie Jackson. When published in colour this is typical of the images we would like for our new front and back covers. Well done Susie, we'll be in touch to arrange free membership for 2009 or 2010.

Photos should be submitted in JPEG format by email to editor@wildcaretas.org.au

Editor (Craig Saunders)



Continued Heath Clearing on South Maria

Nine volunteers escaped the pre-Christmas hype to continue clearing Spanish heath (*Erica lusitanica*) from Haunted Bay on southern Maria Island. The remote infestation has now been cleared of the weed, with only follow-up and further searching required.

Most of the Friends of Maria Island team were deployed by boat, with food and water, camping equipment, weeding tools – and, thankfully, wet weather gear.

The five-day trip followed a working bee held in September, during which over half the two hectare infestation was treated.

Convenor of the Friends of Maria Island Anne Booth said it was marvellous to complete all primary control and to do follow up work on the area treated in September.

"We also did a thorough search of 50 metres beyond the known boundary of the infestation, and found a lot more plants," Anne said.

Among the volunteers were Penny and Bob Tyson who visited the site approximately 20 years ago not long

after its discovery. The Tysons also found a new pocket of erica near Middle Hill while exploring on the last afternoon. This patch was treated and will be monitored.

Dave Harris participated in both the September and December working bees.

"It's marvellous progressing a project. My wife and I do a lot of work on erica at Conningham and in Wellington Park but you never really finish the job," Dave said.



Bob Tyson clearing Heath on South Maria Island

The PWS South-East Weed District Weed Management Plan 2000-2003 notes that Maria Island has arguably one of the most serious forest weed problems of all reserves in the state. Broom and erica are serious threats to otherwise undisturbed native forest, much of which is critical habitat for threatened species.

Working bee coordinator and Maria Island ranger Margie Jenkin said that follow-up and monitoring would be on-going to ensure the erica infestation is kept in hand and ultimately eradicated.

The cause of the infestation is unknown, though it may have originated from seed blown up the valley from garden exotics at Robeys Farm.

The Tasmania Parks and Wildlife Service thanks Friends of Maria Island participants Anne and Peter Booth, Trauti and David Reynolds, Christine and David Harris, Bob and Penny Tyson, Vicki Campbell and NRM for supporting.

Liz Wren, PWS