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Subject: Wildlife Recovery Fund - bushfire recovery highlights!
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Hi to you all, our Members and Supporters

Just over 12 months on from the devastating summer bushfires of 2019-20, our Wildlife Recovery Fund grant recipients are reporting some great outcomes from their recovery projects for habitat restoration.

We are delighted to share these stories so that you can see how the funds you generously donated are being deployed. The [Wildlife Recovery Fund](#) was established through a partnership between Nature Foundation and the National Parks and Wildlife Service and is funded through the generosity of the community.

Our thoughts are also with all the people in the community who were impacted by the recent fires in South Australia including Cherry Gardens, Tilley Swamp in the Limestone Coast, Kangaroo Island perilously close to the critically endangered and remaining KI Dunnart populations, and within the Mount Lofty Ranges. The Wildlife Recovery Fund is an opportunity for us all to help restore critical habitat for native species following large scale bushfires. **You can**

help save our unique biodiversity and landscapes by donating [here](#).

Your [generous tax-deductible donation](#) will go to local landowners, community groups and other organisations in fire-affected regions to urgently assist natural regeneration through weed and feral animal control and fencing, through to technical activities such as species translocation and monitoring programs. Projects that increase scientific knowledge of habitat and native flora and fauna species are encouraged. Your donations will give threatened animal and plant life the best chance of recovery.

Protecting natural regeneration at Kenton Valley

Donna and Danny's property at Kenton Valley in the Adelaide Hills was devastated in the Cudlee Creek Fire in December 2019. Their response through 2020 was to get busy protecting natural regeneration, observing plant species growing where they weren't before and fencing with a wide girth to protect them from livestock. Weed control has also been a focus, particularly blackberries along with gorse and South African weed orchid control. They have planted seeds and are growing tubestock ready for planting in autumn. Donna and Danny have been delighted to see birdlife come back to the area, including Yellow-tailed black cockatoos.

"We are also very excited that the first structure, a workshop and storage shed, is going up since the fire (we lost our outbuildings), which will help us more efficiently undertake habitat restoration works. Thank you to donors and sponsors, your support has given us more than we can describe, and will leave a lasting legacy for future generations. In many ways this Wildlife Recovery project has helped us heal, as we have focused on new life and the rebound and resilience of nature."





Friends of Charleston Conservation Park

Work is well underway for restoration of vegetation in Charleston Conservation Park (CCP), with ten hectares selected for revegetation sprayed to manage weeds prior to direct seeding this year. Seed collection is also in full swing; 6-7 kg of *Allocasuarina verticillata* seed was collected and processed. In December a baleful of *Arthropodium strictum* seed stalks were collected, together with lesser quantities of *Bulbine bulbosa* and several other species.

As more seed types mature early in 2021, local collections will occur for *Leptospermum*, *Xanthorrhoea*, *Acacia*, *Eucalyptus* and *Banksia* species suitable for the restoration of vegetation in the CCP area. To maximise the success of plantings, burnt park fencing has been replaced with fencing that manages the impact of grazing animals overall. The revegetated area will have a significant impact on habitat connectivity, restoring the area for the biodiversity recovering post bushfires.





Protecting Clover Glycine at Cudlee Creek

After the devastating fire which burned her 16-acre property in Cudlee Creek, Irene worried most about a small population of vulnerable Clover Glycine *Glycine latrobeana* she had been working to protect. The bush block had been under active weed management for 17 years and was home to 124 native plant species.



A Wildlife Recovery Fund grant enabled Irene to undertake weed control in the core Glycine area, a buffer zone and other weed front areas, protect individual plants from grazing, and map the entire Glycine population down to individual plant level. Irene reports: “Our little population of *Glycine latrobeana*, which we feared could have been wiped out totally, has regenerated, though not showing quite the numbers we had hoped for. Prior to the fire, there were approximately 3 dozen individual plants in the sheltered damp gully location. Only 13 plants have emerged so far this season. We now have a grand total of 48 seed pods present on 12 of the plants.”

Springtime saw much hand-weeding of pasture grasses, flatweeds, thistles, capeweed and South African daisy, as well as tonging of Guildford grass and St John’s Wort, with assistance from contractors Minimal Disturbance Bushcare. Irene says “Overall I’m feeling positive that we’ve made reasonable inroads into what was a massive weed germination event.”

Creating links between existing native vegetation at Cudlee Creek

As a result of the Cudlee Creek fires last year, Cristy and Jen witnessed a significant loss of habitat and native fauna. The Wildlife Recovery Fund is helping them to re-establish a burnt section along the eastern perimeter of their property by planting and regenerating trees, low shrubby plants and grasses. To create further links between the existing native vegetation sites on the property, Jen and Cristy are planting a number of paddock tree clusters and protecting them with substantial wire guards. So far, Jen and Cristy have planted all the seedlings they can by hand and direct seeding of native species

will be undertaken in June. Jen reports “We have completed the fencing for those zones in preparation. We have also begun making the paddock tree guards (fencing wire, shade cloth and stakes) and are adding them to vulnerable trees as we make them. We have been lucky with the weather so far, so all the trees are doing well at this stage and will be better prepared for the heatwaves than previous years”.



