

Newsletter: September 2017

Dates for Your Diary 2017

All working bees to start at 10 am and go to 12 noon. Starting locations to be notified.

General Meeting Dates. Heritage Centre Meeting room, 89 Thompson Ave Cowes: **NB CHANGE OF GENERAL MEETING DATE AND DAY:** Sunday 1st October, 2 p.m. Speaker will be Kaylene from PI Wildlife Rescue. Donations to this service will be happily received on the day.

Scenic Estate Reserve working bees. All Sundays, all 10 a.m. – 12 noon. All equipment and morning tea provided.
Nov 26: Weed control.

Red Rocks Coastcare Working Bees. All Sundays, all 10 am – 12 noon. All equipment and morning tea provided.
September 24: Weed control; November 19: Spurgebusters.
Start from Red Rocks car park unless notified otherwise.

Saltwater Creek Coastcare Work Party dates: All Sundays. All 10 a.m. – 12 noon. All equipment and morning tea provided: September 17: Clean up.

Annual General Meeting: Saturday 6th January, bring and share meal 6 p.m., meeting 7 p.m. St Philip's Parish Hall, Cowes.

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:

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

Sunday, 1st October 2017, 2 p.m.

Heritage Centre meeting room, 89 Thompson Ave Cowes

Speaker: Kayleen from Wildlife Rescue and Carer Shelters Phillip Island.

All welcome. Afternoon tea to follow.



Enqs: Christine 5956 8501 cgrayden@waterfront.net.au

PICS COMMITTEE 2017

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: **VACANT** Acting Minutes Secretary: Christine Grayden

Treasurer: **VACANT** Acting Treasurer: Christine Grayden

Committee: Steven Angel (webmaster), Margaret Hancock (planning), Penny Manning (Chair of c/ee and sub c/ee meetings) Terry Nott, Jeff Nottle, Lisa Schonberg, Phil Wright

C/ee meets at 9.30 a.m. mostly on 1st Sat of each month at Community Emmaus Room, Parish Hall Cowes.

President's Letter to Members

Cannot believe it is Newsletter time again! Always a great thank you to Christine Grayden and John Eddy for yet another edition as I am sure you will agree the Newsletter is very informative. Christine also keeps our Facebook Page and Steve Angel keeps our Website up to date and this takes up quite a lot of time. There is always something happening on the Island.

Gillian Collins has been travelling from the Peninsula each month as the PICS Minute secretary. Last month she informed us that she is unable to continue in this role. PICS is very grateful for her many years involvement with the Society. Gillian will continue as the PICS representative on the Port of Hastings Community Consultative Committee. Meanwhile, if you or someone you know could fill the role of minutes secretary, the PICS committee would be very grateful.

Another committee member Lisa Schonberg and her daughter Alia have just returned from a photographic trip to Tonga to view and record the songs of whales there. We are very excited at the prospect of seeing the result of their expedition as Lisa is a brilliant photographer and she and her daughter just adore whales!

The book "Women in Conservation on Phillip Island" is proceeding well but it is felt that the previous plan to launch the book next March is proving to be ambitious. The date has been moved forward to May and the Minister for Energy and the Environment, Lily D'Ambrosia has been invited to launch it.

The PINPS held a successful Volunteers Day at the Nobbies last month. It was very well attended. Dozens of dedicated Phillip Island volunteers are committed to the preservation and enhancement of the unique environment.

The Society is the host this year of the Bass Coast Environment Groups annual get-together. It is on Saturday October 14th at the Koala Conservation Centre and all PICS members are welcome. Contact the secretary Christine Grayden.

There are planning proposals being considered by the Bass Coast Council that will potentially impact on the present and future of the Island's natural environment.

The PICS committee values the ongoing support of members and the thoughtful, generous donations that enable the ongoing involvement and work of the Society. There is a need for eternal vigilance. *Anne Davie*. Photos by Lisa Schonberg show mother and baby whales breaching, Tonga.



Planning News

Margaret Hancock

The potential AGL development of the Port of Hastings, the car ferry, and, our “old friend” the Isle of Wight are all bubbling along, and PICS and PWP is keeping our eyes on all of them. It would be interesting to tot up just how many hours PICS has put into the various Isle of Wight proposals over the past 20 years or so! At least we have learned a lot about many different subjects – overnight parking, the difference between a porte cochere for buses and one for cars, rubbish removal, ‘upmarket’ shopping arcades; whatever is proposed, at least it won’t be anything like the long ago 13 storey fantasy!

