



Friends of Ferguson Park



Newsletter No. 110 August 2014

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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

It's certainly turning into a cold and wet winter and no doubt the weeds are thriving. Notwithstanding the weather, the working bees at Ferguson continue every month with strong attendances.

Perhaps one of the most significant things to happen since the last newsletter is the cutting of the NRM Community Grants Program. As the Conservation Council SA Chief Executive Craig Wilkins said, "This is a tiny grants program with a big heart and an even bigger impact on the thousands of South Australians who generously volunteer to look after the natural spaces in their neighbourhoods, towns and regional areas".

Ferguson Conservation Park has certainly benefitted from this grants program and the way forward is now uncertain (see the Stonyfell Creek project update below). Alternative sources for grant money will need to be explored to continue the battle against weeds, erosion, pest animals, track maintenance and consolidation, etc.

Sarah Telfer, FFCP

Stonyfell Creek Rehabilitation Project – Update on Stage 2

Due to the need to defer relatively major stream stability works at Site 11 (construction of a rock chute) for another year, permission to carry over FFCP's 2013 NRM grant (\$30,000) was sought and approved in principle, in anticipation of receiving a further \$30,000 grant in the 2014 round.

Amy Anderson (Ranger) obtained two quotes for the on-site engineering works at Site 11 (the third contractor approached did not submit a fee proposal) and these were evaluated at a meeting attended by James and Sarah with Amy and Kerri Villiers (DEWNR) in June.

In the meantime, the NRM Community and Volunteer Support Grants Program was axed by the State Government, thereby putting the whole creek project at Ferguson in jeopardy. There is now no prospect of receiving a further grant through the Program and the site 11 works have had to be postponed indefinitely.

So, it has been decided that the best way forward is to spend a portion of the in-hand 2014 grant money on engaging Australian Water Environments (AWE) to produce:

- Generalised drawings of the small scale erosion management structures along other parts of the creekline of sufficient detail to enable tendering;
- Notes on construction techniques and materials for each of the erosion management techniques to support DEWNR staff in developing specification and tender documentation when the need arises;

- Estimates of construction cost for each of the erosion management techniques to enable FFCP and DEWNR to plan works within the current budget and inform future funding applications.

Funds permitting, DEWNR could then engage contractors to do the work at Site 5 (log drop weir) and Site 6 (alignment fence) – these are smaller and, hopefully, less expensive works than those proposed at Site 11, although it is still considered by AWE and FFCP that Site 11 should be the priority in terms of long-term erosion control.

DEWNR (ie Kerri and Amy) seem quite keen to access funds from another program administered by the NRM Board and they are preparing a submission. It appears that DEWNR wants to see the project finished and will take over the project management. This is a positive development as the creekline is a part of the wider landscape and erosion control is an issue for surrounding landholders as well.

As we've discovered, managing a relatively large-scale erosion control project is really beyond the capacity of a Friends group, so now we can get back to focussing on weed control and creekline revegetation!



Completed Stage 1 erosion control works – June 2014



Exposed roots of a mature SA Blue Gum located on the creekline in the vicinity of the proposed Site 11 works. This tree is in danger of being lost due to erosion.

Working Bees March – June 2014

Coral Marsden, our former ranger, was nominated for Best Supporting Ranger for a Rotary Award the recipients of which were to be announced at a Rotary Dinner in May. Unfortunately, Coral was unsuccessful but in our books she was our BSR and has our thanks.

A very severe storm whipped through the eastern suburbs in March following temperature of 45 degrees causing severe damage particularly to trees and infrastructure. FCP suffered its share of damage with trees and branches down requiring clean up action particularly in the creek.

Margaret Preiss was presented with Ken's posthumous OAM at Government House in the first week of April acknowledging his significant contribution to the environment and the establishment of Friends of Parks Groups.

The usual weeding was undertaken at the park meetings, focussing through the dry months on pentaschistus and plantain and following substantial rain in May saw the emergence of soursobs, spraxis and other weed bulbs to deal with. There is always litter to be picked up within the Park too.

At the end of May a contractor sprayed weed and nasturtiums (in particular) along the Stonyfell Road boundary where these are a significant problem and the work seems to have been effective to date. We will

need to be vigilant as the nasturtiums in particular drop a lot of seed.

Judi & Doug Nicholas

Extra items of interest

New weeds to watch for

Spotted in Alberton - a 1 metre tall red plant which was identified as *Phytolacca americana* (American Pokeweed). Pigeons and doves love the clusters of black seeds and so it spreads. It's a toxic weed to humans and livestock, so eradicate it if you see it. Also *Cotula australis* (Carrot Weed) which has fine foliage and tiny daisy-like flowers and turns up in lawns. (Courtesy Malcolm Campbell, Eastern Messenger).



American Pokeweed is a large semi-succulent herbaceous perennial plant growing up to 3 metres in height. It is native to eastern North America, the Midwest, and the Gulf Coast



Carrot Weed is a small plant native to Australia and New Zealand but it is considered to be a weed in some areas. The plant grows low to the ground in a thin mat with some slightly erect, spindly stems. The leaves are divided and subdivided into fringed lobes.

Bradley Method

Deborah Bogle wrote a small article in saweekend April 19-20 where she talks about a structured method of weeding, known as the **Bradley Method**, which has been utilised in FCP by our members in the past led by Agnes Jackson, Ken Preiss and Gerhard Weber. The method was "partly inspired by two sisters, Eileen and Joan Bradley, who began weeding the natural bushland near their home in Sydney's Neutral Bay in the '60s. They observed how, once the weeds were cleared, the native species gradually returned. Their guiding principles were to work outwards from the least weedy to more heavily infested areas, to work slowly using hand tools and to minimise disturbance".

The method may be worth adopting again as we work on particular areas.

Judi & Doug Nicholas