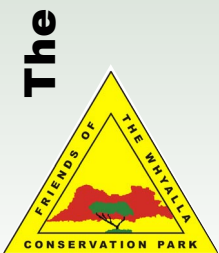




Newsletter of the
 Friends Of Whyalla Conservation Park
 PO Box 805 WHYALLA SA 5600
 Volunteers Working For Conservation

The Myall Post



Volume 14 No 2
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President's Message

Okay, winter is with us, and not being very cold tolerant I for one would like to hibernate. At last however we have good rains, the vegetation in the park will now improve immensely and there is finally water in the dam again. The downside of the rain is further damage to the tracks in the Park, and to prevent this from becoming too bad it has been necessary to temporarily close the Park for some days following the heaviest downpours. Nonetheless this spring should find vegetation and animals return to a state more enjoyable for visitors.

With the AGM nearly upon us, where has the year gone? Thank you to all who have taken part in the various activities throughout the year. Mostly it has been work, and perhaps not as much social pleasure as we might have wished. A busy schedule for many members and a very long hot summer contributing to this.

We have a special guest for the AGM, Nick Bailey the Parks & Wildlife Service Compliance Officer from Pt Augusta. Nick is bound to be both informative and interesting and should give us all valuable insights into a very necessary part of the Parks & Wildlife Service work that we normally would not have much to do with.

So come along to the AGM, and bring a friend, or two, or three. With the Park doubling in size we need more volunteers to share the load, and to enable the hardworking current members to both share their knowledge and experience, and hopefully avoid burnout.

We are currently in a catch 22 situation. We probably need a wider range of activities with more social content to attract more members, however it is difficult to enable this to happen without having more members. See you at the AGM.

Ella Smith

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Members fill a hole in the road to Wild Dog Hill with limestone rubble. From left: John Carter, Lance Dean, Denise Sharp (obscured) and Ella Smith.

Important Dates

Make sure that these dates are entered into your diary!

Thursday 28th June
7:30pm
Middleback Theatre Green Room
Annual General Meeting
Guest Speaker: Nick Bailey

Thursday 26th July
7:30pm
267 Landrace Rd?
Committee Meeting

Friday 17th August – Sunday 19th August
Jubilee Park
Whyalla Show

Friday 24th August – Sunday 26th August
Ceduna
2001 Annual Friends of Parks Forum

Bin Roster

The following individuals or families have volunteered to empty the bins and check the Park on the weekends beginning:

Friday 22nd June – Dean

Friday 29th June – Scottney Turbill / Harvey

Friday 6th July – Poyner / Sharp

Friday 13th July – Hughes / Hollingworth

Friday 20th July –

Friday 27th July –

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!**

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

2001 AGM

The Friends' 2001 Annual General Meeting will be held on

Thursday, 28th June 2001
at 7.30pm
in the
Green Room, Middleback Theatre
Nicolson Ave, Whyalla Norrie
(Enter via the stage door entry at front of the building accessible from the new road off Nicolson Ave)

Come along and hear our guest speaker; Mr Nick Bailey, DEH (NPWSA) talk about some of the issues facing National Parks SA.

The evening will also include the election of the 2001/02 committee

A light supper will be served following the meeting. Tea and coffee will be supplied, members are encouraged to bring nibbles to share as part of this supper

If you have any queries please phone David Poyner or Denise Sharp on 8645 4442

Feb Working Bee

A very productive working bee was held on the 4th February. Six members worked at the car park area, the dam, the front gate and the speedway entrance.

Jobs that were completed were as follows:

- The chain on the toilet door was fixed
- Arrows were put on the walking trail
- The walking trail was swept and generally tidied up
- Tree guards were taken off large Myalls
- Top grid rails were replaced
- Signs were painted at the dam, and the front gate
- Graffiti was painted over on the sign on the highway

If you want to join in the next working bee, then simply turn up at the time and date advertised at the Wild Dog Hill car park.

