



Bandicoot Tails

Newsletter of the Friends of Scott Creek
Conservation Park

No. 184

September—November 2021

Website: www.friendsofscottcreekcp.org.au Facebook: www.facebook.com/friendsofscottcreekcp

Welcome to your spring edition of *Bandicoot Tails*.

Unless otherwise indicated, all articles and photos by Peter Watton. Please send any contributions for the summer edition to info@friendsofscottcreekcp.org.au by mid-November.

The President's words:

Since our last issue of *Bandicoot Tails*, I got to spend an extended time in Canberra and Melbourne to work around pandemic restrictions. It was a great opportunity to do some reading. I immersed myself in Gisela Kaplan's *Bird Minds*. A big take-away is that the term 'bird-brain' may now be taken as a compliment. It seems that although bird brains must be small to fit in a small head, they are more densely packed with brain cells than other animals. It can be reasonably assumed that birds know what they are doing when they return to their home patch after the effects of a bushfire.

It was a delight this month to be at Fox Bog and witness the melodious pair-selection that a group of about ten Grey Shrike-thrushes were engaged in. For over an hour they sang and flitted through blackened Stringybark trees competing for the right mate.

Signs of hope keep us coming back to special places. Whether it be the spread of the carefully placed tree guards along Dorset Vale Road signifying that desirable plants are emerging or the 'plants-that-belong' that are showing through blackened centres like Twisted Chimney Track – our Park is starting to re-generate. So much expert care is going in to weed out what does not belong.

Within the next quarter we hope that all the fences and gates will be installed, allowing for the eventual re-opening of the Eastern side. Please note that even then, this environment will still be vulnerable to human activity for some time. Even when keeping to the tracks, you will discover many delicate plants – especially native orchids at this time of year. So, look hard and tread light.

As you read this issue of 'Tails you will learn of the massive and continuing amount of work our volunteers are doing. There is always another place for anyone wanting to join our Friends group and lend a hand. Thank you so much to our old and new people who are all making a difference.

Jim Spiker, President FoSCCP

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Some Good News: Kat Hill Returns to Help FoSCCP:

We're delighted that Kat Hill, our former NRM Volunteer Support Officer, has been seconded back to help us out with bushcare management for about a day and a half a week for at least 6 months! This is such very welcome support with the many extra hours needed to manage the increase in contracted weed control through which we seek to maximise post-fire weed management. It is of additional help that this person could be Kat who, in her previous role, regularly contributed some funds and management towards SCCP's weed control. This means she could immediately and smoothly provide her skilled support again, which was of particular help to Peter who has put in an outstanding effort in this area. We're appreciative of the interest shown by DEW's senior staff: Chief Executive John Schutz, NPWS Executive Director Mike Williams and Stuart Paul, Director of Regional Operations who, we understand, effected Kat's secondment. Many thanks for making a special difference!



Update on Historic Mackereth Cottage:

FoSCCP appreciate the post-fire interest and concern shown about this 1839 State Heritage-listed building, including by the Minister for the Environment and Water David Speirs (who ensured this parcel of land was finally transferred into the park), and from the local community (some of whom attended childhood birthday parties there and, later, other activities when it was managed by the National Trust of South Australia).

As a result, the Friends recently initiated an interim informal Cottage "sub-committee" to facilitate discussion. Currently this involves Lindsay Carthew (a descendent of the Mackereth family, who is also a generous supporter of our bushcare efforts), John Parker (who leads the long-standing local community history group) and myself (I also live locally), plus our NPWS SA District Ranger Jen Pitman and the Park's Senior Ranger Brent Lores.

Jen Pitman has advised that, following a comprehensive detailed report, it is quite clear that the costs involved in full restoration of the Cottage is well beyond the Department's financial resources, but there is interest and approval to contribute a lesser amount towards its care. Future wider support towards this will be welcome.

The Immediate concerns are its structural stability and safety, plus attending to intruding tree roots and the regenerating creeper, so Jen is organising an expert assessment of the structure. Given the Cottage is in the burnt area, it is closed to the public, but our Senior Ranger will facilitate an on-site discussion and a weed management strategy will form part of this.

A tentative long-term vision for a practical, achievable outcome for the Cottage's locality is to develop it as a small historic precinct with some suitable signage, akin to the nearby Almanda Mine site, but focussed more on telling the earlier human story of these early settlers.



Above: Mackereth Cottage, photo by Tom Hands following the fire that burnt the cottage down in 2007.

Meanwhile, if you can contribute your interest and support (perhaps some helpful information?), you can email me via our info@friendsofscottcreekcp.org.au. We'll let you know when we are able to move forward to expand the

numbers in the our Cottage precinct interest group, perhaps holding a meeting about it, but I know you will understand that spring is likely to preoccupy us with very pressing fire ground weed management.

Jenny Dawes, FoSCCP Bushcare Co-ordinator & Administration Assistant

The below images were provided by photographer Andy Bennett, after hearing about the transfer of the land from SA Water to Scott Creek CP last year. The photos were taken in 1996, and Andy was saddened to hear the Cottage had been vandalised, and revisited it again. In addition to providing digital copies of these photos, Andy donated a framed enlargement of one of the photos for fundraising. As we move forward with our plans for the Cottage, we will work out how to make the most of this generous donation.



Hints of the Past Revealed:

Just over 12 months ago John Wamsley and his mid week team started weeding along the northern side of Scott Creek towards Mackereth Cottage from the intersection of Dorset Vale Road and Matthews Road.

One of the first tasks was to clear an old track which we believe would have been cut in to the hillside more than a century ago to give access to the Mackereth Cottage site. The area was covered in blackberry and the track is about 2-3 metres wide. In one section the excavation is at least 1.5 metres in height.

We were a bit overwhelmed by the size and extent of the gorse which was growing up to 3 metres tall beyond the track but with considerable effort it was chain sawed and piled into a row. We then assumed that in several years time it would break down and its bulk reduced.

Then the fire in January 2021 changed the whole landscape.

The blackberry and gorse disappeared and gave us the opportunity to stop these weeds returning and along with natural regeneration we could add plants native to the area.

The cleared landscape gave us a glimpse of past European structures and plantings. One of the first things we noticed was what appeared to be a fairly crude fire pit, about 1 metre square.



The fire pit is many metres from Mackereth Cottage and does not appear to have an obvious connection.

Just behind the fire pit there is a group of cherry plum trees and without the leaves it appears that they are all the same diameter and they are growing in a random manner suggesting they are suckers of one or more original trees.

Close to the fire pit there is a low pile of stones partly covered in soil and some of them are dressed, so we assumed it was a pile of stones gathered from the rock ledges above to be used in the construction of Mackereth Cottage.

That point of view changed when during winter, 3 clumps of bulbs appeared a short distance from the pile of stones and it made us question why garden plants were placed near a stone pile.

