



Friends of Ferguson Park



Newsletter No. 115 April 2016

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

Newsletter Editor

Sarah Telfer
Ph: 0427 313344

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

Park Working Bee Dates 2016

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

Working Bees Update

December 2015 – April 2016

The last working bee for 2015 (December) was cancelled due to 40° plus temperatures which followed on from an extremely dry period of no rain for 8 weeks or more.



In January 2016 thirty tubestock were planted in and around Ferguson Creek near the bridge (photo above). Watering of seedling Native Pines and other naturally regenerating species was undertaken to help these plants survive through their first summer – special thanks to Doug for continuing to bring in the water from home.

Watering continued in February. Other activities included hand-pulling and grubbing of Rice Millet and Plantain in both the 'Triangle' and around tubestock plantings which were planted out last winter along Stonyfell Creek. A good soaking rain event in late January – early February (approx. 50mm) was very welcome!

The March working bee again saw hot and dry conditions which limited activities. Watering of young regenerants and plantings was again undertaken. The seedling and suckering Native Apricots in the north-west corner of the Park, adjacent to Hallett Road, were sprayed with the systemic insecticide Confidor to control the Pittosporum bug which was attacking these plants. Weeding was also undertaken in this area where weedy grasses have been able to establish due to water run-off from the neighbouring school grounds.

In April the hand-pulling and grubbing of Plantain continued apace. The background of the sign at the entrance to the Park was painted by James and Colin, while Geoffrey did some spraying of Rice Millet and Plantain.

Sarah Telfer

Annual Report for 2015

The year just past marked our 33rd year of operation! A lot has been achieved in this time, as one member recently remarked, 'There are almost no woody weeds in the park; I find an occasional olive seedling and that's about it.' Back in 1982, the park was full of olives and Pincushion Hakea, to the extent that you could not see any distance into sections of the park.

Work has continued during the past year at a steady and systematic pace. Time and volunteer numbers have prevented us from achieving some things we had planned

to do but what we have concentrated on has been productive. For example, the weeding of The Triangle has been most encouraging, as has the systematic monitoring of the five Pentaschistis sites.

Volunteer hours for working bees were 105 hours with an average attendance at events of 7 members. Eleven working bees were held. The hours include some member's work at other times but does not include time devoted to the Stonyfell Creek Project, plant propagation, seed cleaning, communications and preparation of the newsletter. Further major works were done on the Stonyfell Creek Rehabilitation Project during the year. However, additional funding will be required to complete the planned work. The inability to undertake work at Site 10 has meant that Rice Millet and Cyperus have again 'got away' in that area. Thank you to our members who have worked with Ranger Amy and contractors on this project.

A pleasant surprise in late 2015 was the replacement of the boundary fence (completed in March 2016). Whilst the work was very slow and the mess the contractor managed to create was disappointing, the new fence is a vast improvement over the old pine post and rail one.

So, thank you once again to our dedicated band of volunteers, both for your work in the park and for other tasks you undertake – newsletter, communications, hosting gatherings, watering, etc.

Post note – in mid-March our contact ranger Amy Anderson heads off to a new role and will be based at Willunga. Our sincere thanks to Amy for the time and effort she has given to our group. We have enjoyed your enthusiasm and appreciate your dedication and ability. It has been great working with you and we wish you the very best for wherever your new role will take you!

We welcome our new ranger, Brent Lores and look forward to meeting him soon.

Geoffrey Bishop, President

Planning for 2016 – our ideas and concerns

The work plan for 2016 was discussed at the AGM on 7 March. Matters listed (in no particular order) were as follows:

1. Plantings inside the front gate to replace plants lost in recent fencing work and to improve the entrance.
2. Control **Cyperus eragrostis* (non-native species) along Stonyfell Creek.
3. Periwinkle and nasturtiums along Stonyfell Creek need follow-up work.
4. Rice Millet along Stonyfell Creek, adjacent to SPCGS oval, and elsewhere to be targeted.
5. The Triangle – continue methodical weed control; plantain (April); bulb species (Spring).
6. Selective replanting of dominants (*Callitris gracilis*, *Eucalyptus leucoxylon* and *Bursaria spinosa*) on heavy soils of western part of the park (minimal natural regeneration in this area).
7. Sparaxis – select an area and trial deheading to prevent seed set (September).
8. Pentaschistis – currently weeding 5 areas – continue to monitor and weed.
9. Commence weed control of targeted area on north side of Stonyfell Creek from road bridge upstream to the services box. This zone is too big for us to do the whole site at once so work on a small area first and expand out.

These have been built into our revised Work Plan for 2016.

Geoffrey Bishop

Extra items of interest

Persicaria decipiens (Slender Knotweed)

Slender Knotweed is a sprawling annual herb native to south-west Australia, the Kimberly, eastern Australia, New Zealand, Europe, Africa and Malesia. It occurs in swamps, lakes and rivers and is a trailing plant whose stems grow horizontally at first but become more vertical with time, reaching 30 cm high. The slender pink flower spikes appear from November to June, with a peak in February. Patches of Slender Knotweed occur naturally in Ferguson Creek and should be encouraged to spread and replace weedy species such as Umbrella Sedge.

**Cyperus eragrostis (Umbrella Sedge)*

Umbrella Sedge is a long-lived reed-like plant with upright stems and it can grow as tall as 1.5 metres. This species reproduces mainly by seed, though it can spread to form large clumps via short underground stems (or rhizomes). Seeds and stem segments (i.e. pieces of rhizome) are commonly dispersed to new areas by water and in dumped garden waste.

This sedge is growing (and spreading) in the creekline adjacent to Stoneyfell Road. It is often cultivated as a garden ornamental, particularly in ponds and water features, and is considered to be a weed of damp sites (e.g. creeks, wetlands, swamps, drainage channels and ditches). It has escaped cultivation and become established along waterways and in wetlands, particularly near habitation.

Information compiled from various sources including Wikipedia and Richardson, FJ et al, [Weeds of the South-East](#).



Slender Knotweed grows naturally in Ferguson Creek



Umbrella Sedge is a weed which has become established in Ferguson Creek

Anyone for Rice Millet pudding or Plantain pie?

Plants out of place

Could this be the year we stop composting those pesky weeds and start cooking them instead? Chefs, artists and trend forecasters such as Jenny Lee of Studio Aikieu in the UK are intent on re-framing our unwanted edible vegetation as a desirable source of nutrients. "A weed is simply a plant out of place," she says. "All species have in themselves a value, independent of the values humans ascribe to them." For something more home-grown, Adam Grubb and Annie Raser Rowland have compiled *The Weed Forager's Handbook*, a guide to edible and medicinal weeds in Australia.

Article from the [Australian Financial Review](#), February 2016