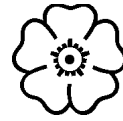




Newsletter

Friends of Stirling Linear Park Inc.



Spring 2002

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The Annual General Meeting 27.10.02

This year, the committee had decided not to make the AGM a lunchtime picnic occasion, but to hold the meeting in the afternoon, in the newly refurbished main building at Woorabinda.

For refreshments, It had been proposed that the meeting be followed with a modest serve of scones, jam and cream. There had been some debate about this. The traditional picnic barbecue was vigorously defended, but in the end the majority vote was in favour of scones and cream. Scone lovers 1; Carnivores 0.

David Ragless opened the meeting with his customary address from the Chair, and followed this by introducing our Treasurer John Allison. After John had delivered the annual report of the Friends' finances (referred to later), David introduced our guest speaker, Onkaparinga Catchment Water Management Board's Steve Paterson.

Steve, who divides his time between Waterwatch and the Our Patch program, is well qualified on the subject of wetland environments.

He gave a very informative talk on our local amphibians, under the title of 'Frogs of the Mt. Lofty Ranges', supplemented by a selection of frog calls on CD. Despite there being only seven frog species in the district (and one of these is quite rare), it's good to know that Woorabinda is host to all of them from time to time.

One or two live specimens were viewed by the audience, and there were several people surprised at the diminutive size of the Park's most abundant frog — appropriately known as the Common Froglet. These little creatures, often smaller than an average thumbnail, chorus continually near the reeds by the boardwalk, but are often difficult to see.

Following the talk, the meeting broke up for the promised scones (courtesy of Baker's Delight, Stirling), and a chance to catch up with members and friends.

Some thirty adults attended the meeting this year, accompanied by about ten children.

The Year in Review

by David Ragless

The 2001-2002 financial year has been a full one for the Friends of Stirling Linear Park. Our efforts to support the Adelaide Hills Council in the management and enhancement of the Park have involved us in a wide range of activities which I shall now summarise.

I shall also comment on developments which influence the status of the Park.

Bushcare

Monthly working bees rotating around the four reserves and walkways, supplemented by an increasing number of individuals working on their own, have continued our minimum-disturbance bushcare program. Caring for our remnant vegetation is now becoming a widespread activity. In March for instance, we welcomed a working group of ten staff from MLC Financial Planning, who each donated a day's labour to the Park's bushcare.

While some areas of the Park are yet to be tackled and others still needing more work, we are at last gaining on the weed problem. The majority of the best bush is now virtually weed free.

During the year a total of 716 hours of volunteer time was donated to bushcare in the Park. Control of *Acacia longifolia*, one of our most troublesome feral weeds, was also assisted by Monarto Zoo, who harvested this pest plant to feed their giraffes. Apparently the giraffes relish it.

Revegetation

Degraded areas below the Woorabinda dam wall and infill between previously planted areas of Stirling Park were planted with tubestock during the year. Planting events were held on five occasions in July, September, November and May when 56 volunteers planted 2,600 plants from eighteen species. All the tubestock was grown from locally collected seed by Trees for Life, Aldgate Primary School, Adelaide Hills Council staff and Friend's committee members. Our most grateful thanks to all those who participated in the work, particularly the Heysen Green Corps team who assisted with the major planting event on National Tree Day in July.

Since our first plantings in 1990, we have now planted over 15,000 tubestock in the Park.

Woorabinda buildings

A major thrust of the year's work has been to further the concept of the Woorabinda Environmental Resource Centre, which was the topic of our guest speakers at last year's AGM.

As you can see, Stage 1, the basic renovation of this building, is virtually complete, and the Onkaparinga Waterwatch Network is now in residence. The work was enabled by a massive volunteer effort, supported by a \$20,000 budget from

Adelaide Hills Council and a further \$29,500 worth of office fittings from Onkaparinga Catchment Water Management Board.

Conservation Volunteers Australia (CVA), through the Green Corps program and the Green Reserve program has provided 1251 hours of labour to the restoration of this building. The Friends have provided an additional 189 hours of labour to this task. Costed at the standard volunteer rate of \$15/hour this amounts to \$18,765 and \$2,835 respectively.

Unfortunately, Conservation Volunteers Australia will soon lose a major part of its Australian government funding, and therefore seems unlikely in the short term to be a major future partner in the Centre as originally planned. But things can change, and at the moment CVA is actively pursuing other sources of funding. Other groups are also interested in participating in the Centre. Once the picture is clear, the Friends will be actively pursuing grant funding to enable Stage 2 of the redevelopment. This involves rebuilding the adjacent bunkhouse and a further upgrading of this building.

