



# *Bandicoot Tails*

## **Newsletter of the Friends of Scott Creek Conservation Park**

No. 171

June – August 2018

### **The President's words:**

Wow! What a great turnout we had on Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> May, at our third annual Open Day to showcase the Almada Project.

Thanks to some great publicity, we had over 400 people come along and enjoy a beautiful autumn day in the park. There were articles in Weekend Notes, The Courier and The Weekender Herald, notices scattered around the district by members of the group, sharing by Friends of Parks Inc amongst our fellow Friends groups, shares amongst our Facebook friends, plus we had a large number of families come along after seeing a post on *WeChat*, the Chinese social media app.



Part of the crowd that attended the open day.

Most people who came along took advantage of the fine weather to pick up a guide from the Friends' stand and go on the self-guided walk. This year, the 12 page guide, prepared and printed by John Wamsley, had 76 entries, matching up with labelled plants and other items of interest along the way. Many visitors also stayed on for a picnic lunch on the mown area.



Walkers in Almada Valley.



Visitors stayed for a picnic lunch.



The female Scarlet Robin banded during the open day – photo by Ursula Dutkiewicz.

Two of our bird banding nets were set up along Mineshaft Track, to give visitors a chance to see what this regular Friends’ activity involves. Unfortunately, the birds were not so cooperative, perhaps because of the proximity to our large crowd. We did, however, manage to catch one beautiful female Scarlet Robin for measuring and banding during the day. I’m told that our regular Senior Ranger, Jen, put in a special request for a Scarlet Robin, so it seems she has considerable pull in these matters.

Warrawong2U Mobile Sanctuary had the children (and many of their parents) captivated as they were able to get up close and even handle a couple of their native animals, including the Sleepy Lizard to the right.



Meanwhile we had one of our own locals perched in the lower branches of a Manna Gum, just above the Friends’ gazebo all day. She very kindly posed for photos for much of the day, but in the end I think it was a bit too much for her so she had a snooze.



The small local Scott Creek Primary School managed to provide the many visitors with hot soups, a sausage sizzle, cakes and hot and cold drinks throughout the day (see report from Chris, one of their students, on the next page.

Thanks to the 22 FoSCCP volunteers who helped out on the day, with a special thanks to John and Steve for the extra work they put into preparing the guided walk, including placing the labels out along the trail.

Lastly, a big thank you to everyone who came along and got to enjoy the park we love.

Peter Watton

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**Friends Of Scott Creek Conservation Park at Almanda mine**

On the 6th May, the Friends of Scott Creek Conservation Park set up a Showcase Day at the Almanda Mine in Scott Creek Conservation Park. Scott Creek Primary was invited to have a refreshments stall so we arrived at 9 am and set up the stall under a tree that had a koala sitting in it. We sold chocolates, biscuits, muffins, homemade soups, soft drinks, fruit boxes and water. The koala was asleep but woke up later when everyone arrived.

We also spent quite a lot of time sitting around doing nothing so I took this as an opportunity to learn some Chinese. There were also lot of trails, which you could walk around on, and guided tours. At the end of the day I went on two of the trails. They were great because they had signs on them pointing out the various native plants and features.

Around lunch time people from Warrawong came with native animals to hold and pat. I got to hold a female sleepy lizard (*Tiliqua rugosa*).

The school raised a lot of money and promoted the school. I found the event a lot of fun and it has interesting to catch up with people that I hadn't seen in a long time.

Chris Fitch



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## Working Bees:

The Hands On Team had to contend with a little inclement weather, but most activities proceeded as scheduled.

Most of our autumn work concentrated on the central and eastern parts of the park, until the last Saturday of May, when we were joined by new member Ian Preston, as we patrolled for regrowth Montpellier Broom through the northern edge of The Panhandle. Unfortunately we also found a lot of Bridal Creeper emerging after its summer dormancy, which will need to be targeted later in the season.

Other work included visits to the north end of Scott Creek, Fern Gully between Neville Road and Bandicoot Track and the edge of the park above Mackereth Cottage, which had not been visited for a while and benefited from the attention it received from our enthusiastic bush gardeners.

Late April involved a group exploration along Bushrat Creek, to see how the area is recovering after the November 2016 prescribed burn and treat a number of the Boneseed, Broom, South African Daisy and Fleabane that we found along the way. After morning tea, by which time we hadn't progressed very far down the creekline, we walked down towards the intersection with Bushrat North and then cut back up to the cars. The regeneration of native plants is terrific, including the nationally endangered Mount Lofty Speedwell (previously Derwentia).



