



Friends of Ferguson Park



Newsletter No. 116 July 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 May – July 2016

In May, the usual weeding continued, as well as watering of young regenerants and litter collection. Construction of the Park boundary fence has been completed and the end result is generally well received. Spraying of weeds in the area behind the school oval (undertaken in April) appears to have been successful.

The June working bee was cancelled due to rain, however we did meet our new Ranger Brett Lores who had a quick tour of the erosion control works on Ferguson Creek before retreating from the weather.

After a wet May and June the weeds (mainly Rice Millet, Plantain, Sparaxis) were easy to pull at the July working bee. Fred supplied approximately 20 Native Pine (*Callitris gracilis*) seedlings which he grew from seed originally collected from Ferguson. These were planted out in Zone 1 adjacent to Hallett Road. The group also discussed the ongoing issue of erosion along walking trails in the Park (see article below).

Track erosion control

At the 3rd of July working bee of Friends of Ferguson Park, I sought and gained the group's support to stop the erosion and export of topsoil from the 'Stonyfell Quarry foot track' onto Stonyfell Road footpath, near the north-east corner abutting Saint Peters Girls.

Because the track is mostly below ground level, it has developed into a small 'creek'. The aim is to divert this stormwater off into the bush, thereby reducing its erosive capacity and volume.

A few days later (just after 57mm of rain!) I rejuvenated 5 previously created stormwater diverters (waterbars), and created 3 new ones, using a long-handled shovel. A garden spade is adequate. Where possible, I created a local log 'backbone' for these, to slow their erosion by foot traffic....and mountain bikes. Parks Senior Ranger, David Hird, forwarded me 2 large track construction & maintenance manuals. David suggested that all soil works need to be done before October, while it is still damp.

To date, the flow from the "Jay Memorial" plaque, to Stonyfell Road, has been successfully stopped, but I will monitor the works during and after any big rainfall events.

At the August Friends working bee, I plan to sweep up the (sandy) footpath on Stonyfell Road, get feedback from the group, and maybe install more stormwater diverters on other tracks. Please inspect the work done, and let me know.

I believe that diverting stormwater away from the tracks is just the first step to reducing the human impact on the fragile soils of this unique piece of 'bush in the burbs'.

Bill Bainger, Stonyfell & Bordertown

Ferguson Creek erosion control works

An on-site meeting to discuss the current status of the erosion control works on Ferguson Creek was held on 20th May 2016. Geoff Fisher, Director and Principal Hydrologist at Australian Water Environments (AWE), met with group members James Swanson and Sarah Telfer. AWE undertook the initial design of the works a few years ago and are very familiar with the site. Issues and possible solutions discussed included:

- The scouring on the outside (northern) bend in the lower section of creek bank - just east of the culvert where the creek leaves Ferguson CP.(Site 2). Geoff did not think that the bank would be undermined but indicated that some additional minor scouring or gouging may continue to occur for a further 2m (approximately) upstream above the Red Gum seedling. He suggested placing rocks in the creek bed in this area, just downstream of the scouring, to create a 'leaky rock weir' in order to encourage pooling of water and thereby prevent further scouring. The weir should be no more than 300 to 400 mm in height and the rocks should be sufficiently large to avoid being moved downstream by the water flow.
- Geoff also suggested placement of a 5-6 metre long alignment fence, similar to that which has been installed further up the creek, but closer in to the creek bank. It should be no more than 100 mm from the bank. The location of the fence would be just upstream of the fox hole. The aim of this would be to take pressure off the bank and encourage a build-up of leaf litter, silt, etc where regeneration could occur, or even growth of weed matter, to stabilise the lower creek bank and adjacent bed.
- Large log across the creek at the upstream end of the rock chute (Site 3) – Geoff's advice is to leave this in place.
- Red Gum juveniles and seedlings establishing in built rock structures - Geoff indicated that these trees will push the rocks around as they grow and may create preferred flow paths. The young Red Gums which are growing in the creek bed and lower creek banks should probably be removed. Instead, other fast-growing local species such as Swamp Wattle (*Acacia provincialis*) and Drooping Sheoak (*Allocasuarina verticillata*) should be encouraged, particularly around the lower portions of the erosion control structures but the creek bed itself should still remain free of trees.
- Scouring of southern creek bank at the pile drop weir upstream of Site 3 - Geoff indicated that the posts were not 'keyed' into the bank when it was constructed and that there should be another couple of posts dug into the bank edges. He suggested that the level of the centre 8 posts should be dropped (i.e cut with a chainsaw) to create a preferential flow structure through the centre of the weir, rather than around the southern end as is occurring at present.
- Scouring of the southern bank will continue if nothing is done. Placement of some larger rock or a roll of chicken wire or jute matting into the void which is forming between the pile drop weir and the creek bank may help to reduce scouring. The rock or roll of wire should be pushed hard up against the bank and pinned in place with star droppers.
- Another recommended action is to plant seedlings or scatter seeds of *Acacia provincialis* on the downstream side of the log weir, in amongst the rocks. Dense plantings through this area, using a variety of (local) species and plant life forms (apart from Red Gums) to slow water flows.