I must also say that we are seeking grant funding to help redevelop the garden surrounds of all the buildings.

Recently, many of you will have been concerned at a public notice appearing in the Mt. Barker Courier. This announced a proposal by the Adelaide Hills Council to exclude a number of assets from Community Land Classification. Among the listed properties was 11 Woorabinda Drive — in other words, the Woorabinda cottage. I am pleased to advise (as most of you now know) that its inclusion in the announcement was an error. The cottage and its land will in fact remain zoned as Community Land.

The Woorabinda Working Party had earlier recommended that the cottage be restored and then leased or rented as a residence. More recently, The Working Party recommended that expressions of interest be sought for the removal of the lakeside building, often referred to as the family cabin. It noted that the building is in poor shape, would be too costly to repair, does not have an identified potential use and is located too close to the lakeside. The Friends committee have unanimously supported the proposed removal of the cabin and the integration of the site into the lakeside landscape.

The Woorabinda Working party incidentally, is a committee convened by the Adelaide Hills Council to oversee the Woorabinda redevelopment. It comprises councillors and Council staff, along with representatives from from Waterwatch, Conservation

Volunteers Australia and the Friends.

Monitoring activities

Photo-monitoring continued during the past year, recording the Park's changing face through 118 views. Our thanks to Jack Benlow for his continuing dedication to this work.

Waterwatch

Monthly water sampling of the lake and creeks also continued during the year. Waterwatch also participated as usual in the detailed sampling of macro invertebrates as part of the annual Australia-wide snapshot of the health of the nation's waterways. In line with previous results, the water quality of the lake continues to be excellent. The water quality of the creeks is also good. This is welcome news, given that their origin is in mostly urban areas.

Our Waterwatch team also participated in training sessions and a water quality testing experiment designed to check the accuracy of the volunteer approach to field sampling. I can report that our group's results from this trial were among the most accurate. Our thanks to Lorri Ragless, and her team for their good work. Lorri also represents the Friends (and the broader community) on the Onkaparinga Waterwatch Steering committee.

Bushcheck

Monthly bird observations in Hender Reserve also continued throughout the year. Our thanks to the Hicks family for their patient observations, and to Rob Tanner for interpreting the data.

Given the quality of the habitat these early results were disappointing. But of course we cannot draw firm conclusions from just one year's set of data.

A report on the survey was presented in the last newsletter and bird observations are continuing during the current year.

Park user survey

Our Winter 2001 newsletter carried the results of a Green Corps survey of Park users. briefly, they indicated that the average age of visitors was generally between 40-60 years, that most people liked the Park for its natural surroundings most of all, and that the majority of interviewees saw the human impact on the Park's environment as the greatest problem. Many people added the comment that the Park should not be over-developed.

Members of our Friends group also contributed to the Frog Census and the Koala Survey.

Progress report on Interpretive Signage Project

Five main entrance signs will soon be put in place. The delay has been caused by our contractor's health problems and a further substantial delay by the printer.

Although the project has been running behind schedule, it will very soon start coming to fruition.

Deductible Gift Recipient Status (DGR)

After six months of a painstaking, and at times tedious work, we were able to lodge our application for this status with Environment Australia in Canberra. Seven months later, only hours in fact before the end of the 2001/2002 financial year, we were advised that our DGR status had been granted, thus enabling our generous donors to be able to claim their gifts on their tax returns.

DGR status will also enable the Friends of Stirling Linear Park to apply for grant funding from philanthropic organisations, who understandably require this funding to be tax-deductible.

Support

The Friends' activities and achievements would be impossible without a huge amount of support from a large number individuals and organisations. To all of them we say many thanks indeed.

- First of all we must thank our general membership for their continuing support. I am pleased to report that we had 119 financial members at 30 June 2002.
- Thanks also to our committee who attend our monthly meetings. Particular thanks to our secretary, Shirley Benlow, who handles a seemingly growing mountain of paper and correspondence for us.
- Thanks also to our patron, Anita Aspinall, and to the community members of our Public fund committee: Anita Aspinall, Isobel Redmond, and Barry Ganguly.
- Throughout the year, we have continued to publish our quarterly newsletter and distribute this to our membership. Our thanks to Jack Benlow, who shoulders the main work load of this ongoing production. In passing, Jack has asked me to remind all members that their letters and any articles relevant to our Park will always be welcome for publication in the newsletter.
- Special thanks are also due to our dedicated band of volunteers who turn up each month for a working bee in the Park, or for work at other times on their own. Their numbers have been increasing lately — an indication of the popularity of this enjoyable and satisfying activity. We thank them all and trust their enthusiasm will continue.
- Very soon, (tomorrow in fact) CVA's Wetland Revive and Lending a Hand teams will start work in the Park. The program is wide-ranging and includes bushcare, weed control, seed collection, revegetation, boardwalk and