Chris and the Johns inspect the Mount Lofty Speedwell at the Bushrat Creek working bee.

There has been a good deal of work on priority weeds throughout the burn area, by both Park's staff and one of our contractors. While there was some off-target spray damage noticed, the work has been of very high quality. The lack of treatment of South African Daisy and Fleabane in the burn area is particularly disappointing to some of our members, though I



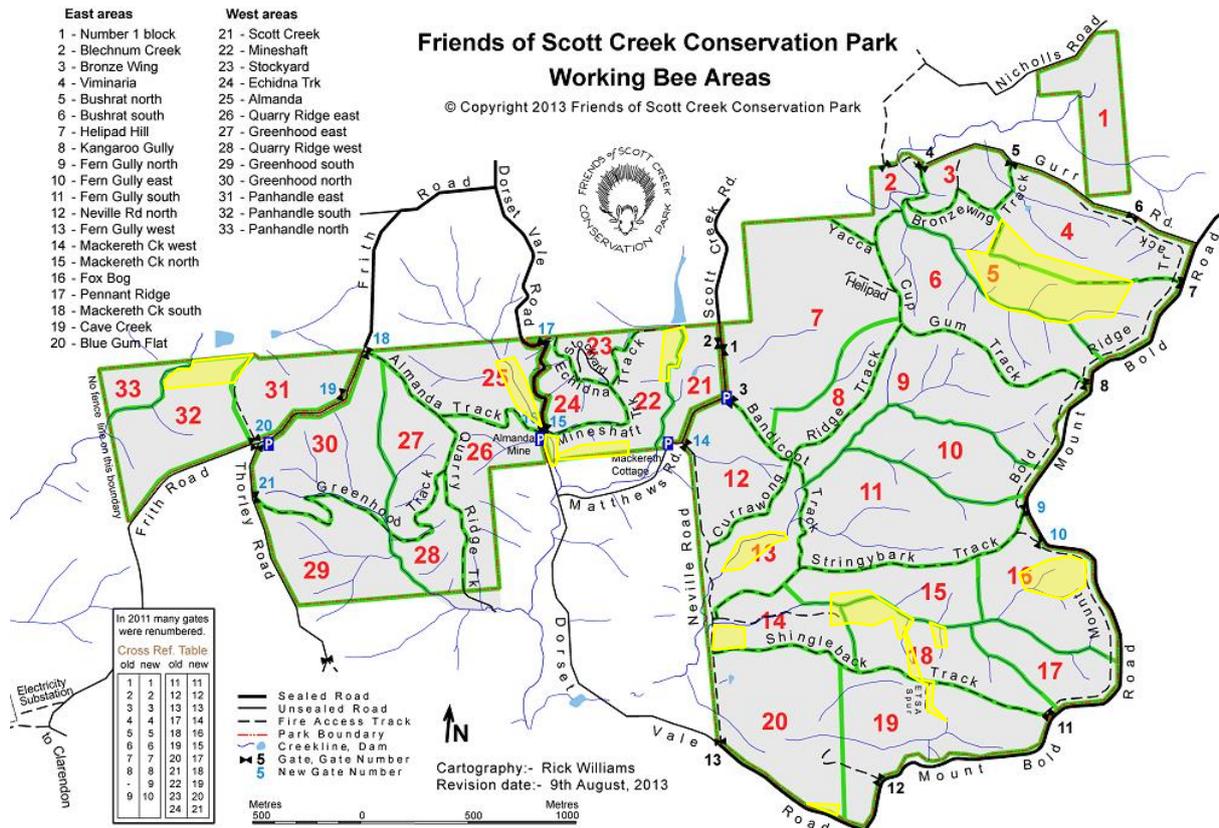
Glenn starting work on several large Boneseed near Mackereth Creek.

understand that the longer lived woody weeds, like Boneseed, Broom, Blackberry and Erica, are the higher priority. In many areas, the South African Daisy and Fleabane tend to be outcompeted by the regenerating native vegetation over time, while the other woody weeds can prevent this regeneration.

On Mother's Day, a small group tackled some steep terrain along Mackereth Creek, to remove several patches of Boneseed that had previously been mapped, but avoided treatment due to lack of time and easy access.