It has been great over the past few weeks to see the delivery of the new rubbish bins. What progress! Especially, if you are old enough to remember the truly awful ‘tip’ which backed onto the Rhyll Inlet, and has caused untold environmental damage. Full marks to Bass Coast Shire Council for tackling the rubbish sorting and disposal problem in such a comprehensive way. Graphic from Bass Coast Shire Council’s Facebook page which has lots of information about the new system, including instructional videos.

The development application of a 2 ½ acre well treed block into 10 housing lots on Red Rocks Road was objected to by over 30 people, many of whom were local in that area. The Council has voted against the proposal on the grounds of its being counter to the local neighbourhood amenity. PICS was concerned about the loss of trees, and had asked if the council approved it, for offsets to be established on the wide road reserve, rather than somewhere else in Bass Coast. The developer may now take the case to VCAT.



The other planning matter at present is the application for a caravan park at Forrest Caves. PICS has objected to this, as has the Friends of Scenic Estate Reserve, on the grounds that the drainage from the site may potentially damage the Reserve. PICS objected on many other environmental grounds, and called for a number of environmental conditions to be placed on any development there. This application goes to the next council meeting.

Meanwhile, on a good note: if you are able to visit the Blue Gum Reserve, walk from the carpark around the Croquet Club, and enjoy the ephemeral wetland. The ducks have returned, the new drainage system is working well, and the frog chorus is heard every evening!

REPORTS

Red Rocks Coastcare Report

1. Our planting day on the 4th June was a great success, attracting 18 volunteers including 2 young boys with their Dad. We put in approx 300 plants along the Fire Track, including 20 new Bursaria plants fully guarded against wallabies.
2. The Planting Day scheduled for 2nd July was no longer needed as such as we had already planted our quota for the year. I decided to cancel the working bee due to illness and family commitments.
3. In late August, I monitored the Sea Spurge emergence near Justice Rd in the 5 quadrats we use for measurements. The results are the lowest numbers recorded so far, a very good sign, although germination is expected to increase again over Spring. Gradually, the seed reserve is being exhausted.
4. A recent check for Blue Periwinkle regrowth saw 48 seedlings dug up. This control program started in 2012. They still keep popping up!
5. Our next working bee is on 24th Sep, and will tackle weed control. *John Eddy, RRCC coordinator* 13.9.17

Saltwater Creek Coastcare Report

1. Ross Lloyd, Patsy Hunt and Maurice Schinkel helped me plant 60 more Coast Banksias over the weekend 10th and 11th June. As we have run out of space on the Foreshore Reserve north of the Creek where our Coast Banksia Woodland project is situated, the new plants were planted on the Creek Reserve just inland from that part of the Foreshore Reserve. The seedlings used were grown from seed taken from the remnant Banksias in the area Dec 2015. All 60 were guarded with 80cm mesh guards supplied by Bass Coast Shire Council. In addition, 7 Banksias in the original planting that had not survived, were replaced. I recently checked the 60 Banksia seedlings. 40% of the mesh guards (80cm high light mesh – not the 120cm high galv. netting we use normally) have been damaged, perhaps by wallabies crashing into them (perhaps not seeing them) or perhaps by vandals. Most seedlings still survive, but there are some signs of water-logging, especially further inland where the soil is less sandy.

2. As an experiment, on 11th June, 50 Coast Sword-sedge plants were planted in the foreshore Reserve in 3 different locations covering 2 different types of soil. Some were left unguarded to test the reaction of wallabies and rabbits. This species is generally not browsed as mature plants. The seedlings had been grown after treatment by freezing, and emerged after 12 months. The species is rarely available from nurseries because of the difficulty in propagation. Another 50 plants were given to the Bush Bank, and most used by the PINP.

Recently the plants at Saltwater Creek were checked.. Nearly all of the unguarded plants were eaten down to the ground (by wallabies?). I put new cardboard guards on all the survivors.

3. On 30th July, Kevin Harris led a planting work party south of the Creek, in front of John Andersons. 9 volunteers put in 180 plants. It was good to see John Anderson taking part along with the other volunteers.

