



Friends of Ferguson Park



Newsletter No. 137 – May 2023

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

Park Working Bee
Dates 2023

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

Working Bees Update

February 2023 – May 2023

February – Today's jobs included weeding of Pentaschistis. There are seven known patches of this grassy weed throughout the Park. James and Sarah undertook weeding of Plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*) around the *Cyperus vaginatus* plantings in Ferguson Creek.

The Friends of Ferguson Park Annual General Meeting was held at Sarah's house after the working bee and included a shared lunch.

March – Sarah gave the group a brief update about the "pollution report" which was submitted to the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) in February and pertained to the continual flow of water from SA Water's discharge pipe in Stonyfell Creek. The EPA replied very promptly and explained that the water discharge is not defined as pollution under the *Environment Protection Act 2017*. The group decided that the next step was to write to SA Water directly.

Bill gave the group an update on the latest round of trails upgrade works which will be undertaken in April.

Today's jobs included:

- the cut and swab of a 2 metre Flinders Ranges Wattle (**Acacia iteaphylla*) near Stonyfell Creek;
- completion of spraying of weedy Umbrella Sedge in Stonyfell Creek – James and Sarah started this task the previous week;
- grubbing of Perennial Veldt Grass (**Ehrharta calycina*) near the group meeting point; and
- more patrol for Pentaschistis.

April – Geoffrey reported that the re-doing of photopoints throughout the Park by St Peters Girls' Environment Group is ongoing.

James and Colin gave a rundown of the track maintenance project (in Bill's absence).

Today's jobs included:

- Colin chainsawed up fallen branches across walking tracks;
- patrol for Pentaschistis; and
- spraying of (predominantly) couch and kikuyu in Stonyfell Creek.

May – James reported that the walking track restoration work was completed last week. As part of the conditions of the grant received, the Friends group must contribute \$2,500 of in-kind work. Boral Quarries donated (and delivered) the track material which has helped a lot to keep costs down. One small length of track up to the Park entrance on Stonyfell Road is yet to be completed.

Sarah and James gave an update on the latest on pipe discharge into Ferguson Creek – a letter was sent to SA Water in last week or two.

Today's jobs included:

- a general clean-up along the edges of the newly restored section of walking track where disturbance occurred as a result of the earthworks; and
- Sparaxis control in the Triangle.

Stage 2 of walking trail upgrades in Ferguson Conservation Park (2022/2023)

A Friends of Parks Small Grant was successfully granted to Friends of Ferguson Conservation Park in the 2022/2023 financial year. This followed nicely on from a grant for similar work which was undertaken in the previous year (2021/2022).

The aim of the project was to rehabilitate a highly degraded and eroded section of existing walking trail (see map below for location), with the installation of water diverters to make the trail more sustainable and reduce negative environmental impacts. The project was undertaken and completed in April/May 2023 by James Pearce of Garden Enhancements.

A considerable amount of money was saved thanks to the donation and delivery of the track surfacing materials by our very community-minded neighbour to the east, Boral Quarries Stonyfell. This meant that the contractors could work on a longer section of trail because no funds were necessary to purchase material.

Our resident ranger, Flynn Balshaw, was able to oversee the project, along with members of FFCP, most notably Bill Bainger who spent a lot of time liaising between the contractors, Boral Quarries, National Parks staff and also keeping the Friends group up to date. Bill also did much work calculating the length of trail which could be upgraded with the available grant funds, working out sites best suited for stockpiling materials, and preparing the general area. His hard work ensured that FFCP was able to get maximum 'bang for buck'!

The contractors' approach was environmentally sensitive and once the new sections of trail were completed they carefully spread out soil and debris left on new trail edges with shovels and rake-hoes to finish the job quite level, avoiding exposed clay being left which would be tough to establish seedlings into - any new seedlings should have a fighting chance, planted into friable topsoil. Since completion of the work there have been many favourable comments from Park users.

In-kind contributions by the Friends Group will include weed control and revegetation along disturbed trail edges, as well as on-going monitoring and modification of stormwater flows to preserve and conserve the trails and the surrounding bush.

A short section of the trail which terminates at the more north-western entrance to the Park on Stonyfell Road was prepared for re-surfacing, however the contractor ran out of time and money to complete all works. It is likely that Boral Quarries will be able to donate the materials required for this short section, however the Friends group are keen to apply for another small grant to get Stage 3 underway and finish off this last bit of trail.

