

Do you wish to receive the next issue of *WILDTIMES*?

WILDCARE members are reminded that future newsletters can only be forwarded if your 2003 membership is renewed before 31 December 2002 —
so don't miss out!

Merry Christmas and a Happy 2003 from the *WILDCARE* Board of Management!

Fishcare Volunteers Program

The Fishcare Volunteers (FCVs) are part of an overall Fishcare program that was established using Natural Heritage Trust and Recreational Licensing Trust funding. Fishcare is now a branch of *WILDCARE* Inc, which is an incorporated community group that supports the operation of community volunteers throughout the state.



Training days.

Fishcare Volunteers Program has been operating in Tasmania since 1998 and currently there are 65 fully trained and operational Fishcare volunteers working Statewide in both freshwater and marine environments. The program is currently undergoing a restructure that will establish regional chapters in the South, North and Northwest.

Fishcare Volunteers (FCV) are an important part of fisheries education program aimed at promoting responsible fishing behavior. Some key roles of the volunteers are:

- Fisheries patrols in a non-compliance role delivering information about Fisheries regulations this involves talking with fishers and collecting data about their fishing.
- Delivery of a school education program on responsible fishing practice and marine issues.



- Assistance with research on recreational fishing including potential projects on fish survival.
- Assistance with creel surveys on scale fish and rock lobster.
- Providing feedback on environmental issues. Training is provided to identify common marine pest species and investigate fish kills.
- Assistance with events such as Take a Kid Fishing days and AGFEST.

All FCVs undergo a formal interview and a police check before they are accepted into the program. They are required to have completed a two day training course before beginning work in the field and their first few patrols are accompanied by a more experienced volunteer acting in a 'mentoring' capacity. An honorary role is provided to potential candidates that are awaiting training and are willing to play a support role to a trained FCV.

Training

All incoming FCVs undergo an intensive two day training course which covers:

- Fisheries rules and regulations
- Fish identification and biology
- Conflict resolution
- Structure of Department
- Volunteer rights and responsibilities
- Marine environment (care of habitats)
- Introduced marine pests
- Interviewing skills



Natural Heritage Trust

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Once fully trained, Fishcare Volunteers are issued with a distinctive uniform that must only be worn when on official Fishcare business. They are also issued with pamphlets detailing rules and regulations, facts sheets and stickers.

Experience has shown that each FCV brings many skills to the program and it is endeavored to utilise and develop these skills not only for the benefit of the program, but also for the benefit of the volunteer. Specific training is provided to selected volunteers who show a desire to assist with a particular project.

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Manning the fishing pool at AGFEST.

Ongoing training is provided regularly in addition to informal meetings. These are usually half-day sessions that provide a forum for the sharing of information on current issues.

Contact with volunteers is maintained regularly to ensure communication links are maintained and any queries are addressed. A small resource library and a computer with Internet access are located in the Hobart office and volunteer usage is encouraged. A quarterly newsletter is also produced providing feedback and general fisheries information to the volunteers.

Patrols

The most common patrol for a Fishcare Volunteer to undertake is a trip to a fishing spot or point of entry/exit (e.g. boat ramp) where they

speak to fishers about their days fishing. They may handout material such as current rules and regulations, safe boating practices or fact sheets on specific fish species.

After their patrol a Volunteer completes a Patrol Report Form, which is sent to the Department. This form includes information on location, number of interviews, type of fishing, species caught and any issues raised (e.g. undersized fish, illegal netting, exceeding bag limit or fishing in closed areas). This information is routinely entered on a database and extracted for management who can to get a clearer picture of what is happening around the State.

When undertaking patrols the FCV notifies the department who in turn notifies the marine police. This is so that they are aware of Volunteer's presence in a particular area. The Volunteers get to know the marine police working in their local area and foster a good relationship with them. A representative of the marine police will usually attend training sessions.

Whilst the FCVs do not act in a compliance capacity, they do work closely with the marine police — this

is to ensure no potential conflict situations occur (e.g. a FCV inadvertently patrols into a police surveillance situation).

If faced with illegal fish activity, FCVs are instructed not to act in a policing role. They make a decision at the time, dependent on the situation, whether to:

a) Approach the offenders and educate regarding the current rules and regulations and implications of illegal activity (e.g. "hey mate, do you realize that fish is too small?") or show them a ruler (promotional item with fish sizes) and advise of the penalties;



Educating the public.

b) Walk away and advise marine police or ask the department to advise the police.

Whilst on patrol a volunteer uses his or her own vehicle. Volunteers receive no financial remuneration for the work that they do and are not reimbursed for fuel costs.

The FCV may have a mobile phone issued to them if there is a perceived need (i.e. safety issue or working in remote areas).

Schools project

This is an educational project where interested FCVs are specifically trained during a two-day course at the Marine Studies Center at Woodbridge. This is a certified course that a FCV must pass to enable them to give school presentations. The course evaluates the communication ability and personality traits of the person when placed in front of a real time class delivery exercise. If suitable and pass they may then address a class as a teachers aide or conduct a interpretation excursion to the seaside or particular fishing spot where relevant Fishcare messages can be delivered.

Take a Kid Fishing Days

This is a widely promoted activity day solely designed to teach children the



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fun of ethical fishing. In the past the Fishcare Volunteers have been involved assisting with this message delivery to the children and general discussion with the parents. Similar events have also been run for disabled people.

Fish kills

Selected volunteers are given specialised training to enable them to respond to fish kills in their local area.

Introduced marine pests

A number of volunteers are trained to identify introduced marine pests and provide assistance with eradication programs including the northern Pacific Seastar.

Other support activities

This may include assistance with manning the Fishcare trailers around the State at events such as AGFEST and agricultural shows and Inland Fisheries open days.

