



Wildcare

Tasmania



WILDTIMES 2020
EDITION 63



the **Wildcare** way

- Volunteers driving results
- Collaborative partnerships
- Lean overheads
- Donations making a difference



FOREWARD

Wildcare Tasmania is a powerhouse team of volunteers and donors supporting the care of Tasmania's wild places, wildlife and cultural heritage. With around 6,000 members and 60 volunteering groups, Wildcare helps people come together to take responsibility for the care of a special place or a special native species, in Tasmania.

Wildcare also manages a special fund to which tax deductible donations may be made. Wildcare welcomes donations from people and businesses all around the world.

Any person may join Wildcare as a member. Wildcare groups work with land managers around Tasmania, including on remote wild islands on multi-day excursions. Alternatively, many Wildcare members choose to support in spirit and enjoy reading the stories from around Tasmania. Each Wildcare group is a 'branch' of the Wildcare 'tree'.

What follows are stories from our Wildcare community collated during 2020.

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Wildcare Tas. acknowledges the Tasmanian Aboriginal Community as the traditional custodians of the places in which we live, work and play. We recognise and respect the enduring relationship they have with their lands and waters, and we pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

Wildcare collects donations for the care and monitoring of the endangered orange-bellied parrot.



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COMMUNITY GROUPS MORE RELEVANT THAN EVER

by Sharon Smith, Wildcare CEO

During this pandemic response, the gestures of kindness and concern that we are seeing are inspiring, as they show the best of what humans are capable of when we stop to think about others. My hope is that globally we begin to notice and better understand our connection with all living species, big and small, with whom we share this planet.

This virus has shown us that as a species, we are capable of adapting to very rapid change globally. Technology is being used in ever more creative ways. We are seeing more people getting back to things such as growing food and in so doing creating more habitat for bees, small birds and other insects - whether that be in an apartment with a pot or pond on the balcony, or on a large property.

I have always felt that there is a gap in media reporting about our world - there is regular coverage of health, economy, education and government policy but no daily commentary by experts on our screens about the big picture of our planetary health or local natural environment.



When we do get back to starting to recover to 'normal' lives, I hope that we don't miss learnings on an environmental front – by taking notice of the impact our short term changes in lifestyles have had on emissions and resource usage. Some of these changes can be sustained after businesses reopen and we meet up again.

Community is so important – in joining with others for a common purpose. I believe that Wildcare community groups will be more relevant than ever in the future. Tasmania's special places and species will need support and people will need to heal. Studies have shown that people thrive when they are part of a team doing something worthwhile and they thrive when they immerse themselves in nature.

My hope is that some people who previously didn't have time to get involved in caring for wild-places or wildlife may find ways to create space for this in the future. Wildcare enables young people to contribute directly to the world they would like to inherit.

To the already committed volunteers who are itching to get back out there, there is an opportunity now to browse the rich array of groups available through the 'Branches' tab on the Wildcare website and to sign up to new networks.

Within the Wildcare community there is so much knowledge and passion to share! I hope you enjoy this collection of wildcaring stories on the year just past, plans for the future and reflections on the natural world around us.

FRIENDS OF MT FIELD

By Adrian Blackman and photos by Peter Franklin unless otherwise stated, (Secretary and President respectively of the Friends of Mount Field)

The Friends of Mount Field are pleased to announce the completion of their most recent and most ambitious project—upgrading the K Col track between K Col and The Watcher in Mount Field National Park.

The construction of a top quality boardwalk now allows walkers to traverse this fragile and valuable place in comfort while no longer causing environmental damage.

The project, which took four years from conception to completion, was largely funded by the Tasmanian Community Fund. Several additional contributors are listed at the end of this article. Major expenditure included purchase of timber and other materials, cost of helicopter transportation, and employment of professional track makers. Interesting statistics include:

- A total of 38 helicopter flights were made (23 conveying personnel and over 29.9 tonnes of material to the work site and 15 flights removing equipment, personnel and rubbish from the work site).
- Contractors did 474 hours of work, PWS staff 169 hours and volunteers 479 hours.
- 298 planks each 6 metres long, 700 metres of wire netting and 70 litres of stain were used.



Pool and Florentine Peak

Mount Field National Park is Tasmania's 3rd most visited national park and attracts almost 200,000 visitors annually. For many walkers the most scenic and attractive part of the park is the Tarn Shelf with its many small glacial lakes and alpine vegetation, some rare or endemic. *Fagus* (*Nothofagus gunnii*), Tasmania's only native deciduous tree, occurs in the area and entices numerous viewers during autumn.

There are two Tarn Shelf circuit walks—the longer one involves traversing the Rodway Range via the K Col track. In recent years with increasing use, part of this track between K Col and The Watcher (a mountain) had become significantly degraded with serious damage to plants and soil. Erosion by water (rain and snow-fall) had exacerbated the problem. Walkers made the destruction even worse by widening the track in their attempts to avoid water and mud. The length of this part of the track is 1.7 km and about half of it was in poor condition; these damaged sections were spread out over various locations along the way.

The volunteer group Friends of Mount Field (FOME), in association with the Parks and Wildlife Service (PWS) decided to rectify this problem. Planning commenced in 2017 and it was determined that the best solution was to construct sections of wooden boardwalk from treated pine over the seriously damaged parts of the existing track.

Site before planking showing damage



Site after timber added



A substantial grant from the Tasmanian Community Fund was obtained in December 2018. Field work commenced in December 2019 when two days were spent at the Osterley sawmill staining boardwalk timber (to lessen its visual impact). Packs of timber and other material were trucked to Wombat Moor in readiness for delivery to the work site by helicopter.

Boardwalk construction occurred over several sessions. After delays due to poor weather, January 17th was declared "helicopter delivery day". The four-person track construction team (led by John "Snapper" Hughes), two FOMF volunteers and a PWS member were taken to K Col together with 19 packs of timber, equipment including tools, a small generator and a toilet, and personal supplies plus food. The timber packs were placed at pre-planned locations along the construction site to minimise carrying by hand.

Construction of the planking commenced at midday on that first day. For the first five days two FOMF volunteers helped and another came (on foot) for one day. The track construction team was first rate both with the build quality and dedication to the task. They worked in all weathers, even when rain curtailed the use of battery powered tools and they maintained long hours from 7:30 in the morning to 5:30 in the afternoon. But it was when they came upon small sections of track not earmarked for action that they shone by suggesting that they would go and carry timber to the new spots for planking to save the area from being further damaged.



Cushion plant in flower



Giving planks the second coat at Osterley



Directing timber delivery



Installing planks Photo from John Hughes



Installing planks

PWS also had a couple of very willing and strong staff who walked there and back - between them they worked for three days on the project. For this the first (and main session) the professional track makers continued working for 12 days. Due to poor weather, their planned retrieval by helicopter was not possible and they had to walk out. A delayed helicopter trip was made two weeks later despite the threat of low cloud cover. The flight delivered more timber to the site and retrieved waste from construction and equipment.

Stage two of the boardwalk construction took place on 6th February (aided by helicopter transportation). The project was eventually completed in late March after several further day visits, again by a mix of paid and volunteer personnel (no helicopter, so old-fashioned walking was needed). During these trips the final small part of the boardwalk was constructed and more wire netting was stapled to the boards to prevent walkers slipping.

The result of all of this activity is that damaged parts of the K Col track are now protected by excellent, professionally made all-weather boardwalk sections having a total length 870 metres. Damaged track sections will slowly recover and a photo record will be kept of the ongoing rehabilitation.



Photo taken by John 'Snapper' Hughes at Mount Field National Park

This project has an overall value of \$87,587 (excluding GST) and consists of actual grant money together with additional in-kind support by PWS and FOMF personnel, donations etc. Included in this is \$14,394 generated from the 480 hours of work contributed by FOMF volunteers (worth \$30 per hour). In addition PWS staff, sometimes working alongside the contractors, contributed 169 hours to logistical and on-ground support with an estimated value of \$11,830.

PWS also made a financial donation. Friends of Mount Field gratefully acknowledge major financial support from the Tasmanian Community Fund. Vital contributions were also obtained from (listed alphabetically) the Australian Plants Society, Hobart Walking Club, Gregory Kidd, Pandani Bushwalking Club, Parks and Wildlife Service, Phyl and Bob Wyatt and Wildcare Tasmania Inc. We also thank the contractors (especially Snapper Hughes), Helicopter Resources and Timber Growers Direct.

The project would not have been possible without contributions from FOMF volunteers, two of whom are worth special mention—Peter Franklin and Greg Kidd. Peter, President of FOMF, was the instigator and devoted considerable time managing many aspects of the project together with PWS. Both Peter and Greg spent multiple days (and nights) at the worksite helping with construction—sometimes under unfavourable weather conditions.

For more details and photos on the project go to the [FOMF webpage](#)

From K Col looking to Lakes Belcher and Belton with Tyenna Peak



WILDCARE COASTAL CUSTODIANS

Selena de Carvalho describes herself as 'artist•designer•maker•risktaker'. She is also a Wildcare volunteer who, whilst the world was beginning to respond to COVID-19, spent March autumn days on the South West Marine Debris Clean Up scouring the coastline of lutruwita (Tasmania) alongside other Coastal Custodians removing rubbish from the beaches, bays and inlets - none the wiser. Below are excerpts from an article she wrote, reflecting on the experience. Photos are by Selena de Carvalho unless otherwise stated. You can see the full article [here](#).

