



The Penguin

Newsletter of Phillip Island Conservation Society - Second Quarter, June 2002

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Saturday, July 6th: General Meeting. 8 PM, Heritage Centre, Cowes. Guest Speaker: Caroline Evans, Hastings National Demonstration Project. Also, to be confirmed, Sally O'Neill, PINP, long-term plans for the Rhyll Inlet area.

Sunday, July 7th: Red Rocks Working Bee. 10 AM, Bring tools for planting and weeding, bags for rubbish, energy, lunch!

Friday, July 12th: Friends of Koalas General Meeting. 8pm.

Saturday, August 3rd: Environment Get-Together. 6 PM at Newhaven Hall. Bring food to share for an evening meal.

Saturday, August 17th: Seasonal Walk, 2 PM, Sewerage Treatment Plant, Pyramid Rock Road.

Friday, September 6th: Landcare Annual Dinner

Saturday, September 28th: General Meeting. 8 PM, Heritage Centre, Cowes. Guest Speaker: Dr Andre Chiaradia, Penguin Research news.

Sunday, September 29th: Working Bee, 10 am

Saturday, November 16th: Seasonal Walk, 2 PM

Saturday, January 11th: Annual General Meeting, 8 PM



Newsletter

Sunday, January 12th: Working Bee, 10 am.

VEGETATION MAPPING

At our April General Meeting, Alison Oates from the Arthur Rylah Institute for Environmental Research gave a very informative PowerPoint presentation about the vegetation mapping work being done by the Flora Ecology Research Section of Natural Resources and Environment. Scientists have been classifying remnant vegetation and look for indicators to determine what the vegetation would have been like pre-1750. Alison brought maps that have been completed of the local area. She indicated that the Shire would have a set of these maps on file. If anyone wishes to contact Alison about this Flora Ecology Research project, she can be reached by email:

aoates@nrs.vic.gov.au

Alison also demonstrated two CD-ROMS that are valuable reference tools for naturalists. Both are comprehensive and authoritative guides developed by Virdans using the extensive databases of NRE. *Wild Animals of Victoria* gives distribution information and concise descriptions of over 820 mammals, birds, reptiles and frogs. There are full-colour photographs, detailed local maps and conservation information. *Wild Plants of Victoria* offers full-colour photographs of over 2500 plant species. There is further information about 4500 plant species including Koori use, cultivation, flowers, general appearance and conservation. Searching facilities can find all plant species recorded for any area on any map. These CD-ROMs sell for \$97.50 through the Department of Natural Resources and Environment.

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Members,

It's about the winter solstice — but we've no time to hibernate!

First of all, congratulations to GREG JOHNSON, who was elected to the *NILLUMBIK SHIRE COUNCIL* in March. How lucky Nillumbik is to have gained a councillor who is well versed in planning, planning schemes and municipal strategic statements!

As you can guess, Greg's election campaign has taken a great deal of effort by him and Marg — Campaign Manager Extraordinaire! To give Greg and Marg time to settle into their new way of life, they are taking a few months 'long serve leave' from the PICS Committee.

Simultaneously, Sandy Shively and Tim Patkin also are taking long service leave. Sandy has been in America visiting her family, and now she and Tim are off to sail in Queensland. They will be back in October.

To suddenly lose four Committee members has caused us to make some internal re-organisation.

First of all, we have a new Treasurer, GILLIAN COLLINS; Second, we have two Editors of *The Penguin*, Christine Grayden and John Eddy. Welcome back to Christine, who has been a previous Editor! Third, the Committee members have decided to divide the "Correspondence Out" between them.

Fourth — there is a gap! We need someone, preferably NOT a Committee member, to oversee the Red Rocks Coast Action project. The job entails some paper work, liaison with Coast Action and the Bass Coast Shire, and planning of Working Bees. Please contact Greg or me if you would like to take on this job.

There has been wonderful rain, so it's time for action with various re-vegetation projects.

I hope to see you at the Meeting on July 6th and at Red Rocks on July 7th.

Yours sincerely,

Margaret Hancock

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FUNDRAISER THANK YOU!

Reg Elder and Cathy Robie from Eltham (holiday home on Phillip Island) recently held a PICS fundraiser BBQ at their Eltham home. They invited a group of people who also have Phillip Island holiday homes and raised over \$150. *Well done and thank you!*

ECOLOGICAL FOOTPRINTS WEBSITE

You can calculate your 'ecological footprint' impact on the earth by using the Redefining Progress Website. Go to:

www.lead.org/leadnet/footprint

VISIT VCAT IN JUNE

On Monday 17th and Tuesday 18th June, PICS will be appearing at VCAT to *support* the Bass Coast Shire in its refusal to grant a permit for the five level apartment building on the 'Clock Café' site. **VCAT** is at **55 King Street**, the northwest corner of Flinders Lane and King Street. Hearings begin at 10 am, and usually finish at about 4 PM. Visitors to the gallery are free to come and go as they wish. It is encouraging for PICS representatives to know that some members are sitting in the gallery. It's a great opportunity to watch VCAT at work, AND *it's free!*

UPDATE: VCAT APPEAL

(620-646 Settlement Road; Subdivision of a 4.3 hectare area adjoining the foreshore between the mouth of Saltwater Creek and Penguin Avenue)

As requested by VCAT, the proponent has amended the plan of subdivision. There are now eight housing lots on the high ground, on the eastern part of the land, roughly parallel to Red Rocks Road.

