



Friends of Ferguson Park



Newsletter No. 111 November 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!

Park Working Bees
First Sunday of month
10am, Main Gate,
Hallett Road
Stonyfell

Park Working Bee
Dates 2014/2015
7 December
4 January
1 February
1 March
5 April
3 May
7 June

Xmas 2014 get-
together
7 December at Judi &
Doug's place (after the
working bee)
Bring a plate to share

Ferguson Update

Well, what has been happening in Ferguson and in our group of valiant volunteers?

Spring came and went and was pretty dry. The park has browned off very quickly, at least in regard to the annual weeds and natives. It is exciting to report that one of our few Grasstrees (*Xanthorrhoea semiplana*) has sent up a fine flowering spike. This is the first time it has flowered in over 10 years. One can but wonder what the stimulus was. Xanthorrhoeas generally flower after a major event such as a fire which is not the case here.



Stonyfell Creek

The Stonyfell Creek Restoration Project continues. Australian Water Environments have recently finished their report on the 'smaller' works for the watercourse restoration works. We had intended to work next on Site 11 which is just below the eastern bridge and the E&WS overflow pipe outlet. This is the most expensive part of the works as it involves the construction of a large rock chute. As the NRM Community Grants Program has been discontinued (axed?), it was clear that we would not secure funds to build this chute and it cannot be partly built. The alternative was to prioritise the other sites (which we can afford to do), and this is what AWE have now done. The next step is to identify which of the works we can pay for and put the work out to tender. Our Ranger, Amy Anderson, is coordinating the tendering process, although if the works are less than \$22,000 then DEWNR does not have to go out to tender.

Further on the NRM grant-funded work, I have recently submitted the final financial report for Project 2, end of the financial year and status reports for Project 3, and seed collection report for 2013-14. We have recently applied for a Friends of Parks Inc. Community Grant for funding to assist with plant propagation for the revegetation work after the project work has been done. Wayne Brown of Environments by Design will undertake the propagation work for us. The main species to be grown is *Cyperus vaginatus* for planting in and along the watercourse.

The plantings done by students from St Peters College Girls School last year near the Stonyfell Road entrance are looking good with a high survival rate. Follow up weeding or weed control has been useful. Plantings near Sites 2 and 3 (along the creek) have been less successful, in part due to the dry season. Planting into a scalped clay site is always hard due to the lack of any water-holding organic material.

Work Plan 2015

It is time to start thinking about our work plan for next year. I update this each January and submit it to DEWNR along with our single 'Pink' form. We can discuss this at our Christmas luncheon. It is important that members have input to this plan as we all observe what is happening in the park. For example, Gerhard mentioned that the area of *Ixia* (a non-native bulb species) in the SE corner of the park has increased in recent years. He is quite correct! We need to work out how to control its spread. *Ixia* sets seed and produces large quantities of bulbils off the 'parent' bulbs each season.

Current Projects

The systematic weeding of the Hallett Road Triangle has continued in recent years and is proving rewarding. In a similar fashion, our weeding of *Pentaschistis* (Pussy-tail Grass) is looking good. We now have 5 sites that we weed on a regular basis. The number of plants at all sites has greatly decreased which is very encouraging. It remains a problem to identify young plants which have not sent up flower heads as they look very similar to native Wallaby Grass (*Austrodanthonia*). *Pentaschistis* is from southern Africa and was originally in the genus *Danthonia* (our Wallaby Grasses).

Rice Millet remains a concern, especially along Stonyfell Creek. This species can go from seedling to seeding plant in one season and its seed seems to last in the soil for many years. Elsewhere in the park, we have had pretty good results in controlling it but it needs constant watching.

I look forward to seeing members at our Christmas lunch at Doug and Judi's home on the first Sunday in December.

Geoffrey Bishop

Working Bees March – July - November 2014

The Park benefited from substantial rain through the winter months but October onwards has been very dry. So the rain meant that there was good growth in the Park including the small native orchids, but also the weeds and feral plants. Now the Park has dried out and early seed gathering has commenced.

A letter was sent to the Premier, Mr Weatherill regarding the cutting of the NRM Community Grants Program, making the upkeep of Parks so much more difficult for volunteers. A standard reply was received.

Foxes have again been active in the Park and two koalas were in the trees near Hallett Road in November.

Spraying was carried out in the Stonyfell Creek area which will need to be monitored. Grass seed was planted in the Stonyfell Creek reparation area. Veldt Grass, Sparaxis, Cape Tulip, Plantain and *Pentaschistus* continue to be the focus of our attention.

Litter is picked up at every meeting and the path in front of the gates swept as rain washes the gravel onto the path causing a hazard.

Judi & Doug Nicholas

Extra items of interest

There was a review by Derek Crozier in **The Adelaide Review**, August 2014 of the cafe on Hallett Road adjacent to the Park called Taylor Blend. The last paragraph of the review said "*The next time you have a day off, I recommend taking a drive up the hill to Taylor Blend, not just for the amazing coffee, but for a beautiful scenic walk through Ferguson Park next door. You may even come across of koala to share your coffee with.*"

There was an interesting article in the Spring 2014 edition of **South Australian Garden and Outdoor Living** magazine about Stipiturus Conservation Park near Mt Compass which was proclaimed as a conservation park in 2006. The area had had been used for sheep and cattle grazing prior to this. It is home to the largest remaining peat swamp on the Fleurieu Peninsula, a nationally endangered ecosystem. It is also home to one of the remaining swamp-based populatations of the nationally endangered Mt Lofty Ranges Southern Emu-wren (*Stipiturus malachurus intermedius*) after which the park was named. The park also contains one of the largest remaining populations of the endangered Mt Compass Oak-bush (*Allocasuarina robusta*). Volunteers are carrying out extensive replanting in the park.

Judi & Doug Nicholas