



AGM 2016

The AGM will be held on Sunday, April 10 at the Bunurong Environment Centre at 11:45am for a 12:00pm Start – Hope to see you there.

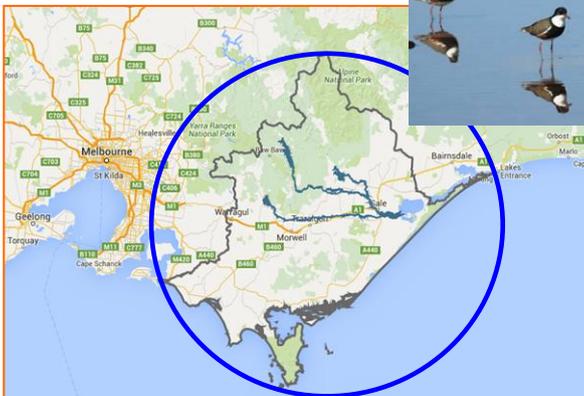
Guest Speaker

**Matt Bowler
Projects Team Leader
West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority**

The West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority (WGCMA) role is *“Protecting and enhancing West Gippsland’s Natural Environment”*

The CMA’s operate with regional waterway, floodplain, drainage and environmental water reserve management powers under the Water Act 1989.

The work and role of the Catchment Management Authorities across Victoria (there are 10 of them) is not widely known. As well as a statutory role and referral authority for other government agencies, the WGCMA plays a vital part in working towards and ensuring we protect and enhance our natural assets, in



particular, our waterways starting from the top of the catchment down to and including the coast.

Matt Bowler has many years of experience working in the Natural Resource Management sector and has worked for the West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority for a number of years in several roles. His current role as Projects Team Leader involves overseeing, managing and prioritising the multitude of projects that are occurring across a very large catchment area. Some of these, but not limited to, are: Fire and flood damage restoration, willow and riparian restoration along

priority gullies, creeks and rivers.

One of his outstanding successes has been the development of a Management Plan with all the stakeholders for the Heart Morass at Sale.

Matt will briefly outline the roles and responsibilities of the Gippsland Catchment Management Authority the CMA, then discuss his own role and the multitude of projects happening across the catchment.



Heart Morass, Sale

2016: South Gippsland Conservation Society - Celebrating 40 years of Conservation

This year the Society celebrates 40 Years of Conservation. This is an important milestone for the Society that marks 40 years of hard work by committed conservation minded volunteers past and present. There have been many conservation battles fought and a long list of battles won. It has also brought together many amazing people with dedication, knowledge, expertise, friendship and common ground for what has been, and continues to be, an ever more complex maze of environmental issues, disappointments and success stories.

Many outstanding projects have been undertaken by the Society's branches and its members. These include on-ground works, surveys, environment and planning issues, research projects, re-vegetation, advocacy.....; the list is endless. The many, positive outcomes are a credit to our membership's expertise, local knowledge and commitment to conservation.

Some of the more satisfying outcomes are often our on-ground activities; the re-vegetation project we have undertaken or the remnant vegetation we succeeded in protecting. We can all see and enjoy the fruits of our effort, watching planted tubestock grow to maturity, mammals and birds that were absent, returning and the beginnings of a restored eco-system.

The launch of our new publication 'A Field Guide to Saltmarsh Plants in Victoria' by authors Mary Ellis, Lorraine Norden and illustrations by renowned artist Celia Rosser follows on from a long history of quality publications initiated by our members. The prolific contribution that Mary Ellis and other authors of note have made is invaluable.

Any publication written and produced by our members, distributed through the shop or other outlets, disseminates valuable knowledge and conservation messages far beyond our members.

Reading through Mary Ellis's 'Three Decades of Conservation 1976 -2006' (available in the shop) highlights the broad range of issues that the Society continues to deal with.

From small beginnings, the ongoing growth and popularity of our education activities continues to reach out to the current and future generations. This gives us some hope and expectation of better environmental gains and protection for all the inhabitants of a planet that we now know is fragile and needs considerable repair, care and nurturing.

The last 40 years of conservation have seen many gains in environmental awareness, protection, policies and actions.

However, the last 20 or more years have also seen the detrimental impacts of poor environmental policy and management that continue to grow in scale and complexity.

