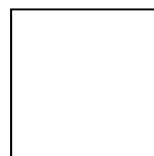




Friends of the Whyalla  
Conservation Park  
PO Box 805  
Whyalla SA 5600



## Committee Report

The last committee meeting was held on Thursday 29th November and the following things were discussed:

- Clint has prepared a native vegetation management plan for the Native Vegetation Authority so that the group can access the clearance offset funds from the CavPower site. The plan is currently with Ranger Michael Wigg for comment and alterations.
- It was noted that the group hasn't heard any of recent developments with the status of the proposed Mount Laura Conservation Reserve.
- Denise showed the group some name badges that John Smith from the Trophy Shop had produced for members of the Landcare group. They are significantly cheaper than the original proposal because the logo had been engraved at the same time as the name rather than being printed. It is unsure if John could engrave the more complex Friends logo.
- Clint and Ella gave a report on the visit to the Park by the partners of the attendees at the Surgeons Conference that was held in Whyalla recently. Clint and Ella led a guided walk over Wild Dog Hill. The organisers of the conference provided the group with a generous donation.
- The members who attended the November working bee reported on the clean up of the Lincoln Highway. The western side of the road was completed and enough rubbish to fill around a third of the trailer was collected. It was noted that there has been a significant reduction in the numbers of deposit drink containers collected since the expansion of the container deposit legislation, and the majority of the rubbish these days appears to be fast food packaging and cigarette butts and packaging.

- The committee discussed preparations for the December working bee and the Xmas BBQ.
- The committee briefly discussed the scheduled display in Westland Shopping Centre in February. Normally the event is used to publicise both the film night and the Native Plant Sale. The committee has previously decided that there will be no plant sale in 2008 due to the drought and water restrictions as we feel that we would not be able to sell enough plants.
- Preliminary preparations were discussed for the film night on Saturday 23rd February. A quick poll of attendees at the last film night indicated that discontinuing using 16mm film would not dissuade people from attending. It is getting difficult to continue to find appropriate films in this format and the next film night will use either video or DVD and a data projector.

## Contacts

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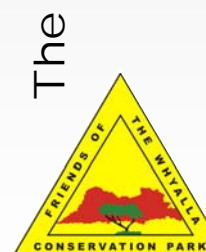
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Newsletter of the  
Friends Of Whyalla Conservation Park  
PO Box 805 WHYALLA SA 5600  
Web: [www.fwcp.org](http://www.fwcp.org)  
Volunteers Working For Conservation

# The Myall Post



December 2007



## President's Message

As I sit here writing this message, it is raining outside. The air smells wonderful as only rain on dry earth can scent the air in this way. However, I am not feeling cheerful about the rain. The small amount of rain that we have tonight will be evaporated away by the sun and wind tomorrow, and we will have gained little. In Whyalla our potential evaporation is about nine times more than our average rainfall. This is why we need a pipeline to link us to the River Murray.

BUT, there is not enough water in the river. About 75% of the water is extracted before the river reaches the sea. More than 70% of those extractions are for irrigated agriculture (see graph on page 3). Those farms have developed as a result of what I believe is poor government policy. Agricultural users have never been charged anything close to the real cost of providing the water which is used to grow their crops. Domestic consumers pay about \$ 1.00 per thousand litres or \$1,000.00 per megalitre. This compares with irrigation water prices of \$2.00 - \$20.00 per megalitre.

Underpricing the value of water in this way leads to inefficient use of the water. As a result the River Murray and its tributaries are vastly over-committed and cannot continue to sustain high levels of use. The

level of over-use has only really become apparent now that we have a drought. In a world where Climate Change is likely to reduce rainfall and snowfall in southern Australia, the situation is likely to get worse than better.

The upside of the low price of irrigation water has been that consumers have not paid the real price for the food which is produced from irrigated farms. If the River is going to be nursed back to health, then we should expect to pay more for our food.