signage construction, and walking trail improvements. Wetland Revive is sponsored by BHP Billiton, and is worth \$6000. The Lending a Hand project is sponsored by the Commonwealth Bank and is also worth \$6000. Both programs will be jointly managed by CVA, Adelaide Hills Council and the Friends. We thank CVA, BHP Billiton and the Commonwealth Bank for their help.

- Our thanks to the staff of MLC Financial Planning for their day's labour in bushcare and weed control. And thanks also to CVA for organising this event.
- Our National Tree Day planting would not have been such a success without Green Corps. Our thanks to all those young people for their efforts on that day and on other occasions when they have worked in the Park. Thanks again to CVA who organises the Green Corps program.
- We thank Adelaide Hills Council who gave us \$730 under the Community Grants Program, to purchase two seats for the Park. These are now in place on the lake embankment.
- We must thank all those generous well-wishers who throughout the year have given us a total of \$210 in unsolicited donations — and this was before we received our DGR approval. Since then, we have received substantial additional donations, about which I shall report next year.
- Finally, we thank Baker's Delight Stirling, for donating the scones for our afternoon tea.

Awards

A number of bouquets came our way during the year. At an Australia Day ceremony, the The Adelaide Hills Council presented us with a Civic Award for our services to the Stirling community. We also received certificates from the Planet Ark Foundation, Friends of Parks Inc, Landcare Australia and the International Year of Volunteers.

Some of these certificates are hung in the passage outside. I might add that these are about half of all those received.

Grant funding

Further grant funding this year amounted to \$12,810.

Since its inception, the Friends of Stirling Linear Park has attracted a total of \$77,520 in grant funding. This has been more than matched by our in-kind labour inputs.

Recognition

From the very early days of the Friends, our members have been passionate about the Park as an important remnant of the district's bushland. We value its creek lines, its bushland, its plant and animal

biodiversity, and its recognition as a well-managed part of the water catchment.

We have argued consistently that the Park is more than public open space — a nice place just to visit and relax in. And now our beliefs are being proved right. During the year, studies by the Department of Environment & Heritage have started to quantify the Park's environmental significance in scientific terms. The Department surveyed eighty-five wetlands in the Mount Lofty Ranges and identified Lake Woorabinda as one of the top five in terms of water quality, presence of rare and endangered plants, and its variety and quantity of macro-invertebrates. The Department has asked that Woorabinda be entered on the list of Australia's wetlands of significance.

Sampling of the wetland swales in Stirling Park shows that surface water actually improves in quality as it moves down the valley. The excellent diversity and abundance of macro-invertebrates in this valley was also a surprise. It demonstrated that this area is working as was planned — as a well-managed water catchment.

It hasn't all been rosy

The year has had its share of disappointments. Foremost among these has been the increase in vandalism — especially to the bird hide. This suffered several incidents of graffiti and mindless wrecking, until after some delay the Council repaired the damage and made some structural improvements at the same time. We were well pleased with the result, and consider that the building has a long life ahead of it, as long as vandalism can be kept at bay.

All the Woorabinda buildings, including the cottage, suffered vandal attacks throughout the year, resulting in minor damage. Since the occupation of the main building however, the vandalism has significantly diminished.

With reference to the Woorabinda cottage, a major disappointment has been Council's delay in its repair and subsequent leasing. A permanent presence of people living in the cottage, ideally with some de facto caretaking role as previous tenants had, could be an effective deterrent to future vandalism.

In January, a serious act of cruelty dismayed and angered many people. Several native long-necked turtles and water rats were found dead around the lake, as a result of a thoughtless person or persons using yabby traps. The animals could not escape the traps, and being air-breathing, were drowned.

The use of traps for yabby fishing is illegal, but unfortunately the perpetrator of the Woorabinda incident continues to remain at large.

Volunteer time

The Friends donated a total of 2,234 hours of labour to various administration and field projects during the 2001-2002 year. Costed at the approved standard rate of

\$15/hour this amounts to \$33,510 of time.