Then the thought occurred to us that we may be looking at the remains of an earlier building which has simply collapsed or a lot of the stones have been recycled elsewhere.

The 3 clumps represent 2 types of plants. One we cannot identify just yet and the second looked like daffodils and even though buds were present we had to wait and see. This week we were rewarded with some bright yellow daffodils with double flowers.



I think it is exciting to look at these flowers and reflect that someone may have planted them 150 years ago. Exotic bulbs are not uncommon in the Park, but mostly they are jonquils and Easter lilies. Do the plants favoured by various settlers reflect a particular period?

When the volunteers spend a lot of time working in an area there is the opportunity to think about what we are observing and instead of seeing unrelated evidence of European settlement, a story starts to emerge. It may not be entirely accurate but it is a starting point to try and find other evidence or photos that might add or take away from the story.

Chris Thomson



Spring.

Jason Tyndall

Spring is the season of life; it is when most of the wildflower's dance. The harshness of winter has all but passed. The warmth of the spring sunshine sees prolific blooms across the Park whilst reptiles begin to emerge from their winter's rest. This year, there will be many things emerging and flowering in the fire-affected areas. Some orchids, for example, thrive on years following fire.

Spring teaches us many things about the seasons of life. It shows us that winter is needed to lay foundations of growth and longevity. It shows us nature at her finest. Every season reveals beautiful facets of nature, but spring does it in a way that compels our curiosity to wonder, explore, and bathe in richness of diversity.

Here are some life forms that you may encounter during spring:

King Spider Orchid (*Caladenia tentaculata*)

The most common spider orchid within the Park. The lucky and patient observer may witness the art of pollination occur. However, unlike the usual bee to flower process – spider orchids are all about complexity. Many rely on attracting a single species of pollinator via sexual deception; often fooling a male wasp into believing that its labellum is a female wasp. Despite the wasp receiving no reward – the orchid reaps the benefits through being pollinated. Many spider orchids respond well years following fire.



Early Nancy (*Wurmbea dioica*)

A delicate wildflower that grows along many of the paths in the Park. Its tiny milk-white flowers are either male or female determined by whether there is a purple stripe on each petal (female). The much larger Milkmaids (*Burchardia umbellata*) is another milk white wildflower that will be encountered throughout spring. No doubt this tiny treasure will form part of the life thriving from the ashes.



Yam Daisy (*Microseris lanceolata*)

A common wildflower that often formed a significant food source for many Aboriginal groups. The nutritional tuber (dormant over summer) is said to taste similar to coconut. When not in bloom, the bud tends to droop. On warm days, pollinators such as native bees can be seen visiting these beautiful flowers. Another wildflower that enjoys blooming from the ashes.



Shingleback Lizard (*Tachyglossus aculeatus*)

These large skinks come out their winter's rest having used fat stored from their tails. They have lifelong partners, can live up to fifty years and give birth to large live young (equivalent to human birthing a 7 year old!). As the warm days set in, reptile encounters will become a regular thing for bushwalkers.



Spring.

A poem from the book *Where the Birds Sing and Wildflowers Dance* by Jason Tyndall that is ideal to prepare our minds for spring:

Stillness helps the mind listen

There are birds chattering
in the canopies
as you find a place to sit.
You close your eyes,
feel the sun gently
warm your face
and hear the soft hum
of busy insects.

The smell of damp earth
and wildflowers
fill the air.
Butterflies flitter by
and you wonder
where they might be going.

The leaves subtly sway
in the stillness of the day.
The heavy white clouds
slowly drift
across an endless
blue canvas.

Everything is still.

Your mind
is quiet.

Your mind
is listening.



Left: Australian Painted Lady (*Vanessa kershawi*).

Below: Common Brown male (*Heteronympha merope*).



Bushcare activities:

The Almanda Bush Gardening group again worked predominantly along Bryophyte Flat, removing invasive weeds and protecting germinating Golden Wattle (*Acacia pycnantha*) and other native seedlings from kangaroos using donated tree guards. During spring they will be planting about 1,500 bandicoot food plants, so hopefully there will be plenty of food available when the tenants move back across Dorset Vale Road from SA Water land into the Bandicoot Shelters that were planted earlier in the year. This work is important following the fire in January, which razed much of this part of the Park. See a note from John Wamsley about Bryophyte Flat at the end of this bushcare report.

1st June 2021—Area 29 five volunteers patrolled the south-west corner of the Park at the end of Thorley Road for Boneseed.

13th June 2021—Area 29, 10 volunteers worked from Greenhood Track to the end of Thorley Road, finding scattered Boneseed and a couple of sizeable patches of Montpellier Broom.

26th June 2021—Area 29, 11 volunteers again headed to the area between Greenhood Track and the southern end of Thorley Road, searching once again for Boneseed further east down the gullies, while also following up on the areas covered in the last two activities.

6th July—Area 23, six volunteers covered the area around Stockyard Track, finding many Montpellier Broom, a couple of English Broom and scattered Boneseed.

11th July 2021—nine volunteers spread their efforts over a number of areas burnt in the January fire, Areas 21 & 22 there was more Montpellier Broom to finish after a previous foray here, Area 7 Boneseed, African Daisy and Blackberry Nightshade was removed up to the dam in Kangaroo Gully, Area 7 alongside Bandicoot Track Montpellier Broom was followed up, Area 13 Fern Creek below the Crossroads Montpellier Broom seedlings were worked on, but there were many to be followed up later when they get a bit bigger, and Area 7 end of Yacca Track, 6 bottom of Bushrat Creek and 9 upper Currawong Gully were patrolled for future work.

24th July 2021—cancelled due to state-wide COVID-19 lockdown.

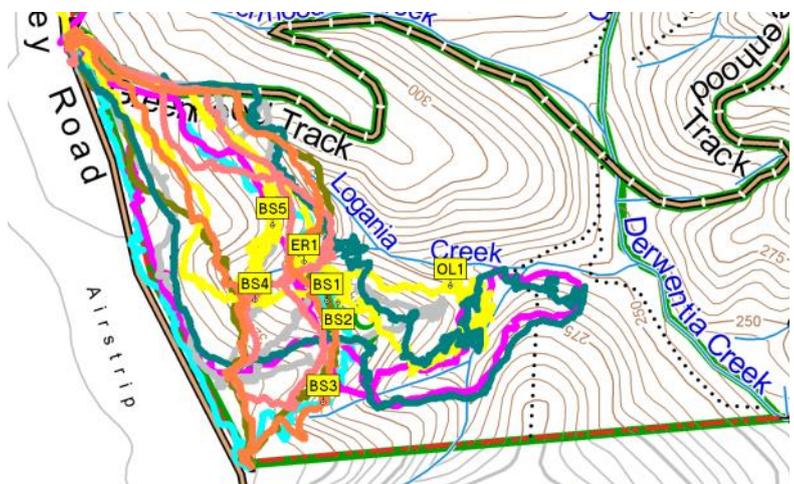
3rd August 2021—cancelled due to bad weather.