Research

Interested Fishcare Volunteers are trained to assist with specific research projects, including:

- Creel survey: FCVs conduct a short survey of fishers at selected fishing locations around the State. Basic fisheries' data is collected including length frequency measurements of catch.
- Rock lobster Project; FCVs will help researchers from the Department of Sea Fisheries on basic recreational catch statistics and some data collection.

General

- FCVs generally devote a minimum of 4 hours per month to the program, with many giving much more time than this. Naturally time is restricted in Tasmania over winter due to the weather and understandably it is busier in the summer and autumn months.
- Each region has a volunteer coordinator (northern, northwest and southern). This person is a Fishcare Volunteer who acts as a link for the volunteers in their particular region. These coordinators are the first points of contact for 'housekeeping' issues, anything more than that, volunteers are referred to a departmental staff member.
- FCVs are working 'on the ground'

and are considered approachable by the general community. In fact, FCVs have reported improvements in fisher behaviour in areas where they regularly work. They act as a go-between for the community, police and other areas of the Department.

- Volunteers are strongly encouraged to have ownership of the program.

For more information on how WILDCARE members can be part of this exciting program, contact — Damian Heran, Fisheries Education Officer, Wild Fisheries Management Branch, DPIWE on 03 6233 3053 or email <Damian.Heran@dpiwe.tas.gov.au>.

Don't forget to register your interest with the WILDCARE Office as well (email <wildcare@dpiwe.tas.gov.au> or phone 03 6233 2836) and we will update your membership record for future information on Fishcare.

CALL UP NOTICE

Snug Falls track working bee

Sunday 12 January 2003, 9:00am–4:00pm. Meet at the Snug Falls car park. Works include drainage, pruning, minor track resurfacing. Tools and equipment to be supplied by PWS. Bring food and drink, and sturdy work boots. Contact Paul Dimmick, Ranger PWS Hounville, on 03 6264 8465 or email <Paul.Dimmick@dpiwe.tas.gov.au>.

WILDLIFE PRODUCT DISCOUNT

Wildlife Product Discount for Carers of Orphaned/Injured Animals

WILDCARE members can now get a 7.5% discount off every product contained in Cartledge Agency's "Wildlife" catalogue.

All members need to do is quote their **WILDCARE** membership number when placing an order.

Stock is available and supplied from the following companies: Healthy Bird, Wombaroo/Passwell, Vetafarm, Inca (Flight), Petcare Direct and Rudducks.

Another customer service offered by Cartledge Agency is to keep their customers up-to-date on any new or deleted products lines as well as forwarding information containing monthly specials.

To request a catalogue or place orders contact:

Mark Cartledge at Cartledge Agency,
26/34 Innocent Street, Kings Meadows Tas 7249.
Phone 03 6344 5466 Fax 03 6344 7721
Email: cartledge.agency@microtech.com.au

WILDCARE Volunteer represents PWS at Spirit of Tasmania I and II launch

As a *WILDCARE* volunteer, I travelled to Melbourne to represent the PWS at the Launch of Tasmania's two new ships in August 2002. About 80,000 people toured the ships and 40,000 passed through the display hall, where about 15 'Taswegians' presented the 'Tasmania experience'. The PWS theme 'Wilderness', along with samples of Tasmanian food and wine, were probably the most popular attractions. The visitors loved hearing about Tasmania's National Parks. Many were surprised that someone wearing a 'Volunteer' badge represented one

of Tasmania's core themes!

I spoke to at least 2,000 people, showing Tasmania as a place of World Heritage Wilderness and an award-winning nature holiday destination. It was like being a Summer Interpretation Ranger all over again, but with ten times as many faces. My display included a stuffed Devil (which drew the crowds) and a stuffed Eastern Barred Bandicoot (making Victorians feel guilty about threatened & extinct species and envious that we

still have a healthy population). Lots of people thought Devils were extinct! Other representatives (not volunteers) were from Tourism; Forestry Tasmania; Port Arthur; caterers with samples of Tasmania's finest food and wines; a fly-fisherman; a sea kayak & abseil operator; the Franklin Wooden Boat School; a wood-turner; a street entertainer and a classical music group. The promotion was very successful and well organised by Tourism Tasmania. Thanks to *WILDCARE* Inc there was the possibility of someone to represent PWS and the Wilderness theme!

Rebecca Cannell
WILDCARE member



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WILDCARE Inc — Wildlife Rescue groups formed

As a result of a meeting recently held with wildlife care volunteers in the north west, the 15 attendees from this area have decided to become a *WILDCARE* group under the name of 'WILDCARE Inc — Wildlife Rescue'. The group has been operating together for nearly two years under the leadership of Judy Synnott, who was elected as President/Coordinator. The group has had a phone number listed in the northwest phone book that will be changed so that the listing is under their new name.

Lorraine McDonald (also a longtime wildlife carer) has taken on the job of pulling the carers in the Launceston/Northeast areas together in a similar way, with the two areas working as one group and Judy and Lorraine sharing the coordination roles. Judy and Lorraine will, as per

CAREs Presidents, have delegation to provide *WILDCARE* authorisation for the carers in the group and will also keep records of who is caring for which particular animal. The *WILDCARE* members living in the area and registered as interested in caring for animals will automatically become members of the group and will be included in the group's activities in a number of ways. Of course the carers still need to comply with departmental requirements in regards to permits and other processes before actually caring for animals. The Department will continue to be available for advice and technical assistance.

This is all an exciting step for wildlife care and rehabilitation in Tasmania and a welcome advance in *WILDCARE*'s role. Contact details for the 2 coordinators are:

Wild Writing breakthrough

Does writing about nature come naturally? Not in Australia, it seems. Can you, for instance, name a famous Australian nature writer? **WILDCARE** — in association with Parks & Wildlife and **ISLAND** magazine — has decided to try and lift the profile of nature writing by creating the **WILDCARE** Tasmania Nature Writing Prize.

