NRE TAS VOLUNTEER NEWS
May 2022

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#NationalVolunteerWeek
Better Together

Welcome to the second edition of the Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania (NRE Tas) volunteering newsletter for 2022. In this edition we celebrate National Volunteer Week. National Volunteer week is an opportunity to celebrate NRE Tas volunteers and all the wonderful work you all do every day.

Thank you!

"*I am proud of the important role that our volunteers play in supporting the work that we do at NRE Tas, and also the value and meaning that volunteering with NRE Tas provides to each and every person that volunteers with us. As you dedicate your time to supporting our work, I firmly believe that we at NRE Tas must always remain conscious of our obligations to you as volunteers – to keep you safe; to provide meaningful and fulfilling experiences; and to ensure that your work is supported, focussed and aligned with our priorities as an organisation.*

With over 1400 registered volunteers, equating to over 13,200 hours per year of volunteer effort, you play a key part in delivering important conservation and community-based projects.

This week is an opportunity for all of us to stop, think and celebrate the important services that volunteers deliver across the broad diversity of our business, whether it be out in our national parks, pitching in as part of the Fishcare Program, monitoring Tasmanian devils or Orange□bellied parrots, or assisting in the Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens."

Jason Jacobi, Acting Secretary

Volunteers in action

Across all our sites volunteers are doing an amazing job, for example, greeting visitors for the annual Good Friday Easter Egg Hunt at the Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens (RTBG), assisting with maintenance activities and monitoring the ecological health of the Moulton Lagoon Game Reserve to name a few. This month we are featuring the great work of volunteers at the RTBG, Cradle Mountain, the East Coast and Furneaux Islands.

Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens (RTBG)

Royal Hobart Hospital Research Foundation's annual Easter Egg Hunt

On Good Friday the RTBG hosted the annual Easter Egg Hunt. The volunteers helped greet several thousand excited (or as I would dare to say "eggcited!") visitors that day, which was a wonderful support for staff on the day.
The photo to the right is of a front gate volunteer who has volunteered with the RTBG for seven years and loves to share her love of the Gardens with everyone who comes through the gate.

Ester Beecroft, Coordinator Visitor Experience

Photo: Ester Beecroft

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Volunteers in action

Parks and Wildlife Service (PWS)

Twisted Lakes Track Upgrade—a great partnership project

Photo: Sally Simco

The Twisted Lakes Track is a 2.5km long, rugged, and steep high-altitude track at Cradle Mountain. It is highly valued by bushwalkers for its remarkable wilderness character, stunning endemic flora and rugged lakes and tarns. Notably, it is one of the best tracks in the area to experience the changing colours of Deciduous Beech (Nothofagus gunnii) and is popular during autumn.

Photo: Sally Simco

Photo: Julie Gale

In partnership with Wildcare Tasmania and Wildcare Cradle Mountain Volunteers, Parks and Wildlife Service (PWS) have recently upgraded 420m of this track with the installation of a double-planking timber boardwalk in very wet, poorly degraded sections. Hardening these sections will encourage walkers to stay on the formed track to reduce further impact on the fragile sub-alpine environment and allow degraded areas to recover. The new boardwalk looks (and feels!) amazing so worth a stroll if you are in the area.

Kate Burton, Ranger in Charge

East Coast Volunteering

A little Something for Everyone

Have you ever walked miles and miles of beautiful coastline in the ultimate hunt for an invasive species?

Have you ever had to “baby-sit” a remote island for a month?

Have you ever helped a visitor from interstate find just the right camp site, perched in heathland above a pristine beach?

Have you ever had a real “Pet Rock”?

Have you ever experienced the timeless stillness of a wetland of international importance whilst quietly counting Swans?

Volunteers with the Parks and Wildlife Service have!

Schouten Island Volunteer Campground Hosts in front of Historic Moreys Hut. Photo: Fiona Everts

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Volunteers in action

East Coast Volunteering—A little Something for Everyone—continued

Whilst all these activities sound idyllic, there are always some challenging elements to any volunteer role. But our NRE Tas Volunteers step up and meet the challenges, often with astonishing good humour and innovative solutions.

