

SILVERLEAVES CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION INC.

Reg.no 0015325J

NEWSLETTER

December 2016



News Update

At the SCA meeting held in the Silverleaves Reserve on Sunday 20 November, business included a report of the recent meeting held with a representative from Bass Coast Shire planning to discuss better planning controls for Silverleaves.

Newsletter readers will recall we are trying to protect Silverleaves from the threats it faces from heightened vegetation removal activity, dwelling removal, and inappropriate development - towards our ultimate objective of achieving an Environmental Significance Overlay.

This would be the same type that is to be placed on the majority of the remaining Rhyll Inlet parcels of private land. SCA Secretary Jarvis Weston took the Bass Coast representative on a tour of Silverleaves showing examples of recent boundary-to-boundary vegetation removal, inappropriate development, and destruction of foreshore. Council explained the vegetation clearing laws, or lack thereof. Jarvis reported that there was positive support signaled for further controls around design and development. We are hoping to invite the same Council Planning representative to a future SCA meeting. This may be at the March 2017 AGM on Labour Day weekend. Watch this space.

SCA also notes the Bass Coast Shire Council has flagged significant environments and landscapes in its C140 Amendment (update below) to:

- Protect and conserve environmentally sensitive areas.
- Protect landscapes and significant open spaces that contribute to character identity and sustainable environments.

We also note C140 - 7.1.11 Integrated Coastal Planning for Gippsland Coastal Action Plan. The Coastal Action Plan provides the basis for achieving integrated decision and consistent planning outcomes by outlining a Coastal Policy for local government across Gippsland. The policy seeks to:

- Prevent coastal strip development and manage development within existing defined settlements
- Protect coastal natural, cultural and landscape values
- Provide for new development (tourism, recreation, aquaculture, wind farms, commercial transport recreational boat hire) consistent with same criteria
- Prevent inappropriate small lot subdivisions and address existing small lot subdivisions in inappropriate locations
- Introduce sighting and design guidelines to protect the coastal landscape.

It should be noted that none of the Victorian municipalities covered by the Coastal Action Plan have introduced the suggested Coastal Policy in its entirety into their planning schemes.

Update on Save the Rhyll Inlet campaign

As of 6 October 2016, amendment status of the C140 proposal per below was 'Waiting on Council'.

The amendment proposes to implement the recommendations of the Bass Coast Rural Land Use Strategy (2013) and the Bass Coast Shire Review of Rhyll Wetland May 2015 by updating the Municipal Strategic Statement at Clause 21 and introducing four new local policies; rezoning land at Coronet Bay/Corinella, The Gurdies, and Inverloch/Cape Paterson; rezoning an area west of Rhyll Wetland and applying the Environmental Significance Overlay Schedule 1 to this land; and updating the Schedules to the Rural Activity Zone and Farming Zone and the Schedule to Clause 61.03.

Renew your SCA Subscription for 2017 and beyond

SCA has updated its membership management and streamlined renewals for existing members - and joining for new members.

From 2017, all renewals will be due for the calendar year on 1 January with membership for one, two or five years, at \$20.00 per annum or \$40.00/\$100.00 respectively.

This includes four issues per annum of the SCA Newsletter and funds directed to the important work of conservation, vegetation protection, weed control and replanting with indigenous species.

You can join using the form included in this issue of the newsletter. Or you can join online.

Please visit the new SCA webpage, which includes archived newsletters and membership forms. See more information at the end of this newsletter. <http://www.silverleavesca.org>

SCA congratulates Bass Coast Shire Council's new Mayor

Bass Coast Shire Council unanimously elected Cr Pamela Rothfield as its new Mayor and Cr Brett Tessari as Deputy Mayor at a Special Meeting held on Wednesday 16 November 2016. Ms Rothfield is a Rhyll resident and grew up on Phillip Island. SCA hopes to work with the new Mayor and Councillors in to help strengthen planning and protection of the unique values of Silverleaves.

