

Two Diary Dates

Our AGM is on **Sunday 17 July, the day after a tree planting activity. We urge you to attend as it is a great opportunity to meet face-to-face with our members, Committee and Parks staff.**

We will:

- Δ review the past year and invite member feedback;
- Δ hear from Prom senior managers about what staff have been doing in the Park over the past year and about major strategic issues facing the Prom over the next 12 months;
- Δ elect a new Committee and office bearers to guide us through the next 12 months. And let it be known — we would love to have new people nominating for our Committee who can offer fresh ideas and skills;
- Δ have a guest speaker to present on a topic of interest to members and relating to the Prom. This year we have arranged for ranger Brooke Love to give us an overview of the exciting research projects current and planned for the Park;
- Δ enjoy a free lunch courtesy of Parks Victoria.



Above: Seagulls and Terns on Squeaky Beach, March 2022



FRIENDS
— OF THE —
PROM

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Coastcare Victoria Volunteer Forums

Coastcare Victoria is hosting a series of forums at Port Melbourne, Warrnambool and Inverloch to celebrate the volunteers who contribute to the health of Victoria's marine and coastal environment. The Bunurong Country forum, which includes the Gippsland Coast and the Prom, is to be held on Monday 6 June at the RACV Inverloch resort.

The forums will be focussed on building the knowledge and capacity of volunteer groups involved in Coastcare Victoria programs.

They'll also be a great chance for coastal volunteers from different areas to come together as a collective and learn from one another.

To register for tickets to the forum, go to the following link: <https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/gippsland-coastcare-victoria-volunteer-forum-2022-tickets-332474950527>



Time to act

For the last two years we have been urging our volunteers to obtain a valid Working with Children Check (WWCC). Various deadlines set by Parks Victoria's have come and gone, but now crunch-time is imminent as they recently advised us that — **“Volunteers who do not hold a WWCC will no longer be able to volunteer on Parks estate after 30 June 2022. A record of proof that a WWCC has been obtained must be uploaded onto Parks Victoria's online volunteer portal ParkConnect.”**

Parks Victoria has confirmed that this directive applies to all our volunteers with only one exception — if you are new to *Friends of the Prom* and are attending one of our activities for the first time (perhaps you want to see if our group is a good fit for you), then you are not expected to have a WWCC. If you decide to continue volunteering with FOTP, you will be expected to have a valid WWCC.

Thanks to all those volunteers who have already loaded their

WWCC onto ParkConnect. If you haven't done so, please read on as we don't want to lose any of our valued volunteers for want of having a WWCC. We have some suggestions to help you comply —

1. If you haven't yet got around to applying for a WWCC please do so now – the application process is (reasonably) straightforward, costs you nothing and you can do it online at: <https://service.vic.gov.au/services/working-with-children>
2. Make sure you use the following address and phone number when you are asked to fill out the details of the organisation you are volunteering with -
Parks Victoria
Level 10, 535 Bourke Street
Melbourne VIC 3000
Phone: 03 8627 4699
In the section that asks for occupation fields and type, use:
Occupational fields = 52
Occupational type = Volunteer

3. If you have an existing WWCC but have not loaded it into Park Connect, please do so now. While you're at it, you may also need to correct the organisational details on your card (there was a bit of confusion at the beginning about the correct details to use). For example, if you did NOT nominate Parks Victoria as the organisation you are volunteering with, you will need to update the information as listed above. Every WWCC cardholder can log in to check their WWCC to change or update their details via the webpage: <https://www.service.vic.gov.au/find-services/work-and-volunteering/working-with-children-check/update-your-working-with-children-check-details>

4. If you run into difficulties with any of the above steps, one of our Committee members, Peter McDowell, has offered to assist you to work through the process. Contact Peter by email on: pdmcdowell101@gmail.com

Restoring Hooded Plover Habitat – aka Sea Spurge Purge

Our three-day Sea Spurge weeding activities are proving to be successful. Held over three consecutive days, volunteers have more choice about which days to attend with some attending for two days or even all three.

