

Third Quarter: September 2014

## Dates for Your Diary 2014-2015

Sunday 21 Sep: **Preserve Western Port Family Picnic**: byo picnic. Entertainment, stalls, information. 11 a.m. – 4 p.m. Erewhon Point end of Cowes foreshore. Come along and bring your family and friends!

Sunday 28 Sep **Red Rocks Coast Care working bee**. Weed control. Details as per July 6

Sat 4 Oct **General Meeting** 7.30 p.m. Speaker below. Heritage Centre Meeting Room, 89 Thompson Ave Cowes.

Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> November: **Meet the Candidates forum** for the state election. 7.30 p.m. start. Cuppa to follow. All welcome.

Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> November: **Saltwater Creek Coast Care working bee**: meet at 10 a.m. end of Settlement Rd.

Sat 10 Jan 2015 **AGM**.

**Enquiries**: Christine Grayden, ph 5956 8501 m 0400 900 612 e: [cgrayden@waterfront.net.au](mailto:cgrayden@waterfront.net.au)

*Sub-committees of PICS:*

**Preserve Western Port Action Group** (against the Port of Hastings): [preservewesternport@gmail.com](mailto:preservewesternport@gmail.com) Official phone number is: 0456 612 852 Facebook: Preserve Western Port Action Group. Media contact: Jeff Nottle [nottle@bigpond.net.au](mailto:nottle@bigpond.net.au) Secretary: Kate 0409 692 425.

**Red Rocks Coast Care**: contact details see diary.

**Saltwater Creek Coast Care**: Co-ordinator is Kevin Harris [kevin@grating.com.au](mailto:kevin@grating.com.au)

*Other groups:*

**Barb Martin Bush Bank**: Sales and volunteers – every Wednesday + 1<sup>st</sup> 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: [webmaster@friendsofchurchillisland.org.au](mailto:webmaster@friendsofchurchillisland.org.au)

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

**Bird Life Bass Coast**: Penny Manning, convener, [penny@waterfront.net.au](mailto:penny@waterfront.net.au)

## PHILLIP ISLAND CONSERVATION SOCIETY INC GENERAL MEETING

Saturday, October 4<sup>th</sup>, 7.30 p.m., Heritage Centre meeting room, 89 Thompson Ave Cowes.



Jonathon Stephenson, Parks Victoria ranger, will speak about  
“The Unique South” and all

the animals and algae that live there and nowhere else in the world. A fascinating presentation not to be missed - and suitable for all ages!

Supper and chat to follow the meeting. All welcome.

## **PICS COMMITTEE 2014**

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: Danielle Angel

Committee: Terry Nott, Steven Angel, Penny Manning (Chair of c/ee and sub c/ee meetings), Margaret Hancock, Lisa Schonberg

C/ee meets at 10.30 a.m. on 4<sup>th</sup> Sat of each month at Community Room, Parish Hall Cowes.

### ***President's Letter to Members***

With the State Election now only a few weeks away, environmental issues will hopefully emerge as extremely important, not only for Phillip Island, but the whole state of Victoria.

The proposed expansion of the Port of Hastings [POH], will dominate the debate for the Western Port communities. Preserve Western Port [PWP], a sub-committee of PICS, is working with the Western Port Protection Council [WPPC], French Island and the Waterline communities to send a strong message to the major political parties, that a major container port and wildlife cannot co-exist. The proposal will have a significant negative impact on tourism jobs.

A very successful Celebrating Western Port Art Exhibition, held last month in Cowes, raised much needed funds for the PWP campaign. It was organised by artist, John Adam, and the generosity of local artists was quite amazing.

PWP members have attended a Seminar, presented by Dr. Hermione Parsons [Victorian University Institute for Supply Chain and Logistics]. Her research and concerns about the POH proposal have been extensively reported in the media.

