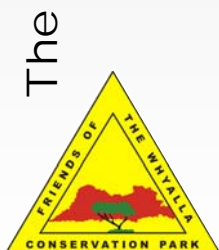




Newsletter of the
Friends Of Whyalla Conservation Park
PO Box 805 WHYALLA SA 5600
Web: www.fwcp.org
Volunteers Working For Conservation

The Myall Post



October 2006



President's Message

There is good news and bad news. First the good news – four items of it!

Denise Sharp will receive an award at the Friends of Parks Forum in October for her excellent work as the group's secretary for the last 9 years. She has continued to help the group since the birth of Hayden, and does both the correspondence and minutes. I appreciate her organisation skills and her ability to make use of her contacts in conservation for the benefit of the group. The food that she has supplied for working bees, community events and committee meetings has been greatly enjoyed!

Our newsletter, the Myall Post, has been selected as the Best Friends newsletter for 2006. This is the second time that we have received this award and is a tribute to the layout skills and work of David Poyner, who has been the editor on both of these occasions.

The group will receive an Appreciation Certificate for "Film Nights under the Stars". There is no doubt that our film nights give a lot of people an enjoyable evening, even if the projector and sound system don't always behave themselves.

Marg and I will receive "The Best Friends of Parks Award", in recognition of our 19 years of active commitment to the Whyalla Conservation Park.

It is no stroke of luck that our group can achieve so well. It is a reflection of the hard work of members that we have consistently gained awards and achieved so much in our park even though there are many other friends groups in the state that are much larger than our group.

Significantly, we have been able to do this at a time when support from NPWS staff is decreasing, because there are just too few staff trying to cover the area.

Now the bad news.

Sadly the most recent State budget is likely to make life for NPWS staff and us even more difficult, as more than \$20 million has been taken away from the Department of Environment budget.

Also on the bad news front is the most recent vandalism in the park. This time, there was an attempt to burn the toilet down. Fortunately the design of the toilet meant that there was little that was flammable and that damage was largely limited to smoke damage.

I look forward to seeing many of you when we build the new trail-head shelter at Wild dog Hill on the 28th of October

Clint Garrett



You have to wonder sometimes just what are some people thinking?

Important Dates

The 2006/07 calendar should have been with this copy of the Myall Post. Make sure you put these upcoming dates in your diary:

Committee Meeting
Thursday 26th October @ 7:30pm
267 Landrace Rd

Working Bee
Saturday 28th (& 29th October?) @ 9:00am
Wild Dog Hill
Walking Trail Header erection

Working Bee
Saturday 11th November @ 9:00am
267 Landrace Rd
Erection of new plant shade structure

Committee Meeting
Thursday 23rd November @ 7:30pm
267 Landrace Rd

Working Bee
Saturday 9th December @ 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:

October 21st & 22nd - Carter

October 28th & 29th - Garrett

November 4th & 5th - Hughes / Hollingworth

November 11th & 12th - Nield

November 18th & 19th - ring now, this could be yours!

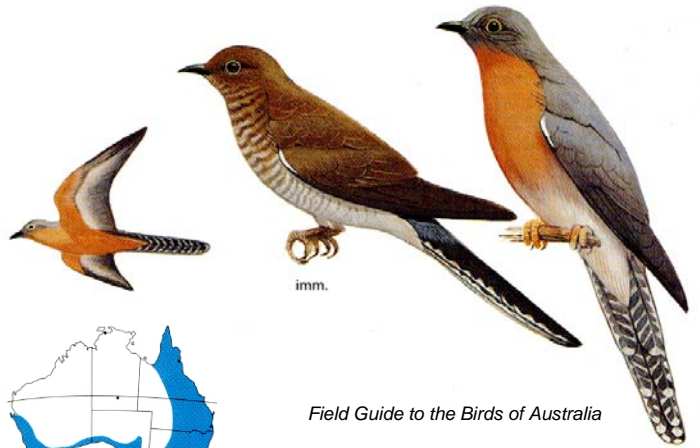
November 25th & 26th - Hughes / Hollingworth

December 2nd & 3rd - Hughes / Hollingworth

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



Fan-tailed Cuckoo

This is the second largest cuckoo to be found in South Australia. It can be found in a relatively coastal strip stretching from Cape York to the SW corner of Western Australia. Also found in Tasmania. Generally considered to be a common bird throughout its range, it is partly migratory, and favours more heavily wooded areas than Whyalla. It is usually found singly and it seems to be only an occasional visitor to our area. My records suggest that the most likely time to see it in Whyalla is in winter.

The plumage is mid-grey above, and cinnamon underneath with the tail feathers grey barred with white. They adopt a perch and pounce approach to capture their food, which consists of caterpillars, moths, beetles and other insects.

About 50 species of birds have been recorded as acting as host to the parasitic breeding habit of this cuckoo. Most often they use various species of thornbills and wrens as hosts. Breeding season varies with availability of suitable nesting hosts but is most common in late winter and spring. One egg is laid in the host nest, and the hatchling will eject any eggs and young belonging to the foster parents, who then find themselves working very hard to feed the interloper that will grow to be much larger than them.