A perfect fit for our “natural state”, the biennial, international prize for an outstanding piece of previously unpublished nature writing, will be advertised widely, both nationally and internationally. The awards will be:

First Prize \$A4,500 in cash plus an airfare to Tasmania; a 2 week

residency in a national park; and publication of the piece in **ISLAND** magazine and **WILDTIMES**. Conditions of entry include the winner collecting the prize in person in Tasmania; taking up the residency between March and November 2003; and presenting some writing workshops in the state. Two Runners-up may be awarded \$A250 each, plus the possibility of publication of their entry in **ISLAND** magazine.

How can **WILDCARE** members get involved?

- Dust off your word-processor and write your own entry
- Volunteer some time to help

administer the prize

- Take part in a special **WILDCARE** nature writing workshop with the winner
- Spread the word — the more entries the better

This issue of **WILDTIMES** includes an entry form with details and conditions. Details can also be found at <www.wildcaretas.org.au>. Entries close on 15 February 2003, with the winner announced during “10 Days on the Island” in March 2003.

Peter Grant

WILDCARE member &
PWS Senior Interpretation Officer

For more information contact the **WILDCARE** Office on <Wildcare@dpiwe.tas.gov.au> or phone 03 6233 2836.

Mt. Roland CAREs Group

Most tourists visiting Sheffield for the first time marvel at the enormous bulk and daunting beauty of the Mr. Roland massif. Many believe it to be cradle Mountain, yet for all its grandeur and photogenic potential it remains a very much under-utilised tourist resource. In December 2000 some 7600 hectares of the area, previously unallocated crown land, was gazette as a Regional Reserve, thereby increasing its conservation value overnight.

Many local residents — myself included — live close to this mountain because we believe it provides a lifestyle second to none and we have consequently become a close-knit

community. It was relaxing over a summer barbecue with neighbours over two years ago that the idea of forming a volunteer group to help protect and promote the mountain was gelled. We decided to call our group Outlook Mt. Roland.

After a few months of informal meetings we developed a constitution and elected an Executive of six and, in turn, found around thirty “supporters”, each willing to pay a small fee to allow the group to pay its way.

Outlook Mt. Roland may be small in numbers but we feel we are big on achievement. In two short years we have written and published our own Walking Track Guide (with sponsorship from the Kentish

Council) as well as entering into a long-term contract with the Council for our group to maintain a local picnic ground. In addition we have a representative in attendance at local CCC (Community Consultative Committee) meetings and we have worked assiduously and co-operatively with Parks & Wildlife District Office in Ulverstone to achieve major improvements to Mr. Roland walking tracks.

As our agenda has expanded it became obvious that we should become incorporated and it seemed the natural way to achieve this was through the **WILDCARE** network. Having now taken this next step, we wish to announce that a new CAREs group has been officially formed and will oversee development and conservation issues in the new Regional Reserve.

We would be pleased to hear from interested **WILDCARE** members. We can be contacted on:

David Welch 6491 1317

Ray Stuart (Treasurer) 6491 2089

Gail Foster (Secretary) 6491 2213

David Welch
President, Mt Roland CAREs group

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The Mountain Festival wins Community Link Award

We have just had news that the Mt Wellington Festival Committee has won the 2002 National Australia Bank Community Link award in the Art and Culture category for Tasmania. The National Australia Bank makes the awards, which carry a prize of \$7,500, annually in six categories in each state. The criteria for each category relate to volunteer involvement and benefit to the community.

WILDCARE, through the involvement of the Friends of the Mountain Festival CAREs group, is one of the Mountain Festival Committee's major community partners. WILDCARE volunteers supported the 2002 Mountain Festival in a number of ways, including participating in the Mountain Orchestra-WILDCARE performance project.

The National Australia Bank Community Link award citation reads: *"The inaugural Mt Wellington Festival was held this year as part of the International Year of Mountains to celebrate Hobart's most important natural symbol, Mt Wellington. The Festival, held over ten days, brought together diverse elements of the community in a dynamic sense of place celebration. Linking arts and*

environment the festival developed creative community partnerships especially between artists, scientists and community groups. Events included artistic performance, exhibitions, and cultural 'walks and talks' all with a thematic link to Mt. Wellington. The major performance, "Alive on the Mountain", involved collaboration between artists and scientists and engagement with many different community groups to build artworks which were integrated into a spectacular community performance. The Mt Wellington Festival Committee won because of its comprehensive use of volunteers in every stage of the project. Over 700 volunteers were involved in all facets of the project, from a volunteer committee organising the festival right through to production, making artworks and performance."

The other Tasmanian winners are:

- The Kempton/Bagdad YISMAC Youth Club in the 'Sport & Recreation' category.
- Female Factory Historic Site in the 'Environment, Conservation and Heritage' category.
- Menzies Centre for Population Health Research in the 'Health' category.
- Southern Region Search and

CALL UP NOTICE

Friends of Trevallyn Bushland Working bee

Saturday 7th December 2002, 10am-noon. Meet at car park on top of the hill on the way to the tearooms. Weeding (gorse) so come prepared. Please bring your own (cleaned) secateurs, loppers (if you have them), gloves, morning tea. Contact Jon Purtell 0419 874 651 or Anna Povey 6334 6633 for details.

Rescue Team in the 'Emergency and Safety' category.

- St Vincent de Paul Society in the 'Community Service' category.

The Mt Wellington Festival Committee will put the prize money towards organising a major community event for the next Mountain Festival in 2004. Well done and thanks to all the WILDCARE volunteers who helped make the 2002 Mountain Festival such a success and contributed to achieving this national recognition.

