



Newsletter

Friends of Stirling Linear Park Inc.



Winter 2001

In this issue

- 1 Planet Ark Day 2001.
- 2 Woorabinda update.
- 3 More on Phytophthora.
Working Bees.
Constitutional amendment.
- 4 Waterwatch news.
Bushcheck update.
- 5 Green Corps Park user survey.
- 6 Welcome to new members.
In the Park.
The committee.
Membership form.

Planet Ark Tree Day 2001

29th July marked the nationwide tree planting event that arrives in varied forms around this time each year. Last year's bumper occasion was the Olympic Landcare Day when a record 3000 seedlings were planted in Stirling Park. This year was a more subdued affair. But even so, some 1500 additional plants were introduced to their new home in the Park, so we can justifiably say with pride that Planet Ark Day was successful.

Our own volunteer numbers were down on last year, with a disappointingly low contingent of six members (not including toddlers and small children). But as ever, Green Corps carried the day, with Sharon Harkin bringing along her troupe of nine volunteers. Without their help we certainly would have not reached anywhere near our quota. Some 25 species ranging from forest eucalypts and understorey shrubs were planted, along with many wetland varieties around the swales. Plantings were confined to areas previously weed-sprayed by AHC Landcare Officer, Alan Wickham earlier in the year.

In a few years' time Stirling Park will begin to take on the appearance of an authentic bushland reserve, creating new habitat for what we hope will be an increasing number of birds and micro fauna. Native plant species that have evolved in the cooler and wetter southern regions tend to grow rapidly. One only has to look at previous plantings in the Park.



Green Corps volunteers, Sian and Paul at work in Stirling Park

Those flourishing trees and shrubs on the western slopes of Stirling Park were planted as recently as three years ago, and the massive growth of eucalypts on the eastern side have only been there since 1990. In ten years' time, you will be treated with disbelief when you observe, "You know, it wasn't so very long ago when all this used to be a market garden".

...Jack Benlow

Woorabinda Update — AHC approves plan

At last we are beginning to see a glimmer of light at the end of this very long tunnel. As we reported in the Summer Newsletter, Harry Bechervaise, assisted by Russell Seaman, had produced a Master Plan for the Woorabinda buildings for the Adelaide Hills Council. The Council has now accepted the plan, recommending at their June 26 meeting that *'... the directions and concepts set out in the Woorabinda Environmental Resource Centre Master Plan dated June 2001 by Harry Bechervaise & Associates be endorsed by Council.'*

They also recommended that a *'Working Group as set out in the Implementations section of the report be established'*...and that *'a progress report be provided to Council in three months'*.

This was very good news. The fact that the plan was endorsed unanimously (there were no dissenting votes at the meeting) indicates that at last Council has come around to the view that a small scale Environmental Centre at Woorabinda would be a valuable asset to the Hills Community.

As well as the convincing case for the Centre outlined in the Bechervaise Plan, considerable credit for the final decision must be given to the representations that the Friends and other community members have made to Council in recent years.

Our gratitude is also extended to committee member, Alistair McHenry of Russell & Yelland, who donated his professional architectural skills to help the process along.

His 'Report on the Woorabinda Buildings', published in September last year, indicated that the buildings were demonstrably refurbishable.

Alistair also supported the case for the Bechervaise plan at the Council's June meeting, with

a presentation of renovation work that had been carried out on buildings similar to those at Woorabinda. Subsequently at the following AHC meeting on 24th July, Crs. John Kemp and George Healey were nominated to the new Woorabinda Working Group, with Cr. Stan Evans being nominated as a proxy member.

The Woorabinda Working Group thus comprises:

Councillors:

George Healey
John Kemp
Stan Evans (proxy)

Council staff:

Michael O'Connor (Senior Planner)
John Moyle (Director Organisation Services)
Lee Mullins (Asset Management Coordinator)

Conservation Volunteers:

Terry Peacock

Onkaparinga Water Watch (OWN):

Sheralee Cox
Lorri Ragless (proxy)

Friends of Stirling Linear Park:

David Ragless
Alistair McHenry

The inaugural meeting of the working Group was held on 8th August. We can report that CV and OWN are committed to taking up residence in the buildings and we hope that this will happen before the end of the year. In the meantime, Alistair is producing a detailed costing for the Council for the refurbishment of the buildings.

