



Bandicoot Tails

Newsletter of the Friends of Scott Creek Conservation Park

No. 163
May-August 2016

The President's Words:

As we approach the end of our amazing Almanda Project's second year, the necessity to prepare a President's Report for the next annual Almanda Report has caused me to reflect on our progress over the last twelve months.

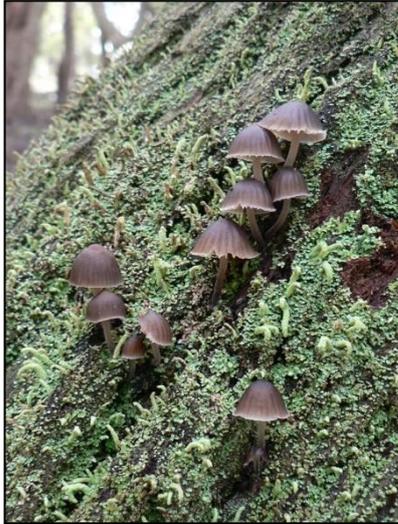
What I have found is that the funding we have received, whether directly as a result of our Almanda Project fund raising, or indirectly through some excellent support from DEWNR and NR AMLR, has seen an enormous amount of contractor work being undertaken across the park during the year. Work that has aligned with the objectives of the Almanda Project has taken place in seven of the eight creek systems in the park (as mapped in the Almanda Report 2015).

Our 'Hands On Team' has continued to attend our bush gardening days in good numbers, often attracting 8-10 members. When the sums are done, I am confident that we will have again contributed over 1,000 hours of on-ground volunteer hours in the park. This has seen us spread our work throughout all of the park's creek systems, which is critical in ensuring previous efforts are not wasted. Undertaking this follow up will help prevent re-establishment of the weeds and allow the native vegetation to become more robust, which in turn helps to reduce future re-infestation.

In addition to the on-ground hours, a huge volume of time has also been contributed to bird banding and behind the scenes activities, with business meetings, website maintenance, Bandicoot Tails, planning and reporting, general correspondence and many more.



Above: the unusual flower of the native daisy Oriental Sigesbeckia (*Sigesbeckia orientalis*) in Blackwater Creek



Above: Fungi growing on a dead tree

Donna and Don have spent countless hours compiling information and photos and laying out the design for the Friends of Scott Creek CP 25 Year Anniversary Book. Les has added many more hours as he worked to transfer this information into an electronic format, while others have helped with proof-reading duties.

At this time I would also like to acknowledge and thank Les for the years of terrific work he has contributed to designing and maintaining the Friends' website. This is a really important means of showcasing and providing information to the general public about the park and our activities. We have received much positive feedback about the website over the years, and the stunning photos are always a great way of drawing people in. Les has decided that it is time to pass the baton on to someone else and we

are fortunate to have Rick Williams willing to take it on.

That's about it for now. Enjoy the rest of your Bandicoot Tails and remember to pop a few dates from the programme in your diary and get out in the park to be at one with nature.

Peter Watton



Above: Blackberry treated in Blackwater Creek earlier this year below a rocky outcrop

Let's Talk Weeds

South Australia, I thought it would be a good idea to have a new look at it.



If I were asked what the worst weed in Scott Creek Conservation Park was, I would have difficulty choosing between Blackberry (*Rubus laciniatus*) and Tree Heath (*Erica arborea*). Both these species can only be described as 'out of control' in Scott Creek Conservation Park.

Tree Heath has just been given the new status of 'declared plant' in South Australia. However, I must start with a warning! The information I am quoting is from the South Australian Department of Primary Industries. They are best remembered for their quote on African Daisy which went viral, 'Restrictions on the sale and transport of African daisy will not be necessary if enforced control is stopped'.

The bits of the Declared Plant Policy which may be of interest to our members are set out below.

Declaration:

To implement this policy, Tree Heath is declared under the Natural Resources Management Act 2004 throughout the whole of the State of South Australia. The movement or transport of the plant on a public road, by itself or as a contaminant, or sale by itself or as a contaminant, is prohibited. In the Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges region, NRM authorities may require land owners to control tree heath plants growing on their land. NRM authorities are required to control plants on road reserves, and may recover costs from the adjoining land owners. Tree Heath is declared in category 3 under the Act for the purpose of setting maximum penalties and for other purposes. Any permit to allow its movement or sale can only be issued by the regional NRM Board pursuant to section 188.