PWP hosted a Scenario Planning Workshop for Western Port at the Newhaven Yacht Squadron last month. Scenario Planning is a structural process of exploring and evaluating plausible futures. The Bass Coast Council provided \$5,000 for the event which was well attended. The Workshop was of 5 days duration and was



strongly supported by Victorian National Parks Association. The workshop was led by Dr. Robert Costanza who holds a Chair in Public Policy at the ANU. Dr. Ida Kubiszewski, a Senior Lecturer at the Crawford School of Policy at ANU also presented. The outcome of the workshop will be available shortly. PICS hosted a Dinner for the Conference leaders and participants in the Parish Hall. Lisa Schonberg, PICS

committee member, and daughter Alia presented a wonderful Power-Point on the Marine Life of Western Port.

PWP is planning a **Preserve Western Port Picnic on Sunday, September 21<sup>st</sup> from 11 am to 4 pm** on the Cowes foreshore. The event will include stalls, games and music to celebrate the wonderful asset we all enjoy: Western Port.

It was with much sadness that we learned of the passing of Hilton Chadwick. Hilton was PICS first Treasurer. He had a strong commitment to the preservation of the Island's natural environment and will be truly missed. Committee member Pauline Taylor also lost her husband Geoff, who has always been such a support to her in her community and conservation work.

*Anne Davie*

## ***Planning Matters***

Recent months have been relatively quiet on the "planning front", with approved developments which are underway just moving along in an orderly manner. Suddenly, the developer of the "Woolamai House" subdivision has appealed against some of the previously accepted conditions, so, next week we go back to VCAT for a Mediation Session, and, if that fails, back for a Hearing on October 30 and 31.

If you are in Wonthaggi on any day from October 6 to October 9, Planning Panels Victoria will be hearing submissions on C82 – the Amendment which considers the effects of projected sea level rise on land use in Bass Coast Shire. The Hearings are held in the Shire Council Buildings at Wonthaggi from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. each day and are open to the public. If you have not previously been to a Hearing, come along and find out how the system works! And you will learn a lot, both from the submitters and the Expert Witnesses.

The "Isle of Wight" site has not yet attracted a buyer, so we continue to wait and watch.

PICS sub-committee "Preserve Western Port" is hard at work gathering information about the proposed Port of Hastings Development and associated dredging – all BAD NEWS for the environment. The alternative proposal of a similar Container Port in Port Phillip is equally bad for that environment. What is the logic of wanting Australia's biggest container port at the southern most part of the continent? There is a long way to go with this proposal!

Wherever you live in Victoria, PLEASE meet the candidate in your electorate, and find out their views on the development of a huge container port, and make your environmental views known to them!

*Margaret Hancock.*

## ***Red Rocks Coast Care***

1. Our Planting Day on 13<sup>th</sup> July was again most successful, with the 13 volunteers putting in 460 plants at 7 sites from which Blue Periwinkle has been almost eliminated. As always, thanks to the Shire's environment officers Dave Martin and Rhiannon Grinham for delivering the tools, gloves and plants. Special thanks also to our member, Ross Lloyd, who though disabled after recent ankle surgery, kindly assembled all the guards prior to the event. Our first scheduled Planting day on the 6<sup>th</sup> July was postponed due to heavy overnight rain and flooding.
2. 16 more high mesh guards were installed the following weekend around most of the moonahs and Bursaria planted. Over the week, wallabies had pulled out and partly eaten 2 of the 3 Bursaria seedlings planted. I was able to replant them. The guards have proved very effective, but obviously need to be installed around Bursaria plants straight after planting.
3. At my school, students recently potted on 80 Pigface plants grown from cuttings, after 100% success rate. Checks have been made to ensure the cuttings came from the indigenous species *Carpobrotus rossii*, and not either of the weed *Carpobrotus* species. The students have also potted on 60 Bower Spinach plants. These are all intended for planting at Red Rocks, probably next autumn.
4. Significant beach erosion has occurred over the winter, with the foredune cut back further between Red Rocks Point and Penguin Rocks. Continuation of this erosion will soon threaten the lower parts of the stairways and protective fencing, but most sand seems to be staying in the local beach system. Some is likely to shift back to

the upper beach over summer. Some action may be required next year to maintain safe access for beach users, and to protect dune vegetation.