Climate change and biodiversity loss and how we reverse their many interwoven impacts presents the most important challenge ever.

Although most of us won't be around for the next 40 years, the challenges are complex and are with us right now. We are at a crisis point on a global scale that threatens to change the planet, possibly irreversibly.

It needs to be recognised that it is our generation that is responsible for where we are at. The next generations will not thank us for this legacy so it remains with us to continue to address the issues.

Many see this too big and too daunting, that we as individuals have little or no control over. As daunting as it may seem, protection and enhancement of our environment, its amazing biodiversity and a truly sustainable future can only be achieved if we all continue to work and act in or within our own community. NOW.

As part of celebrating our 40 years of conservation we are proposing one or more activities throughout 2016. More details at the AGM.

If you have any thoughts/ideas for an activity that all the members can join in let us know at the AGM.

2015 - 2016:

The past year has seen ongoing popularity of the increasingly diverse education programs we offer for schools, adults and a recently popular one on one-family programs.

The Inverloch and Foster Branches continue to meet monthly with monthly working bees undertaking the relentless task of weeding in various public reserves.

A recent climate change forum "Beyond Paris – 1.5° Fact or Fiction" organised by Groundswell Bass Coast (auspiced by SGCS) was held in Wonthaggi and attracted approximately 180 participants. Three speakers highlighted the facts of where we are at, the economics of business as usual or acting now and the psychology of why we find it so hard to face some of the realities of climate change. Creating "active hope" to bring about change was one of the key messages.

Following on from 2014, the hottest year on record, 2015 beat that record with global temperatures about 1°C above the pre-industrial temperatures. (Source: World Meteorological

Organization. The full report can be found here:

<https://www.wmo.int/media/content/2015-hottest-year-record>)



Just this week, February 2016 has been declared globally the hottest February on record.

Politics:

We continue to pursue government at all levels for support and continue to challenge it to develop and implement policy/action that will re-direct the paradigm from “business as usual” to a sustainable and zero carbon future. This is no easy task!!!

A new Prime Minister, apart from the language used, has changed little in federal environment policy with the Environment Minister recently approving logging in a NSW National Park that was only declared in 2010. That same Minister continues to approve new coal mines and land clearing continues at an unprecedented rate.

In Qld. 296,000 hectares of bushland was cleared in 2013/2014. Approvals were also given for an additional 900 square kilometres (90,000Ha) at two properties, where clearing began in 2015.

(Source: “The Conversation” 22/2/2016. Full article here: <http://theconversation.com/queensland-land-clearing-is-undermining-australias-environmental-progress-54882>)

The Victorian Government continues to stumble over its environment policy and actions, although, we have seen some good news stories, an improvement in environment project funding and talk of a Victorian renewable energy target.

Inverloch Branch/Projects Committee:

Courtesy of our Coastcare grant(s) we undertook 5 successful planting days on both sides of Screw Creek where we planted some 4000 plants. 1000 plants were also planted around the Inverloch Bowling Club on the



foreshore. It remains to be seen what the extreme, long, dry spring and summer hot weather do to the survival rate. There will be more planting days throughout 2016 subject to some decent rainfall.

BEC & Shop:

The shop continues to thrive and attract many visitors and locals with the summer holiday period being particularly busy.

The coming year will see some changes to the outside look of the BEC and thanks to the Bass Coast Shire a new coat of paint outside and imminent painting of the shell museum, the office area and new carpet in the meeting room.

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Thanks to:

Everyone who is, or has been, a member and contributed to our 40 year young society: persistent, highly successful and all that you do.

Thanks to all of our office bearers and the various committees and committee members for the work you do. I mentioned last year that one day we should add up the number of volunteer hours – well I did!! – It’s still a work in progress but the conservative estimate to date is 8000 hours per annum.

The many hours of meetings, shop volunteering and weeding, planting, writing, getting our message out to the wider community through education and, all contribute to our ongoing success and 40 years young of longevity.

Special thanks to Vivien Hughes who after many years as our Office Administrator is retiring to Eden in NSW.

Thanks Vivien for a fantastic effort over those years. Vivien’s commitment went well beyond just office admin duties that included shop duty and all the tasks that need/should be done and nobody wants to do.