Weed Risk:

Invasiveness

Tree Heath takes 3-4 years to begin producing seed. It has very high seed production, millions annually from a large bush. The seeds are tiny and disperse short distances by gravity, wind, water, slashing or soil movement. Long distance dispersal is mainly dependant on human activity by planting, or accidental transport of soil containing seeds on vehicles and machinery.

Seed germination may occur in autumn or spring. Seedlings are vulnerable to dry conditions and therefore recruitment is episodic. Infestations may begin on road verges, clearings and drainage lines, later extending into adjoining undisturbed native vegetation.

Impacts

Tree heath is competitive in native vegetation, invading gaps and preventing regeneration of other shrubs due to shading and possibly allelopathic effects. It forms dense pure stands that dominate the shrub stratum in native vegetation, and have the potential to alter the composition and diversity of plant communities. It has no known impacts in agricultural production or human health, but is unpalatable to stock except as seedlings. On roadsides it may require expensive control to maintain sight lines due to the height and density of established plants.

Feasibility of Containment:

Control costs:

Heaths are difficult to manage in native vegetation because they grow among native plants, have high seed production and may form a soil seed bank.

Burning is not recommended as it is likely to favour heaths due to their rapid regrowth. In areas that have been burnt, a follow-up treatment before the seedlings reach flowering size is important. Hand removal of small heath plants including the root is possible in moist or light soil. Heaths are not specifically listed on herbicide labels; herbicide applied by spray, stem injection or to cut stumps according to available permits can be highly effective.

No biological control agents are available for heaths.

Persistence

Individual tree heath plants live for 50 years or longer. They develop a massive lignotuber at the base, from which new stems will grow rapidly if the top is damaged by fire or slashing. Like other heaths, it has a deeply penetrating mycorrhizal root system that enables it to survive hot dry summers.

State Level Risk Assessment:

Weed Risk in native vegetation - negligible.

Feasibility of control - very high.

Response at State Level – monitor.

Considerations:

Tree Heath was introduced as a garden ornamental shrub in colonial times and first recorded as naturalised in 1931. Its wood, known as briar, is imported for making tobacco pipes and knife handles but it is not cultivated for this purpose in Australia.

Risk assessment indicates a management action at State level of monitoring in native vegetation. However, the local weed risk of tree heath is higher in high rainfall areas. In the Mount Lofty Ranges NRM region a strategy of site management by enforced control is justified.

Happy Weeding!!

John Wamsley

Here is a little note about some of the help the Park has been getting from ZoosSA Youth at the Zoo program.

YATZ update: Scott Creek

On Monday 18 April the YATZ crew helped out with the obnoxious plant problem at Scott Creek Conservation Park. We had to dig out the lignotuber of a plant called Erica that grew out all over Scott Creek. We spent two 45-minute sessions digging out hundreds of Erica and we still didn't clear the area we were at! After the sessions we had a bush walk through a creek, which was previously covered in blackberry bushes.

During the walk I slipped and cut my leg on a log, it turned out to be very big (7.5cm long!) and I had to disinfect it after. I learnt I have to be more careful when walking in a slippery area because I almost had to get stitches!

During the bush walk we saw a spring near a swamp. It was a really cool experience because the YATZ crew were one of the first ones who got to see it.

This day wouldn't have happened without our host, John, who took his time and showed us how much he has accomplished in his life and he is still doing everything he can to help conserve wildlife. I am so grateful for what this day has given me, I learnt to never give up in order to help the environment.



Jem Cleere

YATZ member, ZoosSA

Article reproduced from 'Keeping Track' courtesy of ZoosSA

In our previous issue, Steve Davey's expose of his misadventure in Gluepot was so well received, I asked him for another contribution. Enjoy!

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Baudin's Ravine

In 1802, from the deck of his ship *Geographe*, the French Captain Nicholas Baudin saw a valley reaching deep into what is now called Kangaroo Island. He saw large, flightless birds in this valley. The only birds of this kind he was familiar with were Cassowaries. And so he named the place Ravine des Casoars, or, the Valley of the Cassowary. These birds were, in fact, a dwarf sub-species of Emu unique to Kangaroo Island. By the time of official European settlement, a mere thirty-four years later, the species was totally extinct.