Angie McGowan
Mountain Orchestra CAREs group

Flora of Cradle Mountain Plant Identikit

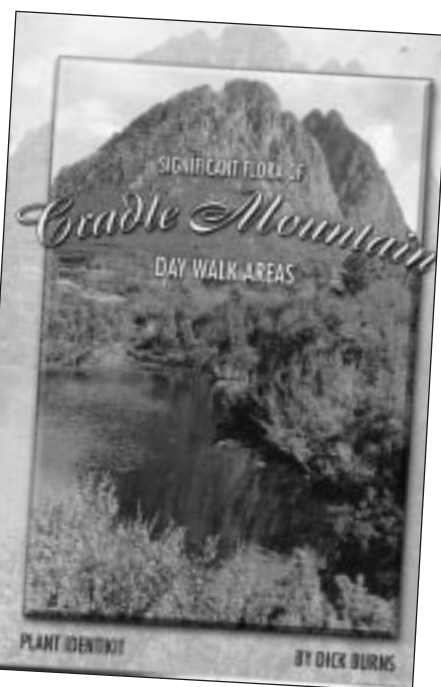
In 2001, WILDCARE approved project funding to assist in the printing of a pocket book to help visitors recognise some of the distinctive plants at Cradle Mountain. Dick Burns is the author and photographer. The plant identikit, released in November 2001, is titled "Significant Flora of Cradle Mountain Day Walk Areas".

The main section of the book consists of plant descriptions, in layman's language, accompanied by colour photos showing the main features required to recognise the plant with about 30 species featured. Allied or confusing plants are also mentioned therefore covering over 60 plants. The identikit has received a number of

reviews from prominent magazines including

- **Wild Magazine:** "You certainly don't need to be a 'horticultural freak' to have success using this 'little beauty'."
- **40° South:** "It would be 'a handy one to pop in your pocket next time'."
- **Nature Australia:** "This little pocket guide is essential for walking or strolling around ... Cradle Mountain...a wonderful little book'."

Dick is starting work on another identikit and offers of financial assistance will be gratefully considered. The plant identikit is available from the Cradle Mountain



shop or good bookstores throughout Tasmania for \$10.95 RRP.

Adopt-a-Track News...

Dial Range has an Adopted Track!

Simon Inkson, a member of the North West Walking Club, approached Forestry Tasmania to volunteer as a track caretaker for the Penguin Cradle Trail between Dial Road and Purton's Flats. This section of the trail is on State forest and Simon, with some assistance from other club members, had previously tackled some track clearance.

When the opportunity arose to formally "adopt" the track in partnership with **WILDCARE** and Forestry Tasmania, Simon was very keen. "With Forestry Tasmania's assistance and guidance, this section of the trail will be cleared, drainage works carried out, steps placed at creek crossings and signage installed", Simon said.

The Dial Range is popular amongst many user groups and several years ago, a Recreational Management Plan was compiled to provide direction and actions for future management. Forestry Tasmania is using the plan to

help prioritise maintenance plans and provide direction for the future adoption of tracks. "One of our main priorities is to ensure the various user groups remain within their designated tracks, on the Penguin Cradle Trail. Some sections have suffered serious erosion through motorbikes traversing trails specifically for walkers and mountain bikers only," commented Community Liaison Officer, Gina Harvey. "We welcome the opportunity to work with the community through the Adopt-a-Track program."

A working bee was held in September 2002, which twelve NW Walking Club and **WILDCARE** members attended. "We had a fantastic day with half of the track clearing completed," Simon said.

Another working bee will be advised in due course through **WILDCARE** for this section of the Penguin Cradle Trail.

For further information on adopting a track in the Murchison District, please contact — Gina Harvey, Community Liaison Officer, Forestry Tasmania, Murchison District on phone (03) 6434 6323 or email <gina.harvey@forestrytas.com.au>.

Penguin to Cradle track — Gunns Plains to Tulip Creek

Five intrepid workers turned up for this working bee under the supervision of Eddie Firth from Cradle Mountain. We climbed up to the Northern Gates with a great deal of huffing and puffing. It was then down to work with Mark Alexander on chainsaw all day, Eddie doing the benching, Pat Scott, Francee Lee and Garry Watts pruning and helping to throw the rubbish off the track, clearing ferns and branches. We camped at First Creek overnight, after farewelling Eddie and Garry who could only stay for the day. The rain started as soon as we set up camp. That night I managed to collect two leeches in my left ear. Pat helped cleanup my face and the first leech came out. The second one however was deep in my ear canal. So next day we packed up and headed home in the rain. I had the second leech sucked out by my doctor with a special machine. I am planning the next working bee for February 7,8,9 2003 so mark it in your diaries. Despite the leeches it was great fun and we got lots of work done, but there is heaps still to do. Hope to see you there.

Lexie Paul
Track Caretaker

Karst CARE working bee in Kubla Kahn

On a Sunday in August 2002, after a "call-up" from **WILDCARE**, five Karst CARE members supervised by Mole Creek PWS Ranger Dick Dwyer carried out flowstone cleaning in Kubla Khan Cave.

To access this cave requires considerable experience, especially in negotiating pitches (cliff faces), both up and down. Participants were chosen based on those who registered availability first, combined with being able to move through the cave reasonably quickly to the work site.

We left the Mole Creek Ranger station soon after 8:30 am after sorting out the considerable gear required to undertake this task. Soon after leaving the cars it was decided that our next working bee would be on the track to the cave as it was considerably overgrown, and in places difficult to



follow! Getting to the work site took about 2.5 hours and involved negotiating four pitches abseiling down, and about 1800 metres of caving. Much amusement was caused in the section known as "Sally's Folly", which involved a water-level traverse, hanging on to the wall to avoid an over-the-head dunking. Water from here was

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transported in collapsible backpack spray units to the work site at the end of the Folly.

After lunch the work began in earnest, with a rope & pulley system rigged at the top of a climb. Two participants washed down this climb with scrubbing brushes and the sprayers to remove the greasy mud, which had made this climb somewhat precarious. Fortunately this mud proved reasonably easy to wash away — much of it landing on those working

below! Some of the group ferried water to the washers, whilst others scrubbed down a notoriously slippery flowstone bank. Underneath the mud were many micro-gores (like tiny little dams), which actually give good grip for a climb AFTER the mud is removed. We managed to return a slippery horrible area into an attractive and interesting flowstone bank. We also installed a boot wash station below where we'd cleaned; ensuring little mud will be transported over the

cleaned area.