Weeds at Silverleaves, help us eradicate them – and replant with natives

After a wet winter at Silverleaves the weeds are abundant this year, especially Forget Me Nots in the foreshore. SCA is committed to weed removal and to replanting with indigenous grasses, shrubs and trees. For those wanting to identify weeds for removal, a useful reference is the *Bass Coast Common Weeds of Gippsland* booklet, available through the Bass Coast Shire or online www.basscoast.vic.gov.au

Some of the common weeds seen in gardens around Silverleaves and unfortunately in the foreshore include:

Agapanthus	Asparagus fern
Forget me nots	Onion weed
Asparagus fern	Blue Periwinkle
Bridal Creeper	Boneseed
Cape Weed	Cleavers (Sticky weed)
Cotoneaster	Dolichos Pea
Ivy - Cape	Ivy - English
Kikuyu Grass	Morning Glory
Mirror Bush	Oxeye Daisy
Polygala	Ragwort
Sweet Pittosporum	Thistles

Environmental weeds can invade and out-compete our native plant communities, resulting in the reduction of plant diversity and loss of habitat for native animals. Please help by removing these weeds from your property in an effort to reduce and control the impact of weeds in our environment.

SCA Working Bees

SCA holds regular Working Bees and welcomes you to join us. Please consider coming along to remove invasive weeds, plant indigenous plants and do your bit to preserve this unique area of Silverleaves for the future. Working Bee dates for 2017 will be decided at the Annual General Meeting on Sunday 12 March at 11 am at the Silverleaves Reserve.

Buruli Ulcers (Mycobacterium ulcerans)

The number of Buruli or Bairnsdale ulcers in the state has increased this year, with cases moving from coastal towns on the Mornington and Bellarine peninsulas, and Phillip Island, to the outskirts of Melbourne. There were 32 cases in Victoria in 2010 but the number grew to 106 cases in 2015 and 45 cases have been diagnosed so far this year. Some years ago a small number of people in Silverleaves contracted the ulcer, so be vigilant this year.

The ulcer starts with a mosquito bite size spot and grows bigger over weeks and eventually becomes an ulcer. Get treatment as early as possible as it can damage skin, flesh and capillaries and even go to the bone and suppress your immune system. Treatment is usually a prolonged course of anti biotics.

There is no evidence of direct person-to-person transmission but it has been thought contact with contaminated soil may play a role in transmission. More recently it is thought mosquitoes could be spreading the bacteria after coming into contact with infected possums. To prevent risk of contracting the ulcer use protective clothing, avoid biting insects and use insect repellent and clean skin or wounds after soil exposure.

Source: Better Health Channel, Vic State Govt.

Mosquitoes

Floods and heavy rains in Victoria have caused mosquito numbers to soar this year. Mosquitoes can carry the Ross River and Barmah Forest viruses, which cause joint inflammation, pain and rashes. To protect yourself from mosquito bites use insect repellent and cover up at the worst times in the morning and evening. Remove stagnant water around homes and change water in bird baths and pets' drinking bowls at least weekly.

One way to reduce the number of mosquitoes inside a home is to leave daddy long legs spiders alone as they kill quite a lot of mosquitoes. So spiders will be our friends for the next few months.

Rabbits

Also on the rise are rabbits. The Federal Government is trialing a new virus, RHDVI K5 next year to curb rabbit populations and Phillip Island will be included in this trial.

Nesting shorebirds Hooded Plovers

So far this season there have been 11 Hooded Plover nests recorded around the island. It hasn't been the best start to the season with a lot of nests failing due to inclement weather and high tides. However the hoodies have strategies in place to overcome such issues, like having a long breeding season. The hoodies haven't yet nested at Silverleaves this year, however they could any day now. In better news there have been Red-capped Plovers nests and chicks and Pied Oystercatcher nests and chicks recorded from Silverleaves to Observation Point.

If you spot a nest please report it to the Nature Park 5951 2800 or Bass Coast Shire Council 1300 226 278. You can help these vulnerable birds by please staying away from fenced nesting areas, keep your dogs on a lead and out of prohibited dog areas, and picking up rubbish.

Please note the 'No dogs anytime' sign at the east end of Silverleaves.

Beware Swooping Kookaburras at Silverleaves!