These encouraging developments give cause for the Friends' committee to be more optimistic about the Park's future.

...David Ragless & Jack Benlow

A significant date for your diary...

Please make every effort to attend. There will be important announcements concerning the future of your Park.

Friends of Stirling Linear Park

Annual General Meeting

To be held as usual in the main building at Woorabinda
on

Sunday, 28th October 2001

Commencing 12 noon.

BYO picnic begins at 1pm. BBQ facilities will be available.

Further details will appear on posters closer to the date.

More on Phytophthora

Phytophthora cinnamomi is a soil borne fungus that destroys the plant root system.

In South Australia there are major infections within Kangaroo Island and the Mt Lofty Ranges. Locally, outbreaks have been identified in Belair National Park, Black Hill CP, Cleland Wildlife Reserve and Mt. Lofty Summit. Suspected infections are at Scott Creek CP, Mount George CP, Kyeema CP, Myponga CP and Cox Scrub. The Federal government has identified *Phytophthora* as a major threat to native vegetation and associated fauna habitat.

The most susceptible species in South Australia is the Yacca or Grass Tree. A group of dying or dead Yaccas in an

otherwise healthy plant community is generally a good indication of *Phytophthora* infection.

Other species at risk are: *E. baxteri* and *E. obliqua*, sheoaks, bush peas, heath, *A. myrtifolia*, banksias, grevilleas and hakeas. Non-native fruits and nuts are also vulnerable to *Phytophthora* attack.

Common signs of *Phytophthora* infection:

- Die back from tips of branches (Eucalypts).
- Yellowing foliage (chlorosis).
- Rapid deterioration and death (Banksias).
- Yellowing and dying back in warm moist periods in Spring/Autumn (Fabaceae, Epacridaceae, Acacia, Leptospermum).
- A progressive death pattern with time. Oldest deaths uphill of the infestation.
- Sharp boundaries between patches of healthy and infected plants.
- Since the fungus spores are water borne, spread is most rapid downhill. Uphill spread is usually slow and by root contact from plant to plant.

Phytophthora travels rapidly when rainfall coincides with warm temperatures, generally in Spring, Summer and early Autumn. The spores travel mainly in runoff from roads and tracks and on the tyres and tracks of vehicles and machinery. Bushwalkers can also spread the disease with mud sticking to boots and tent pegs.

...information sourced from the 'Phytophthora Newsletter, February 2001.

Hear the latest information about Phytophthora in the Adelaide Hills at the forthcoming public meeting:

When: 4 September 2001 at 7.30pm.

Where: Upper Sturt Primary School.

Speaker..... Janine Kraehenbuer from NPW, Belair
..... National Park.

Host: Sturt Upper Reaches Landcare Group

Recent Working Bees

Date	No. of volunteers	Area	Work done
10 June	2	Stirling Park	Weeding
8 July	4	Madurta Reserve	Weeded Madurta track
12 August	6	Hender Reserve	Cut <i>A. longifolia</i> . Cut and swabbed gorse and pittosporum.

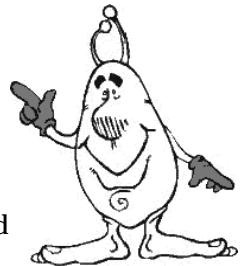
Forthcoming Working Bees

9 September..... Woorabinda.....meet at Woorabinda Drive entrance

14 October..... Stirling Park.....meet at Branch Road entrance

11 November..... Madurta Reserve.....meet at Madurta Avenue

These meetings take place on the second Sunday of each month. 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 your favourite gardening gloves if you wish.



Constitutional amendment

Our secretary, Shirley Benlow, reports a positive response to our mail-out asking for a vote in favour of amending the Constitution. As was explained in the mail-out we want to attract more funding to help with our work in the Park. In order that donors can claim donations against their tax, they have to quote the number of a registered Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR).

