

Fire Recovery... a natural progression

regrowth

A newsletter by Parks Victoria and the Department of Sustainability and Environment on public land fire recovery



DECEMBER 2010

Over 287,000 hectares of Victoria's public land was burnt in the February 2009 bushfires, including almost 100,000 hectares of national and state parks and reserves managed by Parks Victoria and nearly 170,000 hectares of state forests and reserves managed by the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE). The most severely affected parks were Kinglake National Park, Wilsons Promontory National Park, Bunyip State Park, Cathedral Range State Park and Yarra Ranges National Park. The fires devastated the Ash Forests through the Central Highlands.

Inside this issue:

- Makeover for bushfire-stricken tracks
 - Stage one completion for Murrindindi Scenic Reserve
 - Explore Cambarville Historic Area
 - Camping at Kinglake National Park
- ... plus an update on fire-affected parks and reserves

Marysville's Beauty Spots sitting pretty for summer

In the lead up to summer, significant bushfire recovery work has taken place in Marysville, with the development of a number of popular visitor sites throughout **Marysville State Forest**, including the renowned **Beauty Spot Reserve**.

Located on Kings Road, just a stone's throw from the town centre, Beauty Spot has long offered a scenic and leisurely walk through dense, ferny forest. The impact of the 2009 fires has required extensive tree assessment to ensure dangerous trees are felled. Work to reopen Beauty Spot has progressed rapidly; track resurfacing, dangerous tree work and construction of the carpark and boardwalks are all well underway. It is hoped that Beauty Spot will be open to the public in time for Christmas.

One of Marysville's most famous attractions, **Stevensons Falls**, has already seen an impressive number of visitors coming through the gates since it was reopened on weekends in September. Stage two works are currently underway to reconstruct toilets, a visitor shelter, a viewing bridge, further walking tracks and night-time floodlighting.

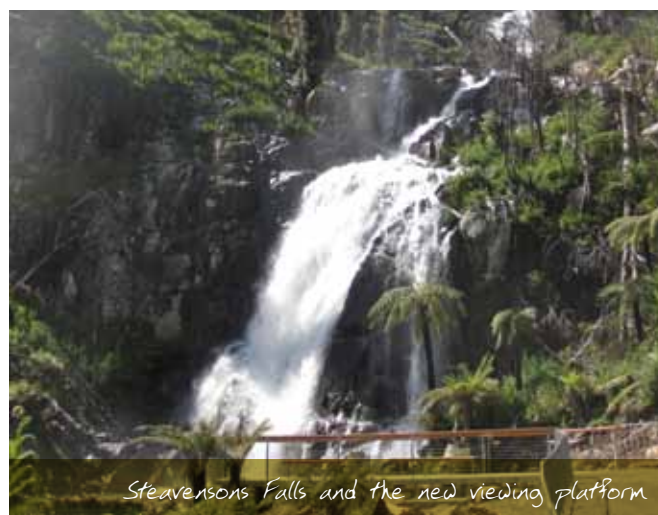
Work has also commenced on the walking tracks of Marysville, with realignment, surfacing and the removal of dangerous trees. The **Marysville Trails Masterplan** has been finalised and cultural heritage and biodiversity checks are now complete. This plan will see Marysville's existing trail network linked in a series of loops that connect the town with the forest's main attractions, creating a great visitor experience.

As part of the works on Marysville's walking tracks, the first of six new footbridges has been installed at **Tree Fern Gully**. The five remaining bridges should be in place by February 2011.

Reconstruction of the historic **Anderson's Mill** site is in its final stages; the horse yards, carpark and picnic tables are finished and other works in the area are expected to be completed during the summer months.



New toilet facilities at Anderson's Mill



Stevensons Falls and the new viewing platform

Wilsons Promontory – Whisky Bay access reopened

Whisky Bay Access

The access track to Whisky Bay beach has been reopened to visitors. One of Wilsons Promontory National Park's most popular and beautiful beaches, the walking track was damaged in February 2009's bushfire.

The walking track was rebuilt and a new retaining wall constructed along a section of the track that runs just above Whisky Creek. This was historically a troublesome site susceptible to erosion during storms. The new wall was designed to withstand these storms and ensure visitors have access to the beach long into the future.

Indigenous Community groups that have strong traditional associations with the Prom were involved in completing a cultural heritage plan for the area and identifying a new alignment which reduced the impact of the new link track on cultural heritage sites. Construction of the new alignment will commence in the new year.



Whisky Beach access works

Murrindindi Scenic Reserve reopens to the public

Over the Melbourne Cup weekend, rangers shared a sausage sizzle with campers and visitors to celebrate the reopening of the Murrindindi Scenic Reserve.

The reopening marks the completion of stage one of the \$2.4 million Murrindindi bushfire recovery project.