By stretching a point, this little mis-naming represents, for me, the way in which European perceptions were simply not adequate to the new world they had encountered. The early people were, through no fault of their own, unable to see what it was they were looking at. Neither were they able to see far enough ahead to understand the impact their actions would have on what was an extremely fragile, though unspeakably old, natural system.

I first became aware of the existence of this valley when I found a slim volume in a school library. It was to be more than forty years before I would visit the place. It became like a pilgrimage.

There was no one else in sight on the winter day when I set off on the narrow track to follow the ravine to the coast. The extent of my enchantment can be gauged by the fact that the outward leg of the hike took me at least twice as long as the return. Words like mesmerised, spellbound, transported and awed are not too strong to convey what I experienced.

Wild fire had gone through the area a couple of years before, and the regrowth of Sugar Gums formed an impenetrable thicket along the track, broken by the massive trunks of fallen trees. Moss covered much of the timber as well as the stone outcrops along the track, further adding to the fanciful air of unreality. Limestone escarpments could be glimpsed where they dropped vertically into the vegetation. The pale, surreal, bare trunks of burnt trees reared above dense regrowth. I looked forward to sighting the stream which had carved out the valley and was not disappointed when I saw how beautiful it was, flowing over rounded boulders. My excitement grew as the valley approached the coast and the stream widened into a peaceful estuary between the folds of the hills.

First glimpses of the sea revealed ocean waves upon a beach narrowly enclosed between tall cliffs. The only sign of human imposition was a small wooden bridge to enable walkers to cross the stream and access the beach. Still in a state of reverie, I sat inside a small cave in the sea-cliff to rest and have something to eat. There I watched mist blowing in off the breakers and had the entire place to myself. Really, little had changed since the time Baudin saw that valley.

On the opposite side of the beach were more extensive caves, but the rain-swollen waters of the estuary were deep and closely hugged the base of the cliffs so that access was not possible without swimming across. It is rumoured that there is an engraving on the wall of the caves which may have been put there by a French sailor. I like to believe such things.

I had read advice which recommended carrying a 'karma bag' in which to put storm-washed detritus found on the coast. It was dismaying to find such material in so remote a place. I filled a small bag with the wave-worn plastic cast-offs from passing ships. But this could not detract from the isolated grandeur of the hidden beach and the dense vegetation which altered in character with each change in the landscape. Likewise, the stream was undisturbed, its tannin stained waters hosting all of the plants long vanished from the mainland streams. It gladdened me to think that some corner of the world had remained largely untrammelled.

On returning home after this trip, I remember commenting that, for me, it simply doesn't get any better.

Bird Banding Notes:

Since the last report, we have operated at Mackereth Creek and gate 11 sites, and started a new site at Gate 20, at the junction of Thorley and Frith Roads. This area is in the Panhandle where we haven't worked before, is an area of earlier DEWNR replanting of a cleared paddock and up-valley from the Derwentia site. Our hope is to document the avifauna at a regeneration site and also to intercept any movement upstream from Derwentia.

19-20 March	Mackereth Ck.	24 captures inc 5 recaps	5 species
2 April	Gate 11	5 do. 1 do.	4 do.
14-15 may	Thorley Rd.	43 do. 3 do.	8 do.

Notable results were 8+ and 5+ Whitebrowed Scrubwrens at Mackereth Creek and also a Bassian Thrush: and a 6+ Eastern Spinebill at Thorley Road, previously banded at Derwentia Creek, nearly a kilometer to the south-east. We already have our first movement through our new site.

Weather may well affect our operations in the next wintery months, so keep an eye out for messages a day or two before the event, in case things are looking inclement.

New Park Pass:

DEWNR are introducing a new Gold Park Pass to be issued to Members of Friends Groups who have a record of at least 15 years of active service. Donella has drawn up a tentative list of our members who fit the criteria. The number is quite substantial. Don will apply for the passes on behalf of the qualifying members.

The passes will allow the following:

- Free entry to all parks in the State, where vehicle entry fees apply.
- Free entry to all parks in the State, where personal access fees apply.
- Free camping up to 5 nights in any one location at any one time
- 50% concession on the use of facilities in parks.
- Free guided tours where applicable

A Walk In The Park:

John Wamsley has suggested we pick a day or two a month to go for a wander through the park. The intention would be to see what needs to be done and ascertain when we should do it. While there may be the occasional weed whipped out as we pass it (boneseed watch out), the aim would be to map the work to be done and come back and do it, not spend the day weeding. Of course we would also get to enjoy our wonderful park and probably get to see some bits we haven't seen before. Over time we would get to see the whole park.