When you cross a border nothing changes, because you're still in the same territory, and everything changes because you are in a whole other cosmology and economy.-39 Steps across the Border and Back, Rebecca Solnit (2005).

.....

Nestled in the stunning rocky enclave of a white sand beach, I nibble fresh seaweed pearls, none here but us, the privilege of setting foot on this remote coast sinking in between my soft, town shod toes. Crawling in the elbow crease of beach and dunes, looking for shards of modernity, waist deep in the visceral quality of remote isolation. Along the edge of an inlet I collect tiny plastic fragments the scale of native cherries. I carefully peel tender plastic bags on the brink of collapse, from shallow graves, tease out fragile, submerged, sand filled membranes. Proof of the far reaching industrial tendrils, these distant West Coast shorelines of lutruwita (Tasmania) are sprinkled with chips of smooth tumble worn plastic, the vibrant colour turquoise screaming foreign entity.

.....

I sense myself reluctantly, authentically slowing down. Arriving. When are we truly present? How slow do I have to be to develop this rubbish mindset?

.....

The smell of decaying kelp hits my nostrils, held in this tight gulch of a corner, decomposition is in full swing. Winding through iodine rich mounds, a small tannin stained creek cuts a trail. Plastic mingles with the rot.

Acclimating to the sensorial overwhelm, each spot is sprinkled in plastic 100's and 1000's, I pick away... shuffling ever so slightly when the debris supply has been exhausted.

.....

Nanoplastics can cross both cellular membranes and the blood-brain barrier. Lubofsky, Evan. Particles on the Move Studying the spread of nanoplastics inside fish (Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution) March 7, 2019. Source:<https://www.whoi.edu/oceanus/feature/particles-on-the-move/>

.....

Plastics are chemical combinations that didn't evolve alongside the detritus of life, their human engineered composition resists deterioration, such that microbial-scavengers of decay have to play catch up. Some time between 2010-15 a tiny organism known as *Ideonella sakaiensis* evolved in Sakai, Japan, and figured out how to breakdown and use plastic for energy. This rare, new form of life grew out of the glut, a mutant borne of the toxic soil surrounding a recycling plant, this new babe of a microbe, surely cannot proliferate to digest our overabundance?



Gondwana Tooth



Diving like seagulls we count the rubbish on deck, scrounging for the remnants of a humanity that has forgotten its ecological interdependence. Unhooked from the news, the shows, the updates, the discovery of a nurdle becomes tabloid. Bags of rope, lurid fluro containers, shards of glass, tokens of plastic, netting, fragments of polystyrene, everything reeks of overwhelming futility, and yet, simultaneously feels purposeful.

How do we care for places, not just technically?

Together, apart, heads craned forward, our slow moving zombie-esk gang looks to the ground, scrutinising this apparently pristine place, the rubbish of millions on the shores of few. Two beaches separated by a headland, a conglomerate of pink rose quartz that fades into cream, a lake behind the dunes, a seam of garnets, petrol shiny middens[i] of snail shells, crags of abalone, a seal skull, spiral twisted bonsai climb the dunes. Only the most elegant of traces remain. Stone tools set in place, seemingly with the confidence of an imminent return. Time stands still.

[i] A 'midden' is an occupation site where Aboriginal people left the remains of their meals. At some sites substantial deposits grew over generations of use of the same area. Source:

<https://www.creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/land/guide-to-aboriginal-sites-and-places>

Micro-plastic and Rose Quartz Conglomerate



Is country laughing at me, in my plastic shoes, and plastic rain-jacket, my fancy phone and plastic bag in hand, examining the sand for hours, picking up pieces of plastic the size of my fingernail? Plastic promiscuously cruising the globe, transporting toxic bacteria surfing international tides, bacteria that are capable of causing coral bleaching, and triggering wound infections in humans. Hyperobjects vastly distributed through time and space, riding the currents of large ocean gyres, no regard for political boundaries... another transnational movement like migratory birds, drifting pollutants, changing weather and pandemics, so widespread in their reach and web of affect.

.....

This changing place is full of ghosts, of histories, country that I will forever be a visitor. The profound sensation of remoteness and isolation is intrinsically linked to colonisation, to the trauma of Aboriginal people. I feel the debt that other bodies have paid for me to walk this line. I want to re-arrange time.

We get pulled into several dry creek beds as clusters of sticky smeg collect in the cul-de-sac of tributaries. Someone pulls a rats tail of rope resting on the surface, the sands birth a sleazy orgy of metal cable, faded ropes of all colours and textures knotted together, pieces of steel railing, a giant caterpillar cocoon post-industrial dread lock.

.....

The uncomfortable presence of absence, a gaping hole in the sand that will be smooth after the next high tide, washed away with our footsteps.

.....

The web of the internet catches us before we reach land.



News on repeat, cruise ships reeling with COVID19, a different regime, new rules and governance, we play catch up after having dropped out of what felt like a significant moment in the unfurling of this tragic time.



FRIENDS OF THE PENGUIN CRADLE TRAIL

by Greig Clarke, President

We are a group of volunteers who maintain and improve the Penguin Cradle Trail in the North West of Tasmania.

The Trail is a diverse walking track from the township of Penguin on the north coast to the iconic Cradle Mountain. We operate cooperatively with the Parks and Wildlife Service, Resource Management and Conservation Division of DPIPWE, private landholders and the Department of Environment as well as recreational groups such as the North West Walking Club.

When the Wildcare team suggested the 20 stories for 2020 concept, I thought what a great idea, but as we are locked down at present due to Covid 19, it would be a very short article as to what we have achieved based upon our planned work schedule. Sure, we have obtained permission to put in a new section of track near Gunns Plains and have spent several days clearing the access road to the track head for our working bee crews. We have applied for grants so that we can employ skilled contractors to work on the Leven Canyon section of the Trail. We have commenced installing signage along the Trail in preparation for the next revision of the PCT booklet and map set. For now however, the completion of these goals is sometime in the future.



So this is a good time to reflect and dream of heading back to the bush again. The following are some images of the PCT and past working bees. There are three themes here, one is the scenery, then a good day's work in a wonderful environment and the other is something that isn't always recognised ... I'll leave you to figure it out.

When the time comes to head out again there will be a need to ground ourselves and volunteering is a good place to start look forward to seeing you on our working bees.



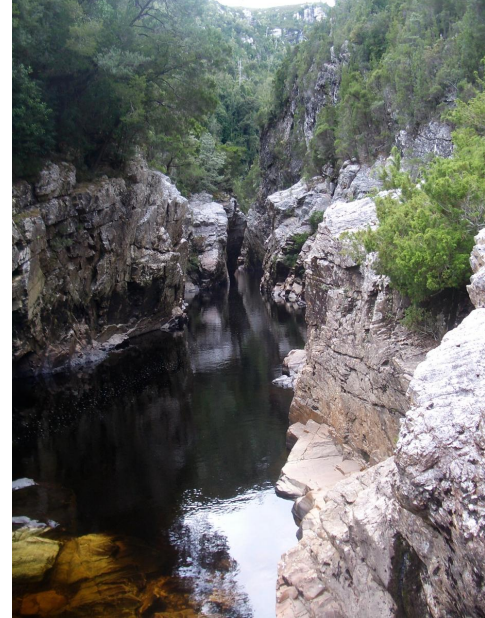
FRIENDS OF THE FRANKLIN RIVER

by David Clarke, President

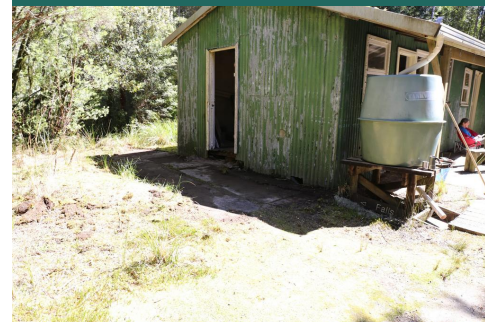
Friends of the Franklin River Branch members had a great time working on the old Hydro Hut at Sir John Falls on the Lower Gordon River between December 2019 and early March 2020. The aim of restoring this old hut is to provide an appealing place for the rafters to stay at the end of their Franklin trip, instead of camping in the sensitive area closer to the waterfall.

The hut was in desperate need of care and attention and over the summer has been completely restumped, with a brand new hardwood floor now in place. The tin sheeting and internal Masonite lining have been repaired, replaced and are being repainted. The hut's timber windows have been repaired or replaced with new ones as needed and two new skylights have been installed bringing in much needed natural light.

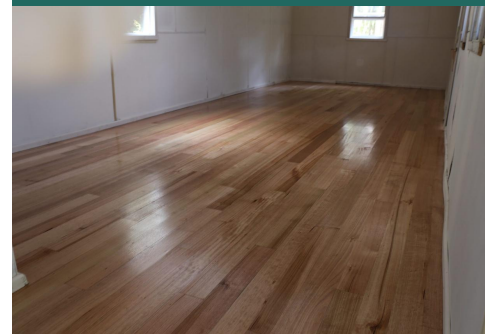
While there, Friends of the Franklin River branch members also removed redundant infrastructure (poly pipes), undertook weed removal (Foxgloves), and generally cleaned up the area after many decades of use by Hydro, Police, PWS and the public. Volunteers also improved the user-friendliness of the site by enhancing hut drainage, tidying up level areas for camping and outside use, and enhanced walker safety between the hut, jetty and waterfall, following a recent landslip.