On our return back through the cave we filled our backpack sprayers to top up another washing station in an area that rarely has water nearby. It was a hot trip back with all the pitches to be climbed and we emerged just on dark, having been underground 8 hours. No doubt this would be one of **WILDCARE's** most inaccessible work sites — but the job got done!

David Wools-Cobb

Karst CARE Group Coordinator

What's been happening at Kate Reed?

The Kate Reed Nature Recreation Area is approximately 120ha of remnant native vegetation located south of the Silverdome in the Launceston suburb of Prospect. The area that has been recognised under the RFA as having the priority plant communities of *Eucalyptus amygdalina* on dolerite with small areas of *Eucalyptus ovata* and *Melaleuca ericifolia*.

The Friends of Kate Reed Reserve CAREs group was formed in

December 1999 with the aim of restoring and protecting the area as well as promoting the importance of the Reserve to the community. The main focus of the group was initially weed removal. In May 2001, our group was approached by Conservation Volunteers Australia (CVA) with a proposal to take on a Green Reserve team. Between the initial four CAREs group volunteers and the Green Reserve team weed removal continued in earnest and huge

in roads were made into the gorse and Spanish heath problems in the Reserve.

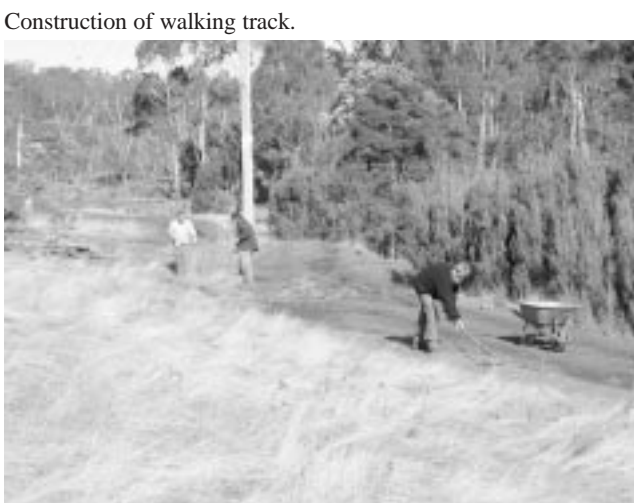
During the first Green Reserve project — a 6-month project predominately concentrating on weeds — it was recognised that a change was needed to keep the project going and the team enthused. So the group looked at the walking tracks in the Reserve and decided that what vague tracks existed needed serious upgrading to encourage the community to use the Reserve while protecting the conservation values of the area.



Volunteers finishing construction of bridge in Kate Reed Reserve.



Constructing the bridge across the rivulet.



Construction of walking track.



The first **WILDCARE** project funding submission the Friends of Kate Reed (in conjunction with Green Reserves) applied for was to reconstruct the bridge across the Kings Meadows rivulet and reconstruct part of the track to this bridge. With the construction of the bridge completed, another **WILDCARE** grant was sort to

create a new access point to the Reserve from the Kings Meadows connector. This part of the project is now well underway, thanks to **WILDCARE** funding!

The Friends have also applied to the Tasmanian Community Fund (TCF) for project funds to construct a boardwalk across the wetlands to protect this sensitive area, with the long term aim of restoring and creating a network of walking tracks that takes in the natural attributes of the area while protecting the important conservation values.

The very successful partnership between the Friends of Kate Reed and the Green Reserves is set to continue with an application

submitted with the CVA for the team to commence their 4th round in January 2003. This partnership could not have happened without the very good support from PWS staff — Rangers Gary Hutchison, Dave Frelek, Andrew Napier and District Manager, Stan Matuszek — and of course Andrew Smith, Jo Field and **WILDCARE** Inc members. Our group also acknowledges the support it has received from the Tasmanian Landcare Association, Bushcare and Tamar NRM.

Rodney Milner
Coordinator

Friends of Kate Reed Reserve
CAREs group

The **POSSUM SHED**

Westerway (Nr Mt Field NP)



**10% discount to
WILDCARE members
on all gifts.**

Profile of PWS/RMC staff...

Visiting the Huon Valley? Why not drop into the Parks Shop in Huonville and meet Melanie?

Melanie commenced work with Parks & Wildlife Service in January 2002 as a Trainee Customer Service Assistant. Initially sharing the workload with two other trainees, then commencing full-time in April 2003. Recently Melanie

completed Customer Service training and is working on completing Certificate III in Business. Melanie has an interest in continuing to work for Parks & Wildlife Service in the future, maybe in a field orientated role.

The Parks Shop's (see advertisement in this issue of **WILDTIMES**) popularity is growing, by both the community and visitors to the region. A range of free information relating to Tasmania's Parks and Reserves is available; including previsit notesheets, parks passes and promotion of summer ranger activity programs. Visitors can also purchase Hastings Caves and Thermal Springs tickets. There is a wide range of nature and activity orientated product available. Some of the most popular lines are Australian-made jigsaws and animal puppets. One of the most popular jigsaws being the Southwest National Park 1000 piece puzzle. Books and maps are also well supported.

So drop in and say hi! to Melanie — and bring your **WILDCARE** membership card to take advantage of the 10% discount on a range of products (see advertisement on page 2).

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Cats — Feral and Domestic

Feral means wild or untamed. It is a word most often used to describe domestic animals that have established breeding populations in the wild. Individual stray animals aren't necessarily feral, however if stray animals breed and their descendants live and breed in the wild, then those descendants are called feral animals.