As a result of these discussions, it was decided to start some mitigation works at the June working bee. However, due to wet weather, these were postponed for a week. James, Colin and Neil dutifully came on the Sunday of the June long weekend and were able to cut the central posts of the pile drop weir at Site 3, as well as place some rock (locally sourced) and old carpet pieces held in place with star droppers to try and prevent scouring of the southern bank at this site. These works were still holding at the end of July after several very high rain events.

However, it is likely that a lot more rock or other material, such as "coir logs", is required to halt the erosion at Site 3 in the future. Watch this space!

James Swanson and Sarah Telfer



This photo was taken by James on 17 June 2016 and shows that the repairs undertaken on 12 June to the log drop weir at Site 3 were holding. Most of the flow is now going over/through the centre. However, there is still a reasonable amount of water flowing through at the southern end of the weir.



This photo was taken by Colin on 5 July 2016. Local rainfall (24 hours to 9 am) was 54mm, no doubt it was higher in the upper catchment. Colin's comment – "Our palisade is still holding".

Extra items of interest

Woman Who Makes a Difference

On Saturday 18 April 2016 Soroptimist International Eastern Districts of Adelaide (SIEDA) members were delighted to present an award to Margaret Preiss as a local woman who has made a difference in her community. The Club seeks to identify women in the community whose considerable voluntary work is so valuable to the organisations and people served but so often unrecognised.

The morning tea award function was held at the Pepper Street Arts Centre with Club members, awardees and guests. Margaret was presented with the award for her voluntary service in the areas of Friends of Ferguson Conservation Park, the Burnside Historical Society and a Sunday Walks Group.

As those present were told, the first Friends of Ferguson Park Group was formed at an inaugural meeting held at Ken and Margaret's home on 9 August 1982. They hosted the Group's meetings over the ensuing years with wonderful hospitality. Living opposite Ferguson, Ken and Margaret have always kept a very close eye on the Park knowing intimately every animal, bird, plant and tree within its boundaries. Margaret can always tell us when the first orchids are up, where weeds are hidden, who is researching in the Park and much, much more. Without her dedication and interest the Park would be the poorer.

Judi Nicholas, SIEDA



SIEDA President Elizabeth Flint OAM with Awardee Mrs Margaret Preiss.

Clean Up Australia Day

In March, SIEDA Club members participated in Clean Up Australia Day by collecting litter in the Park and environs. They thoroughly enjoyed exploring the Park as many had not ventured within before.

Judi Nicholas, SIEDA

Native Apricot

In March this year six seedlings of Native Apricot (*Pittosporum angustifolium*) were taken from the St Peters Girls Early Learning Centre corner in an attempt to grow them on so as to plant them elsewhere in the Park. When the seedlings were dug up it was revealed that they were in fact suckers, interestingly, some up to five metres from the primary plant. Only one of the six taken home and planted out is surviving, not really growing. Perhaps in Spring.

At the July working bee some more plants were taken (still 30 there) to try again. These are more mature and at least one had tiny hairlike roots along the sucker and may strike.

Doug Nicholas