In Freycinet we work shoulder to shoulder with our volunteers, the Wildcare Friends of Freycinet Group. An enthusiastic collective of folk who come from all ages and experiences. Our "Friends" hold annual working bees of 3-5 days duration in March, May, August, October and December.

Friends of Freycinet on the hunt for Sea Spurge at the mouth of Templestowe Lagoon. Photo: Ros Burgess

Their weeding activities include walking 53kms of coastline in search of Sea Spurge from Little Beach at the foot of the Elephant Pass all the way south to Bicheno and beyond into Freycinet National Park and Coles Bay. They target many other weed species across all of our Freycinet managed reserves.

They also undertake minor construction and maintenance of park facilities such as the boardwalk at Cape Tourville, Great Oyster Bay Lookout, Honeymoon Bay and Ranger Creek Picnic Shelters, numerous fence-lines and amenity blocks and other buildings.

They pick up litter from our car parks, walking trails, beaches and four wheel drive trails.

They help us to address erosion issues at numerous sites up and down the east coast like Wineglass Walking Tracks Car Park and further inland at the Apsley Waterhole within the Douglas Apsley National Park.

In March this year we welcomed a new volunteer group – CragCare, who have adopted Freycinet National Park's numerous climbing sites and plan to hold a number of working bees each year focussing on erosion issues, weeds and track maintenance. Members of this group are predominantly keen climbers who care for the special places where they chose to climb like White Water Wall. They get to work in really cool cliff top locations with names like "The Star Factory" and "Harlequin".

A little way off-shore from mainland Freycinet National Park lies Schouten Island. The island measures roughly 6km by 6km and to many is the jewel of Freycinet. Sporting a mix of stunning sandy beaches, unique geological formations and an intriguing past, Schouten is home to pairs of volunteer Campground Hosts from December to April of each year. Volunteers on Schouten need to be self sufficient and able to tolerate the fluctuating visitation that is ruled by the fickle boating weather. Volunteers camp for up to a month on Schouten, based near the historic Morey's Huts. They are the eyes and ears as well as the arms and legs of the Freycinet Field Centre at this remote site, assisting campers and day trippers to enjoy the island in ways that respect its unique character.

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Volunteers in action

East Coast Volunteering—A little Something for Everyone—continued

Not quite so remote but still with an air of wildness about it is the Friendly Beaches, in the northern most part of Freycinet National Park. Freycinet's surfing paradise. Not unexpectedly "Friendliness" is a key attribute to being a Volunteer Campground Host at the Friendlies. Recreational vehicles from parts unknown arrive sometimes quite late in the day, drawn to the site's reputation as having spectacular coastal views and being off the beaten track. Volunteers assist these visitors to navigate this back country haven at the end of a dirt road, to find just the right camping site. They also provide a powerhouse of information in a location without any mobile coverage.

Lastly, they say it's the "Quiet Ones" you've got to watch out for but this isn't always the case. Our Volunteer Bird Counters are a breed unto themselves, having the ability to identify different species by not just their feathers or their mode of flight but by their song. Twice a year volunteers play a key role in monitoring the ecological health of Moulting Lagoon Game Reserve, a Ramsar Wetland of international importance by participating in a bird count of the entire lagoon. Field Staff from Freycinet are often baffled by the generosity of these gum-booted volunteers who share their special skills with those of us who are less experienced, young and old.

Friends of Freycinet Volunteers weeding Sea Spurge at the mouth of the Douglas River. Photo: Ros Burgess.

So, as a volunteer here at Freycinet you can take your pick from a smorgasbord of different roles. This part of the state just mirrors how things roll state-wide with the Parks and Wildlife Service, with a myriad of opportunities available for those who love our National Parks and Reserves. I take my hat off to our volunteers who contribute so much, share so much with us and have a fun time doing it all the way.

I personally hold true that the most consistent attribute our Parks and Wildlife Volunteers bring to our national parks and reserves are all the things that you **don't** see.