5. Our next working bee is on Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> Sept, 10am to 12 noon, starting from the Red Rocks carpark. We will be combating thistles and other weeds, and doing some clean-up of planting sites. All welcome.

*John Eddy, RRCC coordinator. 15.9.14*

## *Saltwater Creek Coast Care*

The newly formed Saltwater Creek Coast Care had 2 working bees in June & July.

The eastern side of Salt Water Creek ( near Aussie Golf Ranch) was cleared of box thorn by machine, this was followed up by volunteers finishing the clearing of box thorn.

We were really pleased with the turnout of around 25 people of all ages for the planting day. We planted over 500 trees in 2 locations. One site was where the box thorn had been cleared. The second site was the west side of Salt Water Creek. This is the first step in the plan to restore native vegetation to the area.

Thanks to all who have supported the Salt Water Coast Care, thanks to John Eddy for writing the submission for funding for the removal of the box thorn & revegetation. Also, in the Spring Coastell magazine from BCSC, listed under works is an entry telling us that \$283,000 has been allocated for a new walking track, boardwalks and bridge at Saltwater Creek, to be commenced in early 2015.

The next working bee will be on 23rd November, meet at the end of Settlement Rd at 10am.

Best regards,

For more information or queries, please contact:

Volunteer Co-ordinator

Kevin Harris

0418507355 [kevin@grating.com.au](mailto:kevin@grating.com.au)

## Facebook

Have you been on the PICS facebook page yet? Over 400 people a week visit to catch up with Phillip Island environment news, and all the PICS action, including Red Rocks and Saltwater Creek Coast Care photos and information. Find us at

<http://www.facebook.com/picsvictoria>

## **PICS WEBSITE & DONATIONS**

Our website, put together by c/ee member Steve Angel, is always worth a visit. Remember, now you can make donations securely online on the PICS website with Paypal. Go to [www.picsvictoria.org.au](http://www.picsvictoria.org.au) Donations of \$2 or more to the Public Fund are tax deductible. You will be sent a tax deductible receipt from one of the signatories to the Public Fund. Or you can mail a cheque or postal order to PICS Treasurer, PO Box 548, COWES, 3922.



PHILLIP ISLAND CONSERVATION SOCIETY INC  
MINUTES OF THE GENERAL MEETING 5.7.2014.  
MEETING ROOM, HERITAGE CENTRE COWES.

Welcome and acknowledgement of country. President Anne Davie welcomed Carmen Bush, who has not attended before.

PRESENT: As per attendance book.

APOLOGIES: As per attendance book.

SPEAKER: Rebecca MacIntosh, PINP. "Australia's charismatic otariids: fur seals and sea lions". Rebecca spoke about her research on Australian sea lions, New Zealand and Australian fur seals, and the various differences between each species. While fur seals are very tactile and like to lie close or even over each other, sea lions are very aloof, don't like being touched, and can be quite aggressive, chasing researchers up to a kilometre over sand dunes to see them off their territory or away from their pups. Many of the sea lion colonies along the south coast of Australia are small in number and therefore very vulnerable. Our own fur seals would be very vulnerable to an oil spill in the vicinity of Seal Rocks, especially in breeding season where the pups would not be able to get off the Rocks, and oil would stick to the rocks and certainly get onto the pups. Anne gave the **vote of thanks**, saying that Rebecca had given us lots of new information and a completely new view of sea lions and the travails of researching them! Rebecca was given a gift of the PICS History book.



Photos from Wikipedia

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING 12.4.14 Margaret Hancock/Penny Manning. *Carried.*

MATTERS ARISING:

1. Fires on Beaches: Phone 000; BCSC fine \$200
2. Green waste response – letter from BCSC confirming trial to be continued and extended and thanking PICS for our efforts in combating garden escapes on the foreshores.
3. PINP Key Area Plan south and north coasts – continuing.