A breakdown of this time will be published in our newsletter. (see opposite)

It includes all our ground work, monitoring, monthly meetings, other Park meetings and secretarial and publication work. It does not include our time spent at more general meetings and training sessions. Nor does it include attendance at workshops held by the Adelaide Hills Council, Onkaparinga Catchment Water Management Board, Mt. Lofty Ranges Catchment Centre or those of groups we are members of — such as Trees for Life, Greening Australia, and Friends of Parks.



In conclusion.....

We wish to pay tribute to the staff of Adelaide Hills Council who have at all times done their best to assist us in our efforts. We appreciate how difficult this usually is, as they are increasingly being expected to achieve more and more with less and less resources.

Special thanks to Michael O'Connell, Ian Binney, Glenn Williams, Lee Mullins and Alan Wickham.

Woorabinda, 27 October 2002.

Summary of volunteer hours in 2001-20022

Activity	Hours
BUSHCARE and woody weed control	716
REVEGETATION: seed collection, tubestock propagation & planting.	271
SPECIAL PROJECTS: signage, grant applications, reporting meetings	128
COMMITTEE WORK: Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, auditor, elected members	212
SECRETARIAL WORK: correspondence, minutes, website maintenance	190
NEWSLETTER: production and distribution	190
PUBLIC FUND: setting up and DGR application	127
ENVIRONMENTAL MONITORING: Waterwatch, photomonitoring, other surveys	134
WOORABINDA BUILDINGS renovation	189
OTHER WORK: sundry meetings, displays, publicity (posters etc)	77
Total hours	2234

Statement of Receipts and Expenditure 01.07.2001 to 30.06.2002

Friends of Stirling Linear Park Inc.	
Receipts	Expenditure
Subscriptions.....205.00	Subscriptions:
Donations.....210.00	Landcare.....25.00
Landcare Grants.....894.00	Greening Australia.....30.00
Interest.....18.14	Trees for Life.....49.50
	Friends of Parks Inc.....10.00
	Weed Control
	& Revegetation.....874.00
	Secretarial costs.....454.32
	FID.....0.07
	Debits Tax.....8.90
	Signage.....1000.00
	Furniture.....803.00
	AGM.....86.34
	Surplus (Deficit).....(2013.99)
1327.14	1327.14
Balance Savings Account 1/7/2001.....9179.17	
Surplus (Deficit) 30/6/2002.....(2013.99)	
Balance Savings Account 30/6/2002	7165.18

Friends of Stirling Linear Park Fund	
Receipts	Expenditure
Transfer.....10.00	Debits Tax.....0.60
	Cheque book charge.....7.50
	Surplus (deficit).....1.90
10.00	10.00
Balance Savings Account 1/7/2001.....0.00	
Surplus (Deficit) 30/6/2002.....1.90	
Balance Savings Account 30/6/2002	1.90

Management plan for Woorabinda cottage

We were disturbed to read in the Courier (9.10.02) of the Adelaide Hills Council's intention to consider the exclusion and or revocation of 11 Woorabinda Drive from Community Land Classification.

As David Ragless has mentioned in the Year in Review, 11 Woorabinda Drive is the address of the Woorabinda Cottage. Over the years there has always been an air of uncertainty surrounding the fate of this property, and the Friends' committee has monitored the various rumours and suggestions with great interest.

The cottage precinct is vitally important to the environmental integrity of the area, which is why it is zoned as a Conservation Area along with the rest of the Park. Plans are now underway for a sensitive development of the site, and the likelihood of the garden being planted with native species is in accordance with this.

Thus we were surprised when the AHC announced a review of its status, calling for public comment.

With great relief we learned some days later that Council in fact had no such plans for the property. The inclusion of 11 Woorabinda Drive on the list of assets being considered for exclusion from the Register was an administrative error.

An explanatory letter from the AHC quotes the following Council resolution:

"That the land described in Certificate of Title 5292/381 and Deposited Plan DP 159207 remain as community land and a Management Plan be

implemented which provides an opportunity to lease the existing dwelling and other buildings on the site, ie. double garage, but excludes the existing pump shed."

The letter also reads: *'It is not possible to remove the property from the listing at this point in time...'*

At this point in time. Significant words, or just a cliché? However, the cottage is at last to have a Management Plan and its status as community land is, for the present, secured by Council resolution.

In the meantime we'll continue to keep a close eye on the cottage and the fine print in the Public Notices section of the Courier.

The Community Land Register provides a safeguard for the preservation of reserves and public assets. Under the provisions of the Local Government Act any third party negotiations (such as changes in leasing arrangements) concerning these assets, must undergo a Public Consultation Process.