This idea has already been put into practice, with John and Steve Davey having a good look at the Viminaria Creek catchment on the 20th. June. We will schedule one weekend day a month to further this programme.

Editor's Apologia:

Steve Davey sent some photos with his essay, but I have not been able to include them due to my inability to make them fit the page! They are good, too.

I have also run into difficulties with email. Somehow I picked up a very nasty ransom virus (a bogus AGL letter?). My regular laptop is still in hospital so my normal mailing list is unavailable. Jenny Dawes has supplied me with an older one, so if anyone misses out, this Tails will be sent out again when my machine is returned, hopefully fully recovered!

Programme June - September 2016

All working bees meet at 9.00am at Gate 16 Almanda Car Park

NOTE: WORKING BEES CANCELLED IF FORECAST TEMPERATURE FOR ADELAIDE IS 36°C OR ABOVE OR IF FIRE BAN ANNOUNCED FOR MOUNT LOFTY RANGES

Month	Date	Activity	Location
JUNE			
Sat & Sun	18,19	Bird banding	Gate 7, 7.30am.
Saturday	25	Working bee	Gate 14, Area 12, Batwatch Dam, broom, boneseed, gorse
JULY			
Sat & Sun	2,3	Bird banding	Gate 9, 7.30am.
Tuesday	5	Working bee	Gate 8, Area 6, Bushrat Ck., boneseed.
Sunday	10	Working bee	South of Gates 18 & 19, Area 30, boneseed, Acacia longifolia, Erica, gorse
Sat & Sun	16,17	Bird banding	Gate 20, new Panhandle site, 7.30am.
Tuesday	19	Business Meeting	*Note different day of the month this time* Butler's Residence, Coromandel Valley, 7.30pm.
Thursday	21	Social Lunch All welcome!	Blackwood Golf Club - 12pm. (611 Cherry Gardens Road - just south past oval at junction of Ackland Hill & Ironbank Roads)

Saturday	23	Working bee	Gate 3, Area 8, north of Crossroads, mixed weeds
Sunday	24	Social outing All welcome!	Waterhouse Exhibition, SA Museum , meet at Museum Café 10.30am.
Saturday	30	Park walk	A Walk in the Park - TBA
AUGUST			
Tuesday	2	Working bee	Gate 3, Area 11, south of Fern Gully, boneseed
Sat & Sun	6,7	Bird banding	Gate 3, Crossroads, 7.30am.
Sunday	14	Working bee	Gate 9, Area 10, Brown Frog Gully, boneseed & Erica
Tuesday	16	Social Lunch All welcome!	The ESSENCE - Stirling 12pm (via lane between Gardiners Real Estate & children's wear shop).
Sat & Sun	20, 21	Bird banding	Gate 9, 7.00am.
Saturday	27	Working bee	Gate 20, Area 33, Panhandle, Sollya
Sunday	28	Park walk	A Walk in the Park - TBA
SEPTEMBER			
Sat & Sun	3,4	Bird banding	Gate 20, new Panhandle site, 7.30am.
Tuesday	6	Working bee	Gate 20, Area 32, Panhandle, Erica & boneseed
Sunday	11	Working bee	Gate 3, Area 11, Gracilis Creek, blackberry & boneseed
Wednesday	14	Social Lunch All welcome!	Mylor Café - 12pm (cnr Strathalbyn Road & Cross St)
Sat & Sun	17, 18	Bird banding	Gate 4, 7.00am.
Saturday	24	Working bee	Gate 2a, Area 21, broom, boneseed, mixed weeds
Sat & Sun	24, 25	Open Gardens SA	Fund raising event at Wirrapunga Indigenous Garden, Williams Road, Aldgate, 10am-4.30pm
OCTOBER			
Tuesday	18	Social Lunch All welcome!	The ARTISAN - Blackwood 12pm (down lane beside Bendigo Bank)

Meeting at the Almanda Mine for working bees enables everyone to be brought up-to-date with late changes to the programme. Bring a small back pack in case we are working further from the cars.

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

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

Friends of Scott Creek Conservation Park Working Bee Areas

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East areas

- 1 - Number 1 block
- 2 - Blechnum Creek
- 3 - Bronze Wing
- 4 - Viminaria
- 5 - Bushrat north
- 6 - Bushrat south
- 7 - Hellpad 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