Ella Smith

Working Bees

The next two working bees involve the erection of two different, but important structures.

On Saturday the 28th October, the new trail-head sign shelter will be erected near the picnic tables at the start of the walking trail. On Saturday 11th November, a shade structure needs to be built to shelter the plants for next year's sale - the last one blew down!

Both of these structures are important and it would be greatly appreciated if there was as many members present to lend a hand as possible!

Green Bulldozers

If somebody was to drive a bulldozer through large sections of the local landscape and thereby completely change it, I have no doubt that many people would take notice and act to prevent this damage from continuing.

There are bulldozers currently destroying our local vegetation. Those bulldozers are called weeds. Their effect is less dramatic than a mechanical bulldozer, however, the end result is much the same.

There are five weed species that are of concern.

1. Carrion Flower
2. Fountain Grass
3. Gazania sp – A South African daisy currently in full flower
4. Maleophora lutea (A South African Iceplant)
5. Prickly Pear (and related cacti)

Let's take these 5 species in turn.

Carrion Flower – *Orbea variegata*.

There are large areas of this species on land under the control of Council and adjacent to the Whyalla Conservation Park. They effectively kill Salt-bush and Blue-bush plants by taking up a lot of soil moisture.

Fountain Grass - *Pennisetum sp*

The population of this species is increasing rapidly on Hummock Hill, on OneSteel land adjacent to the railway and on Transport SA land adjacent to the Playford Avenue Bridge. They crowd out native species.

Gazania sp.

These are grown by residents and Council because they are both pretty and hardy. There is little problem when Gazanias are grown away from native bush-land. However, because they are a daisy, they have light wind-blown seeds that can invade bush-land.

Gazanias are now a major pest species in the Murray Mallee and on lower Eyre Peninsula. We do not need another pest plant species here, no matter how pretty.

Maleophora lutea

If you see a plant that looks like a pigface (*Carpobrotus sp*) but has yellow, orange or red flowers and more slender foliage, the chances are that you are looking at a Maleophora. You can see plenty of it on Mullaquana Road. They crowd out local species and absorb a lot of soil moisture.

Pickly Pear (*Opuntia Sp*)

These hardy and spiny pests are likely to be one of the species to benefit from a drought as they are very well adapted to dryness. At the moment they are relatively few and widely spread mainly north of Mt Laura. There are also several different species which are now colonizing the old Iron Baron townsite.

Weeds are self reproducing bulldozers. They start out at low numbers, multiply themselves and overwhelm native species. Weeds cost Australian agriculture \$4 billion per

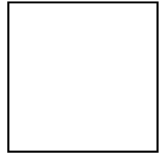
year. There is no figure for the amount of environmental damage that they do.

You can help reduce the impact of weeds in several ways:

1. Don't grow them as garden plants.
2. Report their location to City Council
3. Adopt an area of land and remove the weeds from it.

Clint Garrett





Meeting Reports

At the committee meetings held on Thursday 31st August and Thursday 28th September 2006, the following items were discussed:

- The committee discussed the AGM. Everyone thought that Greg Johnson's presentation was extremely good. The venue was also thought to be good. Several of the committee members were disappointed at the relatively few members of the general public that turned up to hear Greg speak despite repeated (expensive) advertising.
- A donation of \$50 and letter of apology was received from the proprietor of an Adelaide air-conditioning firm after Clint found packaging materials bearing identification dumped in the Park and handed them over to NPWS. The person maintained in his letter that he had correctly disposed of the packaging but that he thought that one of his competitors must have removed the packaging and placed it in the Park to ruin his reputation.
- Several committee members got together at Clint's place on Saturday 17th September to put together the 2006/07 calendar. The calendar includes a film night in February, a display in Westland Shopping Centre, preparations for the Plant Sale, a Mother's Day walk in the Park and a trip to Dutchman's Stern Conservation Park (lets see if we can get there this time!)
- Clint has been busy with striking the cuttings and planting seeds for approximately 50% of the plants for next year's sale. The other 50% of the plants have been ordered as tube stock. Most of these plants will be potted on to the final pots on the 13th January. Clint has since collected the soil that will be required for the potting from Adelaide.

- The committee has been looking at specialist chemical storage cabinets to store pesticides and herbicides in at the Tanderra shed, however these seem to be extremely expensive and we probably won't be purchasing one. The question as to whether we required one arose after the break-in at the shed and while the pesticides were in a locked toolbox, our pesticides and herbicides were not in a single defined area.
- The Community Liaison Unit requested that all groups confirm their contact email addresses and the URL of their website (if they have one). These were used to update the Friends of Parks website which was "re-launched" on the 8th of October. It can be found at <http://www.communitywebs.org/FriendsofParks/>
- There was general discussion on how best to use the OneSteel funds for spraying weeds and controlling rabbits and what assistance NPWS could offer.

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