Excluding an asset from the Register means that a council can dispose of it WITHOUT FURTHER PUBLIC CONSULTATION. It means that at any time in the future it could be sold quietly to private interests on the strength of a council meeting vote.

Once a management plan is drafted, the asset remains in public hands indefinitely.

Recent Park improvements

Signs of progress

After some four years of lobbying the AHC to post advisory signage at the major Park entrances, and following a range of problems with suppliers, the signs are now in place. They graphically indicate prohibited activities in the Park, as well as those that are encouraged. Most people will be familiar with these icons — they are the same as those seen at the entrances to all our National Parks.

Generally they support the ethos of the Park and the community's aspirations for it. The Park should remain a tranquil retreat for walking and relaxation. It should be a safe, quiet place to take young children, walk the dog or enjoy the natural world. Those who wish to indulge their appetite for non-passive sports such as horse riding, mountain biking and canoeing can go elsewhere.

We congratulate the council for installing these signs, which we hope will have the desired effect of deterring inappropriate activities.

...and more steps along the way

Also in August, work began on upgrading the steep track leading down from the end of Branch Road to the creek and the Woorabinda track.

This new addition to our walkways is a great improvement. It was always slippery and hazardous in winter and there was never an easy way across the creek without getting your feet wet. The upgrading will be welcomed by regular walkers, not the least by a number of youngsters who use the track to access Heathfield High School via the Park. Hopefully, from now on their boots will not be quite so muddy when they reach their destination!

A Green Corps team of young enthusiasts under council supervision have worked hard on this task. They have done an excellent job of constructing the steps, and the boardwalk over the creek seems to be of a high professional standard.

Congratulations to all those associated with the project.

Now, if only funding could be found to construct a bridge or boardwalk over the creek in Stirling Park...

An invitation

Members and friends are invited to join with Conservation Volunteers Australia teams to work with them in the Park for the rest of this year and help them with a range of activities.

Join them for a few hours or days.

The following table gives details of dates, times, activities and locations of work. For further details contact David Ragless: 8339-1038.

The volunteer teams are part of the *Wetland Revive* and *Lending a Hand* programs funded jointly by BHP Billiton and the Commonwealth Bank.

Date	Time	Place	Activity
Friday 1 Nov 2002	9.00am to 3.00pm	Meet at Woorabinda	Harvest whipstick Wattle for fencing
Sunday 17 Nov 2002	8.45am to 3.00pm	East of bunkhouse building	Bushcare
Sunday 15 Dec 2002	8.45am to 3.00pm	Trail east of dam wall to start of Keroma Drive link	Constructing narrow path along existing contour bank
Wednesday 18 Dec 2002	8.45am to 3.00pm	South side of lake adjacent to existing boardwalk	Constructing boardwalk
Thursday 19 Dec and Friday 20 Dec 2002	8.45am to 3.00pm	Main entrance to Woorabinda lake on Woorabinda Drive	Constructing signage shelter
Monday 23 Dec 2002	8.45am to 3.00pm	South-east corner of lake adjacent to track	Constructing whipstick fencing
Tuesday 24 Dec 2002	8.45am to 3.00pm	Garden bed between lakeside building and galvanised iron ablutions block	Preparing garden bed for replanting

New Park benches...From bouquets to brickbats.

The long-anticipated Lions Club donation of six new park benches for the district has finally arrived. As our readers must have noticed by now, two of them have been allocated to Stirling Linear Park.

Sorry, but we (your committee) had nothing to do with their installation. Our preferences were (a) near the northern end of the Stirling Park track, looking down the valley, and (b) overlooking the lake — *inside* the Park boundary.

More seating for Park users

We are pleased to report that Mr. John Weightman, a past resident of Woorabinda Drive, wishes to commemorate his late wife with a bench seat in the Park. He has kindly offered to purchase the seat and would like it to be located under the Sequoia tree near the lake landing area. He will personally choose the spot and will be on hand when it is erected.

This is a perfect place for a shady rest with a

view of the lake, and we thank Mr. Weightman for his generosity and excellent choice of location.

More park furniture was added in October. Just in time for the AGM, David Ragless and Bob James set to with picks, shovels and cement and installed two new benches along the dam wall. These had been purchased earlier in the year with a much-appreciated Community Grant from the Adelaide Hills Council. We had thought that the grant money would only be enough for one seat (Summer 2001-02 newsletter). However an opportunity came up to purchase two benches virtually for the price of one — and such a deal could not be ignored. Thus, with the inclusion of Mr. Weightman's we will have seven benches around the Park. Five of them are well located with a good view of the lake, one is at the Branch Road entrance, and one is externally positioned with a rather restricted view of the lake over the boundary fence.