8th August 2021—Area 32, six volunteers followed a previous visit to Panhandle Creek removing many Montpellier



Above: Everyone checking Facebook before heading off on our bushcare activity? No, this is actually us setting up our mapping apps on our mobile phones, so that we can see what areas get covered during an activity and decide whether a return visit is required (image Janet Davill).

Below: Example of mapping from our 11th July bushcare activity, the different colours represent the track logs from different volunteers, with a few waypoints for particular weeds included.



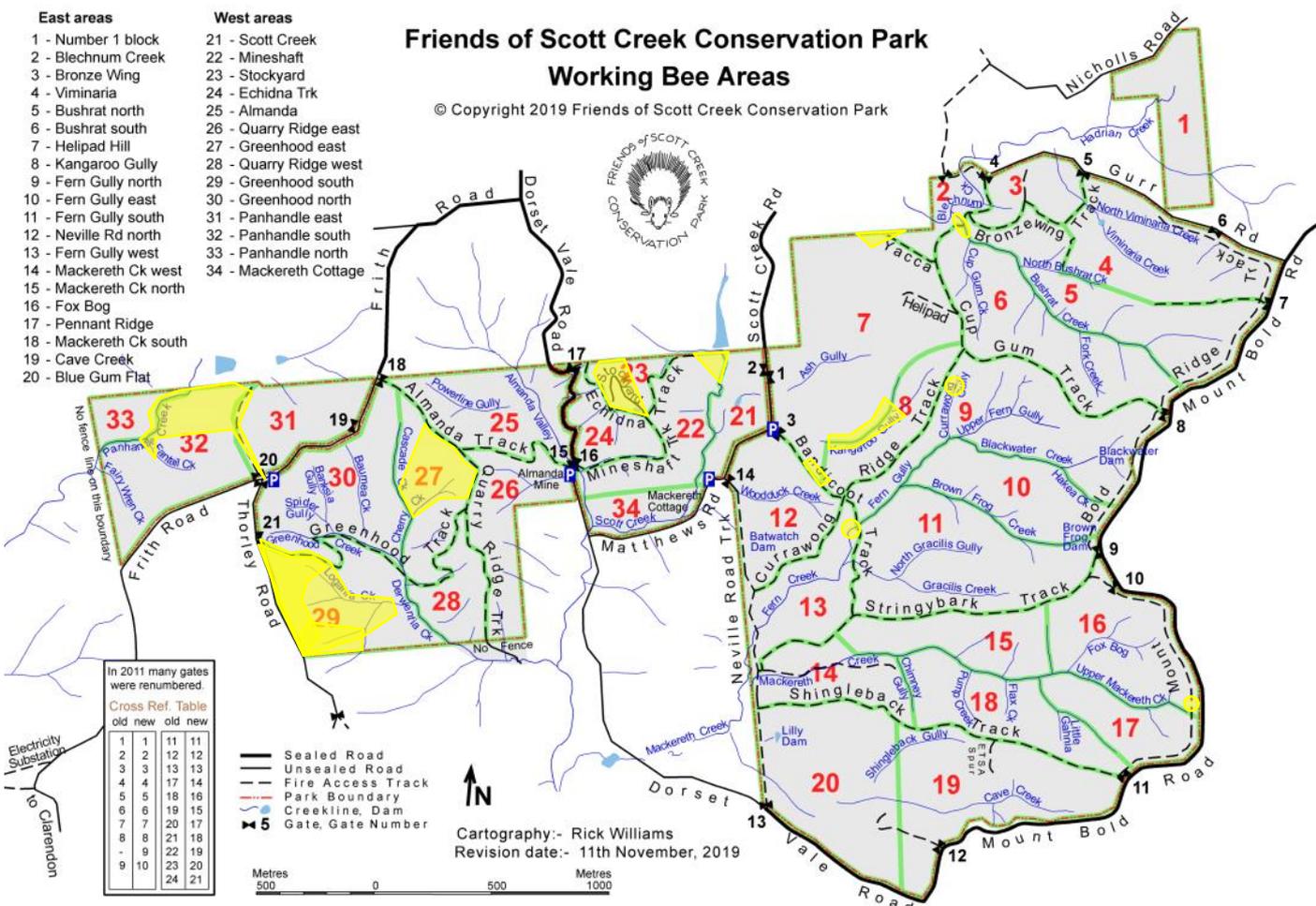
Broom and a few Boneseed, large Erica and African Daisy.

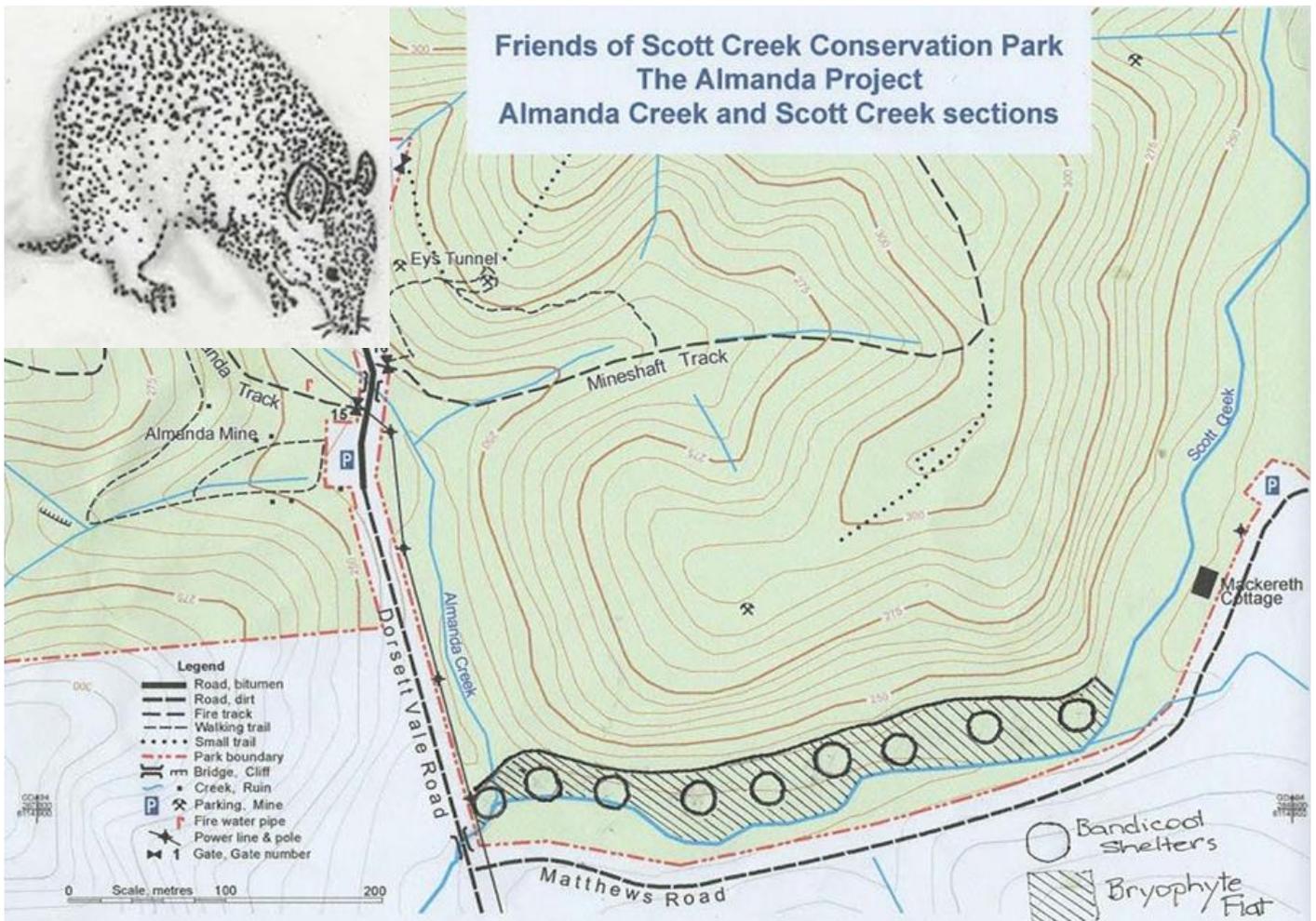
28th August 2021—Area 27, seven volunteers patrolled west of Quarry Ridge Track and Helipad Hill in Derwentia Valley, finding scattered Boneseed down the gully and two significant patches of Erica, which will require a return visit to complete.