We had superb weather for our latest three-day Sea Spurge weeding activity held over Friday 25, Saturday 26 and Sunday 27 March.

It was time to revisit Squeaky

Beach to remove regrowth given that it has received no attention from us since 3 February 2021. Twelve volunteers worked at Squeaky on Friday and 17 on Saturday. They did an amazing job to remove all Sea Spurge from one end of the beach to the other, apart from the protected cultural heritage zone near the northern end.

Having cleared Squeaky over Friday and Saturday, we returned

to Picnic Beach on Sunday. Ten volunteers continued the work we started at Picnic Beach exactly one year ago, but while this was our sixth activity day at Picnic Beach over the past year, there's still a lot more Sea Spurge there for us to weed.

Below: Saturday's weeders at Squeaky Beach; Justin and Eddie; weeding circle



Planned burn at Squeaky Beach

The volunteers for our Sea Spurge weeding activity on Friday 25 March might have wondered what was behind the delayed start and extra precautions taken by Parks Victoria before we could drive our cars into the Squeaky Beach carpark. Ranger Max Monk explains the reasons for the planned burn that was conducted in the area several days prior and was still smouldering on Friday morning—

“Squeaky South planned burn was very successful and delivered several key objectives.

Firstly, situated in such close proximity to Tidal River, the planned burn was able to reduce the bushfire risk to Tidal River by reducing the fuel load over an area designed to protect the community in prevailing

fire-season winds.

Secondly, there are ecological benefits from the burn, aimed at restoring fire adapted heath communities and controlling the spread of Coast Tea-Tree in accordance with the objectives below:

- ▲ Contribute to the restoration of landscapes identified in the Wilsons Promontory Conservation Action Plan to be declining in conservation value.*
- ▲ Contribute to the restoration of canopy and understorey species within the Coastal Grassy Woodlands through the reduction of Coastal Tea-tree through ecological burning.*
- ▲ Apply fire in a mosaic pattern, targeting areas with a closed*

tea-tree canopy to expand the habitat of the New Holland Mouse.

- ▲ Contribute to the structural diversity and distribution of vegetation growth stages in a range of habitats to improve conservation values.*

Significant effort was put into ensuring a cool burn, and after planning and preparing to burn this area for each of the past 8 years, it was a relief to complete the burn safely, according to plan, and within the prescribed area.”

Other planned burns have since been conducted successfully at Tongue Point in April and Varney’s Grassland (on the Isthmus) in early May.



Clockwise from top left: March 2022 #1 planned burn. The flame height allows reduction of the ground fuels without impacting the canopy species. (Parks Vic); March 2022 #2 fire backing to the Tidal Overlook trail. (Parks Vic); The aftermath on Squeaky Beach access road March 2022

Tongue Point burn



Photos: Tongue Point burn (Photo: Cassie Nolan)

Koala Habitat Restoration Project

Since December 2021, we have been striving to build our quota of 200 steel mesh tree guards before the 21 May tree planting activity at the former airfield on the Yanakie Isthmus. Lately we received an offer to help with the guards from an unexpected quarter — year-12 Mirboo North Secondary College students.

Friends of the Prom's Peter McDowell and Bill Hansen were at the Yanakie Works Yard on 22 March

to demonstrate the construction technique to ten year-12 students and their teacher Rebecca Woodall. They were quick learners and set a target for themselves of 30 completed tree-guards, which they exceeded with a total of 37 tree-guards completed in only a few hours. That brought the total number to date to 171. We didn't hesitate to invite them to return another time to complete the last 29 guards which they did on Tuesday

10 May – all done!

The students are keen to see how the tree-guards are used in the field, so we have invited them to plant some trees at the former airfield and protect them against grazing animals with the tree-guards — that will happen in July.