Pam Charlesworth

Volunteers Photo

The following is my personal recording of the 2001 Whyalla volunteers photo event, quickly written immediately afterward. Before launching into my impressions of the day I would like to pay tribute to two of our volunteers whose efforts were central to the result, Margaret Garrett for organising the volunteers photo and Clinton Garrett for stepping in and upwards as cameraman.

They came in a steady procession in the quarter hour before eleven. All shapes, all sizes, all colours, vehicles carrying people also of all varieties but with one thing in common, they were volunteers. They came for the great photo, the 2001 photo on the oval, the numbers formed by the people on a green oval of grass. Photographed by a man hoisted high above in a cherrypicker. With the aid of a microphone attached to his head he cajoled the assembled mass to form up the numbers well enough to fit into the size shot he needed to take.

Before the actual photo shoot the volunteers renewed acquaintances, first with others of their own particular volunteering kind forming into groups, and otherwise with other known people perhaps not seen for sometime and in different circumstances. It was a happy enthusiastic crowd of all ages variously garbed in their normal Sunday morning get out or the particular signature uniform of their group. Recognisable the crisp

black trousers and white shirts of the Ambos, the orange coveralls of the Emergency Service, the khaki of the Scouts, and the greens of the Environmental volunteers.

The sun shone obligingly in the blue sky fringed with fluffy grey-white clouds, barely moving, as the north-west just a breeze rippled the more flexible trees. Nonetheless there was a slight heaviness in the air, it was a little too warm for May and the just a breeze was coming from the wrong direction for this time of the year.

Up and up in the cherrypicker went the photographer, who before ascending admitted to not having done this before. Still, up he went watched by the crowd, and when at the zenith some among them wondered idly whether he had remembered to arm the camera with film-- it was a long way to come down again; and can he fit us all into the shot-- he needs a wide angle lens. But he must have satisfied those needs for after cajoling the crowd into the right positions it was done, pronounced over and successful. Hopefully the photo will come out well when processed.

Afterwards they drifted away to their cars, some quickly as they had only a limited time available, and other things to do, others more slowly as they socialised with as many people as they were able from among those they knew among the throng.

Ella Smith

2001 Plant Sale

The 2001 Friends' Australian Native Plant Sale on Saturday 17th March was an outstanding success.

Over 1,200 plants were sold, and the group only had to return with around 150 plants, compared with last year's approximately 500.

Many of the plants that did not sell were sold to the Sundowner Hotel and planted by a small group of Friends' members. The Sundowner Hotel paid for both the plants, and the labour for planting them.



Roadwatch

Twelve members of the Friends group participated in Clean Up Australia Day on Sunday 4th March 2001 by helping to clean up the Friends' Roadwatch area on the Port Augusta Road immediately outside of the Park.

Members cleaned up both sides of the road, a distance of approximately four kilometres. The participants collected rubbish that filled approximately one third of the Friends' trailer, with items including:

- Flavoured milk cartons
- Pieces of car and truck tyres
- Broken glass and bottles
- Plastic bags
- Take-away food wrappers

Given that the Park will double in size at some time in the near future, the committee has suggested that the Friends tackle future clean-ups in two parts – one half of the distance on one day, and the other half on another day.

2001 Friends Forum

The 2001 Friends of Parks Forum will be held in Ceduna from Friday 24th August to Sunday 26th August. (The weekend after the Whyalla Show)

The forum will be hosted by a consortium of groups, including:

- Friends of Far West Parks
- Friends of Streaky Bay District Parks
- Friends of Kimba District Parks
- Friends of Great Victoria Desert Parks

This forum should be a great opportunity to see some of the country and sights of the area, including whale watching at the head of the Great Australian Bight.

More information and registration forms can be obtained from Pam Smith at the Community Liaison Branch of Department of Environment & Heritage.

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or e-mail: smith.pamela@saugov.sa.gov.au

Bird Of The Month



Noisy Miner

I have chosen to highlight the Noisy Miner, not because it is a bird found in our park, although it's close relative the Yellow-throated Miner is, but because it's an example of the probable future of birds.