Above right: Mal and Rick patrol Kangaroo Gully during the 11th July bushcare activity in the fire scar.

Below left: Anna and Barb removing Montpellier Broom near the end of Thorley Road during one of the June bushcare activities.

Below right: The Broom patch after it had been removed.





On the 19th of January 2020, a man from Wuhan, flew to Melbourne from Guandong. Minister for Health Greg Hunt said, "Australia has world-class health systems with processes for the identification and treatment of cases, including isolation facilities in each state and territory, these processes have been activated."

Since then, we have gone from lockdown to lockdown. However! It did not affect me much. In my spare time I was busy weeding down at Scott Creek Conservation Park. That was until last Tuesday, when our premier decided it was time for me to be part of a lockdown.

So! Since I have nothing much to do, I thought an update on our work on Bryophyte Flat was in order.

Bryophyte Flat lies on the norther side of Scott Creek, from the intersection of Mathews Road with Dorset Vale Road to nearly opposite Mackereth Cottage. It comprises about one hectare of creek flat.

Twelve months ago, it was principally covered with blackberry, bracken, gorse and broom, with a good sprinkling of manna gums. We started working there at the end of last year, clearing a massive patch of gorse over four metres high. Given our experience restoring Almada Creek which was about the same area and took us six years, we figured that we had at least five years work sorting out Bryophyte Flat.

And then! In January we had a fire which burnt out the whole of Bryophyte Flat. It was a bit of a disaster for the bandicoot colony and the manna gums. But! Was there an opportunity here to save us a lot of work?

Firstly, we had to rethink our plan. Manna gums do not like fires so we would need some healthy regrowth in that department. We guessed there would be a flourish of germinating acacias. We would appreciate that. The bandicoots would need some help. Having seen what happened at Fox Bog, I should have known that the bracken would use the opportunity to its advantage. It very nearly won the battle for Bryophyte Flat.

The plan was simple enough. We would just remove what we didn't want and assist what we wanted. Special plants, such as acacia seedlings would be protected by tree guards.

And so, on April Fools Day (The first of April) we started work in earnest.

A lot of thought was put into, what the bandicoot needed. As I understand it, bandicoots are a bit like me. They do not like crowds and enjoy their own company. So! If we want about eight bandicoots to live on Bryophyte Flat, we



Above: *Glycine latrobeana* (Clover Glycine),
image John Wamsley



Above: *Montia fontana* ssp. *chondrosperma* (Waterblinks),
image John Wamsley

will need at least eight bandicoot shelters. Since we do not really know what bandicoots would like for their shelters, we will try some different designs. We know they like a thick patch of introduced blackberries. So, I guess that is what we are trying to imitate.

In addition to protection, the bandicoots also need food. Again, we are guessing a bit here. However! I have noticed that plants with, what I think have edible tubers, such as yam daisies, bulbine and arthropodium lilies do not seem to grow near dense blackberry patches. Although they are quite common away from dense blackberry patches. I assume that is because bandicoots eat them. So! We will be planting a couple of thousand of these near our bandicoot shelters.

Other than that we will be encouraging the area to return to grasslands. Or! On the creek flats themselves, sedgeland?

It must be remembered that only plants can actually make food. They do this by using the energy of the sun to turn carbon dioxide and water into sugar. This process is called photosynthesis. And! All food on earth is derived from this sugar.

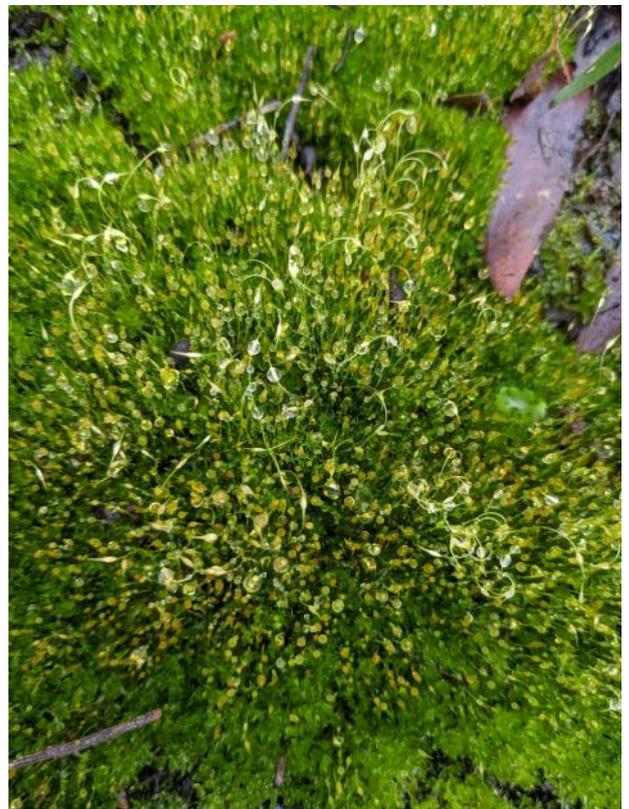
The plants then use this sugar to make all the wonderful compounds they need. They produce foliage that many organisms eat. They produce flowers, nectar and seeds. Insects feed on these plants and the bandicoots eat them.

