

Friends of Harmers Haven Report 2019 -2020

This report is an expanded version of information that appeared in the recent HHRRG newsletter.

1. *Triangle at western end of Viminaria Road (funded by a Bass Coast Shire Council & Bass Coast Landcare Network Biolinks grant)*

The Bass Coast Shire Council which manages this piece of land decided to revegetate as part of their biolinks plan. Many groups and people were involved in getting this project completed. Bass Coast Landcare Network, Wonthaggi Seedbank & Nursery and Frank Smolders down at Fish Creek grew more than 2000 plants for us. Dave Sutton & John Old put in the fence line (and solar run electrification) to keep cattle out and Alison Oates, Botanist, carried out a comprehensive mapping plan as the area, despite being relatively small, had a number of different soil types. Dave Sutton also did some spot spraying to allow the plants the best opportunity to get established.

The planting was completed at one of our wonderful working bees with more than 40 people digging holes, planting and guarding the plants — followed by a delicious lunch at Jes & Bib's place. If you couldn't make the day check out this time-lapse recording of the working bee taken by HH resident drone pilot, Jesse Sago: <https://youtu.be/IOIsxhO4Rn0>

If you think the site looks a bit messy with the weed growth over summer, this was a planned approach with the weeds providing some shelter to the small plants.

The preparation was well worth it as the plants are growing well and have mostly survived the heat, wind and rain (and the resident wombat).

Although we can't hold any working bees due to Covid 19 restrictions, some individuals have continued to care for the foreshore by spot weeding and letting us know when they notice weed problems. If you have any ideas or comments please get in touch with us.

2. *Polygala Valley (funded by a DELWP biodiversity grant)*

We have been successful in controlling a serious weed infestation of Polygala in a valley to the west of the Area 21 sign. Weed contractors, Envirogain, removed the main incursion of Polygala bushes in 2018/19 (using no chemical spraying) followed by a successful working bee with more than 30 participants who planted more than 500 plants (thanks to Wonthaggi Seedbank & Nursery). Pleasing to note, around 70% of those plants have survived. What is exciting too are the new plants growing up through piles of the dead Polygala.



Banksias emerging as part of the revegetation strategy.



Community volunteers at the revegetation day. We are continuing to pull up new shoots of Polygala, so anyone interested in getting down on their knees to lend a hand, give us a call!

3. Silver Wormwood Site (funded by a DELWP biodiversity grant & DELWP Coastcare grant)

We've had similar success at this site. Silver Wormwood had colonised a whole valley to the east of Coal Creek. We have eradicated the Wormwood at this site and replanted with a similar rate of success. Thanks to the more than 25 folk who participated in the replanting last winter and thanks to the Wonthaggi Seedbank & Nursery who provided the 500 plants.

4. Sea Spurge control (funded by a DELWP 2019 Coastcare grant & a DELWP Biodiversity grant)

As a continuation of a Sea Spurge control program begun by Cape Paterson Residents & Ratepayers Association (CPPRA) we have extended this program to pulling Sea Spurge from Area 23 through to Area 20. We have used weed contractors followed by working bees. We have had three school groups pulling Sea Spurge, as a community contribution. These events have been highly successful & enjoyed by school children & teachers alike. South Gippsland Conservation Society together with Friends of Harmers Haven provide educators to talk to the groups about conservation, climate change, coastal erosion, Hooded Plovers nesting sites & how we achieve regeneration of the native Spinifex and Pigface after removal of the Sea Spurge. We also had a highly successful working bee with 35 participants from CPPRA, HHRRG & SGCS in February this year.



5. *Cape Honeyflower eradication (funded by a DELWP 2019 Coastcare grant - \$9,365)*

This is a nasty looking monster of a weed that has invaded pockets of our foreshore west of Area 21. We have made a concerted effort over the last 3 years to eradicate this weed and we have made encouraging progress. Recently we planted 300 plants (supplied in-kind by Envirogain) at the site. See photos showing pre weed control, just after weed control, and now with more recent planting. It is possible to eradicate so if you see some please contact us as soon as possible and we'll get the weed contractors on to it.



Pre weed control

post weed control

revegetation

Other Harmers Haven Foreshore and Coastal Activities 2019 -2020

6. *Alison Oates' Flora and Fauna Assessment of the Harmers Haven Foreshore (funded by HHRRG)*

In order to better understand, appreciate & ultimately protect the natural values of our coastal foreshore, HHRRG engaged a local botanist, Alison Oates, to do a biodiversity values study of flora (Ecological Vegetation Classes (EVCs) & plants of regional, state & national significance) & threatened fauna species within the Harmers Haven Coastal Reserve. Alison identified 11 EVCs on our 90HA foreshore, all but one of which is classified as endangered, threatened, vulnerable or rare in the Gippsland Plains bioregion. The report was completed in November 2019, and it will be a crucial document in this year's community consultations about the San Remo-Inverloch walking track.

[Download and/or read the document.](#)

7. *Great Victorian Fish Count (sponsored by the South Gippsland Conservation Society)*

We are excited, as is Reef Watch and the Victorian National Parks Association, that Wreck Beach Harmers Haven has been added as a snorkelling site for the annual *Great Victorian Fish Count*. Thanks to Rod Webster from SGCS for this initiative. This year we had 25 enthusiastic snorkellers on the 7th December (local folk as well as some coming from as far afield as Williamstown and Ricketts Point, Beaumaris) and we saw this year's signature fish the 'ornate cow fish' as well as lots of other local species, the usual rays & even a Port Jackson Shark. If you'd like to take part in the next count we'll put you on the email list.

8. *Monitoring endangered hooded plovers*

During the Bass Coast 2019/2020 season, on beaches between San Remo and Inverloch, thirty-three pairs of Hooded Plovers created 56 nests, laid 129 eggs, and of the 26 chicks that hatched, 11 fledglings survived. Many eggs were lost to ravens, foxes and high-tides again this season. At Harmers Haven, at

the mouth of Coal Creek Estuary, we had one successful fledgling, whose proud parents WD and No Bands, survived pedestrian traffic and the loss of one set of eggs to a fox, yet raised a healthy chick. JS from Waterfall Creek also survived an entanglement of fishing line at the end of the breeding season and fortunately didn't lose a foot. TP was banded this summer too (in memory of Tom Paterson). Thanks Jem Bennett, Tom & Rosemary's grandson, for being a good citizen scientist and recording the event!



New members — let's regenerate our Friends group

We'd like to thank all Harmers Haven residents & ratepayers who participated in foreshore, coastal & marine activities and community revegetation and weeding days in 2019/2020. We'd particularly like to acknowledge community members who have joined or expressed an interest in joining Friends of Harmers Haven and who have helped with organising and participating in activities and opened up their homes for generous lunches after working bees & supplied delicious home cooked food & yummy cakes: Bibi & Jesse Sago; Susan Peel; Mark Levy; Lynda Western, Yvonne Simmance & Chris & Emelia Sferrazza.

New members are always welcome — but more than that, we need new members. Increasingly, we have to balance the recreational needs of residents and visitors whilst continuing to protect, for future generations, our regionally significant habitat with its high flora & fauna biodiversity & conservation values.

Contact us if you're interested in taking a more active role in protecting our unique habitat at Harmers Haven: grant writing, project managing; planning and organising activities; liaising with Parks Victoria who is our foreshore land manager; wildlife camera monitoring on the foreshore; liaising with the South Gippsland Conservation Society — we'd also encourage residents to become members of the SGCS; supervising school groups pulling sea spurge; hooded plover monitoring; any reef watch activities etc etc.

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