To comply with the requirements of the Tax Act, it is necessary for us, as a DGR applicant, to make additions to our Constitution, based on the models outlined in the mail-out.

Well over half of our paid-up membership voted to add the proposed clauses to the Constitution, thus

providing the committee with the authority to make the additions.

The protocol for our application is fairly detailed and time consuming — all the 'i's' have to be dotted with scrupulous correctness and every 't' crossed with rigorous unambiguity. Our submission must be scrutinised and approved by Environment Australia (the Federal government environmental authority) before the Tax Office will consider assigning DGR status.

It's a slow, tedious and time-consuming process, but eventually we hope to have the necessary papers completed and filed away. Meanwhile, Shirley thanks you all for your prompt responses.

Waterwatch news

Heathfield High School Environmental Monitoring Group gets a gong.

Well, perhaps not a medal as such, but most certainly a Highly Commended Award from the Onkaparinga Waterwatch Network. The Heathfield High School group were joint winners with Upper Christies Creek Waterwatch Group in the Waterwatch Awards 2000 held at the Adelaide Zoo last June.

Heathfield High school EMG regularly monitors the water quality in Madurta Reserve.

They have also removed woody weeds in the Park and are currently revegetating degraded parts of the school grounds.

Congratulations to Ben Parkhurst and our own committee member, Reece Pedler.

Snapshot 2001...Wednesday, 19 September.

No, not another photographic competition, but an annual Australia-wide qualitative survey of all our creeks and inland waterways.

On this one day of the year, thousands of waterwatchers across the nation will be out with their nets and waders sampling the water quality of their neighbourhood creeks.

Nets? The water itself is not actually tested in this exercise. The object is to collect the macro invertebrates living in the water. This provides a good guide to the health of the water habitat, and is thus an indicator of the health of the catchment.

Our contribution will be to sample Woorabinda Lake and the creek running through Stirling Park.

Looking at Bugs...Monday, 24th September (3-4pm at Arbury Park).

OWN is running a short session on the kinds of macro-invertebrates you are likely to find in local waterways. Identification, life cycle and their importance to the ecosystem will be discussed. The results from the Stirling Park and Woorabinda Lake Snapshot samples will also be available.

This will be informative and fun. Please register with Lorri Ragless (ph: 8339 1038) if you would like to attend.

Staff changes

Sadly, **Caroline Mussared** is leaving the Onkaparinga Waterwatch Network after four years of dedicated service. Her enthusiasm and motivation will be sorely missed. However, we understand she will still be volunteering her time for good causes — perhaps Waterwatch!

Welcome to **Nick Fewster** who replaces Caroline. Nick has worked part-time with both the Onkaparinga Catchment Water Management Board and Greening Australia.

He will be working part-time with OWN in the Upper Catchment and will focus on providing education sessions to Upper Catchment groups.

Bushcheck update

Hender Reserve: Anne and Philip Hicks have been bird monitoring this site since it was set up in February. Alice Weatherall agreed to do the vegetation survey but has requested help. Reece Pedler has offered to assist.

A paper is being prepared describing the data collection methods and how birds are using each site.

So far, the data (from the 11 sites) shows:

- Whether birds visit the site because of its natural resources.
- Whether they only visit seasonally — maybe because of ecological infrastructure gaps.
- Whether they are only passing through to reach richer 'pastures' elsewhere, indicating an edge effect or a wildlife corridor.

So far, the Hender results are disappointing, but the following must be borne in mind:

- Hender is small enough for there to be overlap in monitored areas.