The dry summer extended well into autumn, so that Peter and Glenn could continue spraying areas of Blackberry, particularly around Fox Bog and, by Glenn, in Mackereth Creek, extending the work he was involved in as a contractor – thanks Glenn. Some of the patches of Stinkweed were also sprayed along a couple of the park tracks.

The great work also continued in Almada Creek, with regular working bees most weeks. This work came to a head as we got ready for our Open Day on Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> May, with final weeding and track preparation, and a survey for special plants and other items of interest to be labelled as part of the self-guided walk. Thanks to all involved, with a special mention to John W for his leadership and surveying and Steve for his brushcutting efforts.



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***A surprise discovery***

Glenn came across a very interesting find while spraying Blackberry in Mackereth Creek. Next to a pool of water that was overgrown with Blackberry, he found a water drum, bucket and rope, somewhat concealed amongst the undergrowth. It was quite clearly labelled with the Friends’ group name and “Water for Blackberry spraying”. The idea appears to be to draw water from the pool using the bucket and rope, then filling the drum and, in turn, use that water to fill spray units. It seems that Tom is still looking over us and making sure we have no excuse for not finishing off the Blackberry spraying.



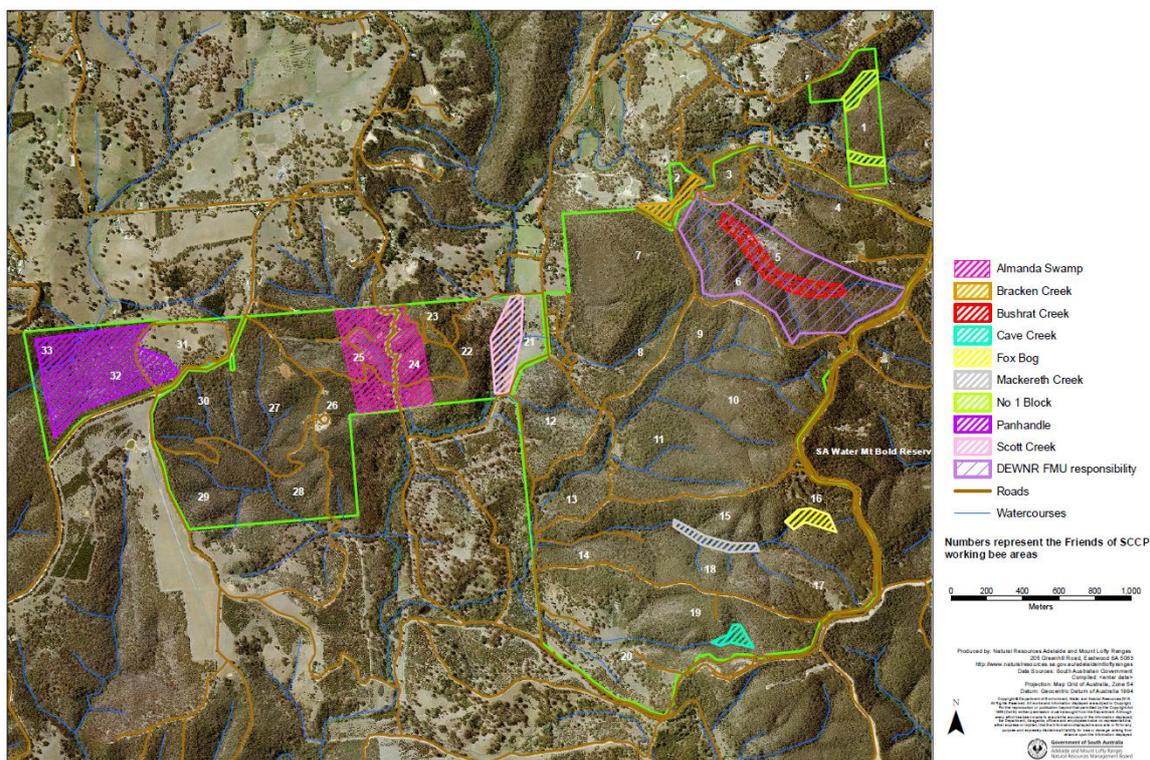
## Contractor work being undertaken in the park:

There has been a huge amount of contractor work undertaken in the last few months, with work unable to start earlier as we waited for funding approvals before being able to commit to it. Blackberry spraying formed a large part of this work and needed to take place before the end of the optimum spray period for this financial year. This work should be able to be spread out over a longer time span next summer, as we have the budgets already in place. Many thanks to the contractors, including Better Bushland, Environmental Contracting Services, Minimal Disturbance Bushcare, South Australian Indigenous Flora and TFL Works.

