

# The Wilsons Prom Sanctuary Concept

The Wilsons Prom Sanctuary Concept has the potential to change the nature of the Park and how it is managed. The key to the Sanctuary Concept is a proposed predator-proof exclusion fence to be built across the Yanakie Isthmus as part of the Victorian Government's \$23 million Prom Revitalisation Project. The fence together with boosted conservation programs, including the eradication of invasive species, will turn the Prom into Victoria's largest conservation sanctuary where native animals and plants can thrive. In a 40 minute video available online,

Parks Victoria's Chief Conservation Scientist, Dr Mark Norman, explains the Prom Sanctuary concept. The video is compulsory viewing for anyone who has been curious about what the fence might look like; or how to prevent invasive pest animals entering the Park through the main gate or around the extremities of the fence at low tide; or how to manage the Park after the fence is built. To access the video, just copy this address into your computer's browser:

<https://www.together.vic.gov.au/nature-wildlife/new-wilsons-prom-sanctuary-concept>



# Friends of the Prom

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Left: Screenshots from Dr Mark Norman's presentation

## Thank you to Lyndon

**P**arks Victoria's Lyndon Bath recently went on extended long service leave and we suspect she might get a taste for the life and not want to return. So just in case, we wanted to take the opportunity to thank her for all her work with the nursery group over the years.

Lyndon has worked alongside Cam Downing for about 10 years and

was best known to *Friends of the Prom* through her support of the nursery crew at Tidal River. She and Cam attended most of the 'every-second-Thursday' nursery days to help out the nursery crew with transporting tools, equipment and people and also pitching in with the physical work.

Lyndon was a pleasure to work alongside – great company, reliable,

dependable – nothing was ever too much trouble for her. She spoiled us with her delicious cakes for morning tea.

Lyndon is very much part of the nursery family and we will all miss working with her – however we are hoping she will pop in to the shed from time to time in civvies, perhaps with a grandchild or two in tow.



Above left: Mary and Lyndon (right) at Tidal River Nov 2018



Right: Cam, Mary and Lyndon celebrating Christmas with the nursery crew December 2020

## Digitising historical photos

**T**his project has just reached a milestone with slides (2090) and photos (130) now digitised.

It began earlier this year when Ranger Jim Whelan arranged to borrow some professional scanning equipment from West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority. The aim of the project is to digitise a collection of historical photographic slides and photos taken by Park

Managers, and Jim in particular, taken throughout his long working career at the Prom. The project will prevent further deterioration and provide an accessible photographic reference source.

Karin Ruff, our Secretary, offered to lead the project and set up the scanning equipment in her home at Yanakie.

Karin was helped by Heather Whelan and Lynne Muir. However, as it turned

out with Covid restrictions, the lion's share of the work fell to Karin working solo. We want to pass on a big thank you to Karin, who is now twiddling her thumbs while expecting the next consignment of historical records from Jim. Waiting for confirmation from *Parks Victoria* on the requirements of recording the data and resolution of photos delayed the start of the work until early this year.



Above left: Servicing the Prom lighthouse by sea — February 1940



Right: The 1922 version of the Park exclusion fence

## Grazer monitoring project from July to September

With a bit of poetic licence, we can take the US postal service's famous creed and adapt it for our pellet counter volunteers – *"neither sleet nor rain nor heat nor Covid would stay the dungflingers from the swift completion of their appointed rounds"*.

While many of us volunteers languish in metro Melbourne under a Covid induced lockdown, our intrepid local volunteers have been fronting up in good numbers, in all types of weather, to continue the

work of counting, recording and clearing of animal pellets (dung) from 140 marked plots spread out through the restored grasslands in a remote corner of the Prom.

Since the last newsletter, these volunteers have come along at six week intervals – 6th July (12), 17th August (12), and 28th September (14). We would like to thank our dependable contingent of locals who supported these activities while the rest of us are stuck in Melbourne.

