



Bandicoot Tails

Newsletter of the Friends of Scott Creek Conservation Park

No. 165

December 2016-February 2017

The President's Words:

Here is Peter Watton's Presidential Report for 2016, given at our AGM on the 8th November, at the Cherry Gardens CFS rooms.

The last twelve months was very challenging, for both the Friends of Scott Creek group and myself personally.

I know that, when I took over the reins as president from Tom Hands last year, I somehow thought that he would still be there to guide me and help me with any problems that came up during my first year. Unfortunately this was not to be, and he passed away just a couple of weeks after the AGM.

Tom's nephew, Deon, wanted to celebrate the impact Tom had on his life with a memorial seat to take in one of Tom's much-loved views of Scott Creek CP. On a wet and wintry Sunday in September, Sue, Deon and their family gathered together at the newly installed seat on the side of Cup Gum Track to enjoy morning tea together. I encourage you all to take a walk along the track sometime and take a few moments to sit down on the beautifully crafted seat and enjoy the view, knowing Tom is there with you.



In a year that took some of the most dedicated, knowledgeable and passionate conservationists from us, we also lost our long-time Patron, Enid Robertson, who also guided much of our early work in the park 26 years ago. People of this calibre cannot be replaced, but it is up to the rest of us to contribute what we can, when we can, to help maintain their legacy.

Change is rarely easy, but there have been a few particular challenges this year.

Leading the way is the Almada Project, which is a huge undertaking for a small group of active volunteers such as our group has. Of course the scale of the project is very much determined by the amount of funds we can raise to pay for contractor work.

To this end, much credit once again goes to John Wamsley. He and Proo generously donated funds raised from their open garden weekend at Wirrapunga to the project again this year. He also took the lead in developing an autumn walk to help showcase the Almanda Project at an open day in April. He used the same format as his open garden and placed out over 70 labels along the trail, which matched numbers in an eight page guide to help identify and provide information about various native plants along the way. Thanks also to the members of our group who put their hands up to volunteer at these events, selling tickets and helping in the kitchen at the open garden, talking and providing information to the public at our stand at both events.



Above: Almanda open day

We also couldn't have had as much contractor work done this year without the significant funds raised through grants and contributed through DEWNR and Natural Resources AMLR. In this regard I have been helped immensely by our Ranger Jen Pitman, Volunteer Support Officer Kat Hill and District Officer Mark Fagan, who can all see the benefits of supporting our efforts to protect the biodiversity values in Scott Creek CP. They have all taken an active lead in obtaining the funding and managing the contractor work. Other grant funding has been received from the City of Onkaparinga and the Patagonia Environmental Grants Fund of Tides Foundation during the year.



Above: John W leads Jen, Kieran & Kat into Bushrat Ck to check Blackberry

While contractors are a big help with what we call the “heavy lifting”, the primary treatment of large infestations of weeds that are beyond us as volunteers, the follow-up after this work is done is largely left to us. It is critical that we ensure this follow-up work is done diligently so that past efforts are not wasted.

This year we became the “Hands-on Team”, in recognition of Tom Hand’s dedication and commitment to the Park. Ideally, we want to stop our priority weeds from getting to seeding stage again in an area that primary weed control has been undertaken. Unfortunately, we don’t live in an



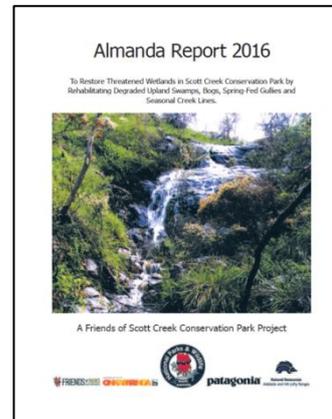
Above: Steve and Glenn at a working bee in the Panhandle earlier this year

ideal world and the Park is very big with only 36 working bees scheduled a year in which to cover it. Fortunately, we are blessed to have such dedicated small band of volunteers, including a number who go out into the Park to work outside of the regular days, and this helps us keep on top of the regrowth. Of course, it would be nice to share the workload around a little more, and new volunteers are always most welcome.

John Wamsley suggested we commence regular “Walks in the Park”, where any of our “Hands-on Team” available comes along

and together patrol one of the 32 working bee areas we have in the Park. The aim is to update our information on the park, mapping and prioritising weed control work for future working bees and contractor work. These have been a great success to date, with several of our members taking advantage of the opportunity to see different parts of the park and help gather important data. This is essentially the same thing that Tom and John Butler used to do together on a regular but informal basis, and how they built up such a terrific knowledge of the Park.