Here is a summary of this contractor work:

- Number 1 Block – follow-up Blackberry spraying in south creekline, Erica and other woody weed follow-up and extend weed front either side of south creekline, Blackberry spraying in north creekline (haven't seen report yet confirming this was done).
- Blechnum Creek – follow-up and extend Blackberry spraying and Broom and other woody weed treatment.
- Scott Creek – Blackberry spraying either side of creekline (including the use of waders and a canoe), woody weed treatment including drill and fill or basal bark treatment of Dog Rose, Desert Ash, Olive, Prunus and Willow.
- Cave Creek – follow-up and extend Blackberry spraying around main infestation.
- Mackereth Creek – follow-up and extend Blackberry spraying upstream of Twisted Chimney.
- Almada Valley – Blackberry spraying throughout valley.
- Fox Bog – follow-up Blackberry spraying throughout valley.

The map below shows the broad areas targeted for work under this plan.



*More from our contractors...*



Montpellier Broom sprayed in Bushrat Creek.

Blackberry sprayed near the junction of Bushrat and North Bushrat Creek.



Part of the Tree Heath forest recently treated next to North Bushrat Creek.



The native Oriental Sigesbeckia thriving amongst the dead Blackberry sprayed in Mackereth Creek this season.



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## Bird Banding Notes:

The weather caused its usual interruptions to our timetable in these last three months. Despite the very dry summer, we lost mornings to either predicted rain or very high temperatures. Easter also precluded any work that weekend. What work we managed to carry out was quite productive, as shown below.

3-4 March Gate 20 The Panhandle 39 captures inc. 7 recaptures 7 species. Our numbers here were boosted by a haul of 21 Red-browed Finches, which kept us busy. All the recaptures were 1+ or 2+, as we have only been working this area comparatively recently.

19-20 May Gate 3 Crossroads 20 captures inc. 11 recaptures 9 species. Saturday morning was a bit damp for an hour or so, but the clouds finally cleared. Our yield wasn't as high as we expected, especially on Sunday, when the conditions for banding seemed perfect; overcast and no wind. However, mostly the birds ignored us. The weekend was unusual in that we had more recaptures than captures. Of note were a Crescent Honeyeater (6+) and a Superb Fairy-wren (7+).

Don Reid



**Above:** a Red-browed Finch.



**Right:** our bird banding team hard at work at The Panhandle in March.

**Below:** releasing a group of Red-browed Finches together after measurements have been taken.



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**Photo Gallery:**



**Clockwise from above:** Austral Brooklime, Cut-leaf Kangaroo-apple, Cranberry Heath, Flame Heath, fungi (*Gymnopilus junonius*), scats in amongst rocks in Mackereth Creek (lizard's?) and Common Heath.





**Above:** A pond in Mackereth Creek surrounded by native creekline vegetation.

**Right:** The unusual Twisted Chimney, which seems to be subjected to small amounts of damage by the occasional visitor.

**Below:** Another small pond with the native Slender Dock growing next to it, and frogs happily calling nearby (you had to be there).



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## **Calendar of Environmental Events coming up:**

### **Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> June is World Environment Day**

Humans are both creatures and moulders of their environment, which gives them physical sustenance and affords them the opportunity for intellectual, moral, social and spiritual growth. In the long and tortuous evolution of the human race on this planet a stage has been reached when, through the rapid acceleration of science and technology, humans have acquired the power to transform their environment in countless ways and on an unprecedented scale.

The United Nations, aware that the protection and improvement of the human environment is a major issue, which affects the well-being of peoples and economic development throughout the world, designated 5 June as World Environment Day. The celebration of this day provides us with an opportunity to broaden the basis for an enlightened opinion and responsible conduct by individuals, enterprises and communities in preserving and enhancing the environment. Since it began in 1974, it has grown to become a global platform for public outreach that is widely celebrated in more than 100 countries.