Feral animals are closely associated with the first European settlers who came to Australia. Some of their animals were abandoned or lost and

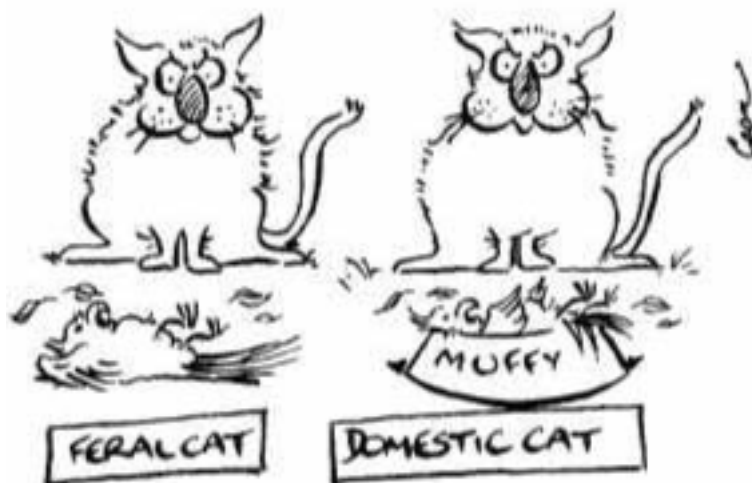


and in the central highlands.

Feral cats are formidable competition. They will travel several kilometres each night in search of prey and not only prey on native animals, but also utilise habitat and food reserves that these native animals need. They have

movement, particularly rapid jerky movements. The prey is often left uneaten and may be brought home. Surveys of domestic cats reveal that the list of prey matches that for feral cats. They have a major impact on the native wildlife in your area.

Feral cats are no accident — there is constant recruitment from the domestic population and of course feral cats breed efficiently. Even the best kept cat can go wild, whether through wandering too far from home when hunting or via interactions with



established breeding populations in the wild. In the Northern Midlands there have been problems with cats and dogs and even goats, and now we have foxes. Cats were brought to Tasmania as domestic animals by early European explorers and settlers, and some of them became feral. We now have extensive populations of feral cats stretching right across the state. Cats have been spotted in remote areas of south west Tasmania

excellent eyesight, acute hearing and a sharp sense of smell and show no mercy when hunting small mammals and birds. And they can climb. All of these features together with four sets of retractable claws, and teeth adapted for gripping, tearing and shearing, make them fearsome hunters.

Cats are the definitive host of the protozoan parasite *Toxoplasma gondii* that causes toxoplasmosis and is known to induce abortion in sheep and to infect humans and wildlife species. Toxoplasmosis can cause central nervous system and systemic disease leading to death in bandicoots and other wildlife species.

Pet cats hunt, and your cat, no matter how cute you may think it is, is no different to any other cat, even when fed on a regular basis. This is because cats instinctively react to



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feral cats. Unfortunately irresponsible owners often dump unwanted domestic cats or kittens in remote areas, where they start new populations. Domestic cats that survive join the feral population and may breed with other feral cats if they have not been desexed. Feral cats are not just a problem in the bush. Indeed, a greater density of feral cats occurs in and around cities, towns and rural settlements. This is probably due to more stable and abundant food sources being available in these areas. The presence of domestic cats may also attract feral cats to population centres.

Female cats can breed before they are one year old. A healthy female produces two litters of kittens per year, usually during spring and summer, with an average of 4 kittens per litter. Some fall prey to birds of prey, feral and domestic dogs, Tasmanian devils and hunger, but



unfortunately many of them grow and thrive and continue to breed.

If you own a cat keep it indoors at dusk and at night, and well fed. This way a cat's home range (where it lives and hunts) may be reduced by up to 75%. This often results in a substantial decrease in the number of native animals killed by individual cats. Make sure your cat is desexed. This

way it cannot breed with any other cats feral or domestic. Fit your cat with a collar and two bells, one on either side of the nametag so that potential prey (birds) are warned of the cats approach. Many cats continue to hunt successfully with a single bell. A second bell can reduce its chances of success.

The Hobart Cat Centre admits about 4,000 cats per year, 90% of which are humanely destroyed. It is best to take unwanted cats there than to dump them in the bush, where they will either die a slow and horrible death or survive, increasing feral cats numbers and decreasing populations of native animals

Produced by Bushcare Technical, Nature Conservation Branch, DPIWE.

For further information call Bushcare Technical on 03 6233 8322 or visit our website where you can download a fact sheet on feral cats <www.bushcare.tas.gov.au>. Cartoons: Patrick Cook, Australian Nature Conservation Agency.

Tasmanian Bettongs

Tasmanian Bettongs (*Bettongia gaimardi*) once roamed all of south eastern Australia but following European settlement their numbers declined drastically. Large scale land clearance and the introduction of exotic animals that are now feral, particularly foxes and cats, wiped out all known mainland populations. Today Tasmania is only place on earth you will find the Tasmanian Bettong so we have to make sure we retain suitable habitat and keep foxes out, other wise the bettong, now uniquely Tasmanian, will be lost forever.

Bettongs are the second smallest member of the Macropoidea group living in Tasmania. Macropods are animals with big feet, the reference being made to their relatively large hind legs that help them get around. They have brown-grey fur above and are pale, almost white underneath. Their long tails usually have a distinctive white tip, and they use it to cart around sticks and litter for nest building.

The type of habitat favoured by bettongs is generally eucalypt forest and woodland, with a complex understorey. This combination

provides food and nesting areas, both essential if they are to thrive and reproduce. Bettongs are picky eaters. Their main food source is made up of subterranean fungi and these are hidden underground. Bettongs have a keen sense of smell and use this to locate the underground food source, and once located they dig around furiously and leave deep conical holes

from which they have removed the fungi. Look out for the characteristic diggings next time you are out in the bush. This type of disturbance is beneficial to the bush and promotes the growth of many small native herbs, lilies and orchids.

There is an interesting three way interaction between the fungi, the bettongs and the plants. Bettongs ingest the fungi and in this way disperse them. Where ever they land



they start to infect the roots of plants in the area. These infected plants are better at taking up water and nutrients. So everyone benefits, the bettongs are fed, the plants healthier and the fungi have been spread around!