Vivien’s sister Pam has agreed to take over the role after expert tutorship by Vivien. We welcome her aboard.

Look forward to seeing you at the AGM on April 10, 2016 at 11.45am for a 12pm start.

Dave Sutton

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Foster Branch:

Foster continues to have only 4 meetings a year and we keep in touch by phone as necessary.

We only had one speaker last year - our local MP Daniel O'Brien. He talked about his job but did not say much about what is being done by government in this area.

We had one working bee to clear weeds around the Rotunda in Foster's main street.

Several of our members are involved with the plant nursery at Wilson's Prom and several others volunteer in the BEC shop on a regular roster.

We have not managed to recruit new members but keep on trying. Our next meeting will be in May and we hope to have Gary Wallis as Speaker then. Several of our members will attend the AGM.

Marion Haupt



BEC Shop Report - 2016:

Once again the Shop Volunteers have been very generous with their time and have worked very hard, especially over the school holiday periods.

This year we opened every day from the beginning of December until the end of the school holidays. The opening hours were also extended slightly with the shop staying open until 5pm daily. Our gross sales during this period were significantly higher than during the same time last year and hopefully this will bolster our annual dividend to the Society.

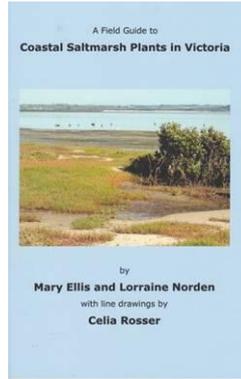
Without the Volunteers the shop would not be able to function and on behalf of the Shop Committee I would like to thank all of the Volunteers who have so generously donated their time to support the shop and the Society.

This year we have said goodbye and thank you to a long term supporter, Kate Harrison, and have welcomed new members into the shop volunteer group. We are always seeking additional volunteers for the shop so if any Society members are interested in joining us please do not hesitate to contact the Shop Manager or any member of the Shop Committee and let us know.

All new volunteers work through an orientation period and are not expected to work alone in the shop until they feel that they are ready to do so.

Just a reminder to Society members that we are seeking someone to take over the Shop Manager position, so if you are interested in finding out more information about this position please contact us on info@sgcs.org.au.

The Committee is also pleased that we have been able to increase our range of works from various local artists this year. Some of these items are on a consignment basis and some have been purchased by BEC. Being able to display work by local artists is always a positive and hopefully we will be able to continue to do this.



At the end of 2015 the Society published "A Field Guide to Coastal Saltmarsh Plants in Victoria" by Mary Ellis and Lorraine Norden with line drawings by Celia Rosser. This publication is now available in the shop, with a very successful launch having taken place on 28th February 2016.

Thanks to the support of SafePower Test and Tag Systems all of our electrical equipment has been checked for safety, with any unsafe items removed and replaced as necessary.

Throughout the year members of the Shop Committee have provided invaluable support and I would like to thank them all for their ongoing assistance and, on their behalf, again thank all of the Shop Volunteers for their outstanding efforts during the last year.

Pauline Taylor,
BEC Shop Manager

Bunurong Coast Education 2015 -16:

This year has again been extremely busy for BCE with our Education Officer Mike having his hours extended from 8 to 10 hours per week to try to manage the increased demands on his time.

Pleasingly, we have been able to provide opportunities for more staff to work at Dinosaur, Rockpool and other environmental activities; expanding their skill base while providing more flexibility for our programs.

Holiday activities and numbers visiting our centre continue to increase and our partnerships with Coastcare and RACV over the summer also continue to strengthen. Summer Programs included some 25 Summer by the Sea events, 35 for BCE and a dozen or so for the RACV.

Our most significant opportunity to influence the values and knowledge of the community continues to be through our programs for visiting schools and community groups along with the broader community's access to information at our Environment Centre. We could not continue with these popular services with the same level of efficiency without the valued support of Dave Berry and his website, Pauline and her volunteers, Treasurer Megan and the committee operating behind the scenes.

