



In this issue.....

- 1 Woorabinda's conservation significance.
- 2 Revive our Wetlands.
Main building launched.
- 3 Our Patch and Waterwatch.
Recent working bees.
- 4 Hender Bushcheck bird monitoring report. .
Our new tax deductible status.
- 5 Woorabinda cottage disrepair.
The working bee reminder flyers.
- 6 Committee etc.

Woorabinda: A wetland of high conservation significance

If there was ever any doubt about this, then the sceptics would do well to refer to the latest in-depth study of wetlands in our region.

This exhaustive survey by the Wetlands Management division of National Parks and Wildlife SA, documents the physical, chemical and biological attributes of 85 representative wetlands in the Mount Lofty Ranges, including brackish water bodies, freshwater wetlands, bogs and constructed wetlands. Not surprisingly, Woorabinda Lake rates high in the league table of sites of significant conservation value:

- Water chemistry parameters in the lake are excellent, compared to other water bodies surveyed in the Mount Lofty Ranges.
- The biological and physical condition of Woorabinda Lake is also of an excellent standard — scoring in the top 20% of water bodies surveyed.
- Invertebrate trophic levels are high in the lake, and fell into the the top ten sites out of the eighty-five sites sampled. Trophic level in this context is a measure of the nutritional value of the lower food chain.
- Woorabinda Lake supports several plant species of conservation significance (above).

Some uncommon plants around Lake Woorabinda

Common name	Botanical name	Status
Pink ground berry	<i>Acrotriche fasciculiflora</i>	UNCOMMON
Square twig rush	<i>Baumea tetragona</i>	UNCOMMON in southern Mt. Lofty Ranges and S.A..
Saw-tooth sedge	<i>Gahnia sieberiana</i>	UNCOMMON in southern Mt. Lofty Ranges
Orange bell creeper	<i>Billardiera bignoniacea</i>	UNCOMMON in southern Mt. Lofty Ranges
Curved logania	<i>Logania recurva</i>	UNCOMMON in southern Mt. Lofty Ranges
White gum	<i>Eucalyptus dalrympleana</i>	RARE in southern Mt. Lofty Ranges

Wetlands Revival for Woorabinda

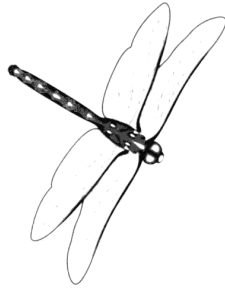
Conservation Volunteers

Australia, recognising the need for a national approach to the problem of our degraded wetlands, has joined forces with BHP Billiton to form **Revive our Wetlands**. This will be Australia's largest business-community partnership set up to repair our damaged water resources. With a target of rehabilitating 100 wetlands across the nation, Revive has already selected some 83 proposals.

Recently the Friends also prepared a submission to Revive our Wetlands, and we are pleased to announce that CVA has approved it.

Our proposal, accepted against strong national competition, is to continue the work of rehabilitating the Woorabinda Lake environment. On the agenda will be more weed control around the lake (longifolia, blackberry, erica, watsonia etc.) and an enhancement of our revegetation program.

More boardwalks are to be constructed, along with



a viewing platform at Patagonia Bay (the southern tip of the lake). That area has become heavily eroded and some form of stabilisation is long overdue. Other eroded areas along the dam wall will be protected with additional whipsstick fencing.

The terms of the Revive our Wetlands program are quite specific: the CVA team leader will provide the volunteers and be responsible for their welfare and safety. Our job (the Friends with AHC) will be to supply materials and supervise the day-to-day progress of the work. We anticipate that the CVA contribution will be in the order of three working team-weeks. This could be expended in an all-out effort or may spread over several weeks or months.

A meeting with David Ragless, Glenn Williams (AHC) and the CVA regional manager will shortly tour the lake and finalise the working schedule — due to commence in September/October.

To find out more about Revive our Wetlands go to the website

www.reviveourwetlands.net or Freecall CVA on 1800 032 501.

Main building launched

With everything now just about ship-shape, a nautical reference couldn't be resisted. By the time you read this, both Onkaparinga Waterwatch Network and Conservation Volunteers Australia will be aboard the main building, enjoying their new quarters.

A massive clean up and renovation has transformed the interior of the building. Although a few details are yet to be completed, such as heating, air-conditioning and ceiling insulation, everything is bright, clean, neat and eminently habitable. Exterior painting awaits some fine weather.

Considering the amount of work and the transformation achieved, the cost to the ratepayers has been marginal, and it has to be remembered that the buildings remain community assets, owned by the AHC, who chipped in \$20,000 for specialist contractors and materials.