Anyone keen to learn more about the Almanda Project are encouraged to purchase a copy of the 2016 Almanda Report, which provides details of all aspects of the project that were undertaken over the past financial year. There are also still copies of the 2015 Almanda Report available, which covers the first year of our project.



On to other matters, the FOSCCP 25th Anniversary Book became a 26th Anniversary epic, but we are finally getting close to going to the printer with it. I would particularly like to pay tribute to Donna and Don Reid and Les and Donella Peters for having the stamina (just) to get to this point, and I for one am very much looking forward to seeing the results of their labour in print.



Above: Bird banding at the Crossroads

Bird banding seemed to be carrying on smoothly as usual this year under the direction of Don Reid, until a slight bump in the road occurred when Jim Spiker was completing his paperwork to get accredited as our second A Class licensed bander. It seemed that the permits Don was renewing under his name were not sufficient paperwork for the bird banding in Scott Creek CP and the FOSCCP group had to apply for its own Wildlife Ethics Committee approval and Scientific Research Permit. This ended up being a fairly drawn out process, during which time all bird banding activities had to be suspended, however, after much work by Jen and Don, we are now fully authorised and back banding, when the weather permits.

I would like to finish with a final thank you to all members of the FOSCCP who have engaged in activities this year, both on and off park. I will try to avoid naming names too much, as there are too many and each contribution is greatly valued. Included is our social committee who arrange monthly lunches at various locations around the district, giving us the opportunity to catch up and talk about things other than the park (although some of that always creeps in). There was also an ornithological excursion by a group of us to Laratinga Wetlands in Mount Barker again earlier this year, and we ran a craft activity for children and had a stand at the Belair NP 125th Anniversary celebration in September. Ranger Jen led our spring walk in October, and a group of 13 FOSCCP, family, friends and neighbour's enjoyed a pleasant walk in the Park, which also revealed some of the damage created by inclement weather in the preceding months.



Above: Sue at Belair NP 125th Anniversary celebration

There is also the huge amount of work done behind the scenes, like organising the schedule of activities, including working bees and bird banding, people contributing articles for Bandicoot Tails and Don putting it all together. After a few major IT headaches this year, Don has received welcome assistance from Jenny Dawes to distribute relevant email correspondence received from Friends of

Parks Inc. to our members. Jenny also sends out emails to inform us of upcoming events and activities and this has led to her being formally nominated as Administration Assistant in this year's AGM elections. They and our very competent Treasurer, Donella Peters, do a great job keeping the group going.

After creating and managing the FOSCCP website for many years, Les Peters decided it was time to pass this responsibility over to someone else during the year, and we are fortunate that Rick Williams was willing to take this on – a huge thank you to Les for all his work on this over the years. John Butler has also decided it is time to stand down as Vice-President of FOSCCP. After being Tom's deputy for many years, he said he was happy to let someone else take on the Vice-President role, which he readily admits to not being very arduous, so he can concentrate on getting out in the park. Jim Spiker, who has been an active member of FOSCCP for about 15 years, has agreed to nominate for the position.

Summary of FOSCCP volunteer hours for the year to 30th June 2016, as reported to DEWNR (thanks to Jenny for compiling these for us):

- 832 working bee hours (average 7-8 attendees doing 24 hours work)
- Nearly 600 hours bird-banding
- 120 hours for Almanda Project's guided walks' day and *Wirrapunga* Open Garden fundraiser
- Almost 1000 hours on administration and meetings, including Bandicoot Tails and grant writing and acquittal
- 760 hours (so far) on compiling 25th Anniversary celebratory booklet
- Over 80 hours on the website and its changeover of manager.

Committee Elections:

At our AGM, the following were elected unopposed to their positions.

| | |
|---------------------------|----------------|
| President: | Peter Watton |
| Vice-president: | Jim Spiker |
| Secretary: | Don Reid |
| Treasurer: | Donella Peters |
| Administrative Assistant: | Jenny Dawes |

After the formalities of the AGM, we were addressed by Dr. Martin Breed, standing for our intended speaker, Professor Andy Lowe. Martin is an Australian Research Council DECRA Fellow within the School of Biological Sciences in the University Of Adelaide. His talk was on the complexities of the re-establishment of ecological systems and the background studies required to make these work. Parallels could be drawn with our own experiences.