New Park ecological study

The Friends of Stirling Linear Park have been successful in obtaining \$5,000 grant funding to undertake an ecological management plan for Stirling Linear Park. The grant is co-ordinated by Wetland Care Australia and the source of funding is the Australian Wetland Repair grant from the Natural Heritage Trust.

The structure of the management plan is being developed, but the Friends' committee has recognised the need for a detailed assessment of Stirling Linear Park's natural resources. The first stage of these resources is to know where they are. This will be achieved by mapping the Park using GIS (Geographical Information System) and ArcView 8.2 software. Mapping will largely be achieved by the use of a GPS and a laptop computer containing software that creates mapping boundaries defined by the user.

Information such as the location of vegetation communities, threatened plant populations, weed infestations, walking trails and riparian areas can be accurately mapped using this method.

A botanical survey of the Park will also commence during this Spring and Summer. This information is vital for the mapping component and for targeting on-ground works in the future.

It is also hoped that micro-habitats can be identified and documented — for example fish breeding areas, frog 'hot spots', insect flight paths and areas used for nesting by birds. This information is important for consideration in the future management of the Park.

The study will be the the biggest single environmental project so far undertaken by the Friends.

The next newsletter will provide an update of the progress of the management plan. If any members have suggestions for the management plan or have general queries about the study, please contact Russell Seaman on 0429.678.741.

For more information on Wetland Care Australia, their Web site can be found at www.wetlandcare.com.au.

Russell Seaman



Waterwatch update

Quality assurance trial yields excellent results

The continuing trial of volunteers' water sampling accuracy has again produced excellent results from the June round of testing.

Samplers were asked to test 'mystery' solutions for pH, turbidity, salinity and nitrate/phosphate content. Solutions having both high and low ranges for these properties were presented to the volunteers for analysis.

Further to our reports in the last (Winter) newsletter, our three OWN samplers (Lorri Ragless, Vivian Curro and Marilyn Browne) again returned above average correlation with known parameters in the samples.

pH readings were within 0.5 of the exact value for all groups taking part in the trial.

Salinity values measured by the groups were variable, but all were within 20% of the known value, with 25 out of the 34 results within 5%.

Our OWN samplers did particularly well in this test, achieving a perfect correlation with the known salinity value of the low range solution.

Once again, turbidity was underestimated by most groups, but most came within 10-20% of the known value.

The volunteers recorded readings for the low range nutrient (nitrate/phosphate) samples within 10-20% of the known values. Results for the higher nutrient concentrations were variable and appeared to depend on the type of test kit and method used.

The results were published in a paper presented at the recent National Waterwatch Conference in Launceston.



Snakes like the Park too

With the weather pundits promising a hotter, drier summer than usual, it is perhaps time to remind walkers that the Park is known to harbour its fair share of venomous snakes.

All three of the most common species in the Mt. Lofty Ranges can be found in the Park. The Pygmy Copperhead, although rare, has been seen on several occasions in the past ten years, while the common but less dangerous Red-bellied Black is a frequent visitor to the creeks and dam.

But by far the most hazardous snake to people (and their dogs) is the Eastern Brown. Numbers in the Park are not great, but there are always one or two reports of sightings each season. Fortunately, like most snakes, brown snakes are shy and will avoid human contact. Sadly however, there's a one in five chance of quite serious injury if you are unlucky enough to be bitten by one.

This season may encourage more snakes than usual to the Park. A prolonged dry spell will dry up the creeks that provide their regular watering and hunting areas. They will thus be forced to seek these essentials near permanent water resources such as lakes and dams.

Snakes demythologised

- Snakes are not normally aggressive unless provoked and directly threatened. Sensing human approach, they will quickly retreat and hide.
- Snakes do not chase after you. This is another myth. It's amazing how many people believe that once a snake catches sight of you it will pursue you to the death.
- Snakes have no 'ears' or any other hearing organs. They cannot hear you, no matter how loud you shout or scream. They sense your approach through vibrations on the ground.
- Snakes cannot sense your body heat.
- The purpose of venom is to subdue the snake's prey. The instinct of the snake is to conserve its venom for that purpose. Snakes do not regard humans as prey. Fangs are the snake's sole defensive weapon, and are used only in the dire circumstance of it being attacked. Even so, 80% of snake bites on humans do not result in envenomation.
- Although brown snake venom is extremely toxic, the fangs are small (average length 2.8 mm) and the amount of venom delivered is also small. Many healthy adults have reported only minor symptoms from a bite. But children and the elderly are particularly at risk.
- Envenomation is therefore unlikely to occur if the bite is through clothing — even through the

thinnest of garments.