Additional finance came from Onkaparinga Catchment Water Management Board, who have allocated \$25,000 for furniture and equipment.

Most of the labour was contributed by volunteers who donated a total of 1228 hours of their time (CVA: 1080 hrs, FoSLP: 148 hrs). At \$15/hour this equates to over \$18,000. The table opposite shows how the work was shared between AHC, CVA and the Friends.

We extend our special thanks to those who took part and particularly to Alistair McHenry who brought his professional architectural expertise to bear on the refurbishment.

WORK COMPLETED	AHC	FoSLP	CVA
Roof repairs		L	
Ceiling repairs and replacement	M		L
Inside wall repairs	M	L	L
Outside wall repairs	M	L	L
Partition moving		L	
Cupboard moving			L
Doors (Inside) moving		L	
Floor repairs	M	L	
Louvre window repairs		L	
Window reglazing	M L		
Door hardware replacement	M L		
Replacing glass in doors	M L		
Preparation for carpet laying	M	L	
Inside painting	M	L	L
Outside painting	M L		
Additional power points	M L		
New ceiling fluoro lights and EXIT sign	M L		
Water testing room plumbing	M L	L	
Weed removal: garden and building surrounds	L		L
Rubbish removal	L	L	L
New gutters and downpipes	M L		
New carpets and floor coverings	M L		
Driveway repairs		L	L
External security lighting	M L		

M=materials. L=labour

Our Patch program helps the catchment

At our May committee meeting, Michael Garrod came along to give us a talk about the work of the Onkaparinga Catchment Water Management Board.

Michael is the Project Officer for Our Patch — a program set up by the Board to assist local communities in monitoring and caring for their local creeks and waterways. It's a daunting task. The Onkaparinga Catchment, of which we are a small part, is an area of some 920 square kilometres. Within its reaches live 174,000 people, ranging across the local government areas of Marion, Onkaparinga, Mt. Barker, Yankalilla and the Adelaide Hills — from Sellicks Beach to Lobethal.

Although city folk often take it for granted, nearly a third of their water supply is collected in the thousands of little creeks and watercourses that make up the Onkaparinga Catchment. Almost 50,000 megalitres of catchment water flow out of Adelaide's taps every year.

Unfortunately, the quality of this water has been substantially degraded since European settlement. Creeks and streams have been filled in, diverted and choked with introduced weeds. The progressive removal of over ninety percent of the original vegetation has reduced natural groundwater filtration leading to the increased sedimentation of the waterways. Farmland run-off, household effluent and industrial waste have all contributed to the problem. Using the Onkaparinga River to transfer Murray River water to Mt. Bold and Happy Valley has also indirectly affected water quality by changing seasonal flow patterns and causing the inevitable impact on biodiversity.

The Board in its December 2000 Management Plan outlined a program of rehabilitation to rectify this unsatisfactory situation. With an operating budget of \$8.7m over three years (largely raised by the Catchment Levy), the Board introduced a series of actions to reduce erosion and inappropriate rural and urban land practices:

- Remove effluent and industrial seepage into watercourses.
- Restore riparian zones and encourage revegetation.
- Promote legislation for the more efficient use of water.

- Enlist the support and commitment of local communities to carry out its plan to rehabilitate the catchment.

This is where the Our Patch program comes in. Realising the enormity of the task of cleaning up such a huge area as the Onkaparinga catchment, the Board is co-opting the community to help with the job. Our Patch works with community members that are actively involved in the stewardship of their part of the catchment, with 50% contribution from community groups and 50% from the Board.

Through a program of funding and education, Our Patch assists individuals, families, schools and other local groups to adopt a particular area, however small, and restore it to health. In an Our Patch program, people can participate in workshops and field trips and be part of an established network of like-minded volunteers. Each 'patch' has its own set of problems, but there is always a Project Officer on hand to provide assistance and advice.

A sister program to Our Patch is the Onkaparinga Waterwatch Network of 120 groups, each of which regularly monitors the quality of the water resources in their area.

Our own 'patch' is of course our Park, and the Friends and its OWN team are its committed carers.

Onka Waterwatch May 2002 testing results 'excellent'

In our last newsletter (Autumn), we reported on the progress of the OWN team's involvement with the Environmental Protection Authority's Quality Assurance Trial for volunteer sampling.

To recap: During a series of May workshops our three Waterwatch volunteers (Lorri Ragless, Vivienne Curro and Marilyn Browne), familiarised themselves with the testing equipment, sampled the Park's lake and creek and tested a 'mystery' water sample supplied by the EPA to see how closely their measurements matched the known values. EPA has assessed the May results and has announced they look 'excellent'.

