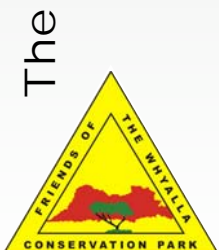




News letter of the  
Friends Of Whyalla Conservation Park  
PO Box 805 WHYALLA SA 5600  
Web: [www.fwcp.org](http://www.fwcp.org)  
Volunteers Working For Conservation

# The Myall Post



March 2007



## President's Message

Recently I had a graphic demonstration of the importance of conservation areas such as our park. I was flying to Port Augusta and was able to see the contrast between the park and the surrounding grazed properties. The difference was enormous – the amount of bare ground visible on the grazed land was much greater than the relatively small amount of bare ground within the park.

Does this mean that our neighbouring pastoralists are thrashing the land beyond its capacity to regenerate? I doubt it. It is sheep doing what they do, in order to survive. They eat almost everything which is soft and succulent and leave most of the woody plants untouched. As soon as any sheep or any other herbivore is introduced into the system, the level of grazing pressure is greater than the natural situation.

Within the park, we have increased grazing pressure due to the activities of rabbits. Calici virus has certainly had an effect on their numbers, but recent observations would suggest that rabbits are on the increase again. The recent rains will help

this by providing the green feed which promotes breeding. The generally accepted figure is that the grazing of 6 rabbits is equal to that of one sheep.

We may have an opportunity to have the warrens in the southern section of the park mapped and destroyed in late April/early May. There is money available, from vegetation clearance payments made by a number of local organisations. The tricky bit is to find which department is sitting on it.

If this work is able to be carried out, there will be several bonuses for the park. We will have reduced rabbit numbers, which may even allow some Myall regeneration. We will have a GPS based map, which will allow us to find and check warrens to see if they have been re-opened. The map will also show the locations of Carrion Flower and Boxthorn. Knowing accurately the locations of these weeds will assist in their control.

I just hope that the money can be found in time.

Clint Garrett



*There was a good turnout for the Film Night on Saturday February 24th. Approximately 80 - 90 people attended and were treated to an outstanding sunset while waiting for the films to start. A big thank you to all the members who helped set up and who provided such a wonderful supper - which everyone thoroughly enjoyed.*

# Important Dates

Make sure you put these upcoming dates in your diary:

**Display / Plant Sale Advertising**  
**Friday 9th March - Saturday 10th March**  
**Westland Shopping Centre**

Committee Meeting  
Thursday 15th March @ 7:30pm  
267 Landrace Rd

**Plant Label Cutting**  
**Tuesday 20th March @ 7:00pm**  
**267 Landrace Rd**

**Plant Labelling & Packing**  
**Friday 23rd March @ 6:00pm**  
**267 Landrace Rd**

**Plant Sale**  
**Saturday 24th March @ 6:00am**  
**Corner Hincks & Nicolson Avenues**

**Working Bee**  
**Saturday 14th April @ 9:00am**  
**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:

**March 10th & 11th - Dean**

**March 17th & 18th - Garrett**

**March 24th & 25th - vacant**

**March 31st & April 1st - vacant**

**April 7th & 8th - Waters**

**April 14th & 15th - vacant**

**April 21st & 22nd - vacant**

**April 28th & 29th - vacant**

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*



## Crested Bellbird

The Crested Bellbird is widespread across Australia's arid zone, living in lightly wooded habitat such as the Whyalla Conservation Park.

It is about the same size as a Common Starling. A mostly grey-brown bird, it is more easily heard than seen, as the male uses his very distinctive call to advertise the pair's territory. When he rises to the top of trees and bushes to sing it is the best opportunity to see the bird. The general drabness of plumage is alleviated in the male with a white face and throat, black chest, and a black erectile crest.

The Bellbird forages on the ground seeking out food mostly under shrubbery. Its diet consists mostly of insects and other invertebrates and a few seeds. They are particularly fond of caterpillars.

Like many of our birds they will usually breed in spring but heavy rain can trigger breeding at other times. The cup shaped nest usually placed in a tree fork is made of twigs and lined with grasses and fine bark strips. The 3 or 4 light coloured eggs are blotched with various darker colours and take approximately 2 weeks to hatch and a further 2 weeks for fledging.

Ella Smith

# April Working Bee

The last Myall Post published a photo of the damage to the Walking Trail at Wild Dog Hill. This is the second time that the surface of the trail has been washed away - the first time was after the rain that filled the dam in 1995.

The April Working Bee (April 14th) will be mainly concerned with putting back some gravel over those sections that have been washed bare.

Please bring along your wheelbarrow (if possible) and your shovel to complement the Friends equipment. The more people we get to help, the quicker the trail will be back to normal.

# 2007 Plant Sale

It's that time of year again - time for our annual Native Plant Sale (after a rest in 2006!). The 2007 Native Plant Sale will be held on Saturday March 24th at 8:30am on the corner of Hincks and Nicolson Avenues.

There will be over 1,200 plants from over 90 different species on sale this year for \$4.00 per plant. The full list can be downloaded from the Friends website at [www.fwcp.org](http://www.fwcp.org).

This is one of those events where we ask for help from all our members that can spare some time. There is a lot to do, so here is the list of preparations that are required prior to, and on, the day.

