



Puffing Billy

GREEN TRACKS PROJECT



Green Tracks is an initiative developed by the Southern Ranges Environment Alliance (SREA)

aim:

“to assist with the environmental sustainability of the Puffing Billy Corridor and surrounds”



SREA is an alliance of community groups located along the Puffing Billy Corridor and surrounds.

- governed by a committee of management SREA members meet on a regular basis to discuss projects and raise awareness on environmental issues in the region.
- SREA has a part time paid facilitator position funded through the Department of Environment and Primary Industries (DEPI) under the Victorian Local Landcare Facilitators Initiative (VLLFI).



In 2012 SREA invited Puffing Billy, Cardinia Council, Yarra Ranges Council and the Port Philip & Western Port Catchment Management Authority to invest in developing a Trackside Management Plan. (TMP)



Track Side Management Plan

Late in 2012 SREA in conjunction with Puffing Billy signed off this plan that aims:

“ to protect those areas of greater environmental significance while improving existing operational practices to reduce costs and environmental impacts in areas of lower ecological significance with a much longer restoration duration.”



Green Tracks Project

Upon the release of the Trackside Management Plan, SREA with the support of Puffing Billy applied to the Victorian Government, 'Communities for Nature' grant for \$147K to implement onground activities as recommended in the TMP. The project was named:

Green Tracks



Green Tracks Project

Objectives of the project are to undertake on ground activities aiming to:

- protect areas of environmental significance
- improve depleted land by increasing biodiversity
- introduce biodiversity resilience throughout the corridor



Green Tracks Project

Some of the activities undertaken include:

- assessment and treatment of :
 pest & native plants and animals
- waterways
- re-vegetation
- Community awareness



Green Tracks Project

How did the activities get implemented?

- Monthly reference groups meetings
- Employment of a GreenTracks team
 - Project Manager, ecologist, officer & on ground team members
 - Environment Officers x 2 employed part time within PB
- Community Groups, members & adjoining landowners
- Contractors
- PB staff and corrective services team



Green Tracks Project: What are the outcomes?

- Detailed Management Plans:
 - Pest and Native Animals
 - Weeds
 - Re vegetation
 - Waterways
- Community Awareness:
 - 2 x weekend training events (over 100 people attending)
 - Brochures, signs and website (www.greentracks.net.au)



Green Tracks Project: What are the outcomes?

- Partnerships
 - PB & SREA
 - Councils x 2
 - Melbourne Water
- Additional funding:
 - Growing Connections - \$30K
 - Melbourne Water - \$20K
 - Councils - \$10K
 - Puffing Billy - \$7K
 - Dept of community services - \$3K
 - Port Philip & Westernport Catchment Management Authority - \$10K



Green Tracks Project: What are the outcomes?

- Additional funding:
 - Community Weed Alliance of the Dandenongs - \$450K over 3 yrs
 - Bushfire Management and Weed Eradication - \$2.4M over 3 yrs
 - Green Army
 - Office of Living Victoria – Stormwater Management \$80K
 - Yarra4Life - \$3.2M over 3 yrs



Green Tracks Project: Where to from here?

- Implement management plans:
 - Pest & Native Animals & Plants
 - Waterways
- Continue to develop procedures and best practice manuals
- Train & raise awareness of PB staff, volunteers and community groups
 - Deliver 2 x training weekends in Winter & Spring 2014
- Continue Reference Group Meetings on a regular basis (Monthly)
- Partner with SREA to continue to provide ongoing funding for on ground works
- Establish an environmental position within PB



Green Tracks Project: PB Environment Position

- Recommended to assist in delivering quality, cost effective vegetation & environment management practices in a sustainable manner
- Partner with SREA & Councils x2 to co contribute to the initial/startup resourcing of the role
- Provide on going funding for the position
- Position Status : Manager, Environment



Green Tracks Project: PB Environment Position

- Tasks include:
 - Chair reference group meetings
 - Implement Trackside Management Plans
 - Develop broader environment policy and practices
 - Source funding for onground works
 - Raise awareness through training and communication
- Responsibilities:
 - Report to Manager, Operations & Maintenance
 - Sponsored by SREA & 2 x councils
 - Establish justification for on going role within 3 yrs
 - Ensure relevant environmental statutory & regulatory obligations are adhered to



Green Tracks Project: Summary

- Partnership between SREA & PB growing over time
- Best practices beginning to roll out to on ground activities
- Cost saving solutions are being tested and monitored
- Future funding looks promising through the implementation of management plans and partnership established through first stage
- First stage is the foundation to kick start an Environment Manager position
- Broader exposure to business opportunities through regular contact with State & Federal Politicians, Local Government Councilors & Staff and local environment community groups.



Green Tracks Project

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www.srea.org.au