

Swan Bay Environment Association Inc.



NEWSLETTER NO. 53 – July 2009

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STAYING POSITIVE

The news that the Geelong Council has given approval for the Stockland development is a blow – however the fight is not over yet!

But it seems a good time to remind our members of all the positive and wonderful environmental activity taking place in our area (much of it involving the Swan Bay Environment Association) so we do not feel discouraged by Stockland and other inappropriate development endangering our local environment and the Victorian coastline.

Here is a brief guide to some of the local action:

REVEGETATION ACTIVITY

As one of the main aims of our Association is to re-vegetate the local environment it is rewarding to see so much weed clearing and planting of indigenous plants around the Borough – e.g. in the Moonah woodland along the Narrows; on the sand dunes above the Dog Beach; around the Dog Beach car park; on the dunes behind Cottage by the Sea and on private property at Burnt Point. Most of the plants used in these projects have been grown at the Community Nursery by our wonderful volunteers.

QUEENCLIFFE COMMUNITY NURSERY

Located at 79 Nelson Rd this is where volunteers meet to grow the indigenous plants for local and coastal planting. Contact details are listed at the end of this Newsletter.

BELLARINE HIGH SCHOOL LANDCARE NURSERY

A similar but much larger Nursery exists at Belchers Rd in the Bellarine High School grounds (Drysdale) to provide inland plants suited to the Bellarine Peninsula.

INDIGENOUS GARDEN (ex-High School site)

Thanks to Fay Agterhuis, head of Point Lonsdale Primary School, Debbie Brearley and the Council outdoor staff, an area on this site is rapidly taking

shape as an indigenous garden which it is hoped can be expanded to include a food garden and self-sufficiency building.

ENVIRONMENTAL TRAIL

Hopefully every member has walked the Swan Bay Environmental Trail which provides an excellent introduction to the features of Swan Bay. The trail runs along the bike track from the Queenscliff Railway Station to the former high school site in King St.

Brochures describing the features can be found in two wooden boxes – one at the Station and one at the King St lookout. Along the track are numbered signposts which correspond to the numbered sections in the trail guide.

Also along the track are display signs featuring the birds, animals and plants important to Swan Bay.

SALTMARSH BOARD WALK

Also hopefully every member has walked along the boardwalk which the Swan Bay Association had installed some years ago. It is at the corner of Murray Rd and Ward Rd and provides an opportunity to view the saltmarsh plants along its edge and of a very special view into the waters of Swan Bay.

SALTMARSH GARDENS

Saltmarsh plants can also be viewed in the gardens surrounding the DPI (Department of Primary Industry) building in the Narrows. This area shows how attractive and environmentally appropriate these plants can be. Visitors are welcome to walk along the boardwalk and path around the building on the edge of the Bay.

SWAN BAY INFORMATION

The Association has for some years collected items of relevance to Swan Bay. This has included books, reports, newspaper articles and other material and the items are listed on the Swan Bay Environment website under the heading LIBRARY.

MUD ISLANDS

Although Mud Islands are in Port Phillip Bay (not Swan Bay), many of our members also belong to the Friends of Mud Islands and as such have the opportunity and pleasure of trips (working bee trips of course!) to this very special place. Parks Vic. and the Friends have spent many years clearing the Islands of weeds and monthly maintenance and bird counting trips continue. Information is on the following website: <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~fomi/>

EDWARDS POINT

This State Faunal Reserve is at the northern end of Swan Bay. It has a lovely scenic walk through coastal woodland and wetlands. There is also a Friends group who assist Parks Vic. with the care of the Reserve.

OCEAN GROVE NATURE RESERVE

This reserve of 143 hectares consists of native coastal bush land including stands of grass trees. It is a wonderful place for walks, picnics, bird observing and spying the occasional wallaby. The Park is being restored to its indigenous state by the Friends Group and Parks Vic. Entry to the Park is off Grubb Rd.

BALLARA AND ARILPA

These are two historic (private) properties in the heart of Point Lonsdale where much of the original indigenous vegetation still exists. Weeding and re-planting is being carried out and the vegetation is providing a good source of seed (local provenance) for cultivation at our Nursery.

WATER TESTING

In conjunction with the Corangamite Waterwatch some of our members are involved in monthly water testing to help create a long term study of the health of our waterways, particularly those flowing into Swan Bay.

BIRD WATCHING

Swan Bay and Lake Victoria provide sites for local and migratory birds, of which nearly 200 species have been observed in the area. It is a bird observer's paradise and bird groups also conduct bird banding and recording activities in the area. Check the website of Birds Australia or ring them on 93470757. www.birdsaustralia.com.au

MARINE DISCOVERY CENTRE

The MDC is a wonderful environmental learning centre located in the Narrows on the DPI site. It is renowned for its educational excellence and provides "hands-on" experience for many thousands of visitors, particularly school groups. It also runs a dune re-vegetation program. A Friends group has been established to provide support and members receive unlimited visits to the MDC. Join at www.friendsofmdc.org/.

PUBLICATIONS

There are many publications, flyers, booklets, brochures, etc. available providing information about our local environment. Two examples are the booklets on "Inland Plants" and "Coastal Plants" of the Bellarine Peninsula. These and other information can be obtained from the Council Offices.

BELLARINE CATCHMENT NETWORK

Overseeing much of the environmental activity around Swan Bay is the Bellarine Catchment Network. Details of this organisation and its work were given in the SBEA Newsletter no 51 in November 2008.

LINKS (Website)

The links heading on the SBEA website provides access to other environmental groups and activities further afield.

GEELONG BOTANIC GARDENS

The Geelong Botanic Gardens are one of the most outstanding regional gardens and feature a coastal plant section. The Gardens will be hosting the 30th Annual National Garden History Conference 16th to 18th October. Details are available from: www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au

QUEENSCLIFFE ECO EXPO

This will be a weekend of information, activities, tours and talks 19th - 20th of September. Details are provided on the flyer inserted with this Newsletter.

Working bees at Nursery, 79 Nelson Rd 10am-12pm, 3rd Sunday each month and mid-week on different days. If interested contact Jill Warneke 5258 1716 or jwarneke@vtown.com.au Mid-week times are also posted on the Nursery fence

Working bee times are listed on our website: home.vicnet.net.au/~sbea