SCA Committee member Gillian Armstrong had a cheese sandwich snatched from her hand by a Kookaburra as she was having lunch on her veranda. With such sharp beaks they could cause damage to eyes or fingers, especially to young children eating outside.

Enjoy our local wildlife and birds by not feeding them as it can have serious consequences; they could lose the ability to source food themselves, as well as cause imbalances in their nutritional requirements causing severe deficiencies.



Kookaburra watching us eat lunch on our veranda at Silverleaves. Photo Myra Holmes

Beachcombing along Silverleaves beach

Have you wondered what these strange looking things are? They are shark egg cases found along the beach at different times of the year.

Elephant fish

Image source www.sharktrust.org



Australian Swellshark

Image source www.wikipedia.org



Port Jackson shark

Image source www.sharktrust.org



Copperhead snakes

With summer approaching so do the snakes. Copperhead snakes are the only snakes found on Phillip Island and are highly venomous, but very quiet and timid. They can sometimes be seen basking on paths or on top of tussocks. Make noise or stamp your feet as you go and they will quickly disappear at your approach. Please do not attack or harm these creatures, they may look scary but they are a protected wildlife species.

Fire safety at Silverleaves

Silverleaves is rated as an EXTREME bushfire risk area. Bushfire activity can also occur outside the Silverleaves area and can move quickly, come from many directions and be unpredictable.

Due to the road network Silverleaves access is limited. Roads may become blocked and visibility poor due to smoke. Power may be out, communications limited and you may not receive an official warning about fire in the area.

Be prepared, you need to know:

Where you will go ahead of time

How you will get there

When you will leave

What you will take with you

Beach Fires

Fires on the beach are of grave concern as embers travel and can start a fire in the foreshore. If you see a fire on the beach ring 000, they will then notify the Cowes Police.

SCA MEETINGS for 2017

- **Sunday 15 January 2017**
- **2.00pm Silverleaves Reserve**

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

- **Sunday 12 March 2017**
- **11.00am Silverleaves Reserve**

Please feel welcome to come along to the meeting and hear more about SCA plans, propose ideas, and meet other residents of Silverleaves. We look forward to seeing you.

SILVERLEAVES NATURE WALK

Jarvis Weston, Ranger in Charge, Phillip Island Nature Park has kindly offered to take us on a Nature Walk to Observation Point.

- **Sunday 15 January 2017**
- **10.00am, 2km walk, approx. 2 hours.**

Learn about the coastal environment of Silverleaves, including nesting shorebirds, migratory birds, weeds that threaten their habitat, and what we can do to help. Meet at the east end of Silverleaves Ave. It will be a great opportunity to meet other Silverleaves residents, and everyone is welcome. This is a free event. Bring your neighbours, friends and children.

SUPPORT THE SCA – JOIN OR RENEW NOW!

SCA relies on membership subscriptions and generous donations from local residents and associates to continue its vital work. Donations are very welcome and help us complete valuable weed clearing and revegetation projects amongst other activities.

It's time to renew your membership for 2017

We want to ensure this work can continue and so we encourage you to renew your membership for 2017. Membership renewal is at the beginning of the calendar year and you can now renew for one, two or five years.

New membership fee for 2017 - \$20 adult/yr

Seniors and Students \$15/yr

Due to rising costs of postage we encourage you to receive the newsletter by email. If you don't already receive the newsletter by email please notify the Secretary at the below email address that you wish to do so.

Complete the membership form with your cheque and send to:

The Secretary Silverleaves Conservation Association Inc
P.O.Box 9037 Cowes, VIC 3922


Or make a direct deposit online:

Bendigo Bank
BSB 633 000 Account 132 984 592.

The SCA has also introduced online payment of memberships to make your life that little bit easier! All it takes is a couple of minutes and a credit card to pay your 2017 membership dues. <http://www.silverleavesca.org>

Email address for any queries or a membership form

silverleavesconservation@outlook.com

 Like us on Facebook Silverleaves Conservation Association has a Facebook page where members share photos and stories of Silverleaves. Become a part of our online community. We would love you to share your experiences of Silverleaves as well!