



Newsletter of the
 Friends Of Whyalla Conservation Park
 PO Box 805 WHYALLA SA 5600
 Volunteers Working For Conservation

The Myall Post



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President's Message

MARCH 2003



As I write this it is raining. Maybe the drought is breaking , 15mm in the last 3 hours so far. There are a lot of flying insects in the air. Their time has come, but as the rain eases off the birds will feast on them. If there is enough rain, seeds will sprout and dormant plants awake.

Hopefully it will save the remaining half of a grove of Native Apricots in the park that suffered badly in the drought and the dead looking Sida will turn into an ocean of green.

Weeds such as Three-cornered Jack, Saffron Thistle and Horehound will unfortunately also thrive and present an urgent eradication problem. The rabbits which have overrun the park again will thrive too. It is a pity they can't be persuaded to confine their foraging to eating the pest weeds. The very plants we wish to conserve seem to be their favourite foods.

The rain has slackened to a drizzle and dozens of Silver Gulls and Whiskered Terns have taken to the air to feed on the insect banquet. Just above the canopy of the large eucalypt outside is a seething spiraling countless mass of flying insects , so dense they are easily visible as a dancing brown cloud even against the gloomy grey background. The gulls are swooping in and out of the mass but doubtless quite enough will survive to perpetuate their niche in our biodiversity. A change of

FORTY AT FILM NIGHT

Forty people came to the **Poetry and Python in the Park** film night. Those present were entertained by local writers, Allan Nield, Brian Hubbert, Jean Oates and Gaynor Loxton.

The wet weather of the last week was enough to close the roads in the park. As a result, the film night was moved to the Edward John Eyre Hall, where we could be sure that we would be in shelter.

The greyness of the day (February 22nd) also did little to encourage people to go out to enjoy a night of film in the open.

The film **Back of Beyond** vividly showed the difficulties that travellers and station people had to endure along the Birdsville track. When John Heyer made the film 50 years ago, Birdsville was a tiny town of just 7 buildings. It was quite a contrast to the Birdsville of today.

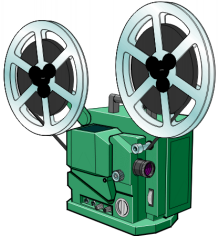
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Tom Kruse in his mail-truck driving over the dunes of the Birdsville Track. A scene from **"Back of Beyond"**

WORKING BEE KESAB ROAD WATCH PROJECT
SATURDAY MARCH 8TH
9.00 am AT HIGHWAY ENTRANCE





FILM NIGHT

Continued from pg 1.

The Monty Python sketches still cause people to laugh. The warped wit of John Cleese and Co, even had some of the youngest members of our audience laughing loudly.

Clint wishes to thank Alvin and Lance for creating the large screen that we used. Denise Sharp, David Poyner, John Carter, Margaret Garrett and Pam Charlesworth, for their part in making the evening a success.

Clint said, "Events such as the film night allow the group to make contact with the wider public and provide a way of recruiting. The real danger for any group such as ours is that without new members, the old hands become worn out." " There is also a need for the group to have some fun events that bring members together - all work and no play does not make people more productive."

From the Committee

At the February 27th meeting, the committee reviewed the 30th January film night. It was felt that the general meeting section needed to be shorter. We also reviewed the film evening. It was felt that many more people would have been present if the weather had been kinder.

An invitation to the next committee meeting will be issued to our Ranger, Shirley Meyer.

Arrangements were finalised for the Plant Sale.