Arenabyss Passage



Old hut. Photo by David Clarke



New Floor. Photo by David Clarke



New Paint. Photo by David Clarke



Removing polypipe removal.
Photo by Sally Simco



Friends of the Franklin Landslip repair



Branch members also engaged with Franklin River commercial users to encourage them towards use of the hardened hut site in preference to camping at the sensitive area nearer the jetty (their pick-up point).

Members worked alongside volunteers from the Mountain Huts Preservation Society (MHPS) to achieve the level of work accomplished. The materials for the project were funded by the PWS, Wildcare provided a small grant, and other community contributors include the West Coast Yacht Charters and Hydro.

Peter Rigozzi, PWS Heritage Officer, oversaw the SJF hut project and provided the budget for material purchases. He is very appreciative of all the volunteer efforts to achieve as much as we did over the 2019-2020 summer - early autumn period including over 800 volunteer hours of work. There is still an amount of finishing off to do, but a completed hut project by the end of the year is a realistic ambition - subject to Covid-19 implications of course.

The successful relationship between Wildcare, the Mountain Huts Preservation Society and the PWS has enabled great progress towards a much improved level of amenity and safety in this remote and beautiful spot and, when needed, a dry place for rafters to spend their final night on the river.

Friends of the Franklin



A VOLUNTEER'S PERSPECTIVE

by Hunter Birch, Volunteer

Hunter Birch is a Wilderness Ranger at Zion National Park, Utah. During a recent 6 month stay in Tasmania, he discovered Wildcare and participated in 2 working bees with Friends of the Franklin River and Friends of Melaleuca. After safely returning to work in the U.S. – amidst dealing with crowds and search and rescues during the pandemic, he found time to share his reflections on the time he spent in Tasmania. Here they are.

I travelled to Tasmania because of its vast wilderness and natural beauty. I spent a month or so when I initially got there just backpacking and climbing. However, as a ranger, I know the impacts that I have recreating in places, even if I'm recreating responsibly, and quickly started to feel like a sponge on Tasmania. I was using and enjoying the natural beauty of the island without giving anything back.

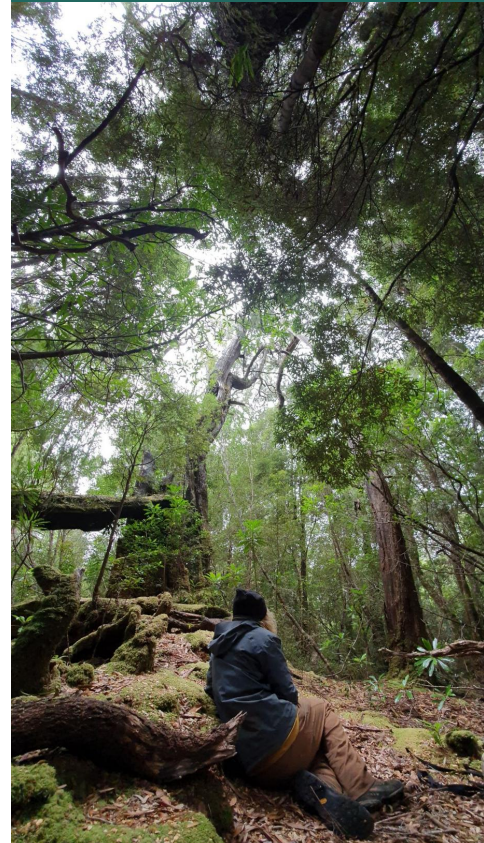
I initially applied for formal volunteer-ships with the park service but my situation with being a traveller who would have to leave come winter, didn't really allow for that. However, I had heard about Wildcare at different visitors' centres and project sites, so I talked to the rangers at Maria Island about it. They told me how easy it was to join, and so as soon as I was back in service I became a member. I looked through the projects and applied for as many as I could. If I had spent the rest of my time there volunteering, I would have been totally fine with that.



Hunter in Zion National Park, Utah



Hunter Birch and Julie Gale, photo by Sally Simco



Hunter at Lea Tree. Photo by Sally Simco



Hunter track building in landslide area, Gordon River. Photo by Sally Simco

I was lucky enough to volunteer with the working bee restoring the Sir John Falls Hut on the Gordon River under David Clarke. I had read about how this area became protected and had even met several people that were integral in that happening. I was very excited to contribute to the interpretation of that history and help other people enjoy that area through this restoration project. This working bee was a group of amazing people who all care very deeply about the wilderness of Tasmania. They were very understanding of my shortcomings and inexperience when it came to construction skills and were excellent mentors when it came to teaching me new things. I couldn't have asked for better company while spending a week on the river.

Perhaps the most memorable part of this working bee for me was that I was able to go on a couple of paddles with David and have conversations with him about that incredible place. Talking with him I saw a passion and reverence towards that area that went beyond almost any of the rangers I've worked with or met. Not only did he care so much about it, but he was able to communicate that to me and make me care about it very much. I would say most of our paddling was in silence, but what was said was important, and the rest of the time was spent in reverent awe of the natural beauty surrounding us.

If the Gordon River was the only working bee I was able to participate in, I would've been more than grateful. But through a series of events that led me to crew on Ian Johnston's boat, I was able to join the working bee with Friends of Melaleuca. Again, this was an amazing group of people that were incredibly welcoming and great mentors.

I was constantly grateful that I was able to spend a week in a place that I had read so much about and help with the restoration of it. I had a chance to work closely with almost everyone in the crew, and consistently heard amazing stories about their lives and what Melaleuca means to them. Even though I was a foreigner in this place, they all made me feel like I had a brief home with them.

I'm still in disbelief that I was fortunate enough to spend that much time there and I want to return as soon as possible. When thinking about how to describe my time in both areas, a lot of what I felt can't even be put into words. Moments like a sunrise over the Melaleuca Range or a still fog rolling over the Gordon River are so unique and breathtaking that there is nothing to even compare them to. Those moments are when it's so clear that these places, along with the plants and animals that call it home deserve to be protected just for their inherent nature.

It also brings to mind that beautiful places like that have been destroyed or developed. That's why Wildcare and organisations like it are so important to me. I'm beyond grateful that I was able to help with their projects and hope it will help interpret to future visitors why these areas are so important and inspire them to help further their preservation. I already miss the island and everyone there so much. I'll be back soon!

Hunter at Sir John falls beach. Photo by Sally Simco



FRIENDS OF MELALEUCA

By volunteer Pip Jones with photos by Andy Johnson.

As the world began to change and news of an escalating coronavirus crisis began to reach Australian shores, 17 volunteers were selected for their superior intelligence, wit and fish-oiling skills to bunker down in the remote southwestern tip of Tasmania's Wilderness World Heritage Area – not for the preservation of the human race, just for the 2020 Friends of Melaleuca Working Bee.

Between 11 and 18 March, this group of assorted volunteers, boaties and rangers gathered in Melaleuca, a world away from phone reception, 24-hour news cycles and foot-tap greetings, and undertook one of the biggest working bees to date. "Those who drink the buttongrass water always come back," so goes one of Deny King's favourite sayings, and this proved true for the 2020 volunteer group. Comprised of old hands and eight new recruits, the volunteers were excited to return to Melaleuca and contribute to caring for this special place. If they were seeking isolation, however, they were mistaken – Melaleuca was a hive of activity with bushwalkers, day visitors, yachties, Orange-Bellied Parrot monitoring volunteers and Parks and Wildlife volunteer caretakers.



Mel and Di oiling First Camp



David sharpening his slash-hook



Janet and Geoff set the agenda for the week, and on top of the routine brushcutting, fish-oiling, drain-digging and weeding jobs, there were a few projects to get stuck into at the Deny King Heritage Museum, the Bushwalkers Huts, Clayton's Corner, the Red Shed and the King's house. The weather had other plans, however, and made 38mm of rain the top priority for Day 2. This allowed plenty of time for planning, discussion and cuppas at the King's and plenty of water for David's drain hydrology investigations at Barbara Willson's house. The next day, with an eagle eye on the weather, expert roofing team Archie, Geoff and David got to work trialling roof replacement at the King's. Barbara generously accommodated the whole team at her house for dinners thereafter – at one stage hosting 25 visitors!

The Deny King Heritage Museum got plenty of attention this year, from both visitors and volunteers. Mel, Melissa, Hunter and Ian put in the hard yards installing new window trim, painting, updating exhibits and installing displays. Meanwhile, the Bushwalkers Huts got an upgrade with a lick of paint and a new top for the tank. Pip made hay while the sun shone and gave the buttongrass surrounding the huts a sharp haircut with the brushcutter. Rik, Mitch and Andrew, the resident sparkies, set about testing and tagging anything that could hold a volt and installed new LED lighting and inverters. The true story of the restoration of the Moth Creek Derrick is worthy of a dramatic adaptation, and we look forward to finding out which Hollywood stars will play DR, Chris, Georgie, Ash and Andy.