Located 70km northeast of Melbourne, Murrindindi Scenic Reserve is part of **Toolangi State Forest**. It features picturesque landscapes and impressive waterfalls, including **Wilhelmina Falls** and the **Murrindindi Cascades**.

'The improved facilities and camp sites at Murrindindi are designed for visitors to interact with and experience our unique forests,' **DSE Bushfire Recovery Project Officer Karen Brown** said. 'Now is a perfect time for visitors to come and witness the amazing natural regeneration happening in the bush.'

The completed stage one works include the reconstruction of Suspension Bridge picnic area and the **Blackwood and Cassinia camping areas**, with new picnic tables, barbecues, footbridges, toilet block and steel suspension bridge.

There are now 28 camp sites available and further sites scheduled to reopen early in 2011. Thousands of campers visited Murrindindi prior to the fires and it is hoped these great new facilities will encourage them to return.



Ranger Hot at the entrance to Murrindindi Scenic Reserve



New suspension bridge over the Murrindindi River

\$270K makeover for Murrindindi's bushfire-stricken tracks

A further \$270,000 of works will be undertaken to repair and restore several major walking tracks within Murrindindi Scenic Reserve. This is in addition to the redevelopments currently underway.

The **Murrindindi River Walk**, **Booroondara Track**, **Cascade Walk**, **Mill Track** and the **Wilhelmina Falls Walk** are all to be rebuilt following impacts of the February 2009 fires.

Work will also enhance some of Murrindindi's major visitor areas. 'We will use this opportunity to upgrade visitor facilities at some of Murrindindi's most popular sites, including Wilhelmina Falls,' said DSE Fire Recovery Project Officer Karen Brown. 'We will improve the access to the top of the falls with new handrails, metal stairs, rock steps and a new viewing platform.'

Damaged infrastructure that previously linked Murrindindi's walking tracks will also be replaced, such as the stairs located on the picturesque Cascade Walk that runs adjacent to the Murrindindi Cascades.

Bunyip State Park update

The Bunyip State Park fire recovery program has been progressing well with all but two sites reopened. Lawson Falls picnic area and walking track will remain closed until early 2011.

Recently a volunteer day was organised by Parks Victoria to work on clearing fire regrowth along Freemans Mill walking track. Twenty-five enthusiastic volunteers from Bushwalking Victoria and field staff from Parks Victoria worked hard to clear large sections along the track with great results.

Bunyip State Park has a large range of walks, recreational activities and picnic areas. Further information can be found at www.parkweb.vic.gov.au

Leadbeater's Possums in the spotlight

Leadbeater's Possums will be shining in the spotlight as Melbourne Museum's main foyer exhibit over the next few months. Leadbeater's Possums are very rare and were heavily impacted by the February 2009 bushfires. A lot of effort and hard work has been put into assisting the survival of the species, including a winter feeding program supported by volunteers from the Friends of Leadbeater's Possum and assisted with funding from the Federal Government's **Caring For Our Country program**.

The museum display contains a static display, a 3D display box and information about the species' history, rediscovery and post-fire survival. A number of events and activities are being planned in 2011 to help promote the plight of these little creatures, which are at great risk.

Further information about the display can be found at <http://museumvictoria.com.au/melbournemuseum>.

Donnelly's Weir toilet back in action

Parks Victoria staff and contractors have completed the rebuilding of **Donnelly's Weir** toilet block in time for the upcoming holiday season.

Donnelly's Weir offers a great picnic area and is also close to **Maroondah Reservoir Park** and **Yarra Ranges National Park**.



Sunday Creek milestone doesn't disappoint

Bushfire recovery works are well underway in the Mt Disappointment State Forest near Broadford with the recent installation of three steel footbridges along the **Sunday Creek Walk**.

The footbridges, which cost \$120,000, are a key part of the **Mt Disappointment** bushfire recovery project.

Although the installation of the bridges is now complete, the Sunday Creek walking track remains closed to the public while extensive road and drainage work is finalised.

Heavy rains throughout September disrupted recovery works within the forest, with much of the existing road infrastructure either washed away, damaged or underwater.

Owing to some recent good weather, contractors have worked hard to complete roadworks and carpark facilities and it is hoped that key recreation areas within the forest will reopen for Easter next year.

Picnic tables and barbecues are being installed throughout Mt Disappointment. This work is expected to be complete by Christmas.

The \$1 million Mt Disappointment recovery project is due for completion in November 2011 and includes reconstruction of camp sites and visitor facilities at **Number One Camp, Regular Camp, Blair's Hut, Strath Falls** and **Andersons Gardens**.

The project will also reinstate the Sunday Creek and Strath Falls walking tracks.

Native Fish Awareness Week launched at Marysville

The **Murray-Darling Basin Authority** launched **Native Fish Awareness Week** in Marysville in mid-November. Staff from across the Basin attended the event in Marysville, which was hosted by the **Department of Sustainability and Environment** and the **Goulburn-Broken Catchment Management Authority**. The launch included a number of environmental education activities for local school students.

