



# Friends of Ferguson Park



Newsletter No. 125 –May 2019

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

Park Working Bee  
Dates 2019

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

## Working Bees Update

**February 2019** – Very hot and very dry. Discussed grants that may be available to Friends groups. Gathered up bunting and stakes used on the St Peters' Girls College track site. With approximately 70 litres of water James and Doug watered the lower region of the Park. Despite a very hot January and no rain for the last 2 months small shrubs and trees are hanging on, and the grasses, although they may look dead, will usually come back.

**March 2019** – Kikuyu was poisoned in Ferguson Creek. Hand-weeding of Plantain. A patrol for woody weeds (not many). More watering undertaken. Still very dry!!!

**April 2019** – The recently discovered patch of Pentaschistis was weeded, as well as the other 2 areas in the south-western corner. Two large bags of plants were collected – a never ending task although the occurrences are much reduced.

**May 2019** –Cereal oats were sown on the St Peters Girls College track site, in a bid to halt erosion over the coming winter and perhaps prepare this heavily scalped area for planting with native species later in the year.

## Annual report - 2018

The calendar year 2018 marked our 36<sup>th</sup> year of operation! By any standard that's a fair achievement. Our annual meeting is held early in the New Year so our reporting tends to cover January to December but this is complicated by DEW collecting volunteer time July to June inclusive.

During the year – July 2017 to June 2018 - we clocked up a total of an estimated 334 volunteer hours, counting our monthly working bee and at other times (these are not well documented). The volunteer hours includes one session with Year 10 and 11 students from St Peter's Girls and some maintenance staff when we were direct seeding the St Peter's Track site in July.

As mentioned last year, in observing what we have been doing over the past couple of years, a great deal of effort has been expended on two projects/tasks which are away from our main focus of habitat maintenance and improvement. These were the Stonyfell Creek Restoration Project and dealing with the College's building project late in 2017 and going over into the present year.

The building project on the college's main building resulted in considerable impact extending from the Hallett Road gates to the end of the school building. In July 2018 the site was direct seeded with a mix of native grasses and small shrub species. The seeding occurred on a very wet morning and some germination did occur but the prolonged very dry summer resulted in a complete failure of any plants establishing. This serves to demonstrate how much we are dependent on weather conditions in this type of work. It is doubtful whether seedlings would have fared much better on

this difficult site. In May 2019 the site was sown to Cereal Oats in order to have some vegetative cover to (1) reduce soil erosion and (2) provide some cover and organic material (eventually) for re-sowing native species.

Our main maintenance work during the past year has included:

- Spraying trials on soursob and Sparaxis
- Poisoning of Ash trees along Stonyfell Creek
- Spraying of selected weeds along Stonyfell Creek (by a contractor engaged by DEW)
- Targeted weeding of Pentaschistis, Plantain and Cape Tulip, to mention the main species. Work on the Hallett Road Triangle has been effective in reducing Cape Tulip, in particular.
- On-going weeding of 5 Pentaschistis sites.
- Maintenance work on a patch of regenerating Native Apricots growing near the Early Learning Centre corner – weeding and spraying for Pittosporum Bug. This has been very worthwhile as the young trees are continuing to spread and look healthy.
- Watering of plants from our plantings in 2017 and 2016 probably assisted them to survive the recent dry summer.

Other activities during the year included:

- Use of a surveillance camera to detect animal activity in the park. This proved to be of some use but was not as revealing as had been hoped.
- Commencement of a project with Year 10 and 11 students from St Peter's Girls on one of the Pentaschistis sites in December to both monitor and control this grass species.
- Updating our Works' Programme for 2019 to highlight what we can do vs what we might like to do. Projects for the current year include repair work to the Ferguson Creek crossing steps and on possible track maintenance with our Ranger Joseph to control increasing wear and tear and soil erosion on some critical sites.

Our thanks to Joseph and Steph from DEW for their input over the past year and Wayne Brown (Environments by Design) for input with the St Peter's Track revegetation work. Thanks to Sarah for producing our newsletter; Wendy and Martin for secretarial work, and, lastly, my thanks, on behalf of all of our members, to each of us who keep our group both productive and enjoyable.

Geoffrey Bishop, President

May 2019

## History of Ferguson Conservation Park

*Following is an article which appeared in the Burnside Historical Society Inc's newsletter (Vol. 20, No. 1, March 2000). It is a continuation of the history of Ferguson which was written by Ken Preiss, who established the Friends of Ferguson Park in 1981 and was a lifelong conservationist.*

### FERGUSON CONSERVATION PARK: A 50-YEAR CHRONOLOGY

**1976:** The Park was rescheduled and renamed Ferguson Conservation Park in the SA Government Gazette of June 24<sup>th</sup>. It was later found this proclamation to be invalid and it was correctly dedicated on 2<sup>nd</sup> June 1977.

