

Seymour Wetland Restoration Reclassification

On June 29th 2022, the Minister for Parks Jacqui Petrusma, announced that an extra 54 hectares of land was incorporated into the Seymour Conservation Area after decades of rehabilitation by the local community. The tri-partisan decision from state Liberal, Labor and Greens to extend the conservation area to the freshwater marsh came after extensive efforts by the Seymour Community Action Group (SCAGI) to tackle a gorse infestation, and restore native flora. The conservation area has now nearly doubled in size, from 61 hectares to 115 hectares.

Ms Petrusma said the decision marked an important milestone for the area which would protect plant species of conservation significance, such as the lowland spiral orchid and mossy pennywort. The land also contains year-round fresh water recognised as being a “high conservation value waterbody” which is importantly home to the green and gold frog (*Litoria raniformis*), Tasmania’s largest frog, and is listed as ‘vulnerable’ under both the State and Commonwealth threatened species legislation.

Seymour Swamp has an interesting land use history. In 1857, it was used for brickworks, with clay dug from the area where the swamp now lies and shaped into bricks before being baked in a large sandstone kiln. The area has been a place of focus for local conservationists since the 1980s, after fire, overgrazing, and attempts at rutile mining destabilised sand blows over Long Point.

The work of SCAGI epitomises the aims of the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021-2030. They have been nominated for Landcare Australia's National Community Group Award, winner to be announced in August, after receiving the ACM Landcare Tasmania Community Group Award last year. This award was for recognition of the years of commitment and dedication to this important restoration work.

The Group is registered with Landcare and have been supported by the Tasmanian Landcare CEO Peter Stronach and his team since they Incorporated in 2016.

They have been mentored by Ecological Consultant Todd Dudley, the convenor of the NE Bioregional Network, throughout the restoration project. Todd is the recipient of multiple awards for his work on the Skyline Tier Restoration Project.

They have worked closely with Parks and Wildlife Services Ranger, Fiona Everts from Freycinet National Park, who has assisted with the Weed Management Plan and been the main point of contact with PWS. Fiona continues to assist the Group with the new Volunteer Program Plan and yearly reviews of the Weed Management Plan.

SCAGI are grateful to all their supporters who have cut and pasted gorse, assisted with planting hundreds of trees over the years, the Earth Ocean Network, the Green Army, Utas Landcare Society, Friends of Freycinet and the many others locally and from afar who have helped.

They are very grateful for the financial support from many sources. DPIPWE, Landcare, NRM North, Break O’Day Council, Weed Action Fund Grant, RACT, Community Environmental Project, Earth Ocean Network, Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal, and ongoing contributions from Group Members and supporters.

Neighbouring property owners have also joined the effort, working on their land to eradicate the weeds. The Group have also worked with William and Melissa Fergusson, who farm the adjacent Chain of Lagoons property, and have removed a large gorse infestation in the Seymour area. The Restoration work has been further supported by Break O’Day Council who have worked together with SCAGI on controlling the gorse and other weeds on the roadside verge.

There will be weed control and further plantings into the future and SCAGI will be working with Parks and Wildlife Services, all are welcome to join in.

With the new Classification and the Volunteer Program Plan, there is a requirement for all volunteers to register with PWS prior to helping in the Project area.

It is a simple task and once completed you are covered by insurance.

Please register through this link:

<https://app.betterimpact.com/Application?OrganizationGuid=aa3c186c-ebde-4f84-9091-6abaef6dc2be&ApplicationFormNumber=1>

For further information or to make contact refer to the SCAGI website.

<https://scagi7215.wixsite.com/scagi> email: scagi7215@gmail.com