The trial is continuing, and so far, says the EPA, the results are 'very encouraging'.

For more information on the Our Patch program, phone 8374 6000.

Recent Working Bees

Date	No. of volunteers	Area	Work done
April 14	7	Stirling Park	Cut and swabbed gorse
May 12	5	Madurta Reserve	Cut and swabbed woody weeds
June 9	1	Hender Reserve	Cut and swabbed woody weeds despite very wet weather

Forthcoming Working Bees (Volunteers meet at 10am, 2nd Sunday of each month)

14 July..... Woorabinda..... meet at Woorabinda Drive entrance

11 August..... Stirling Park..... meet at Branch Road entrance

8 September..... Madurta Reserve..... meet at cnr. Bogaduck Rd/Linwood Av.

Bushcheck update 2001/02: Hender Reserve

The first year of the current Bushcheck survey monitoring the bird species population in Hender Reserve was completed in January. The survey covers 16 segments within Hender, with some overlap between them. Monitoring occurs on a set day each month, and the bird species observed in the five minutes spent at each segment are recorded.

Rob Tanner of Bushcheck has prepared a report analysing the results of the Hender survey. The following is sourced from Rob's report.

Introduction

The Habitat check mathematical model measures the species rather than the individuals. This removes a lot of statistical 'noise' from the data.

Hender Reserve is a climax stringybark forest adjacent to the Woorabinda regrowth stringybark forest on one side. It is part of the Stirling Linear Park wildlife corridor, which links Arbury Park and Mount George with Mark Oliphant Conservation Park and Cleland Conservation Park.

Species composition.... 3 or more individuals
No. of species..... 28
No. of species visits.... 133

Conclusions

Species composition is dominated by forest birds.

- The ground pigeon Common Bronzewing is dominant in the hierarchy, reflecting the reduced shrub layer and more prominent ground layer.
- The Brown Thornbill was not recorded.
- Blackbirds are quite prominent.
- No Bassian Thrushes were reported during the 2001/02 survey period, either in formal surveys or by recreational bird watchers. In previous years there have been several reported sighting of Bassian Thrushes. Unfortunately none were observed during the Bushcheck bird surveys. The data could indicate that their niche competitor, Blackbirds, are now moving in and are pushing these thrushes out.
- One year's data is not enough to draw firm

conclusions, but these bird records seem disappointing when the quality of this habitat is taken into account.

Additional comments by the observers:

- Lower species and overall bird numbers were recorded for Hender Reserve than for each of the three years of the similar survey in Woorabinda (in which the Hender observers participated). The more diverse habitat covered by the 16 segments within Woorabinda may have contributed to this result. Additional species recorded in Woorabinda included a number of water birds and birds associated with open areas.
- The three most frequently observed species in Hender were the same as in Woorabinda.
- The next most frequently observed species in Woorabinda (Magpies and Red Wattlebirds) were mainly observed in segments close to a house where they were fed daily. In Hender Reserve these species were relatively uncommon.
- In addition to the Bassian Thrush, referred to in Rob's report, the Scarlet Robin was not recorded within the survey area, although the species has been observed in the area in the past.
- We are now well into the second year of the survey and are keen to continue the survey as this should provide more reliable data.

Editor's note:

This survey is indebted to Friends Philip and Anne Hicks who provided all the monitoring data. For further information about the survey, contact Rob Tanner, Bushcheck, 19 Aldgate Tce, Bridgewater Park SA 5155.



DGR status for FOSLP

It's official. We have been notified by Environment Australia that Friends of Stirling Linear Park Inc. was entered into the Register of Environmental Organisations on 14 June 2002. This entitles us to received tax deductible donations from that date. Donations of \$2.00 and over are tax deductible.

The application process has taken about a year from the time we circularised members to vote on the necessary amendments to our Constitution. But now, finally, we have the same status, tax-wise, as any other registered non-profit organisation. All donations (not membership fees) are tax deductible. This will increase our attractiveness to philanthropic organisations and other NGOs when we approach them with grant funding applications.

Despair at cottage disrepair

Sometimes we wonder just how serious the AHC is about looking after its assets. The Woorabinda cottage has been empty and neglected for at least two years. The roof is leaking and on several occasions the premises have been vandalised. At least six of these attacks involved forced entry. More recently an intruder used the stove and kitchen to prepare a dubious smorgasbord of Park fungi. The remains of the meal had been abandoned, perhaps indicating that the interloper had hastily decamped to seek medical attention.

After this incident, we realised that some measure of deterrence was urgently required, and with AHC approval we secured the windows and doors with screws.

