



NEWSLETTER OF
PHILLIP ISLAND
CONSERVATION SOCIETY EST. 1968

WEBSITE : picsvictoria.org.au

FACEBOOK : facebook.com/picsvictoria

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Second Quarter: June 2016

Dates for Your Diary 2016

Red Rocks Coastcare (starting at 10 a.m. from the carpark)

Sunday 3rd July: planting

Sunday 25th Sep: angled onion control and rubbish clean up

Sunday 20th Nov: Spurgebusters at Justice Rd (sea spurge seedling control)

Saltwater Creek Coastcare (starting at 10 a.m., but will start from various locations. You will be advised closer to the time)

Sunday 19th June: planting

Sunday 14th Aug

Sunday 23rd Oct (Warning: GP weekend)

Friends of Scenic Estate Reserve (all working bees are from 10 a.m. to 12 noon, and start from the SER carpark)

Sunday 26 June: planting, especially around wetlands and bare areas

Sunday 11 Sep: grasslands maintenance

Sunday 11 Dec: possible mangrove planting in intertidal zone (TBC)

Phillip Island Landcare (various locations) (not a PICS group. contact Mike Cleeland: mikeosaurus@yahoo.com.au)

Sunday 19 July: planting

Saturday 13 Aug: planting

PICS General Meetings:

NB: CHANGE OF DATE TO **Saturday 9th July**, 7.30 p.m. Heritage Centre meeting room, 89 Thompson Ave Cowes.

Speaker: Bruce Robertson will tell us what he has discovered about Pacific Gulls – there aren't many of them!

Saturday 24th September, 7.30 p.m. Heritage Centre meeting room, 89 Thompson Ave Cowes. Speaker: TBA.

Saturday 7th January 2017 Annual General Meeting, St Philip's Parish Hall, cnr Thompson Ave and Church St Cowes.

Bring and share meal 6.30 p.m. Meeting 7.30 p.m. Annual reports; election of office bearers. (No speaker)

Enquiries: Christine Grayden, ph 5956 8501 m 0400 900 612 e: cgrayden@waterfront.net.au

Sub-committees of PICS:

Red Rocks Coastcare/Friends of Scenic Estate Reserve: Co-ordinator is John Eddy, ph 5956 8501 e:

cgrayden@waterfront.net.au

Saltwater Creek Coastcare: Co-ordinator is Kevin Harris kevin@grating.com.au

Other groups:

Preserve Western Port Action Group (against the Port of Hastings): preservewesternport@gmail.com Official phone number is: 0456 612 852 Facebook: Preserve Western Port Action Group. Media contact: Jeff Nottle

nottle@bigpond.net.au Secretary: Kate 0409 692 425.

Barb Martin Bush Bank: Sales and volunteers – every Wednesday + 1st Saturday of each month 10 – 1. Phone Anne Davie ph 5956 8216

Friends of Koalas (FOK) Habitat Days: First Sat of every month at 10 a.m. **Koala Count** at the Koala Conservation Centre, second Tuesday of every month at 10 a.m. Contact Patsy Hunt ph 5952 2407

Friends of Churchill Island (FOCIS): email: secretary@focis.org.au

Groundswell Bass Coast Climate Change action group: <http://groundswellbasscoast.com> Contact Ray Astbury: rugged@people.net.au phone 5952 1991.

Bird Life Bass Coast: Penny Manning, convener, penny@waterfront.net.au



PHILLIP ISLAND CONSERVATION SOCIETY INC

GENERAL MEETING

Saturday 9th July, 2016, 7.30 p.m.

Speaker: Bruce Robertson –

“Variations in the Pacific Gull around Australia”

Followed by reports and general business

Heritage Centre meeting room, 89 Thompson Ave Cowes.

Photo J J Harrison, Wikipedia.

PICS COMMITTEE 2016

President: Anne Davie (media contact 5956 8216) e: bimbadeen@nex.net.au

Vice President: Pauline Taylor ph 5952 5485

Secretary: Christine Grayden, ph 5956 8501 e: cgrayden@waterfront.net.au

Minutes Secretary: Gillian Collins

Treasurer: **VACANT**

Committee: Steven Angel (webmaster), Margaret Hancock (planning), Penny Manning (Chair of c/ee and sub c/ee meetings) Terry Nott, Jeff Nottle, Lisa Schonberg. **ONE POSITION VACANT**

C/ee meets at 9.30 a.m. mostly on 4th Sat of each month at Community Emmaus Room, Parish Hall Cowes.

President's Letter to Members

It has been a busy few months for the PICS Committee, attending Information sessions and responding to the Draft Plan of the Bass Coast Environment Strategy and the Phillip Island Tourism Strategy. The Environment Plan has been endorsed by Council and submissions have recently closed for the Tourism Strategy. The Cape Woolamai Structure Plan has now been released for comment.

