



Friends of Ferguson Park



Newsletter No. 109 April 2014

President: Geoffrey Bishop, "Ferndale" PO Box 194, Uraidla SA 5142 Ph: 8390 3138

Newsletter Editor
Sarah Telfer
Ph: 0427 313344

Annual Memberships are due 1st January each year payable to President/Treasurer, Geoffrey Bishop.

Any memberships not current should be forwarded to the above ASAP. Please ask if you are unsure of your credit status!

Calendar
Park Meetings
First Sunday of month
10am, Main Gate,
Hallett Road
Stonyfell

Park Meetings 2014

- 5 January**
- 2 February**
- 2 March**
- 6 April**
- 4 May**
- 1 June**
- 6 July**
- 3 August**
- 7 September**
- 5 October**
- 2 November**
- 7 December**

Editor's Notes

At the Friends of Ferguson AGM in January 2014 I agreed to take on the compilation of the newsletter. Thank-you to Judi, ably assisted by Doug, for doing such a fantastic job for the past many years!

A warm welcome to our new contact ranger, Amy Anderson. Amy is youthful and energetic and we look forward to working with her.

Our former ranger, Coral Marsden, has been nominated for a Rotary Club of Burnside Rotary Leadership in Conservation Award. Congratulations Coral, we await the outcome. The awards will be presented on 7th May at the Belair Country Club. It is likely that several FFCP members will attend the presentation dinner.

The main points of interest in this newsletter are the President's Report which was presented at the AGM held at Wendy and Martin Percy's house in February, a summary of the monthly working bee activity in the Park (since the last newsletter) and an update of the Stonyfell Creek Rehabilitation Project. This is a major project which has taken much time and energy to organise – special thanks to James, Collin and Geoffrey for their ongoing efforts.

Sarah Telfer, FFCP



PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2013

This has been our 31st year and the 2nd year of the Stonyfell Creek Rehabilitation Project. Apart from our usual work (mainly targeted weed control), the Stonyfell creek Project has been a major focus of our energies during the past year. Our thanks go to James, Colin, Coral and AWE for their input to make all this happen. Sites 2 and 3 were completed and, with minor follow-up work, appear to be functioning well.

Revegetation was started at these sites and on the closed off track at the Stonyfell road style. Success has been variable as the ideal winter conditions quickly became dry with no significant rain since late spring. Some hand-watering has been done in November to January and has aided plant survival.

Eleven working bees were held during the year; some were of shorter duration than anticipated due to weather conditions, either hot or wet. As in recent years, we have continued to focus our efforts on specific weed species and/or areas of the park. This has been our focus for a few years now and is realising results. A survey in December revealed three more small patches of *Pentstemon* (we now know of 7 locations). Rice Millet remains a significant concern, especially along Stonyfell Creek. Weeding of Cape Tulip, *Sparaxis* and Plantain at the western end of the park in the Hallett Road triangle is proving productive. Ash seedlings, again on Stonyfell Creek, are an ongoing concern.

The Stonyfell Creek planting was done in conjunction with students from SPCGS Environment Group. It was good to renew this involvement. The girls were keen to be involved and carried out the planting in far less time it would have taken our smaller group of volunteers.

We lost two of our long-time, valued members during the year, Ken Preiss and Margaret Crisp. Margaret and her husband, Chas, were dedicated members for many years. Ken was the group's founder and first president. We were thrilled to learn on Australia Day 2014 that he had been awarded an O.A.M. in the Australian Honours for his contribution to conservation and the community.

At the other end of the scale, age-wise, it has been great to have Tobias and Sarah as part of our group. Their enthusiasm and energy has been infectious. They plan to remain as members while they continue their academic studies interstate. Our contact with DEWNR staff during the year has been very positive, thanks to the input and support of our contact ranger Coral Marsden. We farewelled Coral at the end of the year as she moves to a new position at Deep Creek CP. We thank her for her support and advice, especially in relation to the Stonyfell Creek Project, the largest project we have yet undertaken. We wish her well in her new role.

Thanks are also recorded to Doug and Judi Nicholas for producing our newsletter and to Judi for her secretarial work on our behalf. They have now decided to relinquish these roles.

Every year some things get done and some do not. But, most importantly, we do achieve results and, as a group, we share a common interest in the future of the park and enjoy working together. So, thanks are extended to all our members for their continuing enthusiasm and involvement. We do make a difference and will continue to do so.

*Geoffrey Bishop
President
January 2014*



PARK NOTES

Working Bees

Adelaide was beset by some extreme weather conditions during the summer with a record high temperature of 45 degrees in March. The burst of extreme heat instigated abnormally strong gully winds across the hill's face suburbs causing considerable damage. Ferguson Conservation Park had its fair share of problems with timber down. The winds were followed a few days later by very heavy much-needed rain which caused its own problems. But through all of this the Park is still very dry but surviving quite well.

At the November meeting, members collected seed from various grasses for sowing this year and then in

December more plant seed was able to be collected in particular Flax Lily.

In the new year members concentrated on weeding *Pentstemon*. The infested areas have now been marked for quick identification and monitoring and in March very little was found. This is one weed we hopefully can keep under control.

At the March gathering our Group's new rangers, David Heard and Amy Anderson, attended to meet members and discuss current projects in the Park. We were sorry to lose Coral Marsden as our Ranger but she is now stationed at Deep Creek following some restructuring of the Department. We wish her well in her new position and we look forward to working with our new rangers.

Judi & Doug Nicholas

Stonyfell Creek Rehabilitation Project - Update

- Work at sites 2 and 3 was undertaken successfully in Feb/Mar 2013. Ranger Coral acted as project manager and visited the site most days. This was vital and not something we could do as volunteers. Belinda Skilton of Australian Water Environments (AWE) also inspected regularly and provided technical oversight. Brett Lawson, the contractor, sustained an injury to his ankle when placing rocks. This highlighted the need for DEWNR to have more direct control over future construction work.
- A problem that was not anticipated was disposal of the two large piles of spoil removed from the Creek bed. The soil needed to be tested before removal in order to comply with environmental laws. The soil was eventually removed off site by Trestrail Earthmoving.
- Colin and James met with Coral in the middle of the year to review progress. It was agreed that DEWNR, rather than FFCP, would engage the contractor for the next stage of the project. However, the contractor would still be paid from FFCP's grant funds.
- DEWNR is currently obtaining quotes for this work. Depending on a number of factors, it might be necessary to postpone this work till next summer/autumn (2014/2015).
- The Project is currently (April 2014) under review as we have not been able to engage a contractor to undertake the work for the next section. The work (excavation) needs to be done before significant rains arrive and this is not likely to happen. We will be discussing options with AMLR NRM Board with regard to carrying the grant funding over to the next season. In addition, the next site is large and the current funding may be insufficient to do all of the proposed works. AWE inform us that doing part of it would not be ideal as it would expose the works to damage if a flash flood occurred. With the rains this week we will be able to broadcast a holding crop of oats on the exposed soils at the previous work's site. Native grasses will be interplanted in early spring.