Our volunteers report that

these are delightful areas to visit with their native grasses and herbs, many of which are flowering at this time of year. The bad news is they were finding lots more rabbit and deer pellets – time consuming to count and from unwelcome introduced species. However, the reduced numbers for the latest count revealed that *Parks Victoria's* recent pest animal control program is having an effect.

The next visit is scheduled for 9th November – refer *ParkConnect*.



Above: The Dungflingers with ranger Megan; lunchtime — it is not all hard work for the Dungflingers; Robin and ranger Jim; carpets of 'Running Postman', (photos by Jim Whelan, Karin Ruff and Lynne Muir)



## Tree planting at Tidal River

Well, we finally got the chance to get some trees in the ground after some false starts, cancellations and postponements courtesy of Covid. Twenty (strictly speaking, two groups of ten) volunteers, planted about 330 trees and grasses around 34th Avenue at Tidal River on Saturday 9 October. Attendance was restricted to local

volunteers, so we are very grateful that you filled every available place on *ParkConnect* and were prepared to put in the hard work.

Olga reported that it was a very successful tree-planting day – the weather was lovely, volunteers enjoyed themselves and a good number of plants from the nursery went into the ground – all

contributing to the re-vegetation of the camp ground.

We would also like to thank *Parks Victoria's* Cam Downing for organising the activity. He prepared the sites and distributed plants and tools in readiness for the workers. Also thanks to ranger Cassie Nolan for helping out on the day.



*Volunteers and Parks Victoria's Cam Downing and Cassie Nolan planting trees at Tidal River 6/10/21 (photos by Kelsey Fraser)*



## Koala Habitat Restoration Project

Some good news amongst all the Covid bad news! *Friends of the Prom* was recently awarded a Victorian Government grant for \$8,306 under the 2021 Community Volunteer Action DELWP grants program. This is the third stage of a long-term project to restore koala habitat woodland near the old airstrip, in the Yanakie Isthmus section of Wilsons Promontory National Park. The target area formerly supported eucalypt woodland before clearing in the early 1900s when koalas were reported

to be numerous. The grant has been used to buy steel-mesh, wire netting and other materials needed for building tree-guards that will protect eucalypt seedlings from all types of grazing animals. Volunteers will propagate Swamp Gum and Manna Gum seedlings in the Tidal River nursery, build sturdy steel-mesh tree-guards to protect seedlings from grazing animals, plant the seedlings and install the tree-guards.

The eucalypts have already been raised from seed collected near the site and should be ready for planting

next winter/spring. Our next task is to build 200 tree-guards – we have bought the materials and they are waiting on site, ready for when lockdown ends. When this happens, we will be asking for volunteers to help build the tree guards over the next 6 to 8 months

*Left: Tree guard building materials waiting for us to get to work (photo by Jim Whelan);*

*Right: Swamp gums– 200 more will be planted by September 2022 (photo by Peter Wilson 06/2020)*



## University of Melbourne Virtual Herbarium

Jim Whelan, ranger at the Prom, writes that he and botanist Mary Ellis (one of our members) worked with the University of Melbourne some years back to digitise the herbarium held at the Prom which was in danger of deteriorating. He quotes an extract from *Museums and Collections e-news* August 2021.

*The Uni has recently updated the virtual herbarium and it's freely available to the public.*

*Explore the biodiversity of Wilsons Promontory via the Virtual Herbarium.*

*Travel to Wilsons Promontory National Park from the comfort of*

*your home. The redesigned Wilsons Promontory Virtual Herbarium, brought to you by the University of Melbourne Herbarium (MELU), enables discovery of the diverse and unique plant and algal species from Wilsons Promontory National Park, which forms the rugged and scenic landscapes of the southernmost tip of the Australian mainland.*

*Almost 500 species from 128 families can be explored in the Virtual Herbarium. Pages outline the distinguishing features of the plant and algal species, their distributions, and ecological preferences and are brought to life with photos of the plants in situ, images of herbarium*