The point is that bandicoots need a constant food supply throughout the year. To get a constant food supply, a range of plants must be producing this food throughout the year. This range of plants is called biodiversity. Grasslands and sedgelands have the highest plant diversity and therefore the highest total biodiversity and therefore is ideal for bandicoots.

So! It is now nearing the end of July. That is only four months after we started Bryophyte Flat in earnest. If it had not been for this dopey lockdown we would have finished Bryophyte Flat by the end of July. Not a bad four months to get five years of work done.

What do you reckon?

John Wamsley



Right: *Funaria hygrometrica* (Bonfire Moss),
image John Wamsley

Contractor work being undertaken in the park:

In the last edition of Bandicoot Tails, I mentioned the contractor work being arranged that was being funded from a Bassian Thrush threat abatement project. In addition to what was previously reported, a further amount of funding was used to engage Mint Green Environments to treat a variety of weeds in Mackereth Creek, from Neville Road to a side creek above Twisted Chimney, and two areas within Number One Block. The latter included the northern creekline and all the area between the southern creekline and Gurr Road. In addition to some Blackberry, Boneseed and Erica, there were many herbaceous weeds targeted, including Watsonia, Bridal Creeper, Arum Lily, African Feathergrass, Black Nightshade, African Daisy, Soursob and One O'clock. The last of this work was completed during June.

As mentioned earlier in this newsletter, we are very pleased to announce that the Department for Environment and Water has responded to our request for additional staff support, to assist with the huge amount of post-fire recovery work required in the Park. We have been provided with the equivalent of about a day and a half staff days of Kat Hill's time, to assist our Senior Ranger Brent Lores and Conservation Ecologist Anthony Abley with this work. Kat has been involved in our work in the Park for many years, mainly through her previous role as Volunteer Support Officer with the Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges Natural Resources Management Board, and more recently as the Project Officer for the abovementioned Bassian Thrush threat abatement project. Her familiarity with both the Park and our group meant she was able to hit the ground running. Already I have inspected several areas of the Park with Kat and she has prepared several work plans for contractors to undertake weed control on our behalf.

The next priority for contractor work includes bulbs weeds like Cape Tulip, Freesia and Bridal Creeper, which need to be treated prior to seed-set. An unexpected weed issue was the germination of a carpet of thousands of Bordered Watsonia (*Watsonia marginata*) below the previously known patch near gate 7. There is also further follow-up of woody weeds, including Montpellier Broom and Tree Lucerne seedlings that have germinated post-fire, and resprouting Erica.



Bordered Watsonia (*Watsonia marginata*)

Right: Flowering plant from 2019.

Below left: Patch of regrowth in the fire ground.

Below right: A carpet of seedlings have come up below the main patch that had been worked on in the past.





Future contractor work planned

Above: The more common Bulbil Watsonia (*Watsonia meriana* var. *bulbillifera*), an outlier patch in upper Viminaria Creek.

Above left: New Montpellier Broom seedlings that have just emerged in Blechnum Creek, after the first post-fire seedlings had already been treated.

Below right: Resprouting Erica amongst native plants, also in upper Viminaria Creek. Treating before the native plants get much bigger means there is less chance of off-target damage, as well as making the weeds easier to locate.



East areas

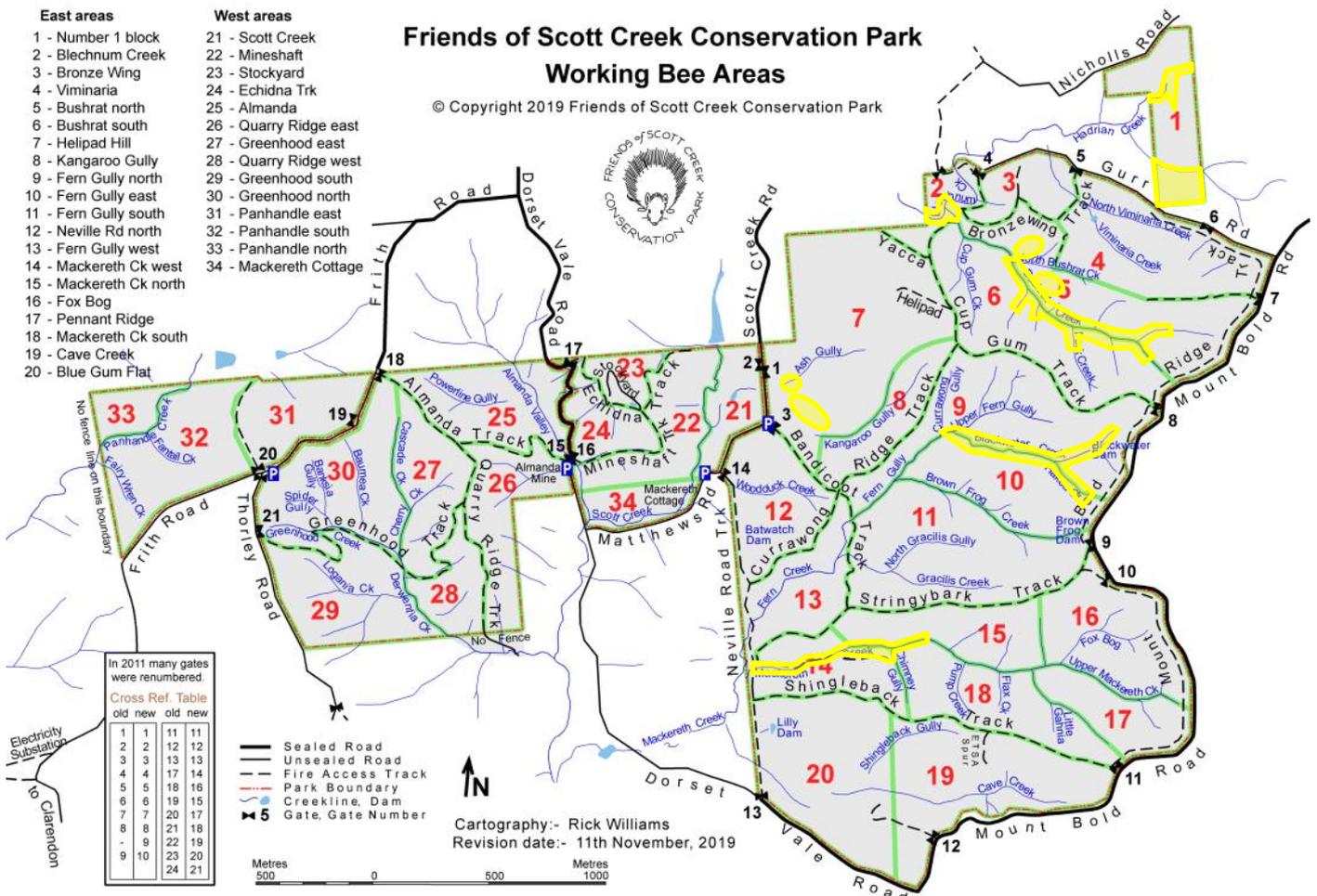
- 1 - Number 1 block
- 2 - Blechnum Creek
- 3 - Bronze Wing
- 4 - Viminaria
- 5 - Bushrat north
- 6 - Bushrat south
- 7 - Helipad Hill
- 8 - Kangaroo Gully
- 9 - Fern Gully north
- 10 - Fern Gully east
- 11 - Fern Gully south
- 12 - Neville Rd north
- 13 - Fern Gully west
- 14 - Mackereth Ck west
- 15 - Mackereth Ck north
- 16 - Fox Bog
- 17 - Pennant Ridge
- 18 - Mackereth Ck south
- 19 - Cave Creek
- 20 - Blue Gum Flat