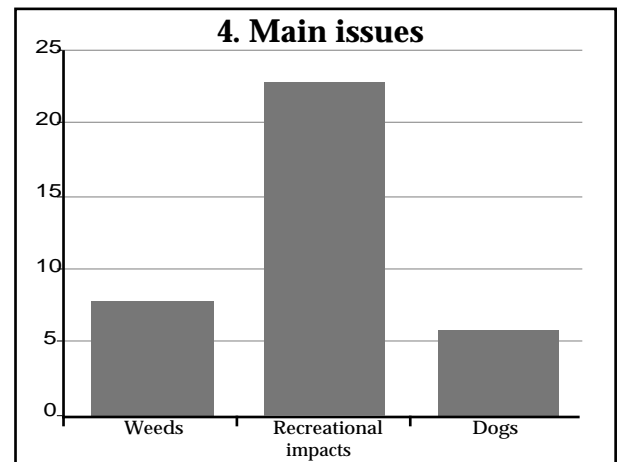
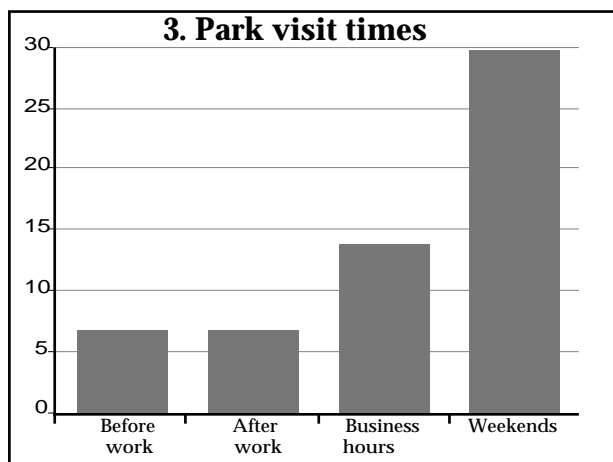
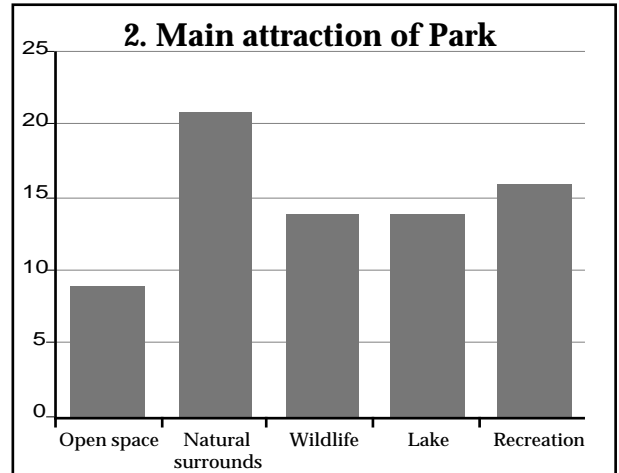
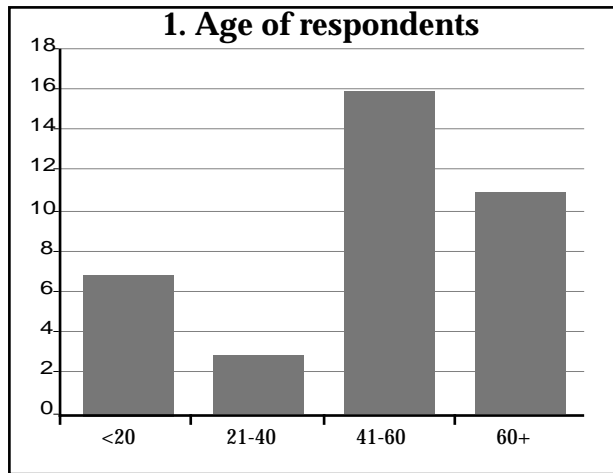
- It is the only climax forest that Bushcheck has attempted to monitor. A large number of birds may only be present at night or outside normal monitoring hours. Also, some species, eg. White's (or Bassian) Thrush, may be very secretive and therefore go unreported.
- Hender's intact tree canopy tends to reduce light levels, making it harder to spot birds.

If the problems persist we may need a different monitoring approach. One suggestion is to identify the more diverse parts of Hender from the data and merge monitors into the background of these areas for a better chance of spotting the more secretive species. It might also be helpful to bone up on bird calls.

Other areas: A site has been set up in East Torrens which Doug Fletcher is monitoring. Another is at Bushlands Park near Lobethal.