4. Dave Martin organised a Community Planting Day in the Creek Reserve near Richardson Way on 19th Aug. Although this was not a SWCC event, we had hoped for a strong community response. However, despite being widely advertised, there was only 5 volunteers there to help Dave put in about 200 plants, mostly trees which we guarded with 80cm high mesh. The volunteers did include 2 new gentlemen who live just east of the Creek, and seemed keen to participate in the future.

John Eddy for Kevin Harris. 13.9.17

Friends of Scenic Estate Reserve

1. On 18th June, we held another successful Planting Day , with 11 volunteers putting in about 300 plants in the two Constructed Wetlands. Our morning tea afterwards was greeted with a heavy shower of rain, with nowhere to shelter, and that dampened us but not our enthusiasm, seeing our plants get watered in very promptly! Photo shows the carnivorous plant Drosera at SER by John Eddy.



2. In June, FOSER put in its own objection to the Planning Permit application for a Camping and Caravan Park directly opposite the Reserve. Normally, I believe it is best for PICS to cover such actions, but we had been encouraged to put in an objection as FOSER because of the direct impact of runoff from the development site on the Reserve. On 6.9.17, I attended an Information Session on the proposal, and after a frank and useful discussion with the owner of the land, I felt we needed to modify FOSER's objections in the light of new information.

3. Another productive working bee was held at the Reserve on 9th July. Gorse was controlled, the boundary of the southern grasslands area was direct-seeded with Coast Saw-sedge (*Gahnia trifida*) in an effort to slow down the encroachment of Swamp Paperbark, and 80 Weeping Grass plants were put in on a bare area north of the boardwalk. We had 9 volunteers.

4. At the FOSER committee meeting on 22nd April, (a) we welcomed a new committee member. Jan Fleming had expressed interest in being more directly involved.

(b) We were addressed by our special guest, Rachael Ferguson, PINP Volunteer coordinator, who is keen to have FOSER join the new volunteer program being developed by the PINP. FOSER committee is happy to consider that option, and would like direction from PICS.. A complication for FOSER is that so much of its activity is with BCSC.

(c) Jan Fleming attends the PINP's Community Advisory Committee and has offered to represent the views of FOSER as required. In the past, we have relied on our PINP representative, Sam Coleman, to take any concerns to PINP, but FOSER com has accepted Jan's kind offer.

5. Our most recent working bee was on 10th September. With 9 volunteers, we continued with gorse control, and cleaned up old plant guards from last year's plantings. Much of the Reserve is difficult to access at present because of flooding, but this does not impact normal visitors. With many pools of water reflecting the sky, and many plants coming into flower, the Reserve continues to be a wonderful place to visit over Spring.. *John Eddy, FOSER co-ordinator. 13.9.17*

WOMEN IN CONSERVATION ON PHILLIP ISLAND



PICS was successful this year in our application for a Bass Coast Shire community grant to print 80 copies of a book titled "Women in Conservation on Phillip Island". This book is being written by a number of women who have participated in environmental action on Phillip Island – not just for PICS, but going back to the 1930s. Each of the women has been supplied with six guiding questions, which ask:

1. What was your earliest encounter with nature?
2. When did you first become active in conservation on Phillip Island and what activities did you do at that time?
3. Tell us about your participation in conservation on Phillip Island...what sorts of campaigns or activities have you been involved in?
4. What is your most memorable occasion of your involvement in conservation on Phillip Island?
5. What do you think is your greatest achievement or contribution to conservation on Phillip Island?
6. What are your hopes and aims for the natural environment of Phillip Island?

Women who are now deceased are having their pieces written, with variation from the questions if necessary, by family members or friends, or in one case, an article from the Phillip Island & San Remo Advertiser. Some of the women in the

book include Margaret Hancock, Anne Davie, Ethel Temby, Rose Thomas, Margaret Johnson, Jan Bodaan, Florence Oswin Roberts, Bessie Tyers, Penny Manning, Ailsa Swan, Patsy Hunt and many more. The drafts are now coming in to the editor, Christine Grayden, and they make fascinating reading. The book will also have photos provided by each woman in the book for their chapters. The PICS subcommittee working on the book are Christine Grayden, Anne Davie and Margaret Hancock. We are hoping to have the Minister for the Environment, Lily D'Ambrosia, to launch the book some time in May 2018, as PICS's contribution to Phillip Island's celebrations of 150 years since closer settlement. Stay tuned.

