A Decade Of Organising LROCG/PV Volunteer Work.

By Greg Rose.

After over a decade of organising Land Rover Owners Club of Gippsland volunteer work, in collaboration with the Parks Victoria Foothills and Southern Alps team, it is time for me to retire from that role. I am immensely proud of what the LROCG volunteers have managed to achieve over those years. We, as a group, have contributed thousands of hours of work, that has improved the visitor experience in the Alpine National Park and added to Four Wheel Drive Victoria’s tally of volunteer efforts.

In those years LROCG volunteers have worked at:

* All Wellington River Campgrounds
* Wonnangatta Valley
* Kelly Lane – Thomastown, Kelly Hut and McMichaels Hut
* Bryces Gorge carpark
* The Horseyards
* Moroka Gorge walking track
* Moroka Hut
* McFarlane Saddle trailhead and camping area
* Howitt Hut and surrounding camping area
* Eaglevale
* Talbotville
* Snowy Plains airstrip
* Billy Goat Bluff Track

We have; mended fences, erected new fences, removed old fencing, installed bollards, dug out fire pits, repaired toilets, cleaned camping areas, assessed walking tracks for damage, replaced hut and walking track visitor books, undertaken emergency pre winter hut repairs, repaired hut chimneys, cleaned huts, removed heavy rubbish (old stoves, fridges, bed frames) from huts and surrounds, mowed grass, removed weeds, used brush cutters, painted various assets, erected signs, learned to drive bob cats, constructed fire rings, built picnic tables, put preserving decking oil on tables, removed old fire rings, removed damaged picnic tables, looked for invasive weed species, towed Parks Victoria trailers, shovelled gravel, filled pot holes, drained puddles, cleared tracks, looked for rare plants, filled in wheel ruts, moved large rocks, cut branches to improve sight lines on roads and tracks and extinguished unattended campfires.

As part of the volunteer activities, we have had the opportunity to drive on some of Victoria’s most iconic four-wheel drive tracks. We have visited beautiful parts of the Alps. We also had some adventures along the way. Waking up to thick frost and frozen water, driving through sleet and snow, negotiating slippery muddy clay tracks, heavy rainstorms, chasing a snake out of camp, fixing a PV trailer, fixing my trailer, breaking shock absorbers in Wonnangatta, the occasional Land Rover breakdown (very rare), trying to stay hydrated on very hot days, swimming in icy cold water, skinny dipping (it was very hot), these have all been part of the experience.

We have cooked meals, enjoyed meals cooked by Park Victoria rangers, had some amazing visitors to our camps and had plenty of tall stories and laughs around the campfire. Covid and wild weather played havoc with some of our plans, but we always managed to prevail.

I would like to give my sincere thanks to all the club members who have enthusiastically joined in the volunteer activities. Club members always overachieve at the volunteer days. Within the group there is a wide range of skills and a willingness to camp and work in sometimes less than ideal conditions.

Thanks to Wayne Hevey and the Four Wheel Drive Victoria folk who have provided advice and support for the club’s activities.

Finally, thanks to Parks Victoria. Every Parks Victoria member we have worked with has been fantastic, some are still with PV and others have moved on. Some have been alongside us in the bush and some helped with planning. There is a huge amount of behind the scenes work to make a volunteer activity run smoothly and safely. It is due to the care and professionalism of these folk that we have had such successful activities with no injuries. Thank you, Vicky, Danica, Sarah, Cliff, Conor, Alex, Ellen, Bernie, Ritchie, Sam, Jenny, Mick, Gary and Adam. Special thanks to Foothills and Southern Alps Area Chief Ranger Mike Dower and our PV contact and joint organiser of activities, Wayne Foon, for the sensational support.