Bettongs do eat other foods as well. In research done on bettong scats other foods found in their diet include tubers, the fruit and leaves of plants, invertebrates and acacia gum. These foods are an important secondary source of nutrition for bettongs, particularly when fungi are not abundant.

Apart from the threat of reduced habitat, domestic cats and dogs also prey on bettongs, and your cat or dog — no matter how cute it may be — is unfortunately no exception.

Cats are formidable hunters, they have excellent eyesight, acute hearing and a sharp sense of smell and show no mercy when hunting. Dogs let loose during the day form packs and will hunt in nearby bushland. Always keep your cats and dogs under control and indoors from dusk — this will reduce the effects on local populations of

native fauna.

The best way to maintain bettong populations is to protect existing bushland. Bettongs need bush with a complex understorey and also large trees, with which fungi have strong associations. Bettongs make a nest under grass tussocks or in hollow logs so it is important not to tidy up the bush. Leave plenty of logs on the ground — and remember the useful old hollows were once new wood, so make sure new wood is left there as these are the hollows of the future. In some cases gorse may be providing the best habitat for the bettongs — it is excellent shelter when there is no other bush around. So if you are doing some serious weed control, just ensure that there is other habitat around that will provide protection for any native animals in the area.

Produced by Bushcare Technical,
Nature Conservation Branch,
DPIWE.

For further information call Bushcare
Technical on 03 6233 8322 or visit our
website <www.bushcare.tas.gov.au>.

Exciting summer projects in PWS SE District...

A couple of potential projects coming up in this District over the next few months are:

1. A heritage inventory of old farm machinery and other artefacts at Woodvine Nature Reserve near Forcett.
2. A user survey of campers and other visitors at Lime Bay camping area down on the Tasman Peninsula over the summer period.

WILDCARE members interested in being notified of these volunteer activities simply need to update their member record with the following activities: General Maintenance Assistance; Archival Research; or Preferred Reserves Coal Mines/Lime Bay; Tasman Peninsula; Woodvine NR.

Nicole Walsh
PWS Planning Officer (SE District)

Maatsuyker Awards

Jill Thiele & David Abbot (former Maatsuyker Island caretakers) in conjunction with the **WILDCARE** and Parks & Wildlife Service organised the Maatsuyker Award Ceremony for volunteer caretakers which was held in November 2002.

The event had a very impressive turn out (probably 60–80 people). Jill did a fine job with the displays at the Waterside Workers Pavilion next to Constitution Dock in Hobart.

The caretakers each received a green polar fleece top and a certificate of appreciation for their efforts from **WILDCARE** and Parks & Wildlife Service.

The senior public service government representatives present could not have failed to be impressed by the commitment to Maatsuyker Island that the volunteer caretakers have towards the existing caretaker program.

Jill & Dave also arranged to have Maatsuyker feature on the ABC news during the weather reports for the week the award ceremony was held on.

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New Projects Funded

Stabilisation of Claytons Hut — Melaleuca

Contact: Mark Bryce/Mark O'May

Requested: \$2,530.00

Granted: \$2,530.00

Details: Have previously been granted funding for plane transport to plan implementation. This application is \$30 over the limit. They now have a CAREs group setup for the area — good project. Approved the application as is.

Interpretation Brochures — Tamar Island Wetlands CAREs Group

Contact: Dave Frelek/Julie Nermut

Requested: \$2,420.00

Granted: \$2,420.00

Details: Design, produce and print 2000 full colour brochures for the Tamar Island Wetlands Centre. Julie said the current brochure is really old and unreadable. Andrew said it's a good project but the brochure will need approval from the PWS Interps section. Recognition for WILDCARE on the brochure as well should be included eg logo. Approved.

Joey Care — Training on care of injured & orphaned wildlife

Contact: NCB Branch DPIWE

Requested: \$1,298.00

Granted: \$1,298.00

Details: Great project. People attending the course who are not *WILDCARE* members will be joined up as members. It will be a good chance to get NCB and *WILDCARE* working closer together. Approved.

Aquarium Educational Displays — Tamar Island Wetlands CAREs Group

Contact: Ruth Mollison

Requested: \$455.00

Granted: \$455.00

Details: The centre has borrowed 1 tank from the QVMAG indefinitely and require fittings for that. Are in need of another tank as well. Andrew said recognition for *WILDCARE* will be needed on the tank perhaps just a sticker. Andrew also said later on maybe get a plaque done as well. Approved.

The *WILDCARE* Tasmania Nature Writer's Prize

Contact: Peter Grant

Requested: \$5,000.00

Granted: \$5,000.00

Details: Funding Submission is actually over the \$2,500 limit but the project is biennial so is okay to support. Ten Days on the Island will have copyright over the pieces.

The Hobart City Council are also providing minor sponsorship. It was agreed that commitment will only be made for the first project — future commitment can't be made. Accepted.

Attendance at Celebrating Mountains Conference

Contact: Angie McGowan

Requested: \$500.00

Granted: \$500.00

Details: \$500 requested for airfares to send Chris Cooper to the Celebrating Mountains Conference, Jindabyne in November. It was suggested that Chris take display material and for Chris to wear a *WILDCARE* vest while at the conference. It was also agreed that Chris will prepare a report to be published in Wildtimes on his return. Accepted.

Tarrameh School Landcare Group

Contact: Kate Kaltenbach

Requested: \$2,240.00

Granted: \$1,285.00

Details: As part of the funding arrangements, Tarremah School Landcare Group is required to be integrated with the larger CAREs group connected with Peter Murrell Reserve and equipment is to be available for use by volunteers working on this Reserve. Requesting funding for purchase of tools for work in the Peter Murrell Reserve. The funding submission was accepted subject to the following conditions:

- The equipment is to be locked away.
- The equipment is the property of *WILDCARE*.
- The equipment is made available to other groups in the area for use.
- The safety helmet and brushcutter requested are not granted.