Meanwhile, here is an excerpt from Ethel Temby's chapter; a beautiful and evocative poem written by Ethel of her Phillip Island home at Silverleaves:

HOME

Four hours on the road:-
I pull in to the Land for Wildlife,
Radio and engine die as one,
Door opens, and I breathe in freedom.
A wonderful clear air
Filled with the smell of bush,
The salt of sea, fills my lungs
And fills my being.
Stresses fall away –
The city fades.....
A slight rain mists my hair
And sea wash laps the beach:-
All tension goes and all of me
Is part of all around me –
This is being home.

Ethel Temby, 1 a.m. 18/6/92.



Ethel hard at work on yet another submission surrounded by her beloved bush block at Silverleaves. Photo supplied by her daughter Gillian Armstrong.

PHILLIP ISLAND CONSERVATION SOCIETY
GENERAL MEETING MINUTES
SAT 8 JULY 2017, 7.30 p.m., HERITAGE CENTRE, COWES.

PRESENT: As per attendance book

APOLOGIES: As per attendance book

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT of indigenous people.

SUSPEND standing orders: "That standing orders be suspended to allow for speaker first" Terry Nott/John Adam.

Carried.

SPEAKER: Kate Bennetts, author of the Scenic Estate Reserve Vegetation Management Plan spoke on "Vegetation Values of Scenic Estate Reserve".

VOTE OF THANKS: John Eddy thanked Kate on behalf of members and visitors present. A copy of the talk as a pdf was requested and Kate agreed to this.

RESUME standing orders: "That standing orders be resumed" Pauline Taylor/Terry Nott. *Carried.*

MINUTES of the previous meeting held 8 April 2017. Margaret Hancock/Patsy Hunt. *Carried.*

MATTERS ARISING:

Anne Davie drew members' attention to the list of matters arising on the agenda and their accompanying explanations, viz:

Medical Hub trees: most removed. BCH has agreed to plant more indigenous plants in their landscaping.

Blue Gum alley: Margaret will present on this at the BCSC community forum on 9 August 3 p.m. Wonthaggi.

Toscana Rise: application withdrawn by the applicant.

TREASURER'S report circulated to members in the treasurer's absence due to illness. "That the treasurer's report be accepted". John Eddy/Jan Fleming *Carried.*

CORRESPONDENCE:

Inwards:

Trust for Nature Bulletin

Re 20-30 Red Rocks Rd.

BCSC acknowledging our submission on Forrest Caves caravan park

Outwards:

Penguin newsletter.

Some discussion took place on the subdivision proposal for 20-30 Red Rocks Rd. Objectors have had correspondence to say that council will vote on this at the next meeting, but objectors have not been notified of recent changes to the plans. "That the secretary write to council saying that objectors and submitters have not been notified of changes to the plans and requesting copies of the changed plan and that a decision by council be deferred until all parties have seen the changes". Terry Nott/Pauline Taylor. *Carried.*

REPORTS:

Red Rocks Coast Care and Saltwater Creek reports – see June newsletter.

Friends of Scenic Estate Reserve: working bee tomorrow Sunday 9.7.17. Boardwalk in saltmarsh not proceeding.

GENERAL BUSINESS.

The Whale Festival is a great success.

Anne Davie thanked Christine Grayden and John Eddy for the excellent June newsletter.

Mike Cleeland suggested that Wonthaggi photographer Geoff Glare would be an excellent speaker for one of our general meetings on whales.

Margaret Hancock reported that the new ferry contractor is the same as the one who operates the Queenscliff-Sorrento vehicular ferry.

Mike Cleeland finished the meeting by reading an amusing poem he has written on vandalism on Landcare-planted trees. The poem delighted those attending.

Meeting closed 9.00 p.m.

Phillip Island Conservation Society, Inc.

The Penguin Newsletter

September 2017

If undeliverable, return to:

PICS Inc.

PO Box 548

COWES, 3922



Water lying at Scenic Estate Reserve grasslands shows how wet our winter and, so far, spring has been, and indicates how difficult it is to drain SER into Western Port. Photo by John Eddy.