...thanks to Rob Tanner (ph. 8339-2835) who provided this information 25.08.01

Green Corps Park user survey



Early this year a Park survey was conducted by Green Corps to gain a snapshot of Park users and issues that concerned them. Thirty-seven responses were collected, the majority from Stirling residents. 16 respondents were female and 21 male. The age majority of respondents fell into the 40 – 60 age bracket, (refer to graph 1).

The most popular activities recorded were bushwalking, walking the dog, bike riding and bird watching. Time spent in the Park varied from 'passing through' (11 respondents), to staying for three hours or more (9 respondents). The main attractions of Stirling Linear Park are the natural surrounds and a place to relax (graph 2).

The majority of Park users visit the Park during weekends, (30 responses). Visits during business hours are also popular as are visits before and after work (graph 3).

There were several issues recorded (graph 4), the main one concerning recreational impacts



a great
place to
relax...

on the natural landscape. Dog control and the amount of environmental weeds were also of concern. There was clearly a concern from many respondents regarding dogs off leads and the impact of dog scats on the environment — but particularly the impact on other Park users.

Survey participants were also asked for their preferred options for the use of the Woorabinda buildings. The overwhelming response was to improve the facility as an education centre (33 responses).

Suggested improvements for the Park included:

- Improve the path conditions
- Provide seating in other areas
- Install signage (interpretive and directional)
- Upgrade the car parking area
- Make sure to retain the Park's naturalness by not over developing the Park.

Thank you to the survey respondents for their time and input. The survey has provided a valuable snap shot of user profiles and some of the issues that concern them. Surveys such as these are valuable in assisting Adelaide Hills Council and the Friends of Stirling Linear Park to respond and plan for the future needs of Park users.

...Russell Seaman

Welcome to new members !

The latest statistics: At 26 August 2001,
The Friends of Stirling Linear Park
had 116 members in 78 households.

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.

IN THE PARK

The Common Froglet

The Common Froglet is the most commonly found frog in the Mt Lofty Ranges and SE South Australia, occurring also in southern Eyre Peninsula and Kangaroo Island.

It accounted for over a third of all frogs surveyed in the year 2000 Frog Census.

The species has highly variable skin colour and texture, even within populations. It may be plain, striped or spotted, smooth, warty or rigid. The belly is usually white with black splotches.

Characteristics

Size: Males 18-25 mm; Females 19-28 mm.

Habitat: Found beneath rocks, vegetation and debris at the edge of creeks, ponds, wetlands and areas of seepage. During dry periods the frog may be found away from water sources.

Breeding: Breeds throughout the year except in mid summer. Eggs are laid in small bunches of 100-150 in shallow water.

Call: Rapidly repeated 'crick...crick...crick'.



Patron Anita Aspinall

Committee 2000/2001:

David Ragless (<i>Chair</i>).....	8339 1038
Shirley Benlow (<i>Secretary</i>).....	8339 2218
John Allison (<i>Treasurer</i>).....	8339 1577
Kathy Bowman (<i>Membership, website</i>).....	8370 9177
Bob James (<i>Working bees</i>).....	8339 1903
Reece Pedler (<i>Student representative</i>).....	8339 3658
Jack Benlow (<i>Newsletter</i>).....	8339 2218
Glenn Williams (<i>AHC: Natural resources</i>).....	8408 0400
Philip Hicks.....	8339 3156
Alistair McHenry.....	8339 5114
Russell Seaman.....	8398 0626
Nick Stevens.....	8339 8643
Neil Strong.....	8339 4085
Lorri Ragless (<i>since April 2001</i>).....	8339 1038

Affiliations

The Friends of Stirling Linear Park Inc. is an Affiliated member of Friends of Parks Inc. and is also a Registered Landcare Group



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 David Ragless, Russell Seaman, Lorri Ragless, Shirley Benlow, Rob Tanner and Jack Benlow.

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.

Name:.....

Address:.....

.....

.....

Phone no:.....

I can help with (please tick):

- ☐ Publicity/letter-boxing
- ☐ Working bees
- ☐ Bushcheck
- ☐ Water Watch
- ☐ Other.....

- ☐ I would like to receive the newsletter only.

Membership fees (individual or family): 1 year/ **\$5.** 5 years/ **\$20.**

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