New tank-top in the making at the bush walker's hut



There's not stopping David on the drains



Touching up the red shed





Coming home after a hard day at work

Headed up by ringleader Rob, an enthusiastic team of volunteers made their daily commute to Clayton's Corner aboard Leptonyx, the PWS boat skippered by ranger Chris. The order of the day (and the next day, and the day after that, and the day after that..) was replacing the tank stands, a monumental task only made possible with the help of Bob's coffee machine. Other jobs at Clayton's included treating and staining the indoor ply panels, fitting a handrail, fertilising Win's lilies, reining in the watsonia and rhododendrons and pulling out those pesky native ferns growing amongst the dianellas.



The coffee machine on Bob's boat helped the work along

A huge week was wrapped up with Chris sparking up the legendary Southern Cross engine, and plans were made for 2021 with a couple of well-earned whiskies under Janet and Geoff's brand new roof. Thanks to all the vollies involved, as well as Andy with his camera, rangers Ian, Chris and Alan, OBP monitoring vollies Rachael and Griff and PWS caretakers David and Di. A huge thanks to Janet and Geoff, Barbara, PWS and the yachts Juliet, Juliene and Georges Bay for their hospitality!



Prep for the new tank-stand



MELALEUCA - A POEM

Rob Banfield, wrote this poem inspired by the recent working bee.

MELALEUCA

At least that's what she's called now.
We wonder about her name when the ice crept down...

Sun dazzles expectant eyes
As they soar in from distant skies

Will this place, again, mark each one?
Or will some skedaddle into the western sun?

He said they would return when waters were imbibed
Deep words that her sage carefully scribed

Leaden sky, foaming water, a string of island jewels
A sudden blaze of white, locals ...and ... their tools

What draws them back to this special place?
Spirit, mutual care ... escape from the race?

Toil and laughter fills the whispering plains
But, she can turn ... crack, flash and fill those sedgy drains.

Side by side they rally against relentless moist decay
Shining, strengthening, renewing ...day after day



Archie Donley - Morning



Day trippers quicken her pulse
Seeking pure wilderness, shy parrot, wild release

Time stops here
Days gently disappear

Sun, suds and bracing water
Sponsor long nights of restful slumber

She has drilled deep under their calloused skin
Refreshed, re-centred, pure spirit in the wind

Her mantle polished anew
They turn and wish her adieu

Content from their gentle attention
She plans her next seduction



FRIENDS OF TASMAN ISLAND

By Erika Shankley

Wildcare Friends of Tasman Island is a group of volunteers who work in partnership with the Parks and Wildlife Service. Formed in late 2005, our aim is to restore the island's cultural and natural heritage to their former glory. Our first working bee, held on the island in 2006, celebrated the 100th anniversary of the lighthouse. Since that time, on-island working bees have been held two or three times a year, with volunteers completing an impressive range of conservation, restoration and maintenance work.

The past year saw the culmination of two major projects – to restore the sunroom and front verandah of Lightkeepers' Quarters No 2 and 3. Planning is now underway to restore the back verandah on both buildings. At our November working bee field naturalist, Amanda Thomson, conducted a survey of the island's natural habitat, fauna and flora. Using the Hamish Saunders 2005 report as a base indicator, her observations include some which may be new recordings.

Thanks to our partners, PWS, the purchase of a ride-on mower has made light work of mowing and brushcutting around the lighthouse precinct and tracks across the island. The programme of weeding, commenced in 2009, has achieved good results with field data now recorded using Fulcrum app software.



Tasman Twins. Photo by Chris Creese



FoTI Group 03 on Verandah. Photo by Amanda Thomson



Glenda FoTI 2019. Photo by Amanda Thomson



Geoff Robinson with new ride-on mower. Photo by Amanda Thomson



John & Dave FoTI working bee Nov 2019.
Photo by Amanda Thomson



Photo by Pip Burke 2018



Earlier in the year the three lighthouse island Wildcare groups – Friends of Tasman Island, Friends of Maatsuyker Island and Friends of Deal Island – conducted a stall at the Australian Wooden Boat Festival. In this way we were able to disseminate information about our respective groups as well as raise funds by the sale of various products.

FoTI's Lighthouse of Tasmania tea towels were a winner! A complete range of merchandise is available in the Wildcare shop at <https://wildcaretas.org.au/shop/>

The expense of getting ten volunteers, their gear plus building materials out to the island has been partly mitigated, thanks to funding from Wildcare. A grant funded by the Australian National Maritime Museums Support Scheme enabled the production of a travelling exhibition featuring family life on Tasman Island. This project is the culmination of three years' work by Rachel Chesmer and other FoTI volunteers and is due to be opened during 2020.

Planning for our work takes a lot of off-island time. During winter, core members gathered at the Low Head lightstation. Here the atmosphere at the heritage-listed lightkeepers' quarters was inspirational as we discussed plans for future working bees and raising funds for the work.

Through our Facebook page and word-of-mouth, Tasman Island and the work FoTI is accomplishing is becoming well known in lighthouse circles around the world.

November volunteers. Photo by Amanda Thomson



This year one of the Trustees of the Association of Lighthouse Keepers travelled to Tasmania from the UK specifically to visit Tasman Island and see the work which FoTI is doing.

Wildcare's Friends of Tasman Island volunteers have carried out hundreds of hours of work during the year. Their dedication will ensure that this dramatic island's history will not be forgotten.

Follow our work through

<https://wildcaretas.org.au/branches/friends-of-tasman-island/> or via our Facebook page

<https://www.facebook.com/FriendsOfTasmanIsland/>



Photo by Amanda Thomson



FRIENDS OF MARIA ISLAND

By Ann Booth, Convenor.

Our long established programs of control/eradication continue with a notable and progressive decrease in the incidence of Broom and Spanish heath. Long term volunteers rotate through the various working bees (4-5 per year) with a welcome regular addition of new Friends of Maria Island.

BROOM

Systematic monitoring and clearing of regrowth continues over the 300 recorded sites on Skipping Ridge and in Bernacchis Valley. Each site is rechecked within 2 years with an increasing number of sites showing no weeds over an extending period. Consequently we are able to check sites more quickly and concentrate on the remaining 'hotspots'. Bernacchis Creek with its dense vegetation and damp soils promotes rapid growth but plants only become evident when they show and flower above the bracken; **last spring (September) was the first time since 2005 that no flowering plants were found here.**



SPANISH HEATH

Haunted Bay. This remote 7 hectare forested site is checked every 2 years. In April 2019 4 volunteers camped at Robeys farm and the next day walked the rough 3km to the site.

Since the 2008 primary control, there has been prolific growth of natives with associated ground litter; which has undoubtedly suppressed regrowth. Areas where germination had occurred since 2008 were checked but **no weeds were found there**, or on transects through the area. **Perhaps it is too soon to declare 'eradication' but we are not far off!**

Robey's Creek site. This 2 hectare infestation has been cleared annually since 2009. Eradication has been slow with germination persisting in a small area. In previous years monitoring has been done in spring but we now realise that autumn is a more appropriate time. The open, north facing slope is covered in Swordsedge, Kunzea ambigua and Acacia species. In March, 4 of us spent 3 hours clearing small seedlings which were mostly hidden under the above plants. At this stage of growth the use of a screwdriver for levering out plants is very effective and minimises soil disturbance.

SEA SPURGE

Our workload has been eased considerably by recently joined members taking over this aspect of our commitments.

In March, from a camp at French's farm a sweep of Riedle beach found 75 plants, with 5 flowering. The following day in the Bloodstone Pt/Pt Lesueur area, 95 plants were removed with 25 flowering (all flowers removed and bagged up). The number of flowering plants located is indicative of the very fast growth rate and maturation in this environment; overall plant numbers have reduced.

During this work, African daisy (*Osteospermum fruticosum*) is also monitored along this section of coast. Only small seedlings were found and removed from the main site near Bloodstone Pt. Another infestation to the north of Return Pt. is yet to be treated.





Mexican Poppy

MEXICAN POPPY (*Argemone ochroleuca*)

This plant has been described as 'one of the worlds' worst agricultural weeds'. It can contaminate grain and is highly toxic to animals. **It was discovered at Darlington in 2009 by some volunteers.**

The site is marked and monitored, although some seeding has occurred since. The plant can germinate and produce seed quickly over summer. In late March 2020 a Ranger found another plant behind the Mess Hall which had commenced seeding!

The significance is perhaps not only for the island, but more for the possibility that seed may be transmitted on footwear to agricultural areas in mainland Tasmania.

On a historical note, the Poppy was last recorded in the 1940's in Hobart. A poster for identification is on display in the Parks Office.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

David Reynolds plans to carry out renovations at French's Farm and other weeding work around Darlington subject, as with all our upcoming work, to a resolution of the current Covid-19 crisis. Spring is a critical time for some of our programmes and we are developing a priority list in case there are limitations on our participation.

Our thanks to Parks for accommodation and with help in transporting us and our gear to remote sites.



KARST CARE

Story and photos by Dave Wools-Cobb, President

Karstcare has been operating for about 20 years and has notched up almost 4000 volunteer hours.

