

Most of these plants were used for basket making by Aborigines. Other plants you may notice are the native Raspberry with its sweet red fruit and the

Small-leaf Clematis



5. **Melaleuca or Paperbark** thickets These grow on the wetter, heavier soil and are habitat for small birds and ringtail possums which build their nests in the dense foliage. There is very little undergrowth here because the deep shade inhibits the growth of seedlings.

Melaleuca ericifolia



6. **The Bluff** Townsend Bluff is composed of Jurassic mudstone (about 200 million years old) with volcanic intrusions of basalt. The shore platform at the base of the cliff was carved out by the sea before the more recent formation of Point Smythe, which is part of the Cape Liptrap Coastal Park, across the water to the south. On the Bluff are depleted stands of Drooping She-oak and many young trees which have been planted over the last few years. The Bluff was once heavily wooded but was cleared for farming soon after settlement.

Black Sheoak –cones



7. **The view from the top** The scene constantly changes as the tide rises and falls. Anderson Inlet forms the estuary of the Tarwin River which can be seen at most tides as a channel winding through the flats below. After heavy rain the Inlet's waters turn brown with soil washed down from the Tarwin catchment. In recent years Landcare groups have been creating holding dams and wetlands, and fencing and revegetating the rivers and creeks in the catchment to repair the damage caused by earlier farming practices. The eroding rockstack of Eagle's Nest, part of the Bunurong Marine and Coastal Park, is an obvious landmark in the west, beyond the township of Inverloch. Note the young Blackwood forest re-appearing at the cliff top, illustrating the remarkable re-generative ability of the Australian bush, even after years of cattle grazing.

Blackwood



8. Loh-ern For thousands of years the local Aoriginal people were protected by the dreamtime spirit Loh-ern who guarded the Bluff. They camped on the dunes below, on their way to the vast swamps of the Tarwin River where food was rich and plentiful.

9. **The Loop** track takes you through a young Paperbark forest, a Kangaroo grass slope and an older Paperbark forest where wombats live to the main track and back to the car park. You may see an echidna searching for insects as you walk across the flat.

Produced by
South Gippsland Conservation Society
Revised April 2012
Email: info@sgcs.org.au
www.sgcs.org.au

SCREW CREEK NATURE WALK

INVERLOCH



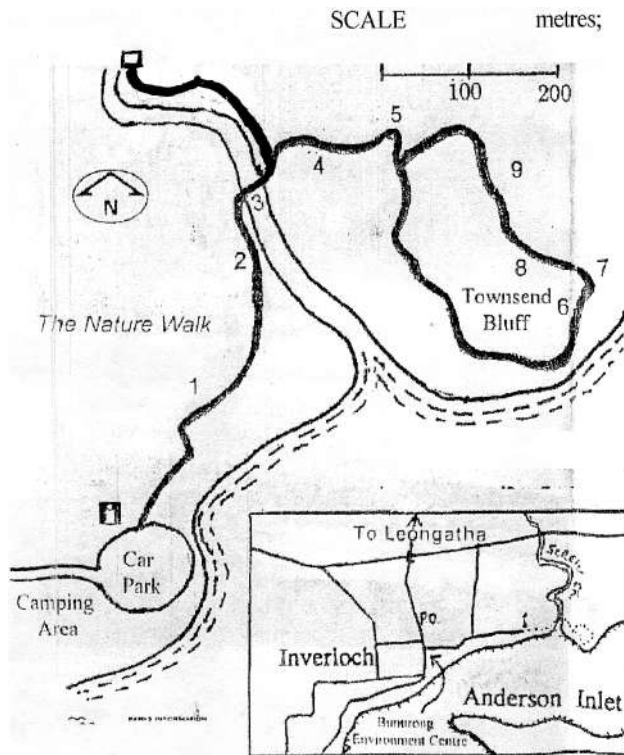
Walk or drive to the eastern end
Of The Esplanade, past Cuttriss Street,
through the camping ground.
Enjoy your walk from here!

The diverse nature of the plant communities combined with the stunning view from the top of the bluff gives this reserve its very special character. The walk takes you across an estuarine creek and through coastal dunes, salt-water swamps, Melaleuca thickets and grass-lands that are slowly being revegetated. Please help us protect it by

- * staying on the track
- * not picking or damaging plants
- * avoiding revegetation areas

Location

The track starts at the carpark at the end of the road through the Eastern Area Camping Ground. This road is a continuation of The Esplanade along the coast to the east of the town.



1. **Dunes** (Screw Creek track) Although you may not realise it at first, you are walking through a vegetated dune system - note the sandy soil and the dune vegetation - Coastal Tea-tree, Coast Beardheath, White Elderberry, Bower Spinach, all used as food by Aborigines. As you walk along the path you will notice a gap in the vegetation where a storm in 1995 caused very high tides, inundating this area with salt water and killing the Tea-trees. Events like these serve to illustrate the dynamic nature of our coastline. A warning - don't try the un-ripe fruit of the Kangaroo Apple – the Aborigines only ate it when very ripe as the green fruit is poisonous.

. *Coast Tea-tree*



Kangaroo Apple

2. **Saltmarsh** Very high tides result in a high level of salt in the sandy soil where saltmarsh plants can grow, dominated here by the Coast Speargrass, which is a tussock grass with sharp pointed leaves as its name suggests. Glasswort, Running Marsh-flower and the native Statice are other plants growing here. Please keep to the boardwalk. It serves two purposes - it keeps your feet dry and protects the marsh plants.

3. **The creek** The bridge was built in 1971 and upgraded in 1995. The mouth of the creek forms a small estuary flowing into the larger estuary of the Tarwin River, which is Anderson Inlet. Note the White Mangrove, the only southern species of mangrove, with its aerial roots sticking up through the mud to take in oxygen, the seagrass, visible at low water under the bridge, the mudflats, the small crabs and the water birds

White Mangrove



On your right as you step on to the bridge is a bed of the grass *Spartina*, an introduced weed from America which is spreading across the Inlet and destroying the feeding grounds of many important wading birds

Royal Spoonbill



Back on to Dunes

The presence of the big *Banksia* stump across the flat tells us that this was once a Coast *Banksia* woodland which was probably cut out for firewood in the early days of settlement. There are many interesting sedges, reeds and grasses in this area, including the Coast *Sword-sedge*, *Knobby Club-rush*, *Blue Tussock-grass* and the *Common Reed*.