



Friends of Ferguson Park



Newsletter No. 135 – October 2022

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

Park Working Bee
Dates 2022

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

Working Bees Update

August 2022 – October 2022

August – Sally, Geoffrey and James updated the group on recent fort-building activity in the Park and the responses to it, as well as the meeting with Jesse and Allira (rangers) at Athelstone DEW offices on 25th July where the fort issue, as well as bikes, dogs and abnormal water flow in Stonyfell Creek, were also discussed.

Jane and Sally weeded around the grove of Pittosporum in the NW corner of the Park. Works on the day included dismantling forts in upper parts of the Park and weeding around the new plantings along the upgraded section of trail.

September – Geoffrey has contacted the Kurna Board re an indigenous name for Ferguson.

Tree guards were placed around new track plantings (thanks to Geoffrey for organising these).

Other tasks - weeding of Cape Tulip (in full flower) and Sparaxis in the Triangle. The soil was still reasonably moist due to recent good rains.

October – Geoffrey reported that planning for 40th birthday celebrations is well under way (see article below). St Peters Girls College is providing the venue, tables, chairs, etc. The Friends group will organise the catering and a sub-committee was formed.

A weed contractor has been contracted (\$500) to spray along the Park boundary between Stonyfell Road and Stonyfell Creek. Bill proposed that the group needs to get more strategic and educated re weed spraying and suggested that a session with Burnside Council may be worthwhile to gain an understanding of how they manage weeds, i.e. in the neighbouring Bell Yett Reserve.

Bill and Sally are putting together a Volunteer Support Grant application for further track upgrade works, as well as possible track closures and track naming. Portions of track to be upgraded were agreed upon and Bill and Sally to meet with a track contractor shortly to get a quotation.

Tasks today included weeding of Cape Tulip and Sparaxis in and around the Triangle.

FFCP 40th birthday celebrations

This year marks the 40th anniversary of the Friends of Ferguson Conservation Park, the first nature-based Friends of Parks SA group. An afternoon tea has been organised on 13th November 2022 to celebrate and recognise our members' commitment and contributions to the Park.

This event will be held at the Chapel Lawns, St Peters' Girls' School, Stonyfell Road, Stonyfell. The program will include:

- A Recognition of Country – presented by SPGS students
- Welcome and speakers
- Celebration formalities – presentation of certificates and volunteer year badges
- Afternoon tea
- Short walks in the Park

Visit to Stonyfell Quarry

Five members of FFCP met with the Stonyfell Quarry Manager, James Magarey and Peter Snell, Environment Manager at Stonyfell Quarry which is close to the western boundary of Ferguson. This visit came about in response to a letter which James Swanson wrote to Boral regarding concerns about releases of turbid water from the quarry's detention ponds into Stonyfell Creek which flows through Ferguson Conservation Park and contributes to issues such as erosion, sedimentation and increased weed loads.

James and Peter provided us with a description of Boral's water management systems at the quarry and this information is briefly summarised below:

- There are a series of sediment basins throughout the quarry.
- The sediment basins capture stormwater run-off, in order to allow for sediment to settle out of the water before it leaves the site.
- James and Peter talked about the capture of 'controlled' material which is treated on site and 'uncontrolled' material which is not treated and is the water that flows after heavy rains when the capacity of the basins is exceeded. The silt traps are cleaned ahead of forecast heavy rains.
- We were shown the basin which is closest to the quarry boundary off Stonyfell Road (where water finally leaves the site). This basin has a 'Silt Buster' associated with it.
- The Silt Buster is a piece of machinery which treats the very fine sediment which takes a very long time to settle out of the water (see photo below). Silty water is pumped via a submersible pump in the basin into the Silt Buster where it is chemically treated with a coagulant and also a flocculent.
- The treated material is then pumped from the Silt Buster into a holding tank and from there into an old Boral cement mixer truck. When this is full it is transported to another part of the quarry and stockpiled.
- Once water has been through the Silt Buster it is piped into the adjoining waterway where it leaves the quarry and is piped under the road and enters Stonyfell Creek.
- The Silt Buster has only been in operation for a few years which may explain why FFCP has observed that there is less silt in the portion of Stonyfell Creek that runs through Ferguson than there used to be.
- Water should only flow out of the quarry when it is wet. In the drier months water should only flow after a heavy downpour.

Also of interest:

- Boral get weed contractors in twice per year to control invasive species such as Ash and Olive (Olive seems to be their biggest problem although there are quite a few Ash around the place also). Colin mentioned the Aleppo Pines which are jumping their boundary on the south-western side and they said that they would have a look at doing something about that issue.
- James offered the group some track rubble for use on walking tracks in Ferguson.

In summary, Boral appear to be addressing environment issues appropriately - they have an Environmental Improvement Program through the EPA, with whom they have regular contact, as well as with the Department for Energy and Mines which is the 'lead' agency.

Sarah Telfer



James Magarey (Quarry Manager), Peter Snell (Environment Manager) and Geoffrey Bishop (FFCP) in front of the Silt Buster, Stonyfell Quarry.

Dudley Peninsula winter cat trapping blitz

I thought this article about cat control at Dudley Peninsula, eastern Kangaroo Island, might be of interest to members. Three members of FFCP are shareholders in the conservation company Bushland Conservation Pty Ltd that owns 1364 hectares of bushland at Black Point, 15 km south of Penneshaw. The company which participated in the Blitz also owns conservation properties at Rockleigh in the eastern Mount Lofty Ranges and at Tothill Range in the Mid North.

This is an edited version of the Dudley Feral Cat Eradication Team's report:

The Dudley Cat Trapping Blitz ran from 24 June to 4 July 2022 and involved 31 landholders over more than 5500 ha, with countless others generously providing access to their properties. The group's feral cat team trapped using 382 cage traps across the entire Dudley Peninsula. With our team and the community we accomplished over 4000 trap nights in 10 nights.

All up, 61 feral cats were captured over the 10 nights (35 females and 22 males) right across the peninsula, but mostly in the west, reflecting to some extent the work already done removing feral cats from the eastern side in the last few years. Some of the male captures were quite large (up to 5600g) with most females hovering around the average of 3100g.

Of the cats captured, four were black, one was ginger and we caught 53 feral tabby cats of various patterns. Some cage traps caught more than one feral cat during the time.

During this winter we will continue trapping across the entirety of the peninsula whilst continuing the expansion of our network of 4G connected cameras.

Thanks again to everyone for your support and participation, we're getting there!

Geoffrey Bishop