You don't see rubbish piling up in the heathland, you don't see reserves being overrun by weeds, you don't see historic buildings and other infrastructure crumbling into the ground. What you do see is a group of happy volunteers enjoying a day working together in a jaw dropping location, knowing that they're making a real difference. And that makes me feel good…

Fiona Everts, Ranger

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Furneaux Islands

On Saturday 13 November 2021 the long awaited inaugural PWS and Volunteers of Flinders Island (VOFI) working bee took place on the stunning coastal walk from the Docs to Killiecrankie.

In the months leading up to it, both PWS staff and volunteer team leaders have not only had a few reconnoitre trips, but additionally staff have been undertaking route marking and tackling some long overdue maintenance activities.

The vegetation along this coastline is wild, beautiful, and simply incredible for those that sit and ponder - *how life must be living in such a harsh place*…. This vegetation whilst so beautiful, is also very fragile, meaning marking out the preferred route for all to walk and enjoy their surroundings was paramount, along with walker safety.

So, despite a terrible stormy night, volunteers and PWS staff ventured off early Saturday morning with updated sign markers and tools in hand, to walk the 2.4 km Killircrankie Beach to start works on 1.8km passed Stackeys Bight to Old Mans Head.

It is hoped by the team that by defining the track this will help cease the much braided and trampled sections impacting upon the fragile vegetation, in addition to fewer visitors becoming bamboozled and lost along this coastline.

The result - the track now traverses a few rocky beach sections and joins into to a worn pathway that does not disappoint as you pass by and view in awe each rock formation and section of geologic wonder.

Time passed so quickly for everyone on the day and before we knew it, sadly, it was time to head back exhausted but with the thought and enthusiasm that we would arrange another working bee soon to complete the tasks that we wished for, but time did not allow.

The PWS would like to thank David Heap, Craig Smith and David Green in volunteering their valuable time and assistance to help make the day a success and we look forward to more working bees!

Dominique Couzens—Acting Ranger in Charge)

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Volunteering opportunities

Save the Tasmanian Devil Program 2022

NRE Tas is seeking Expressions of Interest from volunteers who would like to join a small team of people trapping Tasmanian Devils to assess the health and status of devil populations across Tasmania.

There are multiple trips being planned to a variety of locations across the State, including the following:

Buckland: 12 – 21 July – EOI closing date 27 June
Woolnorth: 19 – 29 July – EOI closing date 4 July
Stony Head: 26 July – 4 August – EOI closing date 11 July

Current vacancies and expression of interest can be found on the NRE Tas website - Volunteering with Us | Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania (nre.tas.gov.au)

Change to definition of COVID-19 vaccination status

The definition of 'vaccinated' now mirrors the 'up-to-date' definition used by Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation. ATAGI defines a person as vaccinated whether they are 'up-to-date' by having a booster shot after their second primary dose. ATAGI recommends boosters are received three months (and no longer than 6 months) after the last primary vaccination dose. For clarity, a person is 'up-to-date' with their COVID-19 vaccinations as long as they have had their booster at some point from when it is due, no matter how long after their final primary dose. In line with this advice, NRE Tas now requires volunteers to be 'up-to-date' with their vaccination status to continue to take part in volunteering activites with NRE Tas. All volunteers should continue to make themselves familiar with the Department's COVID-19 Safe Plan. Further information can be found here—Volunteer Information | Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania (nre.tas.gov.au).

Key contacts

Key contacts	Area	Email
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Jenna Huisman	PWS North West Region	jenna.huisman@parks.tas.gov.au.
Kat Cullen	PWS Southern Region	katrina.cullen@parks.tas.gov.au.
India Thompson	Fishcare	india.thompson@nre.tas.gov.au.
Sandra Kellett	Environment, Heritage and Land	sandra.kellet@nre.tas.gov.au.
Esther Beecroft	Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens	esther.beecroft@rtbg.tas.gov.au.

If you have any questions, queries or comments about volunteering for NRE Tas or you'd like to contribute to our next NRE TAS Volunteer News please contact us via this email: Volunteering@nre.tas.gov.au.

Thank you to each and every volunteer for your extraordinary contributions.
Happy Volunteer Week!