The students participated in hands-on activities such as boat building, Aboriginal painting and Murray Cod and Freshwater Catfish games, all the while learning about a suite of fire recovery actions undertaken in the district for the nationally-threatened **Barred Galaxias** (*Galaxias fuscus*). Community members were also invited to provide feedback on a concept design for an interpretive bridge over the existing predator barrier in Leary's Creek in Marysville, which prevents trout accessing the protected Barred Galaxias population upstream. Local artists provided fish-inspired art activities and, with local students, performed a song they had written about the Barred Galaxias.



Camping area at Kinglake National Park reopened

Campers have been enjoying the new and improved camping area at **Kinglake National Park**. The Gums camping area and nearby **Island Creek picnic area** were officially reopened on October 28. Both visitor sites were impacted heavily by the February 2009 bushfires. Reinstating the camping area included increasing the number of camp sites, creating car parking areas for long vehicles, and building new toilet blocks, picnic tables and gas barbecues. The **Wombelano Waterfalls** and walking tracks are just some of the great attractions now open for park visitors.

The **Kinglake Men's Shed** was an integral part of the project, providing local timber used in rebuilding the visitor sites. As a direct result of rebuilding **The Gums** and **Island Creek**, the Kinglake Men's Shed has been able to employ six part-time staff – a great benefit to the Kinglake community!

Camp site bookings can be made online at www.parkweb.vic.gov.au or call **13 1963**.



Reopened camping area at Kinglake National Park



The Gums Camping Area - Kinglake NP



The Gums toilet block with display material



Local Ranger welcoming campers back to The Gums camping area at Kinglake National Park

Cambarville has lots to offer – Big Trees, Big Culvert, waterfalls and fantastic walks

Cambarville Historic Area is one of Yarra Ranges National Park's best kept secrets (located on the Marysville-Woods Point Road, about a 20-minute drive from Marysville). Cambarville is an undiscovered gem located near the popular **Lady Talbot Drive**. Due to fire and flood recovery works continuing along Lady Talbot Drive, limited visitor facilities will be open for the Christmas holiday period. Visitor sites open along Lady Talbot Drive include **The Beeches, Phantom Falls** and **Keppel Falls** walk.



Cumberland Falls walk

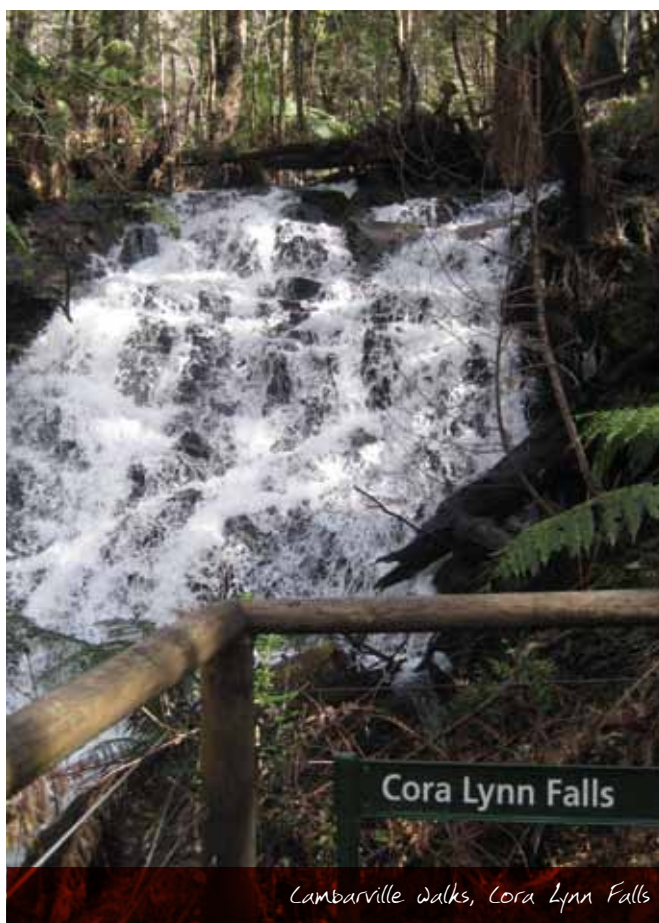
The Cumberland walking track at Cambarville takes you through beautiful, towering mountain ash and lush gullies to sites such as **The Big Tree, Sitka Spruce, Cora Lynn Falls, The Big Culvert, Cumberland Falls** and many more. The historic township walk takes you from the picnic area through to the old township and sites of Cambarville.

This area was slightly impacted on by the bushfires, providing a serene green space for visitors and locals alike.

Further information on Cambarville Historic Area can be found at www.parkweb.vic.gov.au, or call **13 1963**.



Taggerty River Picnic Area on Lady Talbot Drive



Cambarville walks, Cora Lynn Falls

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Healthy People*