We mostly work at Mole Creek which is near Deloraine at the foot of the Great Western Tiers. It is about a 45-minute drive from Devonport and a 1 hour drive from Launceston. The area is famous for the quantity and quality of its limestone caves. There are 2 tourist caves in the area and several hundred "wild caves", some of which are considered amongst the best in Australia. For more information check out the Parks and Wildlife Service web page www.parks.tas.gov.au

Our members assist PWS Rangers with a wide range of management activities, mainly underground. The skills required are a bit unusual compared to most Wildcare groups, and some of our work sites would be considered a bit 'strange'. We do conduct the odd surface job with revegetation projects but the majority of our work is underground in caves, sometimes requiring vertical rope-work skills, climbing, squeezing and wading to get to such work sites.

Our project in Mersey Hill Cave on Jan 11 this year, was no exception. Mersey Hill Cave has been known for a long time and has been visited by many people over the years, including some of the 'non-caver' community.



Karstcare's Lyn Stedman & Jill Bennett hard at work



Shelf before cleaning



Shelf after cleaning

Unfortunately, whilst visiting a particularly beautiful area, careless visitors tracked mud over a shelf of magnificent dogs-tooth spar (I think the visitors were more interested in taking photos of the magnificent formations on the walls rather than looking at the floor).

Six volunteers, all from Northern Caverneers Inc met at a road-side spot near Mole Creek and after the obligatory safety briefing we distributed the gear. Whilst walking down the steep hill to the cave entrance several flagging tapes were replaced and added to: the reason being that all-too-often, trips to the end of this cave are very long with a high chance of finishing in the dark: flagging tapes back up the hill assist with navigation. We carried about 90m of poly-pipe, two pumps and two batteries, plus scrubbing brushes and two towels (used to filter dirty water).

The work site was only about 200m from the cave entrance, however this involved much crawling, a tight squeezey grovel, some wading in ankle deep water and a grovel in a very wet rocky stream bed with the roof only about 60cm above, dragging the gear.

Once at the turn-off, a small temporary 'dam' was constructed to give a bit of depth for a pool to pump from.

Flow from the stream was more than adequate for re-charging. We commenced laying out the poly-pipe, using valves often to maintain a head of water after it was established.

This side passage required approximately 55m of poly-pipe to get to the site. Initially we had some difficulty getting water much past the second pump until it was discovered that this was designed in the opposite way to the first pump regarding inlet/outlet.

Once we had water flowing, both the bottom pump and an in-line pump were left running on separate batteries, which gave a reasonable flow at the top end into a fire-fighting pump with a restrictor to give some pressure for cleaning. Both batteries were adequate for the cleaning period, which I'd guess was about 1.5hrs. Photos of before, during, and after cleaning were taken.

The area being cleaned is extremely beautifully decorated, with the dogs-tooth spar pools at its base. It is believed that the passageway continues higher up however there is too much mud to consider this and plenty of evidence of visitors having stood on the once pristine flowstone and dogs-tooth spar pools as well as attempts to climb in the general area.

With scrubbing, spraying and using the towels to "mop up & filter" the area cleaned up surprisingly well. A bad stain was noted in one of the rear pools, however this was left as is, it being the remains of a small animal. Further cleaning was conducted on the flowstone climb up to this area, then a string-line was left in place well below the decorated area, hopefully dissuading visitors from climbing too high but still allowing access for limited photography.



After re-rolling the poly-pipe and packing up all the gear, we returned to the entrance for a late lunch and a very steep walk back up the hill, arriving at the cars about 15:30. A few Spanish Health plants were noted for the first time; it is many years since we conducted a major eradicating project on this block, so disappointing to find this weed starting to re-establish.

We were very satisfied of a job well done: a 'different' reason to go caving.

Volunteer time: 39hrs

FRIENDS OF WOODVINE

By David Reynolds

Woodvine is a 377 hectare Nature Reserve near Forcett. The Friends of Woodvine work closely with Parks & Wildlife staff to carry on the vision of Ernie Shaw, who donated the property to the people of Tasmania to protect Woodvine's natural environment, flora and fauna forever. We also help care for the heritage-listed farm buildings and weed outbreaks of Spanish heath.

The volunteers of Wildcare Friends of Woodvine Reserve (FoWR) have monthly weeding activities in the Reserve which have involved up to 12 volunteers. Our main focus is on the weed areas containing Spanish heath and a small area of Californian thistle near the Barn site. The main paddocks around the buildings are mostly weed free with ongoing monitoring. We have started a new area near a sandstone outcrop above the road access to the Reserve. We continue monitoring of the track heading east through the Reserve starting from the gate and along the track for several hundred metres and about 10 metres on either side.

Since the 2013 bush fires, weeds have been prolific in certain areas but **a good outcome has been the recovery of many native species.** Methods used for weed control are pulling, cut/paste method and, where suitable, spraying using 10 litre sprayers. Several of our members have recently upgraded our Chem Certificates.



Rangers and staff from PWS Seven Mile Beach Office have undertaken stabilising works on the Shearing shed (original homestead) installing top plates on the walls, hopefully for work to start on the timber walls and reinstalling and repairing the shingle roof. Other works were fixing new spouting and downpipes to Ernie's house, repairing the roof on the Barn and a general clean up inside of the 1920's house.

PWS have installed a water tank on site to help when we are spraying the Spanish heath outliers and they have continued slashing/cutting the paddocks around the buildings and a new slashed track to a new weed area. **A Partnership Agreement between Wildcare Friends of Woodvine Reserve and PWS has been signed and we have worked co-operatively on issues arising in the Reserve.**



FRIENDS OF THE LOW HEAD PENGUIN COLONY

by Bruce George, then Convener of the Friends of the Low Head Penguin Colony.

Following a spate of dog attacks on the Low Head penguin colony (58 penguins were killed in October 2018 and 12 in March 2019), Senator Peter Whish-Wilson and the Low Head Heritage and Progress Association convened a forum in George Town assisted by Dr Eric Woehler and Assoc. Prof Mary - Anne Lea. Dr. Woehler expressed his concern that the penguin population in the area would take a long time to recover from these losses - a penguin can live for up to 20 years and the loss of breeding adults is quite significant.

Several suggestions from the gathering were taken on board such as increased fencing around the nesting areas, trialling Maremma dogs, setting up cameras to identify predators, and increased penalties for off leash dogs. Dr Woehler said the likely increase in dog attacks would be the result of a change in the penguins behaviour as they were coming ashore to breed year-round rather than just summer which meant they were exposed to on-land predators like dogs more often.

Following this meeting, a grass roots Friends of Penguins was formed comprising a group of 4 persons. During our early days we had enormous support and valuable advice from Stan Matuszek, Manager Regional Operations North, Parks and Wildlife, and have been fortunate to have mentoring from our scientific advisor, Dr. Eric Woehler.



Photo by Erika Shankley





We drew up a mission statement which embraced : -
 Protection of the Little Penguins and conservation of the species, Establishment of long term population monitoring and adaptive management procedures for the Low Head Little Penguin Colony, Education of the community, and awareness of environmental issues.

We now have an executive committee of 12. There are 73 people on our mailing list, and 24 volunteers who are part of our Friends Wildcare group. On Mr. Matuszek's recommendation we decided to join Wildcare.

The benefits were obvious, chiefly insurance cover, use of the Wildcare web site, the ability to call on volunteers, and the ability to apply for grant funding especially government grants. We become a branch of Wildcare on 6th July 2019.

Our first activity was mapping the low head penguin habitat. This was done by Eric and his student Jacqui. Friends of the Low Head Penguin Colony arranged the land holders' permissions so this proceeded and the mapping is all but complete. Other activities have been a Cat Management Day and a family fun day 'Dogz Day Out' done jointly with the George Town Council, a public education event. Our focus was on making the public aware of the need for dog management in penguin colonies.

We successfully applied for a Federal Government grant from the Communities Environment Program that has enabled us to fund our part of the Dogz Day Out program, 3 after dark surveillance cameras which we will place on the headland, and two training and information workshops for volunteers this year.

We have acquired an amount of historical information including articles and photos of the Iron Baron disaster as well as records created by a previous penguin group. One of our members, Tim Smith, has documented a wealth of photographic material tracking the start and spread of boxthorn on the peninsula. It is interesting to note that boxthorn did not appear on the peninsula until around 1945. This material we are cataloguing and preparing to lodge it with the Tasmanian State Archive.

We may well archive some of this material in the George Town Library collection.

What's ahead ?

Our immediate goal is to bring the people of George Town into our team. Monitoring predators in the habitat, and a bird count which hasn't been done for some time. We also have plans to establish a public education hub as well as other ambitious plans such as a rescue and release program which is still subject to further investigation and feasibility studies.



Friends of the Low Head Penguin Colony - L to R: Bruce George (Past Convenor), Margie Brophy (Exec member), Steve Gordon (President), Jason Orr (Exec. Member), Jo Hart (Secretary), Rex Cassidy (George Town Council and Associate Member), Tim Smith (ExecMember), Jill Holland (Treasurer).

FRIENDS OF PITT WATER ORIELTON LAGOON

by Georgina Davis, President

The Wildcare Friends of Pitt Water-Orielton Lagoon have re-emerged under new leadership after a break of some years. Our primary goal is to care for the natural values of the coast surrounding Pitt Water. This area is an internationally significant wetlands, as it supports a large number of migratory shore birds. As well as other significant marine life, such as a nursery for gummy, school and elephant sharks, (all harmless I might add!). Pitt Water is one of 10 Ramsar sites (wetlands of international importance) in Tasmania and the only Tasmanian Ramsar site located in an urban area.