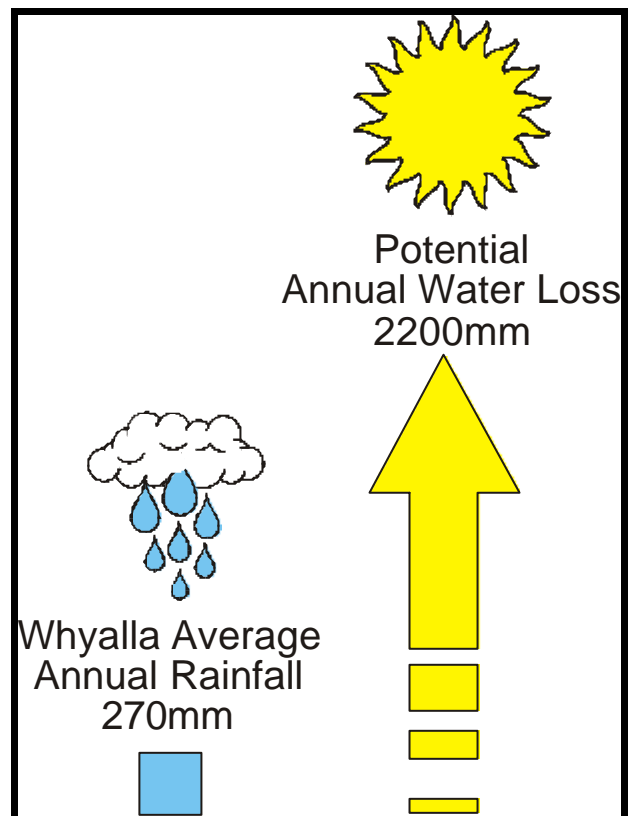
Initial preparations were made for the Mother's day walk. This will be at Cheeseboard hill. Further details in the next newsletter.

RAIN THE GIFT OF LIFE

Did you know that potentially there could be 2200 mm of water loss each year in Whyalla. We do lose that much from the sea, as the supply there is very large. But here on land, all that can be evaporated is the rain and or the water we put on our gardens etc.

We need to supply an average of about 7 mm of water per day just to keep up with potential evaporation. Averages are misleading as we actually need to supply much more than this in the heat of summer and less in winter.

This large water deficit is the reason that the plants and animals of our park are so drought adapted.



The 60 mm of rain that was recorded in the park recently has already begun the germination of many plants. We hope for a follow-up rain to ensure their survival.

There was little damage to the roads as the rain was so steady. Sadly, there was no run off into the dam in spite of the amount that we received.



ROAD WATCH

March 8th 9.00

The Friends group is part of the Statewide Road Watch program which is run by KESAB and Transport SA.

You will have noticed that there are blue signs on the Lincoln Highway telling the public that we care for the roadside adjacent to the Conservation Park.

We will cleanup the roadside to the north of the Park Gate on Saturday 8th March. This should be easier than the section that we cleaned in November, as the area that we will work on has been cleaned each year for the last 3 years.

Meet at the Park Gate at 9.00 am. We should finish and have morning tea around 11.00 am. Wear light coloured clothes and bring gloves.



Our Friends Group as seen on the KESAB Road Watch Website

FRIENDS GREEN WHYALLA

On the 3rd Saturday in March each year, the Friends group has its annual plant sale. Over the years that this has been running, we have added at least 15,000 trees and shrubs to the landscape of Whyalla. We have had a significant effect on the greening of our city.

The plants are looking very healthy and thanks to Ella, David and Denise, they have survived the heat-waves of January and early February. We will again have a wide selection of drought tolerant plants for the public to choose from.

There are three major working bees needed to complete the preparations for the Plant Sale.

Cutting up of the plant labels – 5 PEOPLE NEEDED at David and Denise's on Tuesday March 18th at 7.30 pm. Bring sharp scissors and a hole punch if you have one.

Plant packing night on the Friday evening prior to the sale. There will be nearly 1300 plants to be labelled correctly and packed onto trailer for transport to the sale. Many hands make light work of this challenge. **This is your only chance to buy plants before the sale.**

On the morning of the sale the plants need to be unpacked and set out ready



PLANT SALE 2003
Label Cutting
Tuesday March 18th 7.30 pm
Packing session
Friday March 21st 6.30 pm.

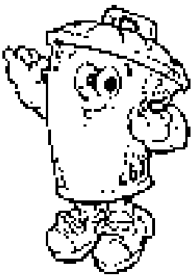
PLANT SALE
Saturday March 22nd
Sales begin at 8.30 am

Mailing Label

HAPPY BIRTHDAY PAM!



BIN



ROSTER

On weekends, members of the Friends group volunteer to visit the park and record any offences, as well as checking the toilet and emptying the bins.

If you wish to be a roster volunteer, please let Denise Sharp know .

This months volunteers are:

- 1st –2nd March – Nields
- 8th – 9th March - Carters
- 15th-16th March – Poyner/Sharp/Smith
- 22-23rd March – Garretts
- 29th 30th March – Deans

CALENDAR

March 8th	Road Watch
March 18th	Label Cutting
March 21st	Plant packing
March 22nd	Plant Sale
March 27th	Committee Meeting

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