The community education presentations have generally been successful in providing interesting and informative sessions. Also pleasing has been the interest in Mike's initiative of activities for home schooled children. This has provided an excellent opportunity for families to meet as children spend stimulating time together. The changing coastal environment has been highlighted with the rapid accumulation of sand at Point Norman and the Abbott Street rock platform, which now no longer exists! The nearest platform available to us is Flat Rocks which makes visits vehicle dependent. Aileen's presentations to Geography classes have highlighted change in our coastal landforms and the impacts of climate change more broadly.

We increased our association with the expanding Inverloch – Kongwak Primary school last year with a range of free activities for Grade 1 students. I would like to see this expanded further with a more defined program being run out across the school with our society taking an active role in promoting environmental awareness within the school.

There have been some disappointments and lack of progress in the coastal sign project for which I must take blame. Where does the time go! Also we can show more initiative to continue to make the environment centre a constantly stimulating and exciting place to visit. Fresh ideas always welcome!

We are proud to be associated with SGCS's publication and promotion of Mary, Lorraine and Celia's "A Field Guide to the Coastal Saltmarsh Plants of Victoria" . The recent book launch successfully highlighted the authors and their work along with our Society's profile. Our continued support and participation for the Great Victorian Fish Count within our Bunurong Marine Park is also a source of satisfaction.

Thanks go to members of the BCE subcommittee for their input and to Bruce Atkin and Coastcare who continue to provide wonderful support. We also are thankful of the ongoing financial encouragement from South Gippsland Water.

Rod Webster



Book Launch:

Approximately 85 guests jammed into the Bunurong Environment Centre on February 28, 2016 to launch this exciting new publication 'A Field Guide to Saltmarsh Plants in Victoria' by authors Mary Ellis, Lorraine Norden with illustrations by renowned artist Celia Rosser.

With standing room only, Bruce Atkin, Coastcare Facilitator, launched the book outlining the importance of Victoria's saltmarsh wetlands that until recent years have been largely ignored as having significant environmental values. The book is a considerable milestone in raising community awareness and education of the role that saltmarsh plant ecosystems have in our environment. The book, a first in Victoria to list saltmarsh species all in the one place, will be of great value to many people and assist with the ongoing recognition and protection of saltmarsh.



The pictures combined with Celia's illustrations will assist greatly for both novice and expert in identifying this amazing plant community.

At the end of Bruce's launch a Q&A session was held where the audience discussed the writing and making of the book with the authors. Lorraine described the whole process as a great experience having "loved every minute of it".

Alison Brewster then presented Mary, Lorraine and Celia each with posy of native flowers (pictured) and thanked them for a great outcome.

Thanks to Mary, Lorraine and Celia for the book and all who assisted with publication. Thanks to Bruce for launching it, Rod Webster for organising the launch, everyone who assisted, Dinah Drummond for the beautiful flowers and to Alison who worked tirelessly at 'Café Alison' cooking up an amazing array of delectable delights for morning tea with additional contributions by Margaret Barnard. Thanks to all the guests who attended making a for thoroughly informative and enjoyable morning.



This Newsletter has been produced by one professional and one amateur
in the absence of our editor, Frank,
who has had a serious farming accident,
requiring extensive therapy.

We wish Frank a speedy and complete recovery.

Dave Sutton
and SGCS members

South Gippsland Conservation Society

Annual General Meeting

to be held on Sunday 10th April, 2016 at
Bunurong Environment Centre,
1 Ramsay Boulevard, Inverloch

11:45 for 12 noon

Speaker:

Matt Bowler

**Projects Team Leader
West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority**

1 pm: LUNCH

Please bring a plate to share. Tea, coffee and fruit juice provided.

**2 pm: ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
&
ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

Nomination forms available on request
For further information, please email info@sgcs.org.au

I/We
of
Email address (please print clearly)
wish to renew my/our membership
wish to make a donation of
<u>New members to be nominated and seconded by a member of the SGCS</u>

<p>Membership subscriptions</p> <p>Family \$27.00</p> <p>Single \$20.00</p> <p>Concession (single) \$15.00</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Send cheque or money order to: SGCS, PO Box 60, Inverloch 3996 ▪ Pay with cash or by EFTPOS at the BEC ▪ Pay on-line to SGCS at Bendigo Bank: BSB 633000 A/c No: 141390898 (note your name)
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