Our team is keen to improve our neighbourhood by initially:

- Organising clean-up days for rubbish in various surrounding areas.
- Managing weeds along the Penna Beach to tackle 'declared weeds' such as Boneseed, African Boxthorn and Fennel as well as Briar Rose (not declared weeds but certainly invasive ones) and encourage natural regeneration and,
- Organising some public educational walks/talks with visiting experts.



Our first official event was held on Sunday 15th March for a Clean-up Australia morning. 12 very enthusiastic members turned up at the carpark near the dog exercise area in Shark Point Road to tackle dumped rubbish along the waterway and the roadway. The group split up and spent two hours collecting rubbish which was then compiled at a collection point for the council pick up later. A variety of rubbish was collected including a number of tyres, plenty of glass bottles and all sorts of other bits and pieces.

Our group recently received a grant through the Wildcare Gift Fund to work with Sorell Council and Parrdarrama Pungenna Aboriginal Corporation to protect natural values at Penna Beach by managing recreational access and providing interpretive signage.



FRIENDS OF MARGARET MITCHELL GARDEN

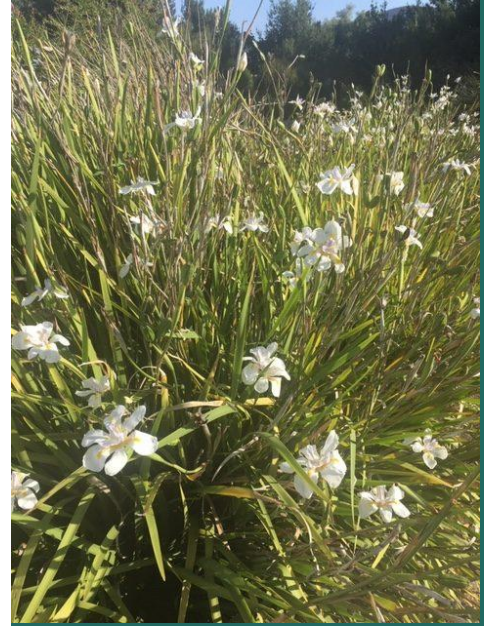
The Margaret Mitchell Garden is a native plant garden oasis in the heart of the village of Richmond. The planting highlights Coal Valley plants and Tasmanian plants generally, and provides a peaceful place to sit and contemplate the natural world. It is a great place for children to wander and play and they even have a giant chess set and a Boules pad.

There is a small information building on-site which has wildlife information about the nearby Pitt Water Reserve, an important RAMSAR listed reserve.

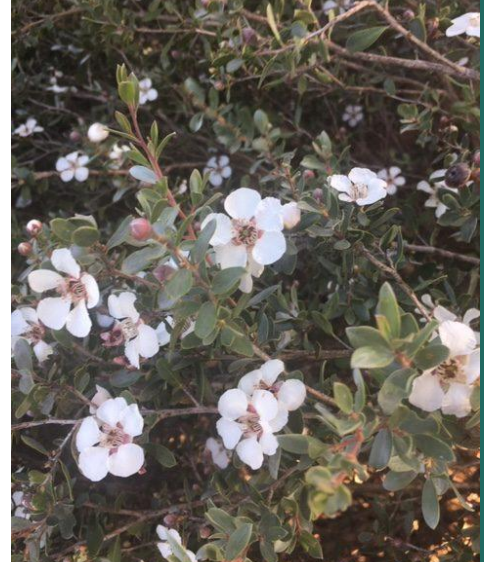
The garden is named in honour of Dr Margaret Mitchell, who was a general practitioner in Richmond and the first female councillor elected in the area.

Friends of the Margaret Mitchell Garden care for the garden as an educational and relaxing place for tourists and locals. The dry summer months have presented a challenge to the Margaret Mitchell Garden but with regular additional hand-watering the plants are getting through it. Both locals and visitors enjoy the garden, with its beautiful plants, secretive winding paths, easy access, birdlife, and giant chess set.

The Friends are grateful for a donation from the Richmond Residents Association and a grant from the Wildcare Inc Board of Management that has allowed them to produce and install plant labels and replace plants that didn't make it last summer.



We conduct a morning working bee once a month to tidy up plantings and pull any weeds. Members, with weekday assistance from staff of the council, make sure the chess pieces are available each day (they are very popular) and open the small exhibition building that provides information about the nearby RAMSAR wetlands.



WILDCARE CRADLE MOUNTAIN VOLUNTEERS

Bill Field



Bill and Sue en route to Rodway

By Bill Field, Volunteer

The highlands of Tasmania are unique and Cradle Mountain in particular holds a very special place in the hearts and memories of almost everyone who has been there. My first time to this magical place was the first of our annual family trips to Waldheim in the mid 1960s. A trip to Cradle Mountain always was and still is a highlight of every year.

In 2018 I jumped at the opportunity to spend a week at this wonderful place with Wildcare as a volunteer. I joined in again for the Spring 2019 Wildcare program and again, thoroughly enjoyed the week. As would be expected, we experienced Cradle in all of its moods, from heavy rain followed by clear sunny sky, to zero night time temperatures and warm calm spring days.

Our week started out with a group of four hiking to camp at Lake Rodway for two nights as a base for our work. Our tasks were to clear overgrown vegetation from walking tracks and to install wire mesh on the boardwalks. In the bushwalking shop a week before, I didn't actually think that I'd be carrying rolls of wire mesh and nail guns in that new backpack.



Laying wire on Rodway Track Boardwalk

The tasks can be tedious and physical but any discomfort is more than offset by the glorious surroundings. The vista of alpine peaks and mountain tarns guarded by pencil pines, the natural perfume of the lemon thyme plant, the distinctive call of the currawong or the ever present trickle of water tumbling down the rocky slopes and the changing sky soothe the senses while out on the track.

During the first night the roar of an early morning downpour on our tents reminded us of the rapid weather changes when out in the high places.

The sunshine of the second day dried our tents out however when more heavy rain was forecast, we altered our plans, packed up camp and took an evening walk back up to the Rangers Hut near Hanson's Peak.

Days four and five were spent in sunshine, clearing and marking along the Dove River Canyon and Pencil Pine tracks. We made the most of the opportunity of the good weather and a few free hours of daylight and had a lovely late afternoon walk up Mt Kate. There are fine views from the summit over Cradle Valley, Barn Bluff and the west coast mountains. This little bonus hike clocked up our distance walked that day to almost 17km so everyone slept well that night.

Any visit to the Cradle Mountain area gives one a great experience in a truly magnificent natural environment and a Wildcare week is a great way to enjoy the place while helping to maintain this beautiful park.

Wildcare Cradle Mountain Volunteers



Rangers Hut at Cradle Mountain.
Photo by Bill Field



Bill Sawing



GET OUTSIDE

By Jodie Epper, Coordinator

The aim of the Get Outside Program is to take people who are new arrivals to Tasmania out for the day to explore some of Tasmania, learn about this place and make some new friends. Exercise in nature and connection to people are great ways to keep us healthy in our bodies and in our minds.

A walk at Risdon Brook Dam

The Get Outside Branch had its first outing since the Corona Virus stopped the excursions in March 2020. The participants on this walk are all studying English at English Languages South at Tas TAFE. They wrote the following recount:

"On a foggy day in June, 25 people went outside - for the first time in a long time. We couldn't walk together in one group due to Corona restrictions but that was ok for us - we split into two groups. All the people felt very happy when we began to walk. We saw lots of other people jogging and riding bikes on the track. The children were running around us because they were so excited. It was very good to be in nature after such a long time inside. We chatted with each other. This felt good, as we had not seen real people for a long time. We shared a delicious lunch and laughed and talked a lot. We can't wait to go outside again."



Photo by Jodie Epper



Barefoot at the Beach

Some young people have been stuck at home for a long time. After a while you forget how to go outside and you feel safe inside. This months Get Outside Event was targeted at some of those young people. We chose to go to the beach, to get some fresh air and some wide open space. We were a group of fourteen. We learnt about rips in the ocean and where it is safe to swim (when the weather warms up).

We saw white bellied sea eagles, learnt about why it is so important to acknowledge the country you are on at the beginning of every event and we remembered how nice BBQ sausage is. Thanks to the continued partnership with Tas TAFE teachers who voluntarily come along on these trips to provide safety and connection for the young people.



FRIENDS OF WELLINGTON PARK

By Adrian Blackman

Thanks to a Communities Environment Program grant and a Wildcare grant, the Friends of Wellington Park have recently completed a project to remove weeds and revegetate a section of Hobart's New Town Rivulet. The upgraded area is part of the New Town Rivulet Park and is quite close to residences. There is a very popular walking track as part of the park so that many people are aware of, and are already benefiting from, this undertaking. Replacement of a weed infested area with a pleasant collection of native plants and associated wildlife like birds is providing passersby with an improved experience.

The City of Hobart has developed the New Town Rivulet Park and Track on council reserve land in the suburb of Lenah Valley. One final badly degraded section filled with blackberries and other invasive plants remained and the Friends of Wellington Park (FOWP) with the support of the City of Hobart won a Federal Government Communities Environment Program grant to rehabilitate this area. Fieldwork for the first part of the project (February, 2020) involved contractors spraying and then clearing an area of approximately 150 metres x 25 metres that was highly infested with blackberries and other weeds beside the New Town Rivulet. Once sprayed and killed, the invasive weeds were slashed and left on the ground to provide mulch and groundcover.