CORRESPONDENCE:

Inwards: (all emails)

Steve Angel, website manager, re adding Donate button to PICS website.

Birdlife Australia re communicating with the public seminar/workshop Friday 15<sup>th</sup> August, Carlton.

Stefan Poll, Env't ranger, PINP re planting morning at Kitty Miller Bay, Sunday 19.7.14, 10-12.

Register of Environmental Organisations re 2014 statistical return (Public Fund accountability)

Various correspondence regarding PWP setting up a separate bank account and not banking and receipting cash donations – to committee

Various correspondence regarding PICS joining Farm Tree & Landcare Assn to access public liability insurance – to committee.

Gillian Collins expressing concern regarding our joining FTLA – to committee

Patsy Hunt reported that Sue Saliba had received a certificate from Bird Life Australia for her dedication to the Hooded Plover Watch program at Red Rocks.

Outwards: nil since c/ee meeting last week.

## REPORTS:

### Red Rocks and Saltwater Creek Coastcare

John Eddy reported on the activities of our two Coast Care groups, including that the first official working bee of the Saltwater Creek Coast Care group will be held on National Tree Day on Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> July, for tree planting on two sites. Please see updated reports elsewhere in this newsletter.

### Preserve Western Port Action Group

Anne reported that PWP had started in March and has already had several articles in the media. Professor Costanza from the ANU is coming to facilitate a week-long series of workshops on various scenarios for Western Port. A paper will be produced based on the workshop results. PWP met with the Minister for Ports and the Shadow Minister, and Peter Ryan the Regional Minister. They also met with BCSC CEO – support from council. They have done a tour of Western Port by boat, attended the Boat Show to alert ‘boaties’ of the problems that will result from port development; Jeff Nottle did a radio interview; and issues paper is being written; and many talks given to community groups.

### Treasurer’s Report:

Distributed and read by Christine Grayden in Treasurer Dani Angel’s absence.

Penny Manning/Margaret Hancock *Carried.*

## GENERAL BUSINESS:

1. Baffle lights at the Woolamai development. PINP will write to the developer requesting baffle lights to protect shearwaters flying in the area.

Penny Manning/Patsy Hunt “That we write to the developer and request that the street lighting be baffled”  
*Carried.*

2. Patsy Hunt reported that the large pines have been removed from the back of the Five Ways reserve. Friends of Koalas will replant the area after a suitable period of time. Nest boxes have been put up in the reserve. Bigger voluntary groups will be needed to do major replanting.



3. John Eddy reported on roadside management needed in vicinity of Conservation Hill and will probably be done towards the end of the month. Mostly Swamp Paperbark involved – no gum trees. Method will be with special machine which cuts down vertically and does not leave shattered ends. Leaves a layer of natural mulch on the ground.

4. Patsy Hunt reported on the domestic animal committee which includes three FIDO organisation people who want dogs off leash everywhere. Meeting Monday 14<sup>th</sup> July. Neither PINP nor Parks Vic are on the c/ee. Margaret Hancock/Penny Manning “That we write to BCSC and suggest that PINP and PV should be attending every DAMAC meeting.” *Carried.*

5. CA 79 The plans include little passive recreation although 55% of respondents said they wanted walking facilities. No off-leash area for dogs included. Lots of active recreation seems to be the priority.

6. Margaret Hancock reported on the gathering at Scenic Estate on Monday 30<sup>th</sup> June. Thanks and congratulations are due to BCSC. PICS members and PICS org have seen 50 years of struggle to get to this stage, starting with Ailsa Swan and Murray Hilgendorf trying to stop the original subdivision. \$300,000 has been given by the government for restoration of the area.

7. Clare Le Serve, a current BCSC councillor, is standing as an independent in the state election for the seat of Bass under the banner of “Voice of Bass”.

8. The date for the Meet the Candidates Forum will be finalised with the candidates as soon as possible.

Meeting closed 9.35 p.m.

The next general meeting will be on Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> October, 7.30 p.m. Heritage Centre Meeting Room.