The next step is for the proponent to prepare a CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT PLAN (CMP) for the arm of Saltwater Creek and the adjacent BANKSIA WOODLAND which connects with the foreshore.

The CMP will go to the Shire for approval. At this point the Department of Natural Resources and Environment will be invited to comment on the CMP — hopefully PICS will too! Meantime, in consultation with Bass Coast Shire, PICS hopes to prepare a CMP for the adjacent foreshore, so that the Banksia woodland is managed as a whole.

SEAL ROCKS VICTORIA AUSTRALIA

As we go to press there is absolutely NO NEWS of the outcome of the protracted arbitration between Seal Rocks Victoria Australia and the Victorian Government.

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WHITE OUT!

My children and I had a terrifying experience recently. When returning home from Cowes on a pitch black night we drove straight into a wall of smoke and took 15 minutes to drive 30 metres, following the newly repainted white centre double lines. We came out of the experience with a huge respect for fire fighters and a fear for people trying to evacuate on bush roads during bushfires.

So what caused the 'White Out'? Following the investigation into fatalities of volunteer firefighters last year, a ruling was made that volunteers now have to have 100 hours experience before going into the field. The local CFA approached Landcare to see if there were any areas requiring burning off for their volunteers to hone their skills on. A paddock of Ventnor farmland, long infested with unpalatable wheatgrass and with an uneven terrain due to drastic drainage works many years ago, was chosen as an ideal location for a burn-off exercise. The burn-off was successful and carried out with a fair breeze, which unfortunately died in the evening, causing the smoke to collect in the Saltwater Creek valley, mainly directly across Ventnor Road! Fortunately no one was hurt.

Burn-offs are not common practice any more, but are deemed appropriate in rough terrain where tractors can't work, or where they will result in a reduced chemical load going into the environment.

Christine Grayden

SEASONAL WALKS

A Seasonal Walk is just that! A pleasant walk and NO WORK! In February, we met at Anderson and walked along the Rail Trail to Kilcunda and back. In May, we met at Cape Woolamai, did the 'inland' walk, and inspected the habitat coops that PICS planted in 1995. In **August, on Saturday 17th at 2 PM** we will meet at the **Sewerage Treatment Plant** in Pyramid Rock Road. Rose Thomas will take us on a guided tour of the Plant and the plantations!

PICS WEBSITE

When you're next browsing the Web, make sure you log onto our web site and have a read. The site is maintained by Diane Baird. If you have any contributions or suggestions for inclusions (such as photos) you can contact Diane on: dianeбайд@Yahoo.com. To view the website go to **home.vicnet.net.au/~piconsoc**

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'PRIDE OF PLACE' DESIGN FRAMEWORK

PLANNING continues to be the most time consuming issue for PICS. The present Bass Coast Planning Scheme has many inadequacies, and we have lost many of the controls that were in place under the Phillip Island Planning Scheme.

Last year, PICS was delighted when the State Premier announced a 'Pride of Place' grant of \$100,000 to fund the preparations of a Design Framework for the whole of Phillip Island, San Remo, and the Western Port side of the Phillip Island Tourist Road back to the Anderson roundabout.

The preparation of the Design Framework has been led by the consultants, Hassell, Pty Ltd, who have worked closely with the Department of Infrastructure, the Bass Coast Shire, and a Steering Committee. The twelve-member Steering Committee includes seven local residents, three of whom are PICS members: Anne Davie, Margaret Hancock and Ann Penaluna.

The first draft was exhibited in Cowes and San Remo during January. The second draft should be on display from Queen's Birthday weekend through to the end of the coming school holidays.

You will be able to see the Draft at the Customer Service Centre in Cowes, the Phillip Island Library, the Mobile Library, and somewhere in San Remo. The San Remo venue remains to be chosen.

The second Draft is long, and needs to be read with care. Please set aside some time to work your way through the Draft and make comment.

When accepted by the Bass Coast Shire Council, the Draft recommendations will be the basis of Amendments to the Municipal Strategic Statement and Planning Scheme.

Margaret Hancock, Member of Design Framework Steering Committee

LONG -TERM PLANNING

Running side by side with the 'Pride of Place' Design Framework is the preparation of a long-term plan for Observation Point, Rhyll Inlet, Conservation Hill, the Tip, Rhyll Swamp and Rowell's Swamp. We hope to be able to display this plan at the General Meeting on July 7th.

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CHURCHILL ISLAND REPORT

Currently FOCIS is discussing a new brochure — black and white, or colour. Two filing cabinets have been purchased to house the Archives. The cannon restoration is almost complete, whilst a new machinery shed will be started when plans are back from the National Trust. The Wetlands Project is soon to begin and the old car park is to be landscaped.

