FRIENDS OF PARKS

VOLUNTEERS WORKING FOR CONSERVATION

BANDICOOT TAILS

Newsletter of the Friends of Scott Creek
Conservation Park

No. 36, October, 1998

The President's Words: After the Nest Box Working Bee we now have an impressive array of large, medium and small nest boxes (or luxury avian apartments in real estate terms) to sell at the Blackwood Rotary Fair in November. They proved to be a popular item last year, often initiating interest in the park, our group and the environment in general.

Doug Bickerton, from the Threatened Plant Action Group, has been searching for Caladenia behrii and Caladenia rigida with some of our group. Doug is the Project Officer and will be making recommendations on a recovery plan for C. behrii. With just one being found in Scott Creek, the odds seem somewhat overwhelmingly unfavourable. Six or seven C. rigida have been located but fortunately both species are in larger numbers in a few other reserves.

Boneseed is still the botanical flavour of the month(s). Several more working bees have virtually finished the valley south of Shingleback Track and this Tuesday's working bee will return to the area east of Currawong Ridge where many are known to still reside.

For all the fungi-ophiles (mycologists-Ed?) and those who would just like to see what one looks like, Robin Coles will be the guest speaker at our AGM in November. He has entitled his talk "Poisonous, Edible and Other Toadstools and Mushrooms of The Mt. Lofty Ranges". There is also a very good slide show to accompany the discourse, which should be fairly comprehensive if the title is any indication.

From The Last Meeting:

Tom Hands and John Butler have supplied NPWSA with a map showing blackberry infestations remaining after NPWSA's recent slashing and spraying. The areas of the pest are shrinking but much is inaccessible except on foot. The above 'treatment has been very successful, with little regeneration after the spray and plenty of native plants germinating. There will be a lot of backpack spraying needed for the harder areas.

John Butler, Tom hands and Bob bates have prepared a revised list of the park's plant species. It still needs a little tidying by our botanical experts. Botanical nomenclature appears to be in a constant state of flux, or is the word revision. There are over 500 plants listed, including exotics, not bad for 750 ha.

We had two interesting talks at the meeting, by husband and wife team Allen and Elizabeth Gordon-Mills. Allen told us about his business, supplying reeds for clarinets throughout Australia, Southeast Asia and elsewhere, made from a bamboo-like grass, introduced from Europe and common through many of our farming areas. His talk ranged from the biology of the plant through to the manufacture of the reeds. When you next blow your 'licorice stick' you may well be using one of Allen's reeds.

Elizabeth's talk on quandongs and their use in jewelry was equally fascinating. She summarised the quandong genus Santalum for us, and then concentrated on the biology of the best-known species, S. acuminatum. The Gordon-Mills have established a small plantation of both cane grass and quandong as commercial ventures. Elizabeth pointed out that plant breeders are trying to improve the quandong in a relatively few years, and do what millenia of breeding and selection has accomplished with our commercial fruit crops. She exhibited examples of usage of the quandong fruit, both as food and as foundations for fine silver jewelry.

Coorong Forum: The forum is being held next weekend at Meningie. Some of our members will be attending some of the sessions. On the Friday night session, our Friends Group will be presented with a certificate acknowledging our participation in last year's "Year of Ornithology". On Saturday Tom Hands will be acknowledged with a Certificate of Appreciation for his several years as head of our group and his dedicated involvement in conservation activities, centring on Scott Creek. Well done, Tom!

Corrections: In last month's Bandicoot Tails, John Butler's note on Derwentia needs amendment. The number of known plants were increased **12-fold,** not by 12. That makes much more sense.

Also, in the Calendar, this month's "Botanising with Ann Prescott will be on the **17th. October,** not the 19th. Your scribe apologises for this one. He was using the wrong calendar!

Activities:
The last weekend in September saw 5 members take part in bird banding at the Gate 9 site. The conditions were marginal on Saturday, with tricky wind conditions, but Sunday was better. We caught 28 birds, including 3 retraps. Honeyeaters were the main group banded. Tom Hands is not far from the magic total of 500 birds processed in order to apply for his own licence.

The Great Monadenia Hunt continues and the plants are beginning to put up flowering heads, so the critical ones are somewhat easier to see. Over 20,000 have been taken to the Adelaide Hills Council to date for deep burial. There are still several places to dig them in the park, if anyone wants to spend some time in congenial surroundings at a slow amble or in a kneeling position. If nothing else, the constant bending of the limbs in the Monadenia hunt must be good for the body!

Next meeting: This will be a business meeting, to be held at John & Rosemary Butler's residence, 5 Trevelyan Court, Coromandel Valley at 7.30 pm. on the 8th. October. See you there.

Any queries on Friends activities, please contact your office bearers.

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FOSCCP 1998 CALENDAR

Month	Date	Event
October	6th. 8th. 9th.-11th. 11th. 17th. 24th.-25th.	Tuesday working bee. Meet Almanda Mine, 9.00 am. Business meeting Coorong Forum Sunday working bee. Meet Almanda Mine, 9.00 am. Botanising with Ann Prescott, Gate 19, 10 am. Bird banding. Gate 3 crossroads, 7.30 am.
November	3rd. 12th. 14th. –15th. 21st. 28th.-29th.	Tuesday working bee. Meet Almanda Mine, 9.00 am Annual General Meeting Mammal Survey & working bee Blackwood Rotary Fair Bird banding, Gate 19, 7.30 am.
December	1st. 13th. 18th.	Tuesday working bee. Meet Almanda Mine, 9.00 am Propagation Day, business meeting Christmas function