## *Phillip Island Nature Notes*

Swan Lake may not flood over the paddocks and across Kitty Miller Bay since the “Lake Lukey’s” went in around 1980, but there is certainly a lot of water in the lake this year, and plenty to see – as more and more visitors are discovering! Swan Lake was the first place my husband John and I went together on the first Sunday in spring in 1984, and this year marks our 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of going out there about the same time each year. In the early years we would take photos of each other or the children posed under the Coast Wattle in full bloom. Now when we go out there the wattle has finished blooming, so it’s about three weeks earlier than it was 30 years ago. Another symptom of climate change?



The Cape Barren Geese have certainly made themselves at home on Phillip Island since their reintroduction in the early 1980s by Wildlife Management Officer with the Fisheries and Wildlife Dept, Charles Nancarrow. Charles also introduced Magpie Geese on the basis of a few sightings made by older locals in their childhood, but the foxes quickly did away with them. Charles unfortunately did not live to see the enormous success of his CBG project. At last count in November 2013, a total of 1803 were counted. The next count is due in 2015.

*Photos Lisa Schonberg.*

The south coast of Phillip Island, Western Port and even San Remo have seen many whales visiting this year. PICS members Lisa and Alia Schonberg are dedicated whale watchers and have six years of photographic records of the whales in the area, including many of flukes by which individual members of some species of whales are recognised. Lisa has shared her information and images with various government and non-government agencies to try and make them aware of just how many whales we do have visiting. Certainly the Port of Hastings Development Corporation was previously ignorant of the numbers involved. Thanks Lisa; let’s hope your wonderful images and information will help keep Western Port as a wildlife haven.



*Notes by Christine Grayden.*

*Phillip Island Conservation Society, Inc.*

***The Penguin Newsletter***

Third Quarter: September 2014

If undeliverable, return to:

PICS Inc.

PO Box 548

COWES, 3922

***Extract from a Phillip Island Nature Parks press release on fox control, 27.8.2014***

“Intensive fox baiting at the start of the 1980s had a noticeable effect on reducing the decline of the penguin population but at the time no one was monitoring the success of the method,” Dr Peter Dann (of the PINP Research department) said. “As such, alternative methods such as hunting and trapping soon took over as they produced carcasses, which gave a measure of success. Hunting and trapping foxes also didn’t endanger domestic pets, and was a more appealing activity for participants.” Scientific evaluation of the control programme in the early 2000s revealed the size of the fox population far surpassed the impressions commonly held, and highlighted that even a handful of foxes could have a devastating effect on many penguins.

The programme was transformed in 2006, and this time the objective was eradication. Two fox control officers were employed and island-wide poison baiting was fully implemented due to its measured effectiveness elsewhere. As a result there was a decline from the 125 penguins killed by foxes on the Summerland Peninsula in 2007/08 to five penguins killed in the next four years. The population at Phillip Island’s last remaining penguin colony has also grown from an estimated 12,000 in 1985 to 32,000 today. In 1996 fox numbers on the island were estimated to be 200 but today fewer than a dozen are thought to remain. Foxes are nearly eradicated from Phillip Island, though the remaining few may be challenging to remove and success difficult to qualify.

“Finding the remaining foxes will be difficult but we’ve recently employed two fox detection dogs that will help locate fox scats and scent and find the foxes’ refuges,” Stuart Murphy, manager of the fox program, said. Outfoxing the fox may be possible after all. If successful, Phillip Island will be the largest island from which red foxes have been eradicated. Complete eradication will be a huge achievement and an exemplar for fox control or eradication across Australia and the world. The next stage would be to remain vigilant and monitor for reinvasions. Despite the up and downs over six decades of trying to rid Phillip Island of foxes, the team behind the case study agrees that a lot can be learned from the past.

In summarising the key findings of the study, Dr Dann concluded: “A team dedicated to control programmes is absolutely essential; there is an imperative to measure the effectiveness of each method independently of personal biases; and monitoring both predator and prey populations concurrently is vital so the benefits of control can be demonstrated or management can be adapted.”