Left: Hoverfly with Pultenaea acerosa (Bristly Bush-pea)

The Occasional Author:

Here is another piece by Steve Davey, highlighting the value of remnant vegetation and the continuing, often unintended, pressures such areas are continually suffering.

Port Julia, a Study in Tenacity

I had occasion to spend time in a different kind of world, on the edge of the monoculture of upper Yorke Peninsula. Inland, the heart is gone from the natural systems which once prevailed, but on the coast there can sometimes be found echoes and remnants of the former diversity.

Between the shack city of Black Point and the yachting mecca of Port Vincent is a tiny settlement called Port Julia. Even the name is romantic. I had stopped in there briefly on trips to the Peninsula but only knew it as the area near the small jetty, with pale cliffs behind a tiny, narrow beach. A pleasant and peaceful place: a good photo site. This time I was staying in a house north of the jetty and the older shacks which encroach right on to the beach, threatening to fall into the slowly rising sea. The house was up above the foreshore along an unsealed road, and I was immediately taken by the beauty of the view. What made it so special was that the sea formed a backdrop for a strip of mallee which filtered the two-tone blue of the sea-grass filled bay and the pale yellows and buff colours of the reef, gradually being exposed as the tide ebbed.

Over the next few days I was able to explore the remarkable diversity and natural history of the bay. The vegetation may only have formed a narrow strip, but it supported a significant population of plants and birds, seeming to punch well above its weight for such a restricted remnant. My host for the stay was involved in the local bushcare group and was able to enlighten me regarding the geology, human history, birds and plants of this quiet part of the peninsular.

Several species of eucalypts are still represented in the coastal strip, along with a healthy understorey, in spite of a long history of human involvement, going back to the days of sailing ketches and bagged wheat. I saw a family of babblers noisily scouring the vegetation along a road verge in the morning and, remarkably, the increasingly uncommon dusky wood-swallow lining the overhead wires like so many starlings or sparrows. The way in which the narrow strip of mallee links in to other patches of vegetation along the coast must mean that the birds have a reasonable, if linear, foraging area. The local bushcare group has had the good fortune to be granted use of an old road reserve which the council handed over to be used as a revegetation corridor to areas inland.

Life on the offshore reef was also in evidence. I saw one specimen of the endangered Hooded Plover along with groups of the commoner birds like Red Capped Plovers and Oyster Catchers feeding when the reef was exposed.

The geology on display in the cliffs embraced tens of millions of years, and it felt strange to put my hand to places where the layers between epochs belied the scale of their formation. I learned that rounded limestone boulders got their shape from being smoothed in the waters of an ancient river, and a famous outcrop of soft jade-green stone, north of the jetty, was composed of the droppings of marine animals from a time beyond our imagining.

For those of us who dwell on the eastern side of the Gulf of Saint Vincent, it is almost a spiritual experience to watch the sun rise over the sea, and I was up early to capture images of this phenomenon. It produced wondrous ochre and yellow colours in the cliffs.

Despite the excellent work of concerned locals to preserve and enhance the remaining natural habitat, it was disturbing to see that a new subdivision had been approved and was underway just back from the foreshore, supplanting the gentle, fragile and scattered mallee with an inappropriate sea of Colorbond and hard surfaces. Out on the reef it is still legal for people to walk where they will and remove a quota of razor fish or disturb anything that gets in their way.

I got the feeling that in Port Julia I was looking back in time, and this glimpse showed me something so extraordinarily precious that we ought to be doing everything humanly possible to protect it. It isn't quite too late.



The Port Julia Coastline

Photo: Steven Davey

Bio-control on St John's Wort:

In my recent travels, I have noticed some small beetles feasting on the spring growth of St John's Wort (*Hypericum perforatum*). A little research revealed these to be the defoliating chrysomelid beetles, of which two species were first released in the 1930s, *Chrysolina quadrigemina* and *C. hyperici*. The adult beetles are bronzy black, dark-blue, or purple, about 6 mm long and oval in shape. The larvae are orange with dark heads and the eggs are orange. Both larvae and adults defoliate the weed, larvae attack the winter growth and adults attack the spring growth.

Within a few years at favourable sites the beetles can reach densities which are high enough to cause complete defoliation. Judging by the amount of flowering St John's Wort around at the moment, I don't think we are quite at this point! Preferring open, sunny situations, they are most effective at suppressing flower and seed production at these sites. The beetles have low mobility and need to be physically transferred to new infestations to become established.