Sunday, June 5th was World Environment Day and I attended the Paris 1.5 degree Active Hope Event at the Outtrim Hall. The event was organised by the Energy Innovation Co-operative and was well attended. The Group was formed a few years ago to – Work Together Towards a Zero Emissions Community.

The transition from a fossil fuel- based culture to a renewable energy-based community, will need to enable change on many levels - government, corporate, local and individual. Across the world, communities are taking the lead, actively promoting change by holding events that reinforce each other, generate momentum and show people how they can make a difference.

Manny Pasqualini from Community Power Agency was the Guest Speaker. It is about communities developing, delivering and benefiting from sustainable, energy products. In Germany 47% of all renewable energy is owned by citizens and communities.



Currently there are 31 community projects operating in Australia and more than 70 groups developing projects. National Landcare is a good example of how it is possible to mobilise people across areas. E.g. Landcare for Clean Energy.

In this area there is a local group formed, known as Community Making Energy Together [CMET]. It has representatives from Bass Coast Shire, South Gippsland Shire, Mirboo North, Western Port Water, the Energy Innovative Co-op and 3 unaffiliated members. It will apply for funding to enable a Community Making Energy project.

The Conservation Society brochure “Do You Love Phillip Island?” has proved popular with members and is a good talking point with the people who call at the Society’s Street Stalls. Our thanks to committee members Steve Angel and Christine Larsen for the brochure and to Steve for the stickers that will be soon available.



A special request to members: If you know of someone who would be willing to offer their services as the PICS Treasurer, the committee would be very appreciative. The system used is a simple book-based one (not computer) and all books are up to date.

With Federal and Council Elections this year, it is hoped that a Healthy Environment Future is well and truly centre-stage.

Anne Davie

Please note that there are no general meeting minutes in this newsletter due to a lack of quorum for the last general meeting.

Western Port: Industrialisation or Recreation? The future to be decided within a year!

A lot of information relating to a container port and the future of Hastings and Western Port is in the media. Look through the daily releases and it is crystal clear the future of Western Port will be decided within year! The Special Minister for State, The Hon Gavin Jennings, wrote to the Board of Infrastructure Victoria (IV) last month requesting IV to come up with a final recommendation on the siting of Melbourne’s future container port.

We welcome this development as the clear and very precise instructions from the Government to Infrastructure Victoria, in that all aspects of environmental, social and economic impacts on Western Port are to be considered. This is precisely what our group has been advocating, since we were formed just over two years ago.

The 2 key container port questions are: When and Where?

1. When is a further container port needed?

Media reports including The Age article of 23 May entitled “Hastings versus Bay West port bout deferred for another decade”. It also reported. “A new container port for Melbourne could be decades away...”

Some media, politicians and other commentators have seized on the comments and spread around the headline.

However, this media report or any related commentary does not represent the findings of IV. Proponents of the port at Hastings will be making submissions to IV on their demand estimates. IV will consider all the reports and consultations and make their recommendations to Government. It is only the IV recommendation on the timing that is relevant.

Previously presented LNP timeframes for a further container port were based on the supply led demand for a port i.e. “Build it and they will come” – and not demand-led supply.

We are encouraged that the very important demand-led analysis will be transparent and subject to detailed analysis by IV. We made this point clearly at our presentation to the Parliamentary Inquiry into Port leases conducted last year.

Nevertheless, a recommendation to Government taken today could see a new port fully operational in a decade as the planning and building will take up to a decade to complete.

2. Where is a further container port to be located?

IV has been formally asked to provide final formal advice to Government by May 2017. The 2 locations to be considered are Hastings and Bay West. Any other mooted locations are now off the table.

We are aware that IV is receiving submissions from interested parties now. All indications are that IV is seeking evidence now to inform their early stages of their reporting processes.

The clear message is that the decision on the location of another container port will be subject to final reporting next year. I urge all those interested in the future of Western Port and Phillip Island environments and economies to act now in preparing evidence to provide to IV.

We do have some time to develop a detailed submission whilst giving our hard working group of volunteers a break from two years of meetings, market stalls, brochure drops, web development, writing discussion papers and letters to local media, plus presentations to Councils, Government Committees and Western Port Fishing Clubs. *Jeff Nottle*

Preserve Western Port Action Group

Email: preservewesternport@gmail.com

Web: www.preservewesternport.org.au

Minister approves Land Subject to Inundation Overlay Amendment

The Minister for Planning has approved Amendment C82 Land Subject to Inundation Overlay with the new controls now forming part of the Bass Coast Planning Scheme. This Amendment is a joint project between Bass Coast Shire Council, Melbourne Water and the West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority.

