

Media Release



Tuesday June 10th 2008



The Australian Trout Foundation re-opens 14k's of premier river access to recreational anglers...

RFL revenue funding provides recreational anglers with 38 immediate access points to a previously remote stretch of the **Howqua River**....

The Australian Trout Foundation is delighted to announce the re-opening of the Howqua River Miner's Track, commonly known as the Lower Howqua Track. The track follows the Howqua River from the Running Creek Camping Reserve for 14 KM upstream to Tobacco Flat. "There are now 38 river crossings giving anglers access to a previously remote stretch of this wonderful Victorian trout river" ATF Secretary, Geoff Churcher said today.



Local identity Charlie Lovick briefs the working committee on the original track location.

Project Manager and Australian Trout Foundation Vice President Merv McGuire, and Secretary Geoff Churcher, have spent the last six months working closely with DSE personnel and local identities to re-open the heavily blackberry overgrown and weed infested track. "This is a wonderful example of putting RFL revenue funds to great use for the benefits of all recreational anglers" McGuire said.



Australian Trout Foundation member Graeme Stoney surveys the tracks direction on horseback.

Local identities and Australian Trout Foundation members, Graeme Stoney and Charlie Lovick commenced the project by re-surveying the old 'Miner' track on horseback. "This was very tough survey work due to the extent of the extremely dense undergrowth, blackberries and thistles. These guys and their horses should receive a medal for fighting their way through" McGuire said. This was followed up by detailed track design by Dave Hurley, the DSE Forrest Management Officer based in Mansfield. "Dave personally supervised the very careful and environmentally sensitive work of local contractor Tony Gardiner to clear and re-establish the existing track without creating siltation problems at each of the crossing points. Following this Ged Mahoney, DSE Bush Fire Recovery Officer, conducted a comprehensive weed-spraying program of the area. "All parties have done a magnificent job.

This is a great example of co-operation between government agencies, local community groups, local small business and recreational fishers working together for the betterment of all" McGuire said.

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Christine Glassford, Waterways Vegetation Officer from the Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority, also played a significant role in ensuring the proper execution and protection of the Howqua water quality for down stream users. Volunteers from the “Mansfield and District Flyfishers Club” and Melbourne based “Southern Fly Fishers” also spent a cold and wet weekend doing “hands on” maintenance work. “Again, this was truly a magnificent and cooperative effort from all those involved.” McGuire concluded.

“The re-opening of this track is going to be the first of many such projects that the members of the Australian Trout Foundation will lead to protect and improve our Australian trout fisheries” said Churcher. “If we anglers want to enjoy high quality trout fishing we need to put down our rods, occasionally, roll up our sleeves and do whatever is needed to help our speckled friends prosper” Churcher concluded.

The Australian Trout Foundation thanks the Fisheries Revenue Allocation Committee for their support of this project and looks forward to future similar projects. For further information contact Geoff Churcher on 0412 307289 or Merv McGuire on 0417 887815.



DSE Forrest Management Officer Dave Hurley, oversees one of the 38 Howqua River crossings.



Newly revamped 'Miners Track' winding through bush fire affected Howqua Valley country.



One of the re-opened 38 Howqua River crossings.



ATF Vice President Merv McGuire and DSE Officer Dave Hurley, inspect the re-opened track... the easy way!

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