You will have seen in the local paper that OneSteel is looking to reduce its water use. This is commendable, as the company is the largest single industrial user of water in the state. In 1997, they had engineers looking at how to use waste heat from the blast furnace to desalinate water. Now the company is looking at those ideas again. What a pity those who foresaw the water problem were not heeded then.

A few years later, some city councillors promoted the Solar Oasis project as a means of providing both power and water to the city. I wonder whether those who are in now charge of our water supply have a greater degree of vision and will adopt new technology to solve the water problems that we face. I DOUBT IT!

Clint Garrett



Ella Smith and Bev Dunham recently played host to a visit to our Park by some members of the Friends of Telowie Gorge Conservation Park. Here is the group on top of Wild Dog Hill.

## Important Dates

Make sure you put these upcoming dates in your diary:

**Working Bee**  
**Saturday 8th December @ 9:00am**  
 Wild Dog Hill

**Xmas BBQ**  
**Saturday 8th December @ 6:30pm**  
 71 Jenkins Ave

Committee Meeting  
 Sunday 27th January @ 1:00pm  
 267 Landrace Rd

**Working Bee**  
**Saturday 9th February @ 9:00am**  
 Wild Dog Hill

**Westland Display**  
**Friday 15th / Saturday 16th February**  
 Westland Shopping Centre Food Hall

**Film Night**  
**Saturday 23rd February**  
 Wild Dog Hill

## Park Roster

The following individuals or families have volunteered to empty the remaining bin, check the toilet, and check the Park on the weekend of:

**December 8th & 9th** - Dean

**December 15th & 16th** - Brougham

**December 22nd & 23rd** - Carter

**December 29th & 30th** - Garrett

**January 5th & 6th** - vacant

**January 12th & 13th** - Nield

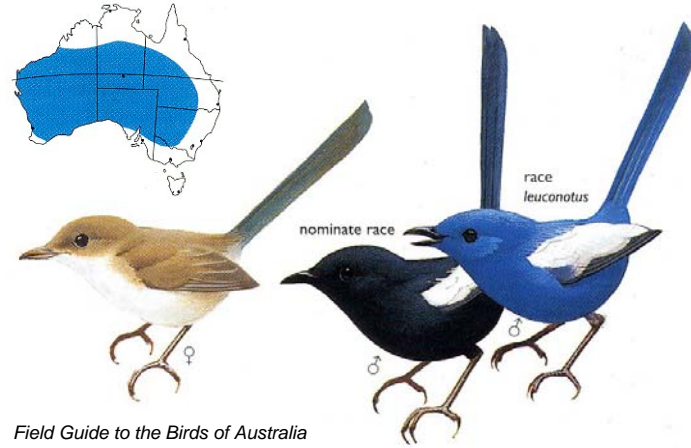
**January 19th & 20th** - vacant

**January 26th & 27th** - Garrett

Please remember to wear clothing which will identify you as a Friends member and NPWS volunteer if at all possible. **Don't forget to look out for syringes! Remember, if you are not a financial member, you are not insured and you should not be on this roster!**

If you would like to volunteer for the roster, please call Denise Sharp on 8645-4442

## Bird Of The Month



Field Guide to the Birds of Australia

### White-winged Fairy-wren

The White-winged Fairy-wren is a bird of Australia's arid regions. It is a tiny bird only 10-13 cm and keeping to low thick shrubs it can go unnoticed unless you are looking for it. Around Whyalla it is common, mostly keeping to areas of saltbush and bluebush and seems to be unwilling to venture close to houses. I suspect this is simply because our domestic gardens are not its preferred habitat.

They tend to be found in groups of 6-12 birds composed of one coloured bird - the breeding male, his mate, and their helpers. The breeding male is bright blue with white wings, the rest are all a quite dull brown-grey colour.

The group forage for insects preferably beetles and bugs among the bushes and on the ground. Breeding takes place in spring - summer with the nest being a small oval ball of grasses placed in a low bush. Being a small bird the 2-4 eggs take only about 13 days to hatch and the young fledge in only about 11 days. The helpers in the group are active in bringing food for the young, which is probably of assistance in assuring their survival and rapid growth.