It is almost 30 years since Churchill Island was bought for the people of Victoria by the State Government. A celebration is being planned for later in the year.

In farm news, the arrival of a new calf, "Little Pat", has caused excitement. Lights have been installed in the stable and a new cattle crush has been purchased. Planting of winter pasture is taking place in the Working Horse paddock, along with planting of winter oats, potatoes and buckwheat.

Julie Box

TWO REGULAR DATES

The **FIRST SATURDAY** in every month is 'HABITAT DAY' -

seed collecting, planting, weeding. Contact Patsy Hunt, (phone 5952 2407) for the venue.

The *SECOND TUESDAY* in every month is the **KOALA COUNT** at the Koala Conservation Centre from 10 am until about noon.

LANDCARE ACTION

We all know bridal creeper, ivy and various woody weeds have been the bane of our lives for many years — on foreshores, public and private land, and now, potentially, in our wonderful Wildlife Corridor. A recent meeting of groups long interested and active in weed eradication and re-vegetation — PICS, Friends of the Koalas, Coast Action and Landcare — resulted in two grant applications aimed at co-ordinating everyone's efforts. Landcare has applied for \$27,000 for development and implementation of a **weed** strategy and \$28,000 for a **re-vegetation** strategy and its implementation, including \$1500 to employ a co-ordinator to get everyone together with their ideas and priorities, write a draft for comment then complete the strategy document. The strategy will be for the next 10 years and will provide a much-needed co-ordinated approach to what we would all love to see happen — **NO MORE WEEDS!** We'll let you know how Landcare gets on.

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BARB MARTIN BUSHBANK

Almost 20,000 plants have been ordered for Phillip Island projects this year; ten hectares of remnant vegetation will be fenced (the most for some years) and 10 km of fencing will be erected. Urban Landcare is starting to take off and many small properties have registered for projects. The autumn planting program had been delayed because of the dry weather but the recent welcome rains means the tree planters are on the job again. The final leg of the wildlife corridor, joining the Penguin Parade to the Oswin Roberts Reserve will be completed in June.

The Bushbank has experienced visitation by unwelcome mice that appear to have acquired a taste for the young tree stock. This has meant that volunteers are needed more than ever so that orders for plants can be activated. If anyone has any spare time to assist at the Bushbank please contact Stephen Curwood on 0409 608030. Your participation is invaluable and is most appreciated.

RED ROCKS PROJECT

We have received a further grant for this project, which will take us as far as the Penguin Avenue steps. There are funds in hand for weed

eradication from the Red Rocks path to Penguin Avenue, the five hundred plants that are ready to be picked up from the Bushbank, and the replacement of the Penguin Avenue stairs. When all that is done, we hope to continue to Salt Water Creek.



Be at the Working Bee on Sunday, July 7th, 10 a.m.!

FROGS

If you are interested in frogs then **The Victorian Frog Group** is for you — they have regular evening meetings at the Melbourne Zoo and lots of field trips during the year. For more information, write to the Membership Secretary, 5a Harper St, Northcote, 3070.

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And also

Thank you to our newsletter sponsor **Kevron Plastics** (Tel 03 9387 9811), Australia's Leading Manufacturer of Plastic Identification Products.

The hard copy of our newsletter contains some items that are not included in the online version. The PICS newsletter is available at the Phillip Island Library.

The items from this issue included in the hard copy are:

- Cartoons by Karen & John Eddy
 - Sketches by Christine Grayden and John Eddy
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YOUR PICS COMMITTEE

The PICS Committee, elected at the AGM, meets once a month to discuss issues of immediate concern to the conservation of wildlife on Phillip Island. These meetings are very informative and challenging. Members are welcome to attend at 8.00 pm on the first Friday of each month. Meetings are usually held at the home of Coral Wood.

Please consider nominating for a Committee position next year. The Committee can always use new members and ideas. A nomination form will be in the last newsletter of the year before the next AGM.

The positions for 2002 are as follows:

President	Margaret Hancock (Ph/Fax 5952-2557)
Senior Vice President	Rose Thomas
Junior Vice President	Sandra Shively
Secretary	Margaret Johnson (Temporary help needed)
Minutes Secretary	Bruce Howe
Treasurer	Gillian Collins (Ph 5956 8840)
Newsletter	Christine Grayden/John Eddy (Ph 5956 8501; Fax 5956 8314)
Meeting notices and publicity	S. Shively, Rose Thomas
Ventnor Public Land Committee	Greg Johnson
Red Rocks Coast Action Project	Position urgently needs to be filled
South Coast Walking Track	Penny Manning
Friends of Churchill Island Liaison	Julie Box
Barb Martin Bushbank Liaison	Anne Davie
Westernport CMA	Graeme Burgan
Landcare Liaison	Morag Mackay
Landcare Salinity Committee	John Jansson
Website	Diane Baird

Manager	
Meeting Venue	Coral Wood

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