West areas

- 21 - Scott Creek
- 22 - Mineshaft
- 23 - Stockyard
- 24 - Echidna Trk
- 25 - Almada
- 26 - Quarry Ridge east
- 27 - Greenhood east
- 28 - Quarry Ridge west
- 29 - Greenhood south
- 30 - Greenhood north
- 31 - Panhandle east
- 32 - Panhandle south
- 33 - Panhandle north
- 34 - Mackereth Cottage

Friends of Scott Creek Conservation Park Working Bee Areas

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Bird Banding Notes:

We were fortunate enough to benefit from the generosity of the Stirling Market organisers with a donation towards some new 'higher-tech' equipment. Along with a new 'tear-drop' banner we can show quite a well-organised look to our banding endeavours. Now all we need is feathered participants in our research. The equipment includes three new purpose-made rulers, a very accurate and easy-to-read quality set of callipers (for beak, head, and tarsus measurements) and new set of digital scales. (All as per photo right)

We ventured more into the burnt areas of the park this quarter. As expected, our numbers were down, but still yielding some surprises. After the fire we had limited access to our bird banding sites until we were granted permission by our ranger staff to start again in the unburnt side of the Park.



6 & 7 June 2021 Kangaroo Gully – KG 13 new birds 2 re-captures

There was just one Silvereeye caught on Saturday, but another 14 birds on Sunday made our effort worthwhile. A young male Superb Fairy-wren that had been banded here before the fire was our first bird on Sunday. This is yet another cause for wonder when all around the bush was severely burnt in the January fire. How this bird survived is amazing. Not long after the wren was processed, we had the excitement of recapturing a Kookaburra also first netted before the fire. There was slightly less damage to a few trees in this area, so it appears that there is some food around for the honeyeaters and thornbills. In the mix were Striated Thornbills (5), Superb Fairy-wrens (3), and one each of: Silvereeye, Laughing Kookaburra, White-throated Treecreeper, White-naped Honeyeater, Scarlet Robin, and 2 Eastern Spinebills. 24 species were observed over the two mornings including a Black Kite and two Wedge-tailed Eagles which had been feeding on a deer carcass nearby.

19 & 20 June 2021 Gurr Road – GR 18 new birds 11 re-captures

This site adjoins private bushland that was not burnt in January. Nets were set along the boundary areas to see what may have survived. It was apparent from the beginning that the private bush had been used as a refuge by



Above: A Flinders University student film crew joined us in Kangaroo Gully to record our group's activities in the Park post-fire (photo Diana Wright).

birds. The very first bird caught was a 3+ Striated Thornbill. All the recaptured birds had been first banded at this site – with the remarkable exception of a 16+ Golden Whistler that was first banded up at the Crossroads site and moved to Gurr Road to take up residence about 13 years ago and has since been captured at least 5 times. This bird is still in prime condition. A summary of banding for this weekend: Striated Thornbills, 1 new, 2 at 3+ (one twice); Yellow-faced Honeyeater, 4 new; Eastern Spinebill, 1 new; White-browed Scrubwren, 3 new, 1 at 9+ and 1 at 2+; New Holland Honeyeater, 2 new, 1 at 5+ and 1 at 1+; Superb Fairy-wren, 1 new, 1 at 5+, 2 at 4+; Brown Thornbill, 1 new; Grey Shrike-thrush, 1 new; Silvereeye, 2 new; Golden Whistler, 1 at 16+; Scarlet Robin, 2 new; and White-throated Treecreeper, 1 new. Overall 26 species were observed.



Above: The very special re-captured Superb Fairy-wren at Fox Bog.



Above: White-browed Scrubwren banded at the gate 4 Gurr Road site.

17 & 18 July 2021 Pennant Ridge – PR 3 new birds

Saturday was miserably wet and cold, and the only activity was setting up 3 nets. Things were a little better on Sunday and we banded a Scarlet Robin, a Silveryeye, and a Superb Fairy-wren. 17 species were observed in this severely burnt site.

1 August 2021. Crossroads – XR 3 new birds

It looks like the iconic Camelia tree has died as a result of the fire. The bush all around this centre is quite barren in comparison to the previous lush habitat. As a result, there are few birds present. We processed a New Holland Honeyeater and 2 Superb Fairy-wrens early and did a lot of walking between empty nets. Most of the 19 species observed were either passing through, or quite high up.

14 & 15 August 2021 Fox Bog – FB 3 new birds 1 re-capture

There is some evidence of the habitat beginning to grow back in the lower parts of this site near the cliffs above Fox Bog itself, but there is still little in the way of sustainable food for the birds. The clear highlight in this centre of burn destruction was a Superb Fairy-wren that had been banded here before the fire. For a minimum of 1 kilometre in every direction all was severely burnt. Where this bird sheltered to survive is a mystery. Scarlet Robins are one of the first visitors to newly burnt woodland and we banded three of them on the second day. A skirmish of Little Ravens mobbing a Wedge-tailed Eagle over Fox Bog was a highlight of this day. There was a lot of activity amongst a group of about 10 Grey Shrike-thrushes going about their partner selection for what will hopefully be a better season for raising a family. 22 species were observed.

Jim Spiker, Bird Banding Coordinator



Above: A male Scarlet Robin, one of three banded at Fox Bog in August.



Above: Jim had the opportunity to put up his new gazebo at the Crossroads. The Camelia bush behind the cars appears to have not survived the fire.

DEW Fire Management:



Cultural burning across SA this autumn

Several Cultural burns were undertaken in different areas of the state this autumn in partnership with different First Nations groups. National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) Fire Management staff were proud to support these traditional fire management practices, as well as work towards different ecological goals.

Cultural burn in the South East

In the South East of the state a burn was undertaken at Finger Point Wastewater Treatment Plant to combat weeds. The burn was facilitated by SA Water working together with the Department for Environment and Water, Burramities Cultural Connections, and members of the South East First Nations community.