Photos: The students with volunteers Peter McDowell and Bill Hansen, 22 March (Photos: Rebecca Woodall and Bill Hansen)



Koala Habitat Restoration Project



Photos: The students from Mirboo North Secondary College with teacher Rebecca Woodall 10th May; Ranger Scott Griggs ties down a load of tree-guards bound for the airfield (Photos: Bill Hansen)



Nursery News

The nursery's hardening-off house is now full of seedlings waiting to be planted in the coming winter months. Rangers Brooke Love and Ruby Wicks recently used 50 trees from the nursery to run a trial at the former airfield. They wanted to know what the survival rate of seedlings would be without tree-guards, particularly after recent feral animal control measures. The results weren't pretty — anecdotally, the survival rate was about 5% after a few weeks. I guess we will be relying on our heavy duty steel tree guards to protect seedlings out at the airfield for some time to come.

The nursery's two main buildings, the hot-house and the hardening-off house, are badly in need of repair. The translucent polythene cover for the hot house

is worn through in places and needs to be replaced before it is torn apart by the wind, while the hardening off house's steel frame is badly rusted in places and there is a risk of partial collapse. These are Parks Victoria assets and Park managers are aware of the problem. We are waiting to see how and when they intend to resolve the problem.

There is some brighter news however. The Rose McMahon Memorial Fund, *Rose's Legacy of Love* (which we wrote about in previous newsletters), has generously donated a substantial sum of money to Friends of the Prom to contribute to the building of a new climate controlled seed-germination house inside the nursery compound at Tidal River. This will be a valuable addition

to our nursery, improving the success rate of seed germination and extending the range of plants we are able to grow. The Fund will pay for supply and delivery of the materials while Park managers have committed to prepare the site, assemble the structure and install services.

On 21 April, the Nursery crew was part of Parks Vic's Junior Ranger Programme during the school holidays. We always look forward to working with the rangers on these programmes as the young children are very keen to plant seedlings and their parents/minders pitch in as well. The Park benefits by getting some more trees, shrubs and grasses into the Tidal River camp-ground.



Above: Volunteers help with Parks Victoria's School Holiday programme on 21 April

EVENTS CALENDAR FOR 2022

SATURDAY 21 MAY

Tree planting –
Koala habitat restoration at the
former airfield

SATURDAY 16 JULY

Tree planting –
sites to be confirmed

SUNDAY 17 JULY

FOTP AGM at Tidal River

SUNDAY 31 JULY

National tree planting day –
a public event.
(Schools Tree Day Friday 29 July
and National Tree Day
Sunday 31 July.)

SATURDAY 24 SEPTEMBER

Tidal River tree planting and
clean-up of plantings
amongst the camp sites.

FRIDAY 4, SATURDAY 5 & SUNDAY 6 NOVEMBER

3-day sea spurge removal –
various locations

*We will send out details of these
activities before the above dates.
You must register for them on
ParkConnect.*

WEEKDAY ACTIVITIES

- Δ Tidal River nursery – every
second Thursday (Register on
ParkConnect or contact Mary
Walker).
- Δ Grazer monitoring project –
The Dungflingers' first visit for
2022 is scheduled for Tuesday
31 May. We will be clearing
animal pellets from the plots
on this visit and the first count
is scheduled six weeks later on
Tuesday 12 July.

COVID VACCINATIONS

Parks Victoria has not mandated double vaccinations for volunteers working in their national parks, but with a large percentage of Victorians over 12 years of age now fully vaccinated, we can safely expect that most of our volunteers will have been double vaccinated by now. On the off-chance you haven't got around to being vaccinated (unless you have a valid medical exemption), we prefer you do not attend our activities – in the interests of the safety of our other volunteers.

NEW MEMBERS

**We extend a warm welcome to new members —
Andy Griffiths and family,
Nicholas Williams and Alex Blazejewski**

MEMBERSHIP FEE RENEWAL

You don't have to be a financial member to participate in our activities. But we urge those of you who have attended more than one or two activities to become financial.

Your membership fees keep us afloat (just) – without them we cease to exist. The fees we receive are low and only just cover our basic running costs, most importantly our public liability insurance.

To renew your membership, please contact our Treasurer Peter Wilson at 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

Please remember to provide your full name as a reference so we can identify you on the bank statement.

CONTACTS

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