Bass Coast Mayor, Cr Jordan Crugnale, said the approval by the Minister is a major step forward in long term planning for areas that are at risk of riverine and coastal inundation.

“We welcome the decision of the Minister, which confirms Council’s commitment to working with the community to secure a built environment that complements our landscape, lifestyle and climate,” Cr Crugnale said.



“Working collaboratively with partner agencies, Amendment C82 is at the vanguard of planning for flood risk across Victoria. It introduces new planning permit requirements for earthworks, buildings and works in areas identified as at risk of flooding.”

Inclusion of flood and coastal inundation information into the Bass Coast Planning Scheme will allow for immediate access to the necessary information about flooding. This information will appear on planning and property information certificates, and may also be used to help Council and other agencies plan and prioritise

emergency management and drainage management plans.

“This means any affected areas can be identified and considered in the early stages of the development process,” Cr Crugnale said. “This will help to ensure that new development is designed with flooding risk in mind.”

For further information regarding the adopted Amendment C82, please visit www.basscoast.vic.gov.au/lsio.

From Bass Coast Shire Council website, 02 June 2016 Photo: John Jansson

HOODED PLOVERS

Phillip Island has had 17 chicks fledge so far this season. **This is the best total for a very long time, probably recorded history.** Between 1992 and 2015 the highest previous total was 12 (average 6).

Chicks fledged: 2 Elizabeth Cove, 1 Red Rocks, 2 Anchorage, 1 Forrest Caves west, 2 Hutchison Beach, 2 Smiths Beach, 2 Berrys Beach, 2 Colonnades, 1 Woolshed Bight, 2 Flynns Reef. There were 40 nests (average for 23 years = 27) with 93 eggs (average for 23 years = 63). There have been 51 chicks (previous best 26, average for 23 years = 15.5), 35 have perished, and there may still be a slow developing chick at Elizabeth Cove.

Breeding has finished and a number of pairs have abandoned their nesting territory to form winter flocks.

There was great concern for the Elizabeth Cove chicks when they were banded. The two chicks were found to be very under-developed. One of the chicks YLF 30 was found dead on the beach by Maurice who has monitored the chicks almost constantly. An autopsy has found:

“The fledgling had no sign of disease although I thought its thorax was dorso-ventrally compressed which may indicate a congenital structural deformity. There was no evidence of trauma.”

Photo: Phillip Island Nature Parks.



WILDLIFE REHABILITATION AND ANIMAL WELFARE

The wildlife rehabilitation rangers have been kept busy during February and March caring for a wide variety of wildlife, including – wattlebirds, Cape Barren Geese, Australian Magpies, Brush-tail and Ringtail Possums, Rainbow Lorikeets, Silver Gulls, wallabies, echidnas, long-necked tortoises, kookaburras, Short-tailed and Fluttering Shearwaters, microbats, Masked Lapwings, ibis, Purple Swamphens, Crested Terns, Pacific Gulls, New Holland Honeyeaters, Blue-tongued Lizards and a Fairy Prion. We have also attended calls regarding seals and have cared for over 30 little penguins during this time.

The Fairy Prion was delivered to us by unusual means – staff from a large cruise ship called, they were coming in to dock at Cowes in early February. The prion had landed on their deck while they were cruising Bass Strait, and hadn't taken flight again by the time they got to Phillip Island. The prion was weak and a little malnourished, but after a short layover and gourmet meals at the Wildlife Clinic, he/she regained strength and flew off beautifully on release!

Nature Parks' Rangers responded to nearly 150 calls to the wildlife hotline during February and

Reports from Phillip Island Nature Parks Environment News, March 2016.

Oiled wildlife workshop

In mid-May PICS c/ee member and wildlife photographer Lisa Schonberg was fortunate to be able to attend an accredited course: “Rescue animals and apply basic first aid; Oiled wildlife response for small seabirds.”

It was well presented and organised with the PINP staff teaching a room full of women who had volunteered for the day. Some were back after training 2 years ago but mostly new-comers from wild life rescue shelters in the district to locals with a passion to help if needed. Having local residents ready to respond immediately will mean a better success rate for any injured/oiled birds.



The atmosphere in that day was a dedicated group of women keen to learn with many questions and open discussion. Those who had previous experience were keen to guide the students. The course covered all areas from Occupational Health and Safety, types of oil spills, handling, capturing and transport of birds, through to assessment, cleaning and drying of oiled birds. Team work was the key to any successful rescue of large numbers of oiled birds and further training was welcomed by the group if the opportunity arose.

