

SAND HILL REHABILITATION WORKING BEE

Regular users of the Lemma - Sandy Cape track would be familiar with 'The Sand Hill' approximately three kilometres south of Lemma beside the track. Most of us would have to plead guilty at some time over the years of being unable to resist the challenge of diverting from the track, which follows the lower contours, and having a go up the hill or dropping off the top to give Mum and the kids a thrill.

The hill originally was vegetated with the typical heath and low scrub common in this area, with the passage of many vehicles over a number of years the vegetation was gradually removed, then the roots which do such an excellent job of binding the loose sand together could no longer perform their job. The west coast is known for its winds and once the wind gets into loose sand it can remove amazing amounts of sand. As the wind was funnelled through wheel tracks on the hill, it carved gullies 4 metres deep. Apart from the environmental impact, it becomes plain dangerous to unsuspecting vehicle operators and more than one vehicle came to grief.

Eventually the hill was a series of eroded gullies and bare sand 30m wide. Whilst by no means an environmental disaster, definitely an embarrassment to the increasing number of 4WD operators who realise the responsibility that goes with using a 4WD "offroad".

Kelvin Walsh of Braddon 4WD club first suggested rehabilitating the hill, the club members were enthusiastic so Kelvin had himself a job of liaising with N.P.W.S. to organise the project. Local ranger in charge Jack Hanson who loves the west coast as much as any of us was enthusiastic and steered us through the bureaucracy and it was relatively easy. NPWS would supply all materials, we would supply manpower.

Devonport 4WD club whose members are also keen users of the area heard of the project and were keen to help.

The day dawned a bit wet but not enough to dampen the spirits of the 28 or so people, including ranger Hanson on his day off, and assorted dogs who turned up. All went well, the hill has been smoothed off by NPWS personnel with a tractor and blade (saved lots of sweat and blisters) and the weather improved, we were soon busy spreading hay over the bare sand, cutting tea tree from a gully, sorting aca tree, spreading tea tree over the hay (this is a well proven method of regenerating bare sand in area subject to persistent high winds).

To prevent accidental damage in future by uneducated drivers the area was also fenced and signs erected. Thanks to the large number and enthusiasm of the

helps the job was soon done, and well done with enough daylight left to go for a dive and catch some cray and abalone for tea.

The west coast is a fantastic area for our recreational pursuits, Braddon Club escorted two separate groups of mainland tourists down this way during January and they were absolutely impressed par-

ticularly by the freedom we have compared to what they are accustomed to. Lets all work to keep it just the way it is.

Remember never drive on vegetated dunes and certainly not on vegetated sand hills where wheel spin is a possibility.

Tony Linc ☐

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