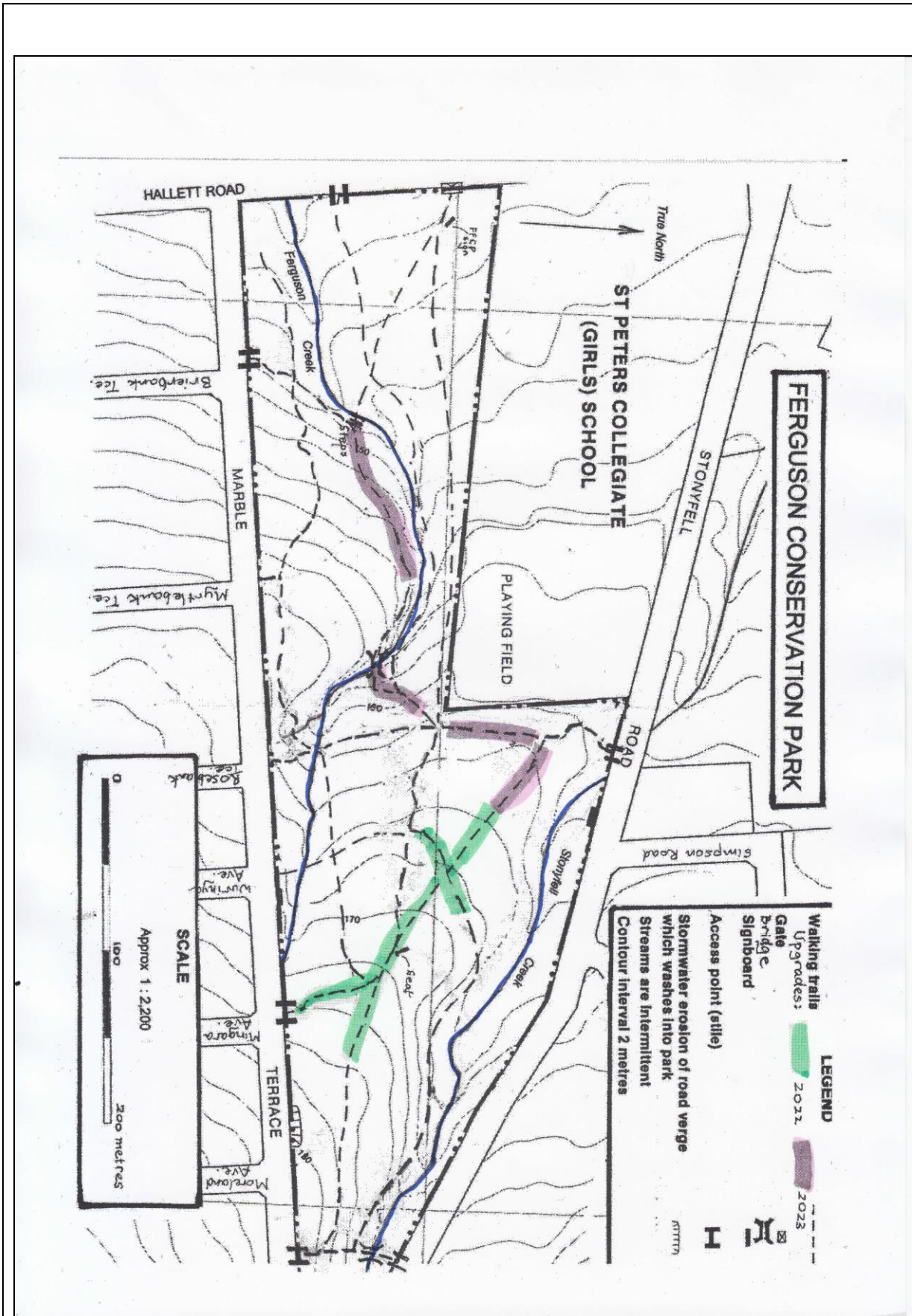
Sarah Telfer



Trail rehabilitation work underway at the junction of Quarryman's Track and Oval Track.



Equipment used to rehabilitate the trail included a stand-on Dingo 4-way bucket loader and a heavy vibrating plate compactor.



Map of Ferguson Conservation Park showing location of Stage 1 and Stage 2 trail upgrades.

Photo-point project update

A third session of repeating the photo-points which were initially established in Ferguson in 1993 was held in the last week of Term 1 with eight members of the St Peter's Girls' School Environment Club taking part. Just three sites now remain to be re-photographed.

The process has been a demanding one for the girls, but a learning experience. The sites are proving hard to relocate. Any markers at the sites have long vanished and they were established before any thought of marking them with a GPS was available.

The girls identified possible key features in each image and then attempted to locate them – a distinctive tree or bend in a track or some object outside the park (for instance, a school building or a house gable). In a couple of instances, the photographer having found the site exclaimed, "I can't take this photo because I can't line up the view". The reason was self-apparent - the line of sight had changed so much that the view was no longer the same. "What does that tell you?" I asked her. "Something has changed over time" was the response. The girls then discussed what was different - the very reason for taking photo-points. It was a lesson well discovered.

Geoffrey Bishop

Special plaque for Ferguson Park

The following article appeared in the St Peters Girls' College School Enews (No. 38, 29th November 2022).

The St Peter's Girls' School Environment Club has partnered with the Friends of Ferguson to achieve great progress in caring for Ferguson Park. This year, students in the club have volunteered lunchtimes to work with Dr Geoffrey Bishop, President and passionate member of the Friends of Ferguson, to remove invasive weeds within the park. Some of the Environment Club members were also privileged to unveil the new memorial plaque on Hallett Road.

Dr Bishop explains, 'The brass plaque replaces the original plaque dating from 1949 which was stolen in May 2020. The Friends of Ferguson made the decision to raise funds to replace the plaque with a replica of the original bronze plaque which recorded the donation of the eight hectare bushland reserve to the people of South Australia by Alice Effie Ferguson.'

The Friends of Ferguson along with the Environment Club hope that this plaque will be a sign of continued support for the park and its great sense of community.

Celebrating Environment Day 2023

On Friday 3rd March 2023 Environment Day was celebrated at Kensington Gardens Reserve, where local environment champions who are driving positive change in the City of Burnside were recognised.

The Young Environmentalist was awarded to St Peter's Girls' School Environment Club. The St Peter's Girls' Environment Club has undertaken major work in habitat management, focusing in and around Ferguson Conservation Park in partnership with Friends of Ferguson Conservation Park. The group has also established several new recycling initiatives within the school. In addition, the group maintains a fresh produce garden which supplies food for the school canteen.

Teacher Anna Sefopoulos collected the award at the presentation ceremony on behalf of the student group

Geoffrey Bishop