Photo shows Wendy and Deb holding models used for the workshop. Photo and article by Lisa Schonberg

Friends of Scenic Estate Reserve

Report 4th June 2016

1. Yr 9 students from Newhaven College, under the direction of teacher Brendan Kimber and the Shire's Dave Martin, spent several hours cutting and laying thatching on the Wetlands at Scenic Estate Reserve on the 12th May. They planned to return on 9th June to do some planting.
2. Junior Landcare undertook an activity in the Reserve on 21st May, a combination of weeding, rubbish collecting, bird-watching and planting.
3. A PhD student from RMIT, Anna Backstrom, contacted me regarding the Reserve as an example of ecosystems arising from human disturbance, which is her line of research. Last Saturday, I met Anna at the Reserve, and we did a detailed tour of the various plant communities and sites of cultural interest. I think she found it most useful, and seemed very enthusiastic about the Reserve, and the changes that are taking place.
4. The FOSER committee has written to the BCSC CEO, Paul Buckley, suggesting some measures that could improve traffic safety for visitors entering or exiting the Reserve carpark. No reply has been received yet.
5. Our Planting Day for volunteers will be on Sunday, 26th June. We will concentrate on some bare areas towards the centre of the Reserve, as well as strengthen the Wetlands planting. Rain over May has totalled over 100mm, put some water back into the Wetlands, and made conditions good for planting.

John Eddy FOSER Coordinator 4.6.16



Red Rocks Coastcare Report 4th June 2016

1. Our main Planting Day was Sunday 5th June. We had 450 plants to go in, and unlike last year when many of the Seaberry Saltbush plants were disease-affected, these plants are all off to a good start. We planted over the same 9 sites as last year, replacing some plants that failed in the drought, and continue to establish groundcover where Blue Periwinkle once covered.

Photo Maurice Schinkel

John Eddy, Red Rocks Coastcare Coordinator 4.6.16

Saltwater Creek Coastcare Report 4th June 2016

1. The Clean Up Day on the 8th May was cancelled due to rain. However, later in the day when weather cleared, Kevin, Alison and I walked in to the Banksia project site, and cleaned up some displaced guards. We also checked on the survival of Banksias and Bursarias in the tall netting guards, to estimate replacement. I have Banksia seedlings, grown from local seed, ready for this purpose.

2. The main Planting Day will be on 19th June, and will concentrate on the old road reserve south of the Creek. Dave Martin has organised plants for that.



Saltwater Creek; Photo: Lisa Schonberg

3. Friends of Saltwater Creek Reserve.

The Council is attempting to start a Friends group to cover the actual Creek Reserve. SWCC only covers the foreshore reserve on both sides of the creek. Dave Martin convened a public meeting at the end of Heyley Ave last Saturday, 25th May, for that purpose. About 12 locals turned up, and while all were keen for a group to be formed and were willing to take part, nobody was prepared to take the lead as coordinator. We created an email list of those present for future communication, but the way ahead is unclear.

John Eddy, for Kevin Harris, SWCC coordinator

Phillip Island Conservation Society, Inc.
The Penguin Newsletter
Second Quarter: June 2016
If undeliverable, return to:
PICS Inc.
PO Box 548
COWES, 3922

Our Public Fund

Did you know that PICS has a Public Fund and that you can make a tax deductible donation into the fund? We use the fund for special works such as botanical surveys and funding environmental works. Recently we were able to donate \$500 over two years to a very worthwhile cause: Bayview Park; a small park within an estate near Cowes. The park has high environmental significance but had been neglected for many years until local residents and PICS members got together with the help of BCSC to eliminate the weeds and plant indigenous species. Here is what Sue Saliba, the main person driving this project had to say in her “thank you” card to PICS:

“Thank you so much for kindly giving a grant of \$500 for Bayview Park. I have ordered 125 plants for this year from the Bush Bank and then ...a small group of volunteers will put the plants in...Your generous grant has made it possible for us to add more beautiful indigenous plants to the remnant bushland and hopefully make a home for many of our gorgeous native birds and small animals, as well as raise awareness of our precious indigenous plants within the local community.

Last year we had a lovely butcherbird family in their nest in the area and over summer I saw a number of nice healthy blue-tongues. Yesterday there were thornbills flitting around in there, so hopefully, in time, we’ll see more and more. Thank you again – the grant will make such a difference. And thanks for all you do!”

If you would like to donate to the Public Fund and receive a tax deductible receipt, please go to our website: <http://picsvictoria.org.au/donate/> where you can make a secure donation using Paypal. Or send a cheque or money order made out to the Phillip Island Conservation Society Public Fund and mail to PO Box 548 COWES 3922.



Photo shows Bruno, Sue, Kate and Jan planting among the remnant swamp paperbark at Bayview Park.

Photo: Maurice Schinkel.