



Major upgrade for Wineglass Bay experience



Track workers, Jeram Cowley (left) and Gavin Rose, wrestle a rock into position on a new section of the improved Wineglass Bay track at Freycinet National Park.

The climb to the lookout for a glimpse of the internationally lauded Wineglass Bay will be a much better experience for visitors when construction of a new track is completed later this year.

Freycinet is Tasmania's most visited national park and the perfect curve and sparkling white beach of the bay has made it an icon image for the promotion of Tasmania's unspoilt landscape. Its high profile has been further increased by the travel industry regularly naming it as one of the world's great beaches.

Wineglass Bay is now a must-see destination for Australian and international visitors to Tasmania, with more than 150,000 people making the short but steep trek from the car park to the lookout each year.

This pressure has taken its toll on the environment with significant degradation caused by the increasing number of visitors.

Freycinet ranger Stuart Dudgeon said that a lot of thought has gone into planning the route for the new sections of track as well as the materials used in track construction.

"There were a number of problems with the existing track, including the steep grade and approximately 600 steps, the narrowness of the track and the slippery surface caused by the granite soil of the area," Stuart said.

"It's going to change the experience completely; instead of a single file trudge, with people following closely behind and coming at them from the other direction, walkers can walk side by side.

FACT FILE

Waterhouse Conservation Area

What: The Waterhouse Conservation Area is a popular holiday spot with great coastal scenery backed by dunes, heathlands and lagoons.

Where: East of Bridport accessed from the B82 and Homestead Rd.

Activities: Camping, bird watching, diving, beachcombing, fishing, swimming and boating.

Highlights: Mathers Beach is popular with families; Little Waterhouse Lake is an internationally significant wetland and has Ramsar Convention listing; Blackmans Lagoon is a refuge and habitat for ducks and the threatened green and gold frog.

Campfires: Gas or barbecue cooking is preferred. Pre-cut wood should be brought in for campfires as chainsaws and axes are not permitted in the conservation area.

Pets: Dogs allowed under effective control.

Off-road vehicles: Vehicles permitted on beaches during summer to launch and retrieve boats as signposted. Nearby Tomahawk Beach (known as Ransons) is open from Easter to 1 December for four wheel drive access.

Parks and Wildlife Service manages 19 national parks and more than 440 reserves in Tasmania.

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"With a much improved surface and a gentle grade that has eliminated the majority of steps, you can view the scenery while you are walking.

"All of these factors mean that there will be safer access for a wider range of age groups, fitness levels and walking experience."