- Snakes are not in the least interested in drinking milk, and trying to lure them from their hiding place with a dish of the stuff is only a waste of good moo juice.
- Sleepy lizards and blue-tongues do not repel snakes.
- If you're sleeping out on the ground, and think that a surrounding coil of thick rope will deter snakes — think again. This is another myth from Hollywood. In the unlikely event a passing snake will find you interesting, the rope will be no barrier.

Some sensible precautions

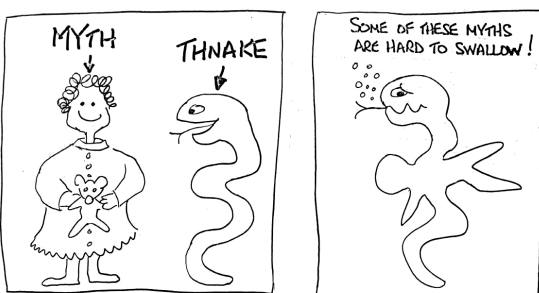
- Remember to be especially watchful on cool, cloudy or windy days when snakes tend to be less active and are thus slower to retreat.
- Be easily observed. You are less visible to the snake if you wear light coloured clothing. Dark clothing provides a greater contrast to the sky.
- Snakes rely on thick vegetation and other ground cover for refuge. Be watchful in these areas from late morning to mid afternoon, especially in the Spring.
- Never poke about in vegetation you believe conceals a snake. This is only common sense. The snake's instinct is to attack once its cover is removed. Leave well alone.

First aid for snake bite

- Stay calm. Serious complications are rare, especially in the first few minutes, and symptoms may take up to several hours to develop.
- If the bite is on a limb (the most usual site), remove watch, rings, socks and shoes.
- Do not clean the bite or interfere with it. Apply a pressure bandage over the bite.
- Apply a second bandage, starting at the fingers or toes and continue binding up the limb as far as the bandage will go. Do not attempt to remove tight clothing. This will only cause unnecessary movement to the limb. Bandaging firmly over the clothing is quite effective, but avoid excessive tightness that could cut off blood flow.
- The goal is to immobilise the limb. If possible find a stick to serve as a splint.
- Do not administer food, alcohol, drugs or any medication. Small sips of water are OK.
- Even if severe envenomation is not suspected, arrange for the patient to be moved to a hospital once the limb is immobilised and the patient is resting.

Sources:

Mark Judd & Julian White (1994): *A South Australian Handbook on Bites and Stings*.
Whitaker, P.B. & Shine, R (1999): *Wildlife Research* 26: 675-688; 689-704.



"I always keep a flask of stimulant handy in case I see a snake — which I also keep handy." ... W. C Fields

Your very own frog pond

We were enchanted with the information sheets that Waterwatch issues to children when they visit schools to talk about frogs.

These fascinating creatures (frogs that is) play such an important part in our eco-world that they really do deserve much more love and care than they get. Our Woorabinda frogs are fortunate in having found a good place to live, where their watery environment is benign and non-toxic. Unfortunately, many of their cousins are not so lucky. Good clean habitat close to urban settlement tends to be in short supply, and thus many frogs face a dismal future.

So why not help out and create some good frog habitat of your own?

Tadpoles

Frogs-to-be need clean fresh water, free of chemicals and chlorine. Tap water is OK as long as you expose it to sunshine for 24 hours, to let the chlorine dissipate.

Tadpoles love algae and decomposing vegetable matter, but a good food source is tropical fish flakes. You can also feed tadpoles boiled lettuce.

Thoroughly rinse the lettuce leaves to remove chemicals and boil them until they start to go limp. Drain and roll into small balls. The lettuce balls can be frozen for future use.



Tadpoles should only be fed enough that they do not cannibalise their siblings, but not so much that uneaten food will cause pollution.

For all you eager frog lovers, here are a few tips on how to create an amphibian paradise in your own backyard — taken (with due acknowledgements) from the Waterwatch publication : 'Frog Frenzy'.