### *“Beat Plastic Pollution”*

Each World Environment Day is organized around a theme that focuses attention on a particularly pressing environmental concern. The theme for 2018, “Beat Plastic Pollution,” is a call to action for all of us to come together to combat one of the great environmental challenges of our time. The theme invites us all to consider how we can make changes in our everyday lives to reduce the heavy burden of plastic pollution on our natural places, our wildlife – and our own health. While plastic has many valuable uses, we have become over-reliant on single-use or disposable plastic – with severe environmental consequences.

<http://www.un.org/en/events/environmentday/>

### **Friday 27<sup>th</sup> July is Schools Tree Day and Monday 30<sup>th</sup> July is National Tree Day**

Planet Ark recently celebrated 22 years of National Tree Day and Schools Tree Day - Australia's largest community tree-planting and nature care event. Proudly sponsored by Toyota Australia, Tree Day is an opportunity to do something positive for your local environment and community and to reconnect with nature. National Tree Day started in 1996 and since then more than 4 million people have planted over 24 million trees and plants and it's still growing.

<https://treeday.planetark.org/about/>



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A HERBAL Remedy for LIFEACHE.

you suffer  
from lifeache



Lie on the grass  
beneath one tree  
and contemplate  
the other tree.



your whole life  
is sore; it hurts  
when you move it.



nap from time to  
time or gaze  
occasionally at the  
grass.



HERBAL REMEDY.  
Take one patch of  
grass, a mild day  
and two large, green trees.



Pain will subside.  
Lifeache cannot be  
cured but you can  
learn to MANAGE  
THE SYMPTOMS.



Leunig



## Winter Program of Activities June – August 2018

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

**NOTE:** Activities in the park 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.

### **Working bees: meet at 9.00am in winter at Almanda Mine Car Park, Dorset Vale Road**

Meeting here for working bees enables everyone to sign in and be brought up-to-date with late changes to the program. BYO morning tea and a small back pack to carry it, for occasions when we are working further from the cars.

Month	Date	Activity	Location
<b>JUNE</b>			
Saturday, Sunday	2, 3	Bird banding	Gate 20 Panhandle east, 7.30am
Tuesday	5	Working bee	Gate 20 Area 32 Panhandle south: woody weeds
Sunday	10	Working bee	Gate 13 Area 14 Stringybark Track: Erica
Tuesday	12	General mtg <b>All welcome!</b>	Cherry Gardens CFS, 294 Cherry Gardens Rd, 4.00pm
Saturday, Sunday	16, 17	Bird banding	Gate 11 Pennant Ridge, 7.30am
Tuesday	19	<b>Social Lunch</b> <b>All welcome!</b>	The Artisan - Blackwood, 12 midday (down lane beside Bendigo Bank)
Saturday	23	Working bee	Gate 9 Area 11 Stringybark Track: woody weeds
<b>JULY</b>			
Sunday	1	<b>Social outing</b> <b>All welcome!</b>	Waterhouse Natural Science Art Prize, SA Museum: meet 10.30am in its coffee shop
Tuesday	3	Working bee	Gate 13 Area 20 Shingleback track: Boneseed, Rose
Sunday	8	Working bee	Area 1 Number 1 Block north-east corner (Nicholls Road): woody weeds
Saturday, Sunday	14, 15	Bird banding	Gate 15 Mineshaft Track, 7.30am
Wednesday	18	<b>Social Lunch</b> <b>All welcome!</b>	The Essence - Stirling, 12 midday (via lane between Gardiners Real Estate & children's wear shop)
Saturday	28	Working bee	Gate 11 Area 18 north of Shingleback Track: woody weeds
<b>AUGUST</b>			
Saturday, Sunday	4, 5	Bird banding	Gate 13 Mackereth Creek, 7.00am
Tuesday	7	Working bee	Gate 11 Areas 18 & 19 ETSA Spur Track area: woody weeds
Sunday	12	Working bee	Gate 9 Area 10 Brown Frog Dam: woody weeds
Tuesday	14	General mtg <b>All welcome!</b>	Venue and time to be advised
Saturday, Sunday	18, 19	Bird banding	Scott Creek, Mackereth Cottage, 7.00am
Thursday	23	<b>Social Lunch</b> <b>All welcome!</b>	Joan's Pantry - Hawthorndene, 12 midday (Watahuna Ave opposite the oval)
Saturday	25	Working bee	Gate 7 Area 5 Mt Bold Ridge Track: Erica

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

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