New Town Rivulet CEP site A central blackberry from walking track Sep 2019



Site A After with plants



The project's second fieldwork stage (May 2020) involved revegetating the site by planting Tasmanian native plants—a mix of trees, shrubs and grasses, all occurring naturally in the area. Once established, these plants will provide a suitable habitat for wildlife. The original plan was for FOWP members to do this planting work. Over 420 plants and other required material were purchased but due to restrictions then imposed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the volunteers were not able to work at the site.

Fortunately Wildcare Tasmania came to the rescue and additional funds were provided that enabled contractors to complete the task.

FOWP members will now care for the area for approximately 5 years. Weeds will be controlled and the site maintained until the plantings are mature enough to shade out weeds and survive unassisted. A photographic record of progress is being kept. The project will improve the environment and increase native species. It will also stabilise the river bank and help to reduce rubbish along the rivulet including environmental weeds dumped from local backyards. Local community members (including school children, guides and scouts) will be invited to join the FOWP volunteers in maintaining the site. We thank Andrew Wilkie for his support by awarding us a Federal Government Communities Environment Program grant (\$12,000).

Thanks are also given to Wildcare Tasmania for funds (\$850). The City of Hobart provided logistical support that is appreciated. FOWP volunteers have contributed their time for project planning, administration and limited field work (equivalent to about \$3,800) with more time to be spent working in the next five years due to ongoing site maintenance.



New Town Rivulet CEP site B
blackberry from walking track Sep
2019 The blackberry was over head
height
The blackberry was over head
height



New Town Rivulet CEP site A central
blackberry from walking track Sep 2019



CARING FOR ORPHANED AND INJURED WILDLIFE



Feeding time. Photo by David Frost



Photos by Leslie Frost



By Leslie Frost, Wildlife Carer and Chair of Wildcare's Gift Fund Assessment Committee

I started caring for injured and orphaned wildlife as a registered carer, about 30 years ago. I obtained a permit and my first patient was a young echidna named Spike (of course) who somehow lost most of one of his hind feet. I found him in the bush up at Cradle Mountain, put him in my backpack and brought him back to Hobart. He had his leg cleaned and stitched up and after being confined to a bucket for awhile to allow it to heal, ended up with a stump that did not seem to hinder his digging abilities. After several months, he went to live with my friend Rosemary in Battery Point while I was at Macquarie Island one summer, where he became quite plump and then disappeared. After months of looking, Rosemary's neighbours found him asleep in a drain pipe in their backyard! It seems well-fed echidnas will go into torpor or hibernation in the colder months to conserve energy for the following breeding season.

Since then, we have had one brushtail and three ringtail possums, countless Bennett's wallabies (usually in pairs), five bandicoots, three potoroos and many pademelons. One of our ringtails still lives in our 'Land for Wildlife' garden and has produced two joeys that we have seen.

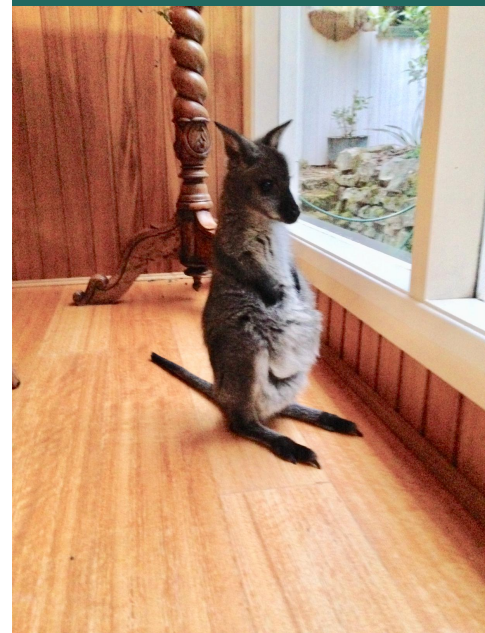
It is hard to say which is our favourite species as they are all different, but I think we would say bandicoots, potoroos and ringtails, in that order. We currently have an Eastern barred bandicoot, who was 59g with very fine fur and his eyes still closed. After a few weeks, he is very active, fully furred and now weighs about 140g. He loves scrabbling about in his box of mulch, searching for store-bought mealy worms. Listed as vulnerable under the Threatened Species Act, they are under threat from ingesting earthworms or cat faeces which carry the oocysts of Toxoplasmosis, a disease that causes loss of coordination, blindness and death.

Raising injured and orphaned wildlife – especially very young animals, takes some effort. I prefer to take animals that are furred and have their eyes open, as they are easier to keep alive and usually don't require a feed in the middle of the night. My children learned quite a lot about the 'circle of life' and were very sad when we lost one. Before moving to Howden, we always took our animals to a halfway or 'soft release' site, where they would be in an enclosure with little contact with people before release. Here in my garden I have released a few animals to a semi-wild environment and have only had a couple of animals that would allow me to approach them after a few days. And while I know that the animals we raise could be killed by local or feral cats, hit by cars or shot, I still feel it is worthwhile, because we have given these young creatures a chance to live that they would not otherwise have had. I seriously doubt that I do all the caring by the book, but most of them have lived and the people that I have shared them with have gained a greater appreciation for our wonderful wildlife.

For anyone interested in wildlife caring, DPIPWE – Injured and Orphaned Wildlife, and Bonorong offer courses and access to a network of carers to help and provide advice.



Tippy's 2nd Birthday



Photos by Leslie Frost



FRIENDS OF BRUNY ISLAND QUARANTINE STATION

Governor's visit



Palisade fence replication in its original p

By Kathy Duncombe, then President of the FoBIOS

2019 saw a change of pace at the station with essential maintenance work carried out by Parks. The Superintendent Quarters was re-roofed and painted, a new roof was put on the Health Officer Quarters, trees on the dam wall were removed with help from members of FOBIOS. Parks have also taken back the selection of volunteer caretaker applications and supplied a new phone for the volunteer caretakers which will go on Parks account. All these activities are to commended.

Our group activities were more behind the scenes this past year with a native orchid sign erected matching our bird sign near the bushland. After many years of hoping to erect a replica portion of the original palisade fence this has come to fruition, and the visitors are intrigued by the thought of having to pass through the cleansing room if they showed symptoms of disease. Surprisingly our team still spent 187 hours on site & a total of 580 hours off site on Quarantine Station planning meetings, admin & research.



Young scientist learning some nature-based geometry,
Science Day

I met with Dr. Phil Thomson COMA - Collection Of Medical Artefacts last year and he may have some medical equipment we could use for the mortuary display.

Our annual Science Day was well supported as usual. It is great to see families enjoying the site together and working together to perform the science activities. It has become a regular event for many families.

Doro Forck's translation of the German diary written by Fritz Stegherr 4th Officer on the Oberhausen interned at the station in 1915 is being continued by a very enthusiastic 90 year old Paul Thost in Lindisfarne. Each week 6 pages are posted to him with a stamped self addressed envelope and he sends his translation as soon as completed. To date he has translated 195 pages, approximately 1/3 of the total 578 pages of the diary.

The visit in November by TMAG & later the Governor & Mr. Warner was very exciting. Mr. Warner had supplied the 'Pride of Ringwood' virus-free cultivar hops growing at the station. The same variety that was quarantined here at the Plant Station many years ago. They were both extremely interested in the site and the information at the Visitor Centre and I presented them with a copy of my book. Many Coral Cruise groups also visited throughout the summer period and a Sea Scout group of 25 had a morning & picnic lunch on site. ABC TV put an article on their online ABC site followed by an ABC news report that evening 8th March on the QS influenza pandemic of 1919.

Progress of Returning Tasmanian Soldier database is ongoing with 10,700 last year, now up to about 12,000.



Archival picture of stabilisation of north wall of mortuary in the early days of FOBIQS



Smart new exterior to Superintendents' house



Meeting



This has created a lot of interest in the Visitor Centre with visitors giving feedback about their relative who may have been quarantined here at the end of WWI due to the influenza pandemic of 1918/1919 where all returning soldiers had to spend 7 days in quarantine to ensure they were germ free before meeting their loved one.

Our 'Last Stop Before Home' day in February brought many visitors to the station with 70 signing at the Visitor Centre and about 50 or more visiting the display. Albeit a smaller event this year, those that did attend interacted with the display well, and asked questions which was great.

After 8 1/2 years as president of our group, with secretary Peter Williams for 90% of that time, neither of us are seeking re-election to the executive on committee this year. It is time for new ideas and direction to move us forward and we wish the incoming committee well. We will remain part of the group as our interest in the site continues. I would like to thank all our committee members for their ongoing commitment and support.

I would also like to thank Parks staff Pip Gowen, Jen Mudge, Brett Knowles and Scott Thornton for their commitment to the quarantine station and their input and guidance throughout.



FRENCHMAN'S CAP

A large portion of Tasmania's spectacular wilderness, and much of the western half of Tasmania, is listed as the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area. It contains some of the most important natural areas, communities and landscapes in the world, including Southwest National Park, Franklin Gordon Wild Rivers National Park, Cradle Mountain - Lake St Clair National Park and Walls of Jerusalem National Park.