*specimens and links to species descriptions and maps.*

*The herbarium specimens that form the basis of the Virtual Herbarium were collected from 1959 to 1974 by University of Melbourne staff and students, including internationally renowned botanists and ecologists and members of the McCoy Society. Originally housed in the Botany Laboratory at Tidal River, the collection was donated to MELU by Parks Victoria in 2011 for its long-term management, storage and preservation.*

*Discover more by typing <Wilsons Promontory Virtual Herbarium> into your browser.*

## The Nursery

The nursery continued to operate through the Covid lockdowns. Volunteer numbers have been down because of Covid travel restrictions – some of our regular crew are based in the Melbourne metro area including Mary Walker the nursery co-ordinator. However, locally based members came every second Thursday to collect seeds, tend the plants, propagate new plants from seed and maintain the facilities. When the Park was closed for a few weeks, Parks Victoria's Cam Downing dropped in to check the watering system and do other important chores.

When volunteer numbers allowed, the crew were able to work in the camp ground, tending the display garden and weeding and planting the beds within the camp ground.



Above left: This Kookaburra's not shy about lining up for an easy meal of freshly dug worms and bugs (both photos by Olga Wilkinson)

Right: Bert and Antoinette planting grasses at Tidal River 12/08/21

## Next activity – Sea Spurge removal at Picnic Bay

There's been some action on the Sea Spurge front. Funding from our 2020 Coastcare grant was used to pay a contractor to complete a re-spray of the Sea Spurge at Picnic Bay in early September. You may recall that the initial spray in January/ February was followed up with a 3-day weeding activity in late March. To follow up the latest re-spray, we have another 3-day weeding activity scheduled for 5, 6 and 7 November.

The possibility of the Victorian Government easing the Covid lockdown for metro Melbourne and freeing up travel restrictions and group sizes is still very uncertain, so initially, we will offer places through *ParkConnect* starting with local volunteers only and a few groups of 10, but will progressively relax the attendance criteria if the Government eases restrictions. We will keep you up to date by email.



Emus enjoying a roadside puddle – (photo by Jo Stubbs)

### New members

We extend a warm welcome to recent new members –

Tim Wall, Penelope Watson and their children.

Celia and Richard Sutterby

Robert and Laurie Brentall

Jessica Somerville

## EVENTS FOR THE REMAINDER OF 2021

### FRIDAY 5 , SATURDAY 6 AND SUNDAY 7 NOVEMBER

3-day sea spurge removal at Picnic Bay

### TREE GUARD BUILDING AT YANAKIE WORKS YARD

To be advised.

We will send out details of these activities before the above dates. You will need to register for these activities with *ParkConnect*.

### WEEKDAY ACTIVITIES

- ☞ Tidal River nursery – every second Thursday (Register on *ParkConnect* or contact Mary Walker).
- ☞ Grazer monitoring project The next visit is scheduled for Tuesday 9th November. Register on *ParkConnect* or contact Bill Hansen (see Contacts below).

### WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECK

All volunteers registered on *Park Connect* received a message from *Parks Victoria* CEO on 20th July, re-stating its policy requiring all volunteers to have a current **Working with Children Check**. The checks become mandatory for volunteers after 31st December 2021.

We urge all our volunteers to apply for a **Working with Children Check** as soon as you can. The application process is straight-forward if you follow *Parks Victoria's* instructions in its email message. Don't disqualify yourself from volunteering with us for want of a **Working with Children Check** – we need you!

## MEMBERSHIP FEE RENEWAL

Memberships expire on 30 June each year, so please consider renewing your membership for 2021/22. Your membership fees keep us going – without them we cease to exist. They cover our basic running costs and most importantly our public liability insurance.

To renew your membership, please contact our Treasurer Peter Wilson at [membership@friendsoftheprom.org.au](mailto:membership@friendsoftheprom.org.au)

You can pay via Direct Deposit to our Westpac account:

Account Name: Friends of the Prom Inc.

BSB: 033 152

Account Number: 188795

Single: \$15, Couple: \$20, Family: \$25

**Important: Please provide your full name so we can identify you from the bank statement.**

## CONTACTS

### Media Enquiries

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### Membership & General Enquiries

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