Bird Banding Notes:

Bad weather put paid to any banding activities in August, with the result that our first activity was on the 18th September. Results of our work since then are listed below. Even then we could only work on two days, due to the continued wet and stormy weather.

| | | | |
|--------------|--------|-----------|------------------------------------|
| 18 September | Gate 7 | 7 species | 12 captures including 2 recaptures |
| 29 October | Gate 3 | 4 species | 11 captures including 4 recaptures |

Superb Fairy Wrens recaptured at both Gate 7 and 3 were aged at 4+. All other recaptures were of last year birds.

Talking of our avian neighbours, have you noticed this?

Signs of the Times:

Have you noticed that there are crunching sounds and little mewling calls coming from some of our gardens and parts of the Park? This is the time that the hakea pruners move in and feast on the ripe hakea seeds. Jenny Dawes has captured one of the pruners in the act.



Programme December 2016 - February 2017

During summer, all working bees meet at 8.30am at Gate 16 Almanda Car Park

**NOTE: WORKING BEES CANCELLED IF FIRE BAN
ANNOUNCED FOR MOUNT LOFTY RANGES**

| Month | Date | Activity | Location |
|------------------|-------------|----------------------------------|---|
| DECEMBER | | | |
| Saturday, Sunday | 3, 4 | Bird banding | Gate 20 opposite Thorley Road, 6.00am |
| Tuesday | 6 | Working bee | Gate 3 Area 7, Sollya along western boundary (then Freesia 30m NW of Crossroads junction) |
| Sunday | 11 | Working bee | Gate 20 Area 33, Panhandle, finish Sollya near Mushroom houses (then Creekside broom) |
| Friday | 16 | Christmas Function | At Reid's residence, 224 Mt. Bold Road, Bradbury, 6.00pm start. BBQ available, BYO meat, drinks, chairs and a salad/ sweets to share |
| Saturday, Sunday | 17, 18 | Bird banding | Gate 13 Mackereth Creek, 6.00am |
| Saturday | 24 | No working bee today | Cancelled: day before Christmas |
| JANUARY | | | |
| Tuesday | 3 | Working bee | Gate 11 Area 16/17, Old Gate 10 site at top of Upper Mackereth Creek, broom & bulbs (bring diggers and bags) |
| Sunday | 8 | Working bee | Gate 11 Area 19, end ETSA Spur Track, boneseed & other woody weeds |
| Saturday, Sunday | 14, 15 | Bird banding | Gate 21 Derwentia Creek, 6.00am |
| Wednesday | 18 | Social Lunch All welcome! | The Artisan, Blackwood 12 midday |
| Saturday | 28 | Working bee | New location: Gate 14 Area 13, boneseed along Fern Creek |
| FEBRUARY | | | |
| Saturday | 4 | Bird banding | Gate 4, 6.00am |
| Sunday | 5 | Excursion | Laratinga Wetlands, Mt. Barker, 8.00am |
| Tuesday | 7 | Working bee | Gate 17 Area 23, Echidna & Stockyard Tracks, boneseed |
| Sunday | 12 | Working bee | Gate 15/16 Areas 22/25, Almanda Creek & Swamp area, blackberry, woody weeds, etc |
| Thursday | 16 | Social Lunch All welcome! | Fred's, 220 Mt Barker Rd, Aldgate, 12 midday |
| Saturday, Sunday | 18, 19 | Bird banding | Gate 9, 6.30am |
| Saturday | 25 | Working bee | Gate 13 Area 20, boneseed & woody weeds either side of Twisted Chimney Track |

NOTE: NEW 8.30AM START FOR SUMMER WORKING BEES

Christmas Function:

This will be held this year on Friday 16th December at the Reid's residence, 224 Mount Bold Road, Bradbury, starting at 6 pm.

Bring chairs, a table, own meat and drink plus salad or dessert to share. We have a Weber MiniQ barbecue, which should be able to handle a moderate amount of snaggers and steak, but a second similar appliance wouldn't go astray, if someone can bring one.

Last year, a very hot fire ban day cancelled this function. Pray for better weather this time around.