1. Like all waterfront property, location is important. Roughly two-thirds of the surface of the pond should be always in shade, but some sunlight is important for algal growth — good tucker for tadpoles.
2. Your pond should be at least a metre and a half across, and no deeper than 60-70 centimetres. Line it with plastic sheeting or PVC pond liner. Fibreglass pond shells are a good option for small ponds.
3. Plant a few native plant species around the pond. Ensure they hang into the water so that spawn can be laid on the leaves and twigs. Choose a diversity of plants: trees, shrubs, grasses, climbers, sedges, ferns. Also plant a few aquatic species for the pond itself.
4. Plants and grass around the edges of the pond should be long enough and dense enough to provide good cover. Frogs need to hide when they are calling during the mating season.
5. Choose insect-attracting plants for a plentiful supply of frog food.
6. Place logs and rocks around the pond for natural habitat and shelter.

Source: Onkaparinga Waterwatch Network, 2002: Frog Frenzy.

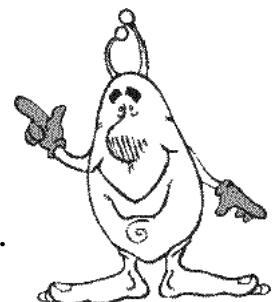
Recent Working Bees

Date	No. of volunteers	Area	Work done
14.07.02	11	Woorabinda	Best volunteer attendance since August 1999. Removed longifolia from western side of the lake.
11.08.02	11	Stirling Park	Cut and swabbed gorse on the western slope of the valley.
08.09.02	11	Madurta	General weeding in the western area.
13.10.02	10	Hender	Cut and swabbed longifolia and pittosporum.

Forthcoming Working Bees (Volunteers meet at 10am)

10 November..... Woorabinda..... meet at Woorabinda Drive entrance
8 December..... Stirling Park..... meet at Branch Road entrance.

Dust off those workaday blues with a couple of hours each month helping the Park. It's a rewarding experience and it's fun. Tools are provided, but bring along your favourite gardening gloves.





Our new website

The Friends of Stirling

Linear Park now has a new website:

<http://users.esc.net.au/~slp/>

Members (and anyone else for that matter) are invited to take a peek at the site. At first glance it may appear very similar to our earlier one that was hosted by the Adelaide Hills Council. But committee member and webperson, Kathy Bowman, has made some important improvements to her original design.

The new site will be kept up to date with working bee notices, the latest newsletters in PDF format, links to other environmentally friendly sites and any other items of immediate interest.

Disclaimer: Contributors' views and opinions expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily the views of the editor, the committee or the general membership of the Friends of Stirling Linear Park Inc.

Contributors to this issue include Russell Seaman David Ragless and Jack Benlow.

Not a member yet?

The purpose and commitment of the Friends of Stirling Linear Park is to help restore the Park to natural bushland and to ensure its preservation as a public open space in perpetuity. If you share this vision, why not join us? Active participation in working bees etc, is entirely voluntary. Membership is open to anyone who has the best interests of the Park at heart. This newsletter is distributed quarterly to all members.



Patron Anita Aspinall

Committee 2002/2003:

Office bearers to be decided at the next Committee Meeting (19.11.02). This will be reported in the next newsletter.

David Ragless	8339 1038
Bob James	8339 1903
Shirley Benlow	8339 2218
John Allison	8339 1577
Kathy Bowman	8370 9177
Reece Pedler	8339 3658
Jack Benlow.....	8339 2218
Lorri Ragless.....	8339 1038
Philip Hicks.....	8339 3156
Alistair McHenry.....	8339 5114
Russell Seaman.....	8398 0626
Nick Stevens.....	8339 8643
Neil Strong.....	8339 4085
Merilyn Browne	
Glenn Williams (AHC: Natural Resources).....	8408 0400

Affiliations

The Friends of Stirling Linear Park Inc. is an Affiliated Member of Friends of Parks Inc. We are also a Registered Landcare Group and a Member of Greening Australia and Trees for Life.



Friends of Stirling Linear Park — Membership application/renewal

I/we would like to join/renew membership of the Friends of Stirling Linear Park (strike out word not applicable).

\$..... membership fee is enclosed.

\$..... donation is included. Donations of \$2.00 or more to Friends of Stirling Linear Park Fund are tax-deductible. A separate receipt will be issued.

Name:.....

Address:.....

.....

.....

Phone no:

Membership fee for both individuals and family:
1 year.....\$5.00
5 years.....\$25.00

Please return to: David Ragless, Friends of Stirling Linear Park Inc., 6 Branch Rd, STIRLING SA 5152.