Ella Smith

## Xmas BBQ

There are two Friends functions this Saturday, December 8th. The first is the December Working Bee. There are a variety of jobs that need completing, I'm sure that we can find something for everyone. As usual, meet at 9:00am at the Wild Dog Hill car park.

In the evening, the 2007 Xmas BBQ will be held at Clint and Marg's house at 71 Jenkins Ave at 6:30pm. As usual, the Friends group will provide the meat, condiments and some drinks, but you will need to bring a salad to share.

See you there!

## Stapelia gigantea

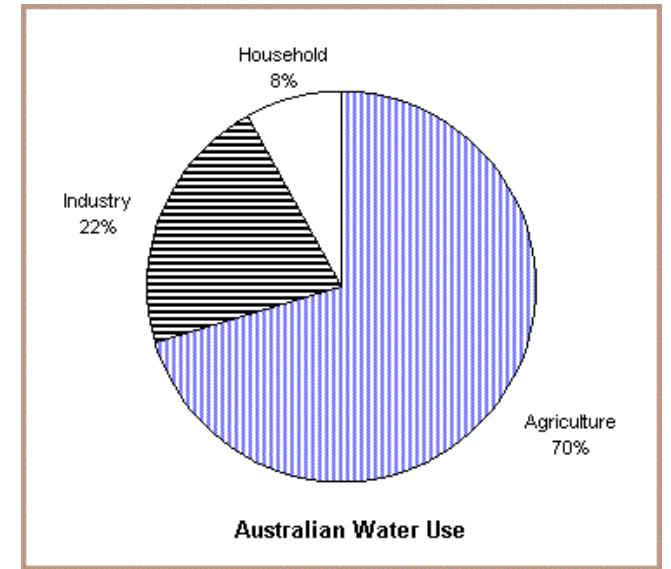
Member Yvonne Ward has found a new species of Stapelia in the Park as well as 2 other significant infestations of *Orbea variegata* (Carrion Flower). The new species is *Stapelia gigantea* - a much more robust species with "leaves" up to 30 cm tall. It was found 1 km from the Lincoln Highway entrance to the park about 30 metres from the roadway.

In the photograph (below, compared with *Orbea variegata*), you can see the seeds at the base of the plant. They have a hairy papus, but are quite heavy and could not easily be blown along in the wind. This plant almost certainly established from some rubbish that was a few metres away. The rubbish had been there so long that lichen had grown on it. This suggests that *S. gigantea* is unlikely to be a problem.

Fortunately there was only one plant, which I have dug out. It will go to the State Herbarium where it can join the only other record for SA - a specimen that I found on Rocky Hill.

The new locations for *Orbea* are approximately 300 metres NW of the *gigantea* and adjacent to the point where the more westerly powerline crosses our northern boundary. The second location is one of the biggest outbreaks that I have seen. It extends for about 300 X 500 metres. In some areas the infestation is very dense and well established as the host plants are long dead.

Clint Garrett.



Above: A graph depicting Australian water usage as referenced in the President's Message.

## Friends of Parks Inc

As you might be aware, the Friends of the Whyalla Conservation Park is a member of a larger organization, Friends of Parks Inc. FOP is an umbrella organisation for all South Australian Friends groups. Our membership provides benefits such as insurance and a lobbying voice.

Friends groups used to receive a quarterly newsletter called the Community Chain which was produced and distributed by what is now the Volunteer Support Unit of the Department of Environment and Heritage. As FOP moves towards greater independence from DEH, the VSU has ceased production of the Community Chain.

The replacement newsletter is not a printed newsletter, but an electronic one - posted on the FOP website. You can find the latest issue by typing the link below into your web browser:

<http://www.communitywebs.org/FriendsofParks/e-News/>

Towards the bottom of the e-News you will find a link that you can use to request that you be notified each time a new edition has been published.

If you enter in the following link:

<http://www.communitywebs.org/FriendsofParks/>

you will arrive at the FOP main website. Here you will find a listing of all Friends groups and links to the websites of those groups that have them, as well as information on available training and grants.