There are incredible gondwanan plant communities, endemic alpine vegetation, intriguing wildlife, rare and threatened species, rugged mountains and valleys gouged by glaciers, vast buttongrass plains, windswept coast, isolated islands and unique marine environments, all protected within the World Heritage Wilderness.

Generous donations by Dick Smith into the Wildcare Gift Fund - World Heritage Wilderness Cause, enabled significant track restoration works to be conducted along the third most popular overnight backcountry-walking destination in Tasmania after the Overland Track and the Walls of Jerusalem - the Frenchmans Cap Track.

This track, which provides a challenging but accessible wilderness experience amongst spectacular mountainous terrain now has a longer life expectancy.



What follows is an extract for the 'Frenchmans Cap Wildcare Project Report 2019-2020 Season' - Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment, 2019.



The Frenchmans Cap Track is located within the Franklin – Gordon Wild Rivers National Park, a 440,000 hectare reserve in western Tasmania. The reserve forms part of the larger Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area. However, bushwalkers predominantly use the 6,596 hectare Recreation Zone that encompasses the track from the highway to just short of Irenabyss on the Franklin River.



The main track is 27 km long and is composed of three different track classes each of which has a different visitor use and management requirement.

All three sections of the main track were considered during the track maintenance program; however, the vast majority of the works were undertaken on the section between the Franklin River and Frenchmans Cap. This section of track is a T2 class track; which is maintained to 'wet boot' standard.

The aims of the project were:

- Improved visitor safety and satisfaction
- Reduced track degradation (widening, braiding, erosion) and,
- Rationalisation and/or replacement of failing infrastructure.

The focus of works for the 2019/2020 season included:

- Replacement of degraded bridges and addressing erosion in Artichoke Valley and the approach to the Lake Tahune VSS
- Improving drainage along Laughtons Lead, Loddon Plains, and either side of Mt Mullens



Wire netting was placed on over 300m of board walk. The wire netting improves walker safety by prevent slips on wet/icy timber track surface.

Work was undertaken to replace two minor bridges - both were in very poor condition and have been replaced with longer, wider bridges that will protect sensitive water courses from erosion. Bags of rock were pre-positioned along the Artichoke Valley section of track. The rock is to be used to harden the track where bogs have formed thereby arresting the erosion and preventing track widening.

The Tasmania Parks and Wildlife Service wishes to acknowledge the generous assistances of Wildcare Inc. and Dick Smith, with whose philanthropic contribution this project was made possible.

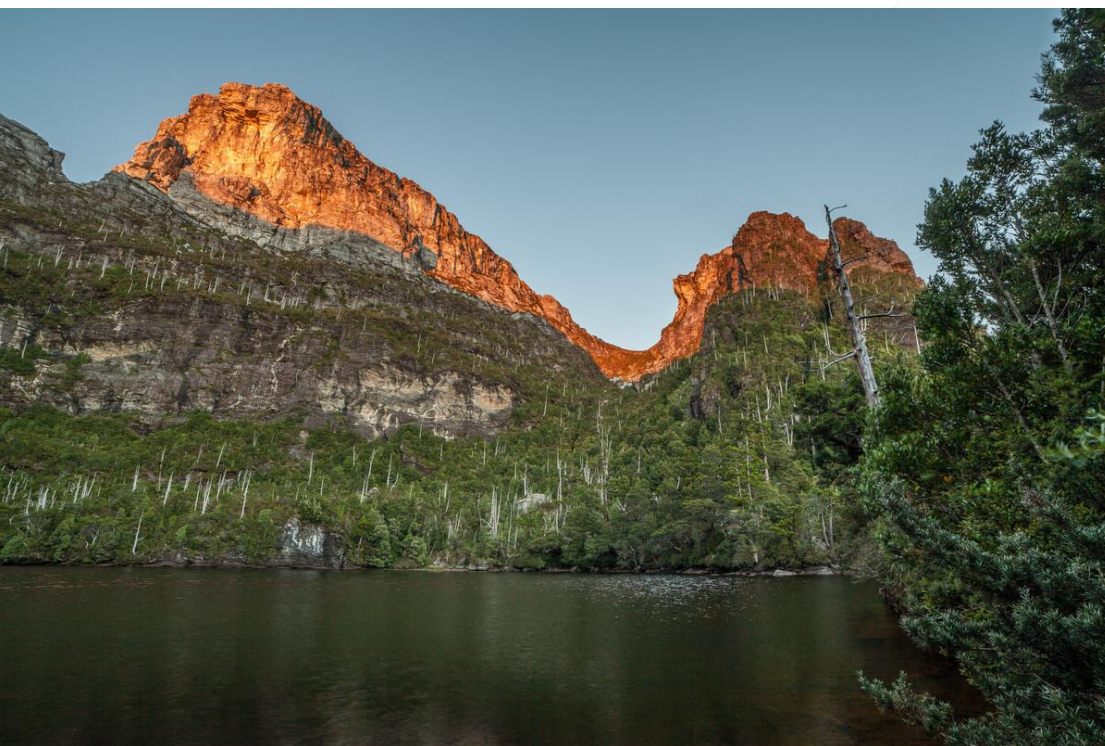


Image by Parks & Wildlife Service



WILDCARE SPRATS

At the forefront of consolidating a new volunteer ethos of “adventure conservation” to tackle conservation issues, Wildcare SPRATS (Sea sPurge Remote Area TeamS) are a crack team of weeders who are out to eradicate sea spurge from the remote beaches of the west coast of Tasmania.

This community partnership with Tas Parks & Wildlife has generated real benefits for wilderness conservation and provides fulfilment and fun for volunteers.

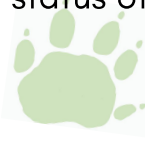
“We concentrate on getting the work done but work hard at having a good time.”

SPRATS began their work in 2006/2007 and every year since then, 25-70 volunteers (representing over \$2.1 million labour) have worked on Tasmania’s west coast from Macquarie Harbour to Cockle Creek - representing approximately 850kms of Tasmania’s Wilderness World Heritage coastline and the results are impressive.

They focus on sea spurge (*Euphorbia paralias*) and marram grass (*Ammophila arenaria*) - both of which are major weed threats with the capacity to:

- transform ecosystems
- impact geoheritage values
- transform beach structure
- displace native species and,
- impact shore birds by forcing them to nest and feed closer to the wave zone.

[This article](#) presents results to date, and outlines future plans including the status of a promising biocontrol agent for sea spurge.



THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS

A big thank you to you for donating to Wildcare Tasmania this financial year.

Wildcare Tasmania is a not for profit charity that supports other great Tasmanian organisations by providing tax deductible donation options to a range of causes. Wildcare has around 60 volunteering groups working around Tasmania.

PROJECTS ENABLED THROUGH DONATIONS

In this financial year, enabled through the generosity of people such as you who donated, Wildcare has granted a total of over \$200,000 to practical conservation projects such as:

- \$27,000 from the Tasmanian Coast Conservation Cause for environmental works and interpretive signage at Pitt Water Orielton Lagoon to reduce the impact of foot traffic and highlight the natural values of the area. This is a collaboration between Wildcare Friends of Pitt Water Orielton Lagoon and Sorell Council.
- \$8,000 from the Raptor Rehabilitation and Research Cause for aviary construction and maintenance to assist in the rehabilitation of injured raptors with help from the Friends of the Raptor Refuge.
- \$70,000 from the Wild Bushwalking Tracks Cause for construction of parallel planking on the Lake Judd track to enable walkers to traverse this fragile and valuable place in comfort while no longer causing environmental damage.

- \$16,800 for trail upkeep and maintenance of the Penguin Cradle Trail (with help from its [Friends](#)).
- \$36,000 from the [Wildcare Bonorong Cause](#) to Bonorong Wildlife Sanctuary for the feeding and care of injured and orphaned animals following the impacts of Covid-19.
- \$40,000 also to Bonorong to support the 24/7 phone Wildlife Rescue Service.
- \$25,000 from the [Wildcare Tasmanian Devils Cause](#) for research into an immunological approach to protect Tasmanian devils against devil facial tumour disease. Read more [here](#).
- \$8,300 from a bequest made by the late Barry Hebbard for shearwater bird research at Lillico Beach. Read about the [Wildcare Friends of Lillico Penguins](#).
- \$7,000 in total from the [Penguin Cause](#) for penguin interpretation guides at Low Head and Stanley and \$3,500 for orphan penguin chick rescue. Read about the penguin rehabilitation and rescue work [here](#).
- \$5,385 for training of wildlife rehabilitators, from the [Injured and Orphaned Wildlife Cause](#).
- \$2,780 from the [Save the Orange-bellied Parrots Cause](#) for Birch's Inlet infrastructure clean up and rehabilitation. Read about what was achieved [here](#).
- \$2,895 for a calendar describing the life cycle and conservation of the orange-bellied parrot, prepared by the [Wildcare Friends of the Orange-bellied parrot](#).
- \$5,000 from the [Nature Conservation Cause](#) for weed eradication projects on Deal Island. Read more about the weed eradication efforts [here](#).
- \$3,290 from the [Nature Conservation Cause](#) for preparation of interpretive panels at the Freycinet Visitor Centre, highlighting the work of Wildcare in the area.