Pelion Hut — Hut Warden Program (Out of Session)

Contact: Kathy Van Dulleman

Requested: \$2,500

Granted: \$2,500

Details: Extension to the annual Cradle Valley Hut Wardens program at Waterfall Valley, to have additional volunteers at Pelion from mid December to mid March.

Deal Island working bee (Out of Session)

Contact: Stuart Dudgeon

Requested: \$2,500

Granted: \$2,500

Details: Friends of the Kent Group National Park CAREs group maintenance working bee on Deal Island in December 2002.

What have we all been doing for the last 12 months?

WILDCARE Inc. volunteers work on year round, annual and/or working bee programs or projects. In addition, around 40 individuals have also been 'authorised' to assist individual departmental staff members in the field and/or in the office.

Year round programs adopted	Hours	\$ value @ \$15/hr
Maatsuyker Is Caretakers Program	17,520	262,800
Deal Is. Caretakers Program	17,520	262,800
Tamar Is. Visitor Centre operations/staffing	5,824	87,360
Adopt-a-Track (50 Track Caretakers and 36 Tracks statewide)	3,000	45,000
Caring for Injured & Orphaned Wildlife *	613,200	9,198,000
WILDCARE Office admin	320	4,800
WILDCARE Office special assistance/mailouts	84	1,260
TOTAL	747,548	9,860,420

* Represents 70 people, full time statewide caring for animals 365 days of the year, 24 hours a day, which would include other associated expenses such as foods, travel, telephone and the building/purchasing of special animal accommodation. The figure of 70 people is a full time equivalent figure that includes all the part time carers. All figures err on the conservative side.

Annual programs adopted	Hours	\$ value @ \$15/hr
Overland Track Wardens Program — Waterfall Valley Hut	3,600	54,000
Orange Bellied Parrot Recovery Program @ Melaleuca	6,000	90,000
Orange Bellied Parrot Recovery Program @ Birches Inlet	6,000	90,000
TOTAL	15,600	234,000
TOTAL	763,148	10,094,420

Note: All figures are based on the number of participants X number of hours/day X number of days X \$15/hour (the nationally accepted value of volunteers/hour).

Working Bees/Projects 2002	For	Date(s)
AAT Postman's Track — Rocky Cape NP	PWS	10/2/02
AAT Paddy's Lake (part of Penguin to Cradle Track)	PWS	2–3/3/02
Eddystone Point Annual Weedbusting Mountain Festival	PWS	9–10/3/02 15–24/3/02
Rice Grass Action Day — Port Sorell	NCB	23/3/02
SE Reserves Friendly Neighbours	PWS	3/02
Seven Mile Beach office — data entry	PWS	3/02
WHA Zoologist — data entry	NCB	3/02
Schouten Island Annual Gorse Gnashing (2002)	PWS	13/3/02
Beach Weed Watch Botanical Guardians	NCB	10/4/02

Coal Mines/Lime Bay CAREs inaugural meeting	PWS	4/5/02
WILDCARE Office — admin	W	5/02
Archaeological Funding Support	THO	9/5/02
WHA Vegetation Mapping assistance Granville Harbour (4 Mile Beach) working bee	NCB	29/5/02
Threatened Sp. <i>Epacris virgata</i> working bee — Trial Bay/Kettering	PWS	7–9/6/02
Biannual Waterbird Count — Moulting Lagoon	NCB	23/6/02
Friends of Snake Island (D'Entrecasteaux Channel)	NCB	10/7/02
Cheltenham Bush Landcare Group working bee		31/7/02
KarstCare—Mole Creek Kubla Khan working bee	PWS	18/7/02
Injured & Orphaned Wildlife — "Hospital" Bird Cage building	NCB	7/02
Tasmanian Trail working bee — shelter erection at Ouse	TT	19/10/02
Tasmanian Trail working bee — 100km of new trail with markers	TT	23/11/02
AAT Crescent Bay & Mt. Brown Track	PWS12	12–13/10/02
AAT Dial Rd to Purton's Flats (Penguin — Cradle Trail)	PWS11 &	18/9/02
AAT Kermandie Track, Hartz Mtn	PWS	17/9/02
Friends of Trevallyn Bushland working bee	PWS	14/9/02; 19/9/02; 9/11/02; 7/12/02
Orange Bellied Parrot Surveys at Melaleuca & Birches Inlet	NCB	18/10/02– 4/4/03
Fox Taskforce Admin assistance	PWS	10/02
KarstCare —Mole Creek Kubla Khan track clearing & maintenance	PWS	26/10/02
AAT Tulip Creek (Penguin — Cradle Trail)	PWS	4–6/10/02
Maria Island working bee — erosion control at Fossil Cliffs	PWS26	26–27/10/02
Maria Island working bee — art gallery opening assistance	PWS	23/11/02
AAT Kermandie Track Hartz Mountain NP working bee	PWS	15/10/02 & 8/11/02
Friends of Cradle Valley General Meeting	PWS	23/10/02
Threatened Sp. <i>Epacris virgata</i> working bee — Trial Bay/Kettering	NCB	2/11/02
Devils Kitchen/Waterfall Bay working bee	PWS	8/12/02

Note

1. The figures for the working bee/projects have not been compiled at this time.
2. Some of the projects are ongoing after the initial call up.

Thankyou!

WILDCARE wishes to thank the following sponsors for their support of the *WILDCARE* Fund

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- Resource Management & Conservation

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The Possum Shed, Westerway – 10% discount on all gifts

Eaglehawk Cafe — 10% discount (on meals over \$20.00 excludes alcohol)

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We are looking for other sponsors, both for the *WILDCARE* Fund and as discounters. Know someone who you think might be interested? Why not have a chat to them and suggest they contact **Andrew Smith at Community Partnerships Section** for more details (Ph 6233 2836 — GPO Box 44 Hobart 7001).

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