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

President: Peter Watton (H) 8270 4354 (M) 0427 010 949, 11 Banes Road, Coromandel Valley, 5051. Email: peterw@treesforlife.org.au

Vice President: Jim Spiker (H) 8276 6724, 42A Vancouver Avenue, Panorama 5041. Email: spikpics@internode.on.net

Secretary & Bird Banding Coordinator: Don Reid (H) 8388 2123 (M) 0488 174 992, 224 Mt. Bold Road, Bradbury, 5153. Email: dre00249@bigpond.net.au

Treasurer: Donella Peters, (H) 8339 5639 (M) 0407 417 247, 10 Boomerang Cres, Aldgate, 5154. Email: dld@internode.on.net

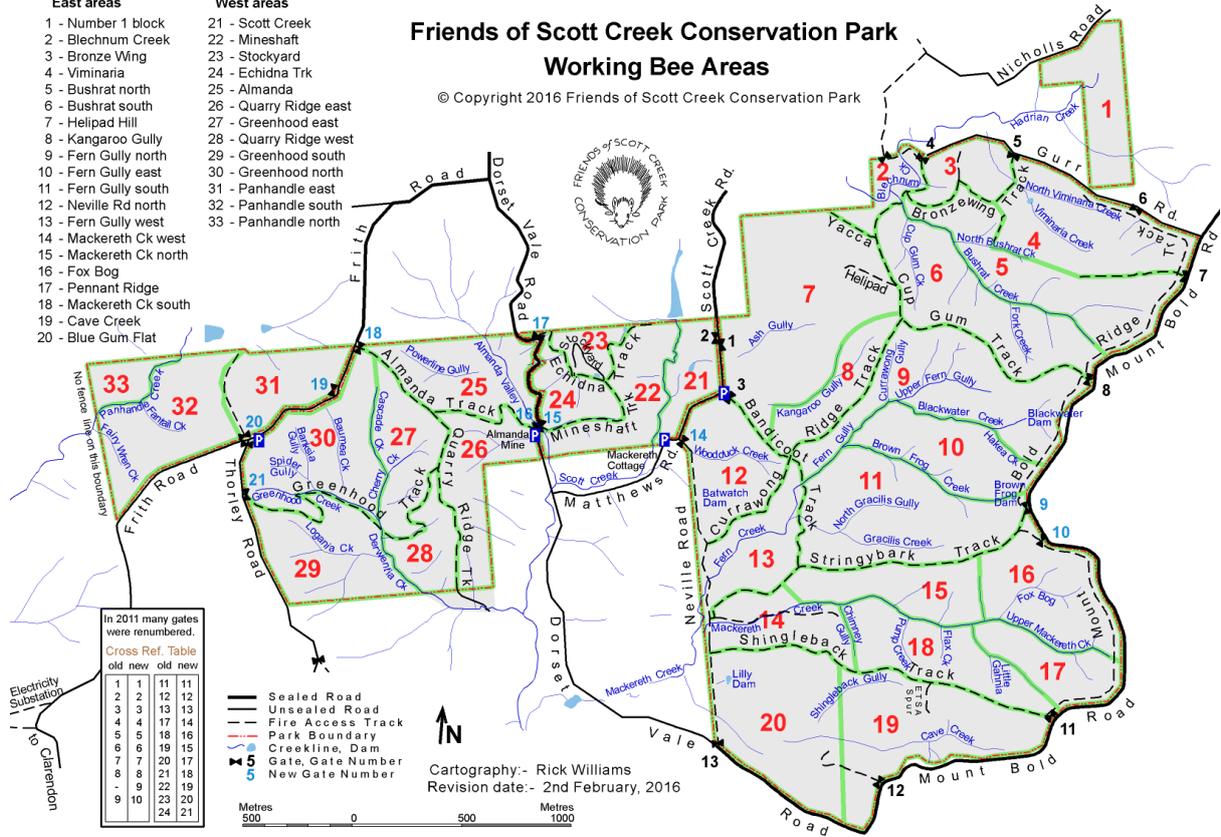
Working Bee Coordinator: John Butler (H) 8278 2773 (M) 0427 164 290, 5 Trevelyan Court, Coromandel Valley, 5051. Email: jhbutler36@gmail.com

Administration Assistant: Jenny Dawes (H) 8388 2297 (M) 0427 841 425, Email: jdawes@chariot.net.au

- East areas**
- 1 - Number 1 block
 - 2 - Blechnum Creek
 - 3 - Bronze Wing
 - 4 - Viminaria
 - 5 - Bushrat north
 - 6 - Bushrat south
 - 7 - Hellipad 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 - Almunda
 - 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

Friends of Scott Creek Conservation Park Working Bee Areas

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Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all

Almanda Blue is the world's rarest plant
Almanda Blue is the FoSCCP Pot plant of
the year
Almanda Blue is the perfect Xmas present



Order your ideal Xmas present now
Receive your plant the week before Xmas

\$20 if picked up from John Wamsley's place – otherwise \$25.

Proceeds to the Almanda Project