The environments available to various species of birds are changing. The degree and speed of those changes are largely due both directly and indirectly to human activity. Only those species that adapt well to these changes may survive. The Noisy miner is such a species.

Currently only as close as the Mid-North and the southern Flinders Ranges, in future it could well expand it's range as other species contract. It lives in colonies from a handful of birds up to several hundred, with the colonies further subdivided into smaller groups.

Adaptable and aggressive, not only individually but communally, they band together to mob any prey species entering their territory. Good social organisation and considerable cooperation is also evident in driving out of their territory other species who are no actual threat to them. Sharing of resources with other species is not tolerated, and they fully exploit food sources of nectar, fruit and insects from canopy to ground.

Taking whatever advantage possible they are prepared to breed at anytime of the year, although mostly in spring. Almost anything is used as nesting material. The cup shaped nest is usually basically of twigs and grasses and lined with fur, hair, wool, feathers, but anything to hand that will form the desired nest will do.

Two to four eggs form the clutch which takes an average of 16 days to hatch and the chicks a further two weeks to fledge.

Their other big advantage is that they seem not to be afraid of humans and like the alterations to the environment made by us.

Ella Smith

Committee Report

Due to the fact that it has been some time since the last newsletter we are unable to report on everything that has been discussed at the committee meetings that have been held. However, the following are some of the things that the committee has been dealing with.

- NDC is a company that lays cable for the major telecommunications companies. NDC recently approached Whyalla Council and NPWSA with several options for a proposal to underground an optic fibre cable through the park. Discussions between the committee and NPWSA resolved to support an option of the cable being layed along the eastern boundary (Pt Augusta Rd) and then along the new southern boundary (of the Park extensions). The advantages of this route would be that NDC would create a new access track along the length of the boundary at no cost to NPWSA if NDC agrees to this.
- The committee agreed that the Friends should continue to have a presence at the annual Whyalla Show by attending this year's show.
- Some members may recall that the group planted some native shrubs in front of our shed at Tanderra. Currently these plants are being watered by hand. The committee resolved to contact the Tanderra committee and investigate the laying of a water pipe to the area so that the plants can be watered using a dripper system and automatic timer.
- The committee discussed the current method of recording outstanding tasks and the method of ensuring the correct equipment was present at working bees, with the conclusion that it was less than ideal. A workbook has been purchased and outstanding tasks will be entered into it, along with a list of equipment required at the next working bee. The book will be taken to working bees.
- The committee is keen to get the results of the traffic counters in the Park charted. The information is recorded in the bin roster book every week, but has not yet been added to any kind of database.
- No additional information has been provided to the group regarding the extension to the Park and when it will be official. At this stage, we are possibly expecting it to be complete by July 2001.
- The Friends still have a concrete picnic table in storage at the site of our old shed in Services SA. The committee has decided to place this next to the first table on the left in the car-park at Wild Dog Hill. Installing the table site requires re-aligning some car-park barricades and many people to lift the table into place – it will be scheduled for a future working bee.

UniSA Student Visit

Around thirty students and five lecturers from the University of South Australia's Underdale campus visited the Park on Saturday May 20th.

The students were studying to be teachers and their visit to the Park was designed to give them an understanding of a natural ecosystem. The group was met in the Park by David Poyner and Denise Sharp who spent the morning with the group.

Firstly, the group spent around an hour in the area around the dam, investigating the vegetation. As it was the first time that most of the students had seen these kind of plants, David and Denise gave an overview of the more common species:

- Western Myall
- Sugarwood
- Black Oak
- Eremophila oppositifolia
- Eremophila alternifolia
- Eremophila scoparia
- Native Cherry
- Harlequin & Grey Mistletoe
- Quandong
- Bluebush
- Saltbush

The students then moved on to Wild Dog Hill where they split into three groups that rotated between three activities. David & Denise led each of the groups in turn up Wild Dog Hill and gave an explanation about the surroundings on the way up, and at the top.

The following day, the students met Clinton Garrett at a site in the Middleback Ranges where they looked at a different vegetation community (Mallee).

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