

FRIENDS OF CRADLE VALLEY BULLETIN April 2010

Greetings folks!

The Anzac weekend is coming up again, and, as you know, this is traditionally a good time to come and see the Fagus changing colour at Cradle. However because of circumstances beyond our control, this year the Fagus show is a bit late. Indeed, those growing around Waldheim are showing no signs yet of turning to a deliciously golden yellow, as their leaves are still bright green.

Only high up on the exposed mountain slopes, our strands of Fagus are definitely starting to change. Providing the weather stays moderate, it could be a good year.

1. NEW MEMBERS: A warm welcome to Michael and Carol Davis.

2. REPAIRS AT WALDHEIM:

Did you catch the ABC TV News item on Monday night (19th April) featuring the repairs that are being done to the historic Waldheim Chalet? The original wooden Chalet was built from King Billy Pine by Gustav Weindorfer between 1911 and 1932. Over subsequent years, under different management, it was enlarged and modified. The Chalet eventually succumbed to the elements in 1976, at which point a team of PWS officers lead by former Cradle Head Ranger Gordon Saunders built the replica according to Weindorfer's original design.

These current repairs are being funded from a \$400,000 Federal Government allocation for maintaining Waldheim and the Overland Track that was part of a \$60M 'sweetener' involving Heritage Projects nationwide that Tasmanian Green Senators Bob Brown and Christine Milne negotiated with the Rudd Government which was wanting to pass its *Economic Stimulus Package* in the Senate.

The restoration work itself is being undertaken by skilled local craftsman Tim Youlden who is being resourced and supervised by Senior Cradle Ranger Ted Bugg.

In the photo, Senior Ranger Ted Bugg (Centre) is being interviewed at the rear of Waldheim by ABC Newsman Damien McIntyre, PWS's Liz Wren keenly observing proceedings.



3. NEED FOR PRECINCT PLANNING TO RE-COMMENCE:

As it's been a few years since Precinct Planning was suspended in the Cradle Valley because of a lack of funding, FoCV is calling for PWS to re-commence this important planning process as a top priority.

If plans for the various precincts are not discussed and established, then developments may become piece-meal, haphazard and sometimes down-right inappropriate.

There is still no toilet facility at the starting point of the Overland Track, for instance, and at Waldeim, a number of problems have emerged, such as an ugly obtrusive 1970s toilet block which will have to be relocated and a concrete culvert that's resulted in tree deaths.



This photo shows the current view of the Waldheim Chalet from the carpark - an iconic image recognized worldwide. Note the gravel dump, the undisguised electrical sub-stations and the dead trees in the gully caused by large concrete pipes insensitively placed by DIER, who tell us they're planning for a "hundred year flood". A better solution may have been to maintain a spoon drain, and ask guests who are using the cabins at the rear of the Chalet to park their cars in the communal car park, and leave the roadway for PWS service vehicles only.

4. FINALLY, A RESPONSE TO ROADSIDE SLASHING CONCERNS:

We're delighted to have received the following response from Malcolm Wells, Chairman of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area Consultative Committee (TWWHACC) with whom we raised concerns about the cavalier way that the Dove Lake Road was slashed: *"Following receipt of your letter of 20 October 2009, the Committee requested advice from the PWS regarding the manner in which roadside slashing was undertaken along the Dove Lake Road in late 2009. At its most recent meeting of 25 February 2010, TWWHACC were advised that the manner in which the clearing was undertaken was the result of a communication breakdown between the agency, DIER and DIER's contractor who performed the work. TWWHACC is of the view that in order to avoid a repeat of these types of incidents, some formal process should be implemented between the PWS and the other agencies that undertake works on PWS behalf. The Committee requested that I write to the General Manager of PWS conveying the Committee's support for the immediate development of formal standard operating procedures with DIER and other agencies, such as Hydro Tasmania, that regularly operate, either independently or through contractors in the TWWHA. Such action should result in any works undertaken by other agencies or contractors on land managed by PWS being agreed by all parties before that work is carried out. Thank you for bringing this matter to TWWHACC's attention."* Well, we'll chalk this one up as a small victory to us, Malcolm.

5. POSSIBLE EXTENSION TO CRADLE PRECINCT'S CONSERVATION AREA?

We've also had the following response from the Prime Minister's office about the nearby Middlesex Plains property: *"Your letter of 4 January 2010 to the Prime Minister Hon Kevin Rudd MP, concerning an opportunity to purchase the Middlesex Plains property has been passed to the Minister for Environment Protection, Heritage and the Arts, the Hon. Peter Garrett AM MP. The Minister has asked me to thank you for your letter and to reply on his behalf. The Australian Government recently submitted a proposal to the World Heritage Committee for a boundary extension to the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area into a number of adjacent reserves. The boundary extension was agreed with the Tasmanian Government and the Australian Government does not propose*



to extent the World Heritage Area further. However, there are areas of land near the World Heritage Area and National parks around Tasmania on which conservation objectives are pursued, which may be under public or private ownership. Although no funds are available within current heritage budgets for such land acquisitions, you may wish to consider some other avenues in an effort to protect heritage values at Middlesex Plains. Under the Australian Government's 'Caring for our Country' initiative, building Australia's National Reserve System is one of six priorities for national investment. The National Reserve System is aimed at conserving Australia's distinctive landscapes, plants and animals through a comprehensive, adequate and representative system of reserves across Australia. Partners can apply for assistance from the Australian Government to buy land for new reserves. The Government will provide up to two-thirds of the costs of purchasing an approved property, to be owned and managed as part of the NRS by the partner organisation. ... I understand that tenders for this property have already closed, so if you know of a suitable partner organisation interested in purchasing and managing the property, I would advise them to contact the Director of the National Reserve System section ... Another potential avenue for the long-term protection of this property may be the Tasmanian Land Conservancy's 'Revolving Fund' program." On the ball, President Cathy Clayton immediately referred this sanguine advice to her close contacts in the Tasmanian Land Conservancy (See Letter in separate attachment), noting that there were only 3 days before the close of submissions.

6. MORE GOOD NEWS: FoCV welcomes the appointment of Nic Deka to the position of Park & Reserves Manager - Cradle Mountain/Lake St Clair based at Cradle. He replaces Eddie Staier who is now the PWS North West Regional Fire Management Officer based in Ulverstone. Congratulations to Nic, and our 'warmest' congratulations to Eddie too!

7. AGM Notice: The AGM of FoCV will be held on Saturday 20 November 2010 commencing at 1pm at the Blandfordia Alpine Club Hut which is near the Ronney Creek carpark in the Cradle Valley. Three days/nights have been booked for Friday 19th, Saturday 20th and Sunday 21st November for FoCV members who may wish to stay over and enjoy the ambience. As many of us of are nearing an uncertain age, it's probably a good idea to put the dates into your diaries now. Remember that Blandfordia has ample sleeping quarters for 'overnighting'.

Best wishes,
John Wilson
Hon. FoCV Secretary



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Biodiversity is our life