Controlling woody weeds

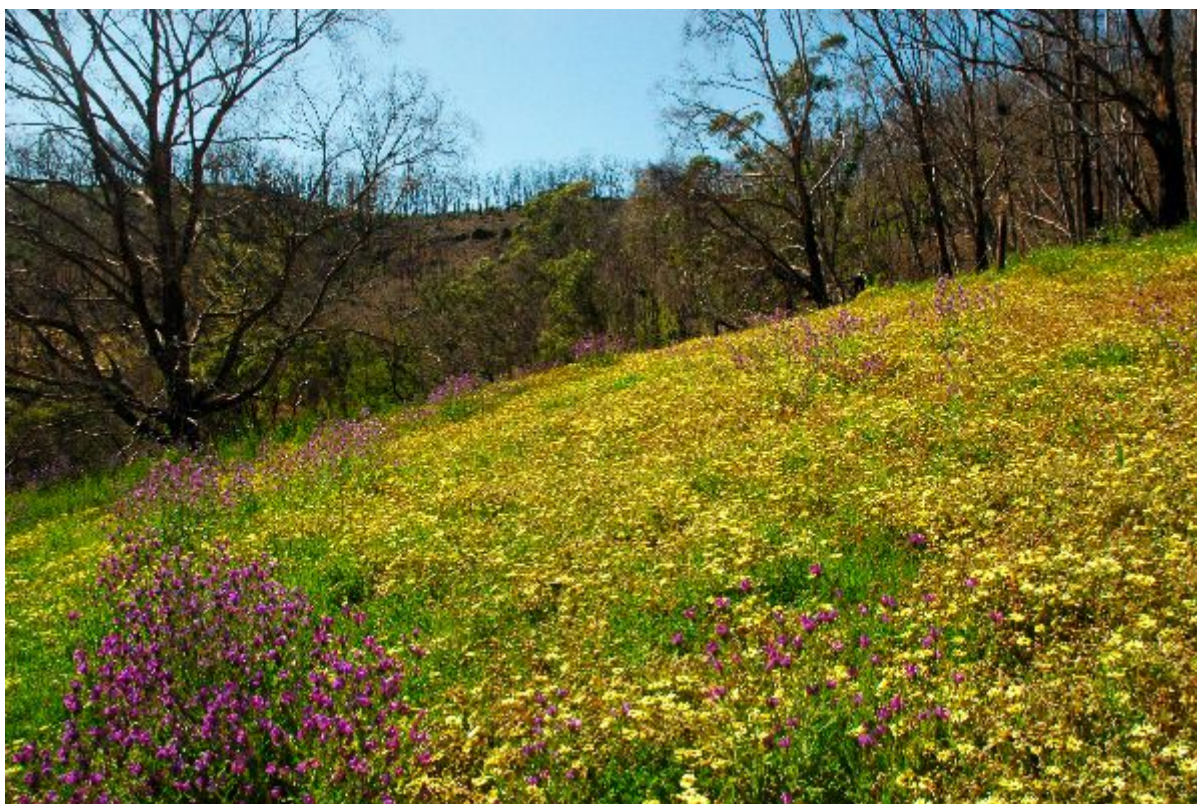
Greg and Jo-Ann are no strangers to hard work but the enormous task of restoring their 80-acre property after the Cudlee Creek fire has taken them by surprise, particularly the massive weed load that has arisen.

Their main task has been attempting control of ‘triffid like’ woody weeds in remnant native veg, mostly blackberry, African daisy, St John's wort, English broome, thistles etc

Despite the setbacks, Greg and Jo-Ann have made progress. They have fenced 250m of creekline to protect the riparian zone and installed a ‘leaky weir’, a coir log structure designed to slow down the water and hopefully drop some of the sediment.

The only part of the project still to be completed is the revegetation. Greg and Jo-Ann have given themselves another season to get the weeds under control

before planting reeds, rushes and sedges. Despite the grief and the enormous task ahead of them, Greg and Jo-Ann are very grateful for the grant they received from the Wildlife Recovery Fund, and the community donations that made it possible.



Restoring native vegetation to provide habitat for woodland birds

The Eastern Mount Lofty Ranges is a largely agricultural landscape. As such, native habitats for woodland birds have mostly been cleared and those that currently exist are either small or fragmented. During the Cudlee Creek fire, Paul witnessed the destruction of 12 acres of native vegetation that contained more than 300 native plants and shrubs. Some trees and almost all of the ground covers were lost in the fire.

The area had been planted with native vegetation over a period of years to create a habitat for the at-risk woodland birds, and the Wildlife Recovery Fund has helped to restore the area post-fire.

Activities included replacing burnt fencing to protect the conservation area from stock, clearing burnt 'skeletons' of shrubs to allow for new plants, revegetating with local species and managing weeds and pest animals. Paul is happy with the outcome: "Luckily, we had a few family volunteers to help as it turned out to be more time consuming than we initially thought, but very rewarding."