Finger Point is a culturally significant site, and using traditional fire-starting practices, the flame was ignited then handed over to the cultural rangers by First Nations Elders, to safely undertake the prescribed burn.

Ecological burn at the Aldinga Washpool

An ecological burn was conducted this autumn at the Aldinga Washpool Lagoon as part of Green Adelaide's re-wilding of the Yellowish Sedge-skipper butterfly. The burn was ignited by Kurna environmental contractors from Aboriginal Contemporary Arts working together with NPWS Fire Management. City of Onkaparinga and Green Adelaide staff were also involved.

The burn targeted patches of Thatching Grass (*Gahnia filum*), the food plant for Yellowish Sedge-skipper larvae, and promote new growth that the sedge skippers prefer. The new growth also encourages the butterflies to lay eggs.

Prior research has identified the benefits of planned patch burning at the right time to benefit the skipper's life cycles. Before the burn an Entomologist and Coastal Conservation Officer surveyed selected patches and ensured no butterfly larvae were present.

Adelaide Parklands Cultural Burn

Since mid-2019 the City of Adelaide (CoA) has been working with the Kurna community, NPWS Fire Management and other key stakeholders to undertake a pilot Cultural burn in a small area of the Adelaide Park Lands.

This project was initiated in response to outcomes from CoA's Integrated Biodiversity Management Plan Reconciliation Plan related to incorporating Kurna knowledge into management of the Park Lands. It carries significant cultural importance for the Kurna community, the Traditional Owners of the Adelaide region.

The burn was intended to assist in the ecological management of a section of a biodiversity area in the parklands. The fire was small and low in intensity and was undertaken by trained members of the Kurna community alongside NPWS fire management personnel.

[The Fire Side Winter 2021](#)



Above: Kurna environmental contractors lighting the burn at the Aldinga Washpool Lagoon.

Photo Gallery:



Above left and right: A large group of Yacca (*Xanthorrhoea semiplana* ssp. *semiplana*) above Fox Bog, one week after the January fire and again about seven months later.



Above: The Yacca (*Xanthorrhoea semiplana* ssp. *semiplana*) regrows quickly and flowers prolifically after fire.



Above: Many lilies, like the Early Nancy (*Wurmbea dioica* ssp. *dioica*), produce mass flowering displays after fire.

Below: Generally we find patches of Black Fire-orchids (*Pyrorchis nigricans*) with large numbers of leaves and few flowers, but after a fire there is often mass flowering. There are many buds that have already developed after the January fire, with the first of these starting to open.

Below: There are also many of the beautiful Bluebeard Orchids or Blue Fairies (*Pheladenia deformis*) flowering over large areas of the fire ground.



Calendar of Environmental Events coming up:

September is Biodiversity Month

Biodiversity Month is held in September each year and aims to promote the importance of protecting, conserving and improving biodiversity both within Australia and across the world.



Australian Government
**Department of Agriculture,
Water and the Environment**

Biodiversity has been described as the 'web of life', 'the variety of living things' or 'the different plants, animals and micro-organisms, their genes and ecosystems of which they are a part'.

Biodiversity encompasses every living thing that exists on our planet and the environment in which they live. From the smallest one-cell microbe to the enormous majesty of the blue whale. From the depths of the Pacific Ocean to peaks of our tallest mountains, biodiversity forms part of an intricate and interdependent web of life in which we are all a part.

Australia is home to between 600,000 and 700,000 species, many of which are found nowhere else in the world. About 84 per cent of our plants, 83 per cent of our mammals, and 45 per cent of our birds are endemic — that is, they are only found in Australia.

The marine environment is home to thousands of marine species, some of which are unique to Australia and all of which contribute to making Australia the most biodiversity-rich developed country in the world. This includes at least 45 species of whales, dolphins and porpoises.

[Biodiversity Month | Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment](#)

Wednesday 1st September is National Wattle Day

We celebrate National Wattle Day to celebrate Australia and being Australian.

Golden Wattle (*Acacia pycnantha*) is our national floral emblem.

Wattles are Australian with great diversity (more than 1,071 species) and resilience like our people.

Wattle welcomes the spring, and is among the first plants to regenerate after fire, reminding us of the importance of renewal as it paints our national colours across our landscapes.

[About National Wattle Day — Wattle Day](#)

Tuesday 7th September is Threatened Species Day

National Threatened Species Day is commemorated across the country on 7 September to raise awareness of plants and animals at risk of extinction.

Australia is home to more than 500,000 animal and plant species, many of which are found nowhere else in the world. Over the last 200 years, more than 100 animal and plant species have become extinct.

Threatened Species Day is when we turn the spotlight on native plants, animals, and ecosystems that are under threat and reflect on how we can protect them now and into the future.

The day also celebrates the amazing work that is being done to save them by passionate conservationists, researchers, volunteers, and community experts.

Threatened Species Day was declared in 1996 to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the death of the last remaining Tasmanian tiger (also known as the thylacine) at Hobart Zoo in 1936.

Threatened Species Day is a time to reflect on what happened in the past and how similar fates to the thylacine could await other native plants and animals unless appropriate action is taken.

[Threatened Species Day | NSW Environment, Energy and Science](#)

National Wattle Day
1 September



*Celebrating Australia
and the Australian Spirit*



Photo credit The Thylacine Museum

Monday 18 to Sunday 24 October is National Bird Week and the Aussie Backyard Bird Count

The celebration of National Bird Week has its origins back in the early 1900s when 28 October was first designated by the Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union, as the first 'Bird Day'. BirdLife Australia organises and promotes Bird Week with the goal of inspiring Australians to take action and get involved in bird conservation efforts.

[Aussie Backyard Bird Count | BirdLife](#)

Celebrate National Bird Week by taking part in the Aussie Backyard Bird Count — you will be joining thousands of people from across the country who will be heading out into their backyards, local parks or favourite outdoor spaces to take part.

To get involved all you need is 20 minutes, your favourite outdoor space (this doesn't have to be your actual backyard), and some keen eyesight. And it doesn't matter if you're a novice or an expert — we will be there to help you out. Simply record the birds you know and look up those you don't on our 'Aussie Bird Count' app or our website. You'll instantly see live statistics and information on how many people are taking part near you and the number of birds and species counted in your neighbourhood and the whole of Australia!

Not only will you get to know your feathered neighbours, but you'll be contributing to a vital pool of information from across the nation that will help us see how Australian birds are faring.

So get your friends and family together during National Bird Week, head into the great outdoors and start counting!

<https://aussiebirdcount.org.au>

Saturday 6 to Sunday 14 November is Australian Pollinator Week

Australian Pollinator Week was founded by Dr Megan Halcroft, of Bees Business (beesbusiness.com.au), in November 2015. It followed on from a community project called "Bee Aware of Your Native Bees", which was funded by Western Sydney University and the Environmental Trust.