**Label cutting.** This will occur on Tuesday 20th March at 7:00pm at David & Denise's house at 267 Landrace Rd. The labels for the plants are printed on A4 sheets and need guillotining, holes punched in them and then sorted. This normally takes approximately two hours and around 6 - 8 people are needed for this job.

**Plant labeling and packing.** This occurs on the evening prior to the sale, Friday 23rd March at 6:00pm. The plants need to be picked up in species order, counted, labeled, and packed onto trailers. This normally takes 3-4 hours and at least 14 people are required for this job to go smoothly.

**Unpacking and sale day.** Unpacking the trailers begins around 6:00am on Saturday March 24th. The plants need to be unloaded in species order and placed in rows on the ground. The cash points need to be set up and a fence around the site erected. Once the sale begins at 8:30am, we will need people to sell the plants, help pack boxes or bags, and assist the public. If there are any plants left at around 11:30am, these will need to be repacked into trailers and everything packed away. At least 12 people are required to achieve all of this.

Posters advertising the sale are included with this newsletter. If you can, can you place these posters up in your workplace or some other prominent location. Don't forget to take them down after the sale however!



Potting on in January. Photo: Hector Kavanagh

# A New Weed



## Coast Cholla

*Cylindropuntia prolifera*

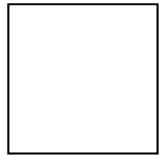
This cactus is a native of the southern coastal region of California and the Baja California of Mexico. Those locations have a climate very similar to that of Whyalla.

*C. prolifera* is a declared noxious weed in New South Wales having first been found at Lightning Ridge in 2003 and later at Bourke. It would appear that this is the first record for South Australia. Clint found the Coast Cholla on the large vacant allotment which lies between McBryde Terrace and Charles Avenue. It is probable that it was dumped with garden rubbish and has now established itself in the bush and is doing very well. The land is in the process of being sold at this stage. Its new owners will have this and a range of other weed problems to deal with.

At Bourke, the local weeds officer found 6,299 plants spread over 1850 hectares. It took him 4 days to spray them. We are fortunate that the area infested here is only a matter of a few hundred square metres.

The plants have 2cm long spines, which are barbed. The leaf segments break off easily as the barbed spines attach themselves to anything that brushes by them. At the base of the spines are a ring of fine brown coloured hairs (glochids). These small hairs are also barbed as can be seen in the magnified view from [www.cactus-art.biz](http://www.cactus-art.biz). The glochids get into your skin and very irritating. If you cannot get them out, you end up with something that resembles an infected mosquito bite. My preferred method of removal is to apply sticky tape to them and lift them out that way. Glochids are generally too fine to be grasped with tweezers.

Have you seen any other cacti similar to this in the local bush? If you have, please let Clint know of the location (s). He has multiple records for Prickly Pear and Devil's Rope and would like to eradicate as many cacti as possible before they reach the point where they cannot be easily controlled.



## Committee Report

At the last committee meeting on Thursday, 15 February, the following matters were discussed:

- It was reported that following the recent inspection of the Park by Michael Wigg, Senior Ranger with Clinton & Lance to assess the damage done to the main track by irresponsible 4WD owners after the heavy rains. Michael is to make arrangements for quotes to be obtained for repair works and get back to the group with details of when this work can be completed.
- Clinton reported that he has been liaising with Peter Baker from Baker's Vertebrate Pest Control regarding rabbit warren destruction work and a quote for \$20,000 has been provided to carry out said works during April & May. Clint to discuss further with DEH re level of priority and accessing of funds to complete works. Clinton outlined some of Peter's previous works in the Flinders & Gawler Ranges National Parks. The \$20,000 price tag breaks down to approx 24 days work @ \$1,000 per day or \$55.00 per hr and is not seen to be an unreasonable amount of money for this type of work. Work done by Peter also includes spotlighting and shooting after main explosion work of warrens has been completed.
- A report was provided on the February working bee which focused on weed control and roll out of Metserv fines in and around picnic table area. The number of volunteers totalled 4. Further discussions need to be held about how to get more people out to the working bees. The next working bee in April will require a large number of volunteers to carry out some major repair works to the walking trail damaged from recent rains.
- Preparations for the Film Night on 24 February were made including catering, packing of trailer, parking on the night and collection of donations. It was noted that at previous events a small number of people have failed to pay their donation for supper which is disappointing as it ends up be a very cheap night's entertainment for any family.

- Preparations were discussed for the up and coming Westland Display on Friday, 9 & Saturday, 10 March. The key themes being advertisement of Plant Sale on 24 March, weed identification and control (3 main ones: Carrion Flower, Caltrop & Onion Weed), call for volunteers for April working bee and repair of walking trail, raffle with a gardening theme.
- Finally a discussion was held regarding memberships and the concern over the shrinking number of people who are actually paid members. One of the main issues being that if people are not paid up they are not covered by insurance for any accidents at working bees, the other key issue being that it costs on average \$14.00 per person per year to have the newsletter printed and posted. For each newsletter we send out to a non paying recipient it costs the group this amount. It was agreed that Denise & David will compile a letter and send out to those who have been receiving a free newsletter for a while (not including life members) and see if we can change the balance.

## Contacts

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