Return of wildlife at Cudlee Creek

Wildlife Recovery Fund recipients Simon and Penny Cox's Cudlee Creek property is a mixture of areas including grazing, vineyard, native scrub and a section of vegetation badly affected by woody weeds.

When the Cudlee Creek fire ripped through Simon and Penny's land, it burned hot and left a scene of devastation. It also revealed a section of the property that had not been accessible for 30 years due to dense pine infestation. This provided them with an opportunity to restore the area, remove the remaining woody weeds and create habitat for the diverse range of flora and fauna present in other areas of the property.

The Wildlife Recovery Fund has helped cover the cost of some of the fencing, clearing of woody weeds and the propagation of native plants. So far Simon and Penny have completed the fencing and ordered plants for revegetation in May 2021. Weed control has been a major issue, but the wet winter has also triggered the germination of native species. Simon reports it has been a particularly good year for native flowers, including Orchids and Lillies, "whether self-seeded or planted, the seedlings have thrived in the favourable growing conditions". Happily, the regrowth seems to have encouraged the return of wildlife, and in early spring, Simon and Penny saw the return of a couple of koalas, and in recent weeks Wedge-tailed eagles have returned. They join the kangaroos, echidnas and birds that started to return in Autumn, following rain!





Evaluating habitat supplementation on Kangaroo Island

As the fire on Kangaroo Island was still raging, Topa Petit from the University of South Australia organised a wildlife shelter workshop to guide the effort, attended by many. They focused on bats (seven known species, some of which could be sub-species) and Pygmy possums (two species) because they are important service providers (insect control and pollination, respectively) and major users of vegetation communities dominated by five eucalypt species whose range was almost entirely burnt on the island. Most of the range of the little Pygmy possum *Cercartetus lepidus* disappeared in smoke.

Months later and with the help of sponsors and volunteers, they have built and deployed over 700 bat and Pygmy possum nest boxes in 13 private properties, completed eight box monitoring field trips, organised a bat acoustic survey analysis training workshop, a monitoring workshop, seven species identification workshops for several taxa (bats, birds, Pygmy possums, eucalypts, spiders, and even fungi and fish), and intervened at schools. All the boxes have been measured, numbered, and geolocated.

The UniSA staff were delighted to receive a Wildlife Recovery Fund grant as it is one of very few sources of funding that permits both recovery action on the ground and research over more than one year - they thank all the donors who have contributed to this research.





Critical work for threatened species on Kangaroo Island

Heidi and the team at Kangaroo Island Land for Wildlife manage ten properties in the north west of Kangaroo Island. Together with a group of like-minded landholders, they manage 4200 hectares of conservation area known as the North West Conservation Alliance, the most important unburnt conservation bushland remaining on the western end of the island. This area is now critical for species including the endangered KI dunnart, KI echidna, Green carpenter bee, Southern brown bandicoot, Heath goanna, Bassian thrush, Southern emu-wren and the Western whipbird.

The organisation has been using funds granted from the Wildlife Recovery Fund to monitor and help save the species that survived the fire. To date, the team have monitored wildlife at 69 camera survey sites across the north west using 150 cameras. Species spotted have included Bandicoots and Pygmy possums. A suite of priority species have been detected on the cameras, including the Endangered KI dunnart. In addition to the camera surveys, a second round of pitfall trapping will be undertaken in autumn. The Wildlife Recovery Fund will allow for good quality analysis of species numbers and provide important post-fire data.

They have also been undertaking intensive feral cat control activities with 80 cage traps set 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The funding means staff can keep checking the traps daily. Fifteen cats have been trapped since the funding was received, and 44 cats have been trapped since the fire. WRF funding has also supported the management of five Felixer traps that are currently being used in the field.

Heidi reports that the team are very grateful for the support from the Wildlife Recovery Fund and haven't stopped working since the funding was received:

"We have delayed our holidays to make the most of the money while it is there"

we have delayed our holidays to make the most of the money while it is there. We are tired but want to ensure the threatened species that are taking refuge in the most important and largest unburnt bushland on the west end of the island are protected from threats. We are very lucky to receive funding through the Wildlife Recovery Fund – it has been combined with support received from other sources to deliver comprehensive fire recovery research and work”.



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Please donate now to save our native species.

Photos from top:

Donna and Mostyn from Kenton Valley looking at Natural regeneration at their property after the Cudlee Creek fire
A baleful of seed stalks ready for processing, destined for direct seeding across 10 hectare of park land requiring restoration.

Protecting native vegetation at Cudlee Creek

Revegetation at Cudlee Creek with paddock tree clusters

St Johns Wort post-fire in native vegetation at Cudlee Creek

Restoring habitat with revegetation and replacing fencing at Cudlee Creek

Regrowth at Simon and Penny's property at Cudlee Creek

Box deployment on burnt ground, Kangaroo Island

Kangaroo Island Echidna





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