



Friends of Woorabinda Bushland Reserves

NEWS LETTER

Number 65, March 2020

Thirty years a-growing

The 30th anniversary of the protests that eventually led to the Woorabinda Bushland Reserves we have today was celebrated at the AGM in November with bubbles, a lake walk and the award of life membership to three highly deserving recipients.

It was also a celebration of the fact that after three decades, the reserves had finally been recognised and protected with the award during the year of Natural Vegetation Heritage status.

Janet Pedler led a guided walk around the lake for about a dozen people before the meeting. One of the highlights was a pygmy copperhead at the side of the path but it quickly slithered into the bush rather than join the party.

David Ragless provided the commentary for a short slideshow of photos showing highlights from the past three decades. (A brief history of the reserves is available at the Historical Society at the Stirling Library).

Lorri Ragless presented the reserves' long-time patron and supporter, the former mayor of Stirling District Council Anita Aspinall with a life membership certificate.

Phil Hicks did the honours for Jack and Shirley Benlow, in recognition of the years they had spent mapping, photographing, promoting, weeding and working for years as secretary of the Friends.

A complimentary glass of bubbles was provided for everyone before the usual barbecue, with our current patron, Professor Chris Daniels, formally proposing a 30th anniversary toast.



Anita (l) and Lorri



Jack (l) Shirley and Philip

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The Time Capsule has been opened

In the year 2000 a time capsule was interred adjacent to the freeway Heysen Tunnels to be opened in 2020. It was known as the The Hills Community and 'The Courier" Time Capsule, and was supported by the Adelaide Hills Council and District Council of Mt Barker.

Several local businesses provided sponsorship and Bank SA provided Certificates to those who participated.

Various organisations were invited to purchase an official Capsule envelope in which to put memorabilia and comments. Community groups, businesses, schools, families and individuals were included.

Friends of Woorabinda Bushlands (known at the time as Friends of Stirling Linear Park) bought an envelope and put in it the group's vision statement, a newsletter, brochure, walking map and a Council notice regarding a forthcoming review of Woorabinda Reserves purpose and management.

Friends committee members Shirley and Jack Benlow, who at the time were Secretary / Publicity Officer and Newsletter Editor respectively, organised the Capsule participation. At the time the full Friends Committee was not very enthusiastic about Capsule participation so it was

left to the Benlows to prepare the submission. Friends Bank SA Certificate was No 3083.

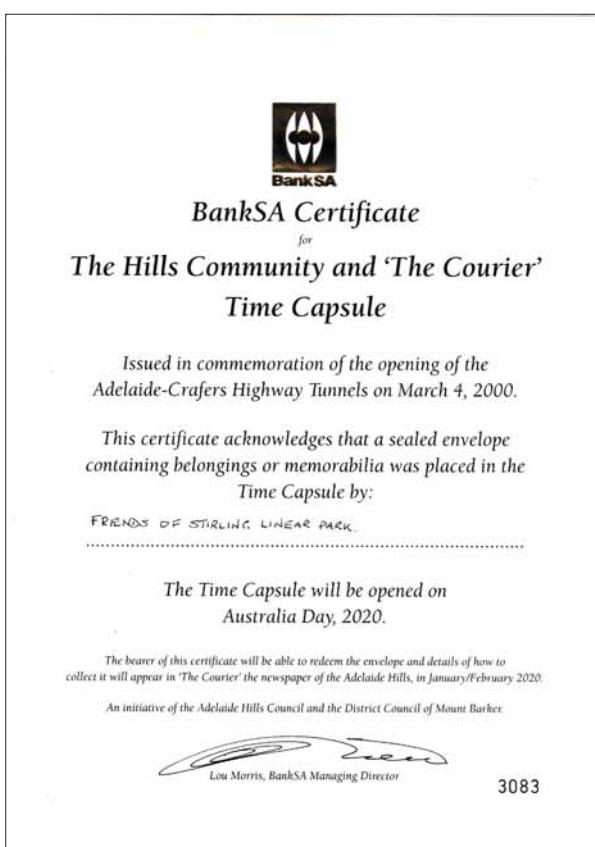
The Capsule was recently opened by Adelaide Hills Council who hosted a morning tea for Capsule participants with some of the contents on display. Sadly many of the contents were so damaged by water ingress that they were unrecognisable.

The Friends packet could not be found, however we have copies of all the contents, most of which make interesting reading now.

Firstly, our Vision Statement listed six things that we hoped would be achieved by 2020. All but one of these has been fully achieved and one is regarded as a work in progress - that 'all park users will have come to understand the special nature of wetlands and the need to love and respect their finely balanced biodiversity'.

Secondly, our 2020 Walking Guide for the reserves (produced by Jack Benlow in 1999) continues almost unchanged with only a couple of minor updates.

Thirdly, the Council Reserve review reconfirmed that the Reserves are of high conservation value and should be appropriately managed.