**1978:** A two-rail pine fence around the road boundaries of the Park was completed in November at a cost of \$7,330.

**1981:** A draft management plan for the Park was released for comment. This was generally well accepted, although the Burnside Council held different views. The City Engineer, Peter Hanning, said it was "one of the most absurd documents I have ever read", and Bill Potts, Parks and Gardens Superintendent, said it had "been written by someone who sits in an office and reads books". The main objections were to the cost of controlling stormwater runoff, removing the toilets, and exotic trees.

**1982:** Following a suggestion from the Nature Conservation Society SA the National Parks and Wildlife Service

(NP&WS) approved the formation of a Friends' group to care for Ferguson Park. This was formed in August 1982 with sixteen people attending the inaugural evening meeting. It was the first group officially formed, preceded only by the Friends of Fort Glanville and the National Parks Association which had both been formed in their own right. At the three park meetings held that year a preliminary survey of the vegetation was made, a nature trail proposed and some olives eradicated.

**1983:** A small fire in February burnt about 0.5 ha near the centre of the Park. In June the first planting by the Friends of indigenous species, raised from seed collected in the Park, was made near the toilets and the recently burnt area.

**1984:** Management plan released. Most of the recommendations in the draft plan were adopted, but the toilets were to remain, subject to the negotiation of a satisfactory maintenance and security arrangement between NP&WS and Burnside Council. Six areas were planted during the year. They were south of the main gate, near the toilets, midway along the path on the northern boundary near the college, near the south-eastern corner of the college fence, opposite Rosebank Terrace, and south of Stonyfell Creek opposite Mingara Avenue. The June session was held with about fifty Year 7 girls from St Peters' College Girls' School (SPCGS), an ongoing co-operative activity. Control of path erosion was undertaken by staking pine logs across affected paths.

**1985:** A bridge was built over the steep path crossing of Ferguson Creek and the placement of pine logs across paths continued. This work done by the Friends with help and materials from NP&WS. Records of the Friends were lodged with the Mortlock Library.

**1986:** A primary school teaching kit, "A Child's Eye View", was based on Ferguson Park and prepared by SPCGS with help from the Friends. It was launched as a 'Jubilee 150' project. A nature trail and brochure prepared by the Friends was completed.

**1987:** Further path rehabilitation work with pine logs was undertaken. The first promotional display relevant to the Friends' work and interests was held in the Burnside Library. Similar displays were held most years, some in the Burnside Village Mall, until 1995.

**1988:** The Friends expressed concern to the Burnside Council over the physical and ecological damage to Ferguson Creek caused by stormwater runoff from Marble Terrace, a problem first raised in the 1981 draft management plan.

**1989:** The first evidence of foxes in the vicinity of the Park was reported. Later active burrows were seen in the bank of Stonyfell Creek. These were closed and poisoned in February 1996. The Friends, from competition entries received from SPCGS students, adopted a logo featuring the fruits of the native pine. Plant name signs were prepared by NP&WS and fixed by Friends along the walking trail.

**1990:** The toilets, subject of vandalism, misuse and considerable discussion over many years, were finally removed.

**1991:** Wooden steps were built on the walking trail to reduce path erosion and make the path safer where it crossed Ferguson Creek.

**1992:** in January a small fire burnt a few square metres just inside the boundary fence at the bottom of Marble Terrace.

**1993:** A koala was first sighted in the Park. Sightings in and around the Park continue to be made. In 1998 a female was seen carrying a juvenile. In February a fire burnt about 0.1 ha north of the walking trail between marker posts four and five. It was a cool burn and little damage was caused.

**1995:** The Burnside Council, as part of its Enviroplan, investigated the problems associated with stormwater damage to Ferguson Creek. Remedial action has been tried and investigations are ongoing.

**1998:** *Monadenia hracteata*, a pest South African orchid species, was found growing in the Park.

**1998-99:** The two bridges in the Park were replaced with more substantial structures. Since its foundation the Friends' group has maintained a policy of encouraging use of the Park for educational purposes. Guided walks through the Park, promotional displays, information pamphlets, and cooperation with schools and tertiary students have achieved this. The group has been supported in this policy by a good working relationship with the National Parks and Wildlife Service. Membership numbers have remained relatively static since formation of the Friends of Ferguson Park and the group is justifiably proud of its achievements over the past seventeen years.

**Ken Preiss**



*The newly completed A-frame sign which can be placed outside the Park entrance on Hallett Road during working bees (or any other opportunities) in a bid to attract new members.*