The Woorabinda Working Party, set up to implement the recommendations of the May 2001 Master Plan for Woorabinda, recommended that the cottage refurbishment, although forming part of Stage 3 of the Plan, should proceed without delay. It was felt that the cost could be easily met with a loan,

with the interest and principal being repaid over eight to ten years from rental receipts. Thus there would be no demand on Council to open its purse-strings.

This eminently feasible notion seems to have fallen by the wayside. We have long advocated that a suitable tenant, ideally a Council employee with inspector authority, could lease the cottage at a reduced rent and act as de facto caretaker for the Park and buildings. This would solve several problems. The refurbished cottage would have a tenant in residence to keep an eye on the Park. It would help to solve our vandalism problem and perhaps encourage Park users to have more respect for the by-laws.

In the meantime, it would be useful if nearby residents could voice their concerns to Council over this issue. Derelict property only invites vandals into their neighbourhood — reducing over time the quality of their locality and its desirability as a good place to live.

Working bee reminders



To those members who dismiss our working bee notices as just more annoying junk mail stuffed into the letter box, we apologise for the intrusion.

The fact is, we're worried about the

reducing numbers of volunteers willing to spend a couple of hours each month helping to look after their park. A few years ago, we could count on perhaps ten or a dozen, but these days the group has dwindled to five or six dedicated regulars.

There's probably a number of reasons — near the top of the list would have to be family commitments along with the relentless demands of modern living. Then of course there is the weather at this time of the year. Splashing about in a winter-wet bush, pulling soggy weeds with the rain dripping down your neck, is not everyone's idea of a fun time.

But we thought that another reason for our falling numbers of working bee participants was their

not knowing about the event. Maybe the schedule was missing from its rightful place on the fridge door. Perchance it had been covered over with footy stickers, grandma's heritage cake recipe and the excessively large magnetised notice advertising Fred Nerk's 24-hour plumbing service.

So we decided to send out a gentle reminder each month. We thought it might help if we could be sure that everyone knew that a working bee was coming up and where it was to be held.

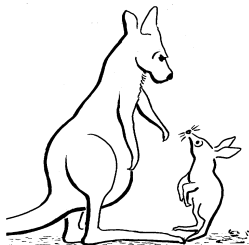
Our own lack of foresight may be another reason contributing to the reduced numbers of participants. When the schedule was originally drawn up, for simplicity we decided to keep the working bees to the same day on each month — the second Sunday. Unfortunately we did not allow for the alternative attractions that a public holiday weekend might bring. So it was not surprising that hardly anyone showed up for the May and June working bees as they fell on Mothers' Day and the Queen's Birthday respectively.

Next year's schedule will be a little different. We'll make sure that the working bees do not fall on a public holiday weekend.

Important notice

In our last newsletter we advised that the Trees for Life Bushcare Workshop on 14 September was free. Unfortunately TFL policy has changed and the charge is now \$68.

However, Adelaide Hills Council have agreed to pick up this cost for any FOSLP members who wish to attend. Please contact Glenn Williams, Natural Resources Officer, AHC. Ph. 8408 0400.



Feedback

Although we do our best to report accurately and fairly on Park matters, we know there are issues we may have missed.

This newsletter goes to some 150 Friends and similar interest groups. That's a wide enough readership to harbour a diversity of ideas and opinions.

Do you approve of the program of revegetation and regeneration going on the Park? Or do you have misgivings about the Park's management and its future directions?

Let us know what you think. Keep it brief and we'll gladly publish it in the newsletter. Post your comments to:

J. Benlow, PO box 1, Stirling 5152.
email: benlows@picknowl.com.au.

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.

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 2001/2002:

David Ragless (<i>Chair</i>).....	8339 1038
Bob James (<i>Dep. Chair, Working bees</i>).....	8339 1903
Shirley Benlow (<i>Secretary</i>).....	8339 2218
John Allison (<i>Treasurer</i>).....	8339 1577
Kathy Bowman (<i>Public Officer, Membership, website</i>).....	8370 9177
Reece Pedler (<i>Student representative</i>).....	8339 3658
Jack Benlow (<i>Newsletter</i>).....	8339 2218
Lorri Ragless (<i>OWN representative</i>).....	8339 1038
Philip Hicks.....	8339 3156
Alistair McHenry.....	8339 5114
Russell Seaman.....	8398 0626
Nick Stevens.....	8339 8643
Neil Strong.....	8339 4085
Glenn Williams (<i>AHC: Natural Resources</i>).....	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, Trees for Life and the Community Biodiversity Network.



Contributors to this issue include David Ragless, Russell Seaman, Philip Hicks 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.

\$..... donation is included. Donations of \$2.00 or more 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.....\$20.00

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