Communities in the northern hemisphere have been celebrating the importance of pollinators since June 2007, however, the seasonal differences in the southern hemisphere has restricted bilateral celebrations.

Australian Pollinator Week acknowledges our important and unique insect pollinators during our southern spring (November). It is a designated week when communities, businesses and organisations can come together to raise awareness of the importance of pollinators and support their needs.

Through group activities, community members can learn and laugh together as they help to support our pollinators. By engaging communities in schools, retirement villages, art groups, gardening clubs, community gardens, local council areas, Landcare groups and neighbourhoods we can increase awareness and act on our increased knowledge.

[About – Australian Pollinator Week](#)

Sunday 14 to Sunday 21 November is Wild Pollinator Count

Australia has lots of wild pollinator insects that are often overlooked. European honey bees get a lot of attention because they are an adaptable, generalist forager, which means they are happy to visit almost any flower, in most climate zones. They are also a social species, so their hives are easy to domesticate and manage.



However, many native insects also contribute to pollination in crops and gardens all around the country. We still need to do a lot of research to identify all our pollinator insect species, understand their ecology and how they are affected by human activities. So far, we know that Australia has around 2,000 native bee species, all of which are important pollinators. We also know there are a couple of thousand butterfly, wasp, fly, moth, beetle, thrips and ant species, some of which are documented pollinators. Unfortunately, we don't have a lot of information on the ecology of many of these insects, what flowers they pollinate, or where they are found.

The Wild Pollinator Count gives you an opportunity to contribute to wild pollinator insect conservation in Australia. We invite you to count wild pollinators in your local environment and help us build a database on wild pollinator activity.

[Wild Pollinator Count](#)

Spring Program of Activities September – November 2021

The Friends of Scott Creek Conservation Park welcome visitors to any of our activities, but it is best to contact us beforehand to confirm details. This is particularly important with regard to COVID-19 restrictions, which makes it essential that anyone considering a visit to an activity contact us beforehand to ensure this will still be possible at the time. Thank you.

For enquiries or information see contact details at the end of this program or on our website www.friendsofscottcreekcp.org.au.

NOTE: Activities in the park and social events in the Adelaide Hills will be cancelled if a fire ban or severe weather warning/thunderstorms are announced for the Mount Lofty Ranges. Bird banding will also be cancelled in conditions that may adversely affect the birds. See links to BOM & CFS websites below.

Bushcare activities: meet at 9.00am, Almanda Mine Car Park, Dorset Vale Rd

This enables everyone to sign in and be brought up-to-date with last minute changes. BYO morning tea and a small back pack to carry it, in case we are working further from the cars.

Contact our Admin. Assistant for details about regular mid-week bush gardening activities at Almanda Creek.

Month	Date	Activity	Location
SEPTEMBER			
Saturday, Sunday	4, 5	Bird banding	PH, The Panhandle Gate 20, 6:30 am
Tuesday	7	Bushcare	To be advised
Wednesday	8	Bird banding	TC, Twisted Chimney via Gate 13, 6:30 am
Sunday	12	Bushcare	To be advised
Tuesday	14	General mtg All welcome!	Venue to be advised, 4:30pm
Saturday, Sunday	18, 19	Bird banding	TP, The Plantation via Gate 7, 6:30am
Wednesday	22	Social Lunch All welcome!	Konditorei Coffee Lounge—Stirling Arcade at noon (39 Mt Barker Rd, behind Stirling Fruit Mart, parking at rear)
Saturday	25	Bushcare	To be advised
Tuesday	28	Nature Festival	Nature Play SA walks in the Park
OCTOBER			
Saturday, Sunday, Monday	2, 3, 4	GLUEPOT	Long Weekend. Bird banding course at Gluepot
Tuesday	5	Bushcare	To be advised
Sunday	10	Bushcare	To be advised
Saturday, Sunday	16, 17	Bird banding	AB, Almanda Battery & Swamp, Almanda Carpark, 6:30 am
Thursday	21	Social Lunch All welcome!	Joan's Pantry—Hawthorndene at noon (Watahuna Ave opposite the oval)
Saturday	23	Bushcare	To be advised
Sunday	24	Social outing All welcome!	SA Museum: Australian Geographic Nature Photographer of 2021 exhibition, meet 10.30am in its coffee shop
Saturday, Sunday	30, 31	Bird banding	MC, Mackereth Cottage, 6:30 am
NOVEMBER			
Tuesday	2	Bushcare	To be advised
Saturday, Sunday	6, 7	Bird banding	DV, Derwentia Valley via Gate 21, 6:00 am
Tuesday	9	FoSCCP AGM	Cherry Gardens CFS, 294 Cherry Gardens Rd, 7.30pm – followed by a presentation by Jason Tyndall, General Manager Nature Play SA, on his time with the Friends group and his recent book launch, <i>Where birds sing and wildflowers dance</i>
Sunday	14	Bushcare	To be advised
Saturday, Sunday	20, 21	Bird banding	AT, Almanda Track via Gate 18, 6:00 am
Tuesday	23	Social Lunch All welcome!	Fred's Eatery, Aldgate (220 Mt Barker Rd), 12 noon
Saturday	27	Bushcare	To be advised

BOM website: <http://www.bom.gov.au/australia/meteve/dorset-vale>

CFS website: https://www.cfs.sa.gov.au/site/bans_and_ratings

Office bearers:

Any queries on Friends activities, please contact the relevant person below, general queries to info@friendsofscottcreekcp.org.au

President: Jim Spiker (M) 0430 247 705, Email: president@friendsofscottcreekcp.org.au

Vice President: Peter Watton (M) 0427 010 949, Email: info@friendsofscottcreekcp.org.au

Treasurer & Minute Secretary: Donella Peters, (H) 8339 5639 (M) 0407 417 247, Email: treasurer@friendsofscottcreekcp.org.au

Correspondence Secretary: Diana Wright Email: secretary@friendsofscottcreekcp.org.au

Administration Assistant: Jenny Dawes (H) 8388 2297 (M) 0427 841 425, Email: info@friendsofscottcreekcp.org.au

Membership Officer: Lorraine Billett (H) 8278 6623 (M) 0427 093 839, Email: lorry66@tpg.com.au

Other roles and positions:

Bird Banding Coordinator: Jim Spiker (contact details above)

Bushcare Coordinator: Jenny Dawes (contact details above)

Assistant Bushcare Coordinator: Glenn Giles (M) 0413 615 514, Email: gilesgd81@gmail.com

Bushcare — Grants & Funding, Contractor Liaison & Reporting: Peter Watton (contact details above)

Bush Gardening Almada Creek: John Wamsley (M) 0407 716 074, Email: john@johnwamsley.com

Editor Bandicoot Tails & Facebook: Peter Watton (contact details above)

Website Coordinator: Rick Williams (M) 0424 308 011, Email: webmaster@friendsofscottcreek.org.au