Bushcare and weed control working bee report

Our monthly Sunday working bees are held in three of the four reserves making up Woorabinda Bushland Reserves. An average of 13 volunteers took part in the four working bees held since the previous Newsletter: two in Woorabinda Reserve and one each in Madurta Reserve and Stirling Park. (There were no Thursday working bees over the summer period.)

In each working bee we undertook much-needed follow-up weeding. This was mainly around the margins of the good quality bush in areas in which we had reduced the quantity of weeds through follow-up work over a number of years. In one of the Woorabinda working bees, we extended our work into an area where we had not previously worked and removed large woody weeds from between the fence near the boardwalk and the road. These weeds were effectively seed banks for the spread of weeds back into an area where we had already made good progress.

Thursday working bees, Woorabinda, 9 - 11am

March 26	August 27
April 30	September 24
May 28	October 29
June 25	November 26
July 30	

Thanks to working bee members for their suggestions about areas warranting bushcare work. Thanks also to those who provide the morning tea we all appreciate after the working bees.

In addition to his long term bushcare work in Hender Reserve, Bob James has continued to work in Hender with Bush for Life teams funded by Adelaide Hills Council.

Council funded CVA teams of around six to eight volunteers worked for three days in November 2019 on removing large woody weeds from areas of Stirling Park and Madurta Reserve. FoWBR volunteers Anne, Bob, David R, Jan, Jane and Philip worked, one at a time, with the CVA teams.

Working bee schedule for 2020, 9 - 11am

March 15	Madurta	Madurta Avenue
April 19	Stirling Park	Branch Road
May 17	Woorabinda	Woorabinda Drive
June 21	Woorabinda	Woorabinda Drive
July 19	Stirling Park	Branch Road
August 16	Woorabinda	Woorabinda Drive
September 20	Woorabinda	Woorabinda Drive
October 18	Madurta	Madurta Avenue
November 15	Woorabinda	Woorabinda Drive
December 20	Stirling Park	Branch Road

Woorabinda Bushlands history: are you interested?

- How do we happen to have the bushlands?
- Who saved them from subdivision for housing?
- Who has attracted funding for re-vegetation?
- Why are the Reserves important?
- Other questions?

You can find answers in the Stirling Library.

A history folder has been completed by Friends volunteers as part of the Mount Lofty Historical Societies 'short history' folder set. It is available for reading in the History Society's room.

If you cannot find an answer to your question in the library email the Friends: woorabinda@internode.on.net

They are always happy to answer questions.

New posting for our patron, Chris Daniels

Professor Chris Daniels has taken up a new position, CEO of the International Koala Centre of Excellence (IKCE).

The IKCE was established by the South Australian Government. Its roles, in relation to koala research, management and conservation, are to :

- conduct and co-ordinate research;
- raise funds;
- foster collaboration;
- provide national leadership on strategies for sustainable management;
- understand community / koala relationships;
- connect interested parties; and
- educate the community and interest groups.

The disease-free koala insurance population newly established at Cleland Wildlife Park will be central to the work of the IKCE. We wish Chris every success in his new posting.

Life's Cycle: Rescue; Renewal; Recovery

Amid the COVID-19 emptiness of supermarket shelves and other madness, Woorabinda continues to tell uplifting stories which remind us that there is still plenty of room for hope and enjoyment of the natural world around us.

Rescue

With fauna rescue rightly in the news, Woorabinda has been pleased to play a part by providing a new home for four orphaned Pacific Black Ducks.

On January 19, Ella Jones released the ducks at Woorabinda as part of her Fauna Care volunteer duties. She and her mother had cared for them for 10 weeks until they were old enough to fend for themselves.

Renewal

Did you notice that in late October and early November chicks of the Dusky Moorhen and the Eurasian Coot appeared around the shores of our lake? Watching these little balls of fluff moving through the undergrowth or swimming after their parents was a true delight. Even better though, was to see the tiny chicks of spring had become, by February, noisy adolescents vying with their parents for our attention.

Despite increasing urbanisation and its associated threats for our native animals, Woorabinda has provided a safe habitat for these fascinating birds to raise their chicks.

The successful breeding season of the coots and moorhens is one obvious example of the importance of our bushland reserves in maintaining populations of our local native plants and animals. Keep your eyes open for others.

Recovery

In February 2014 an area of around three hectares on either side of the Linwood Trail to the southeast of the Woorabinda Lake was burnt. The fire was thankfully brought under control by prompt CFS action well before it reached adjoining properties. Part of the burnt area had been rated as having the highest biodiversity value of any area within an Adelaide Hills Council park or reserve.

The relatively low intensity of the Woorabinda fire was significantly different from the recent fires in the Adelaide Hills.

From a layman's perspective, it has been fascinating to observe the regeneration that has occurred since the fire. Photos taken in the months after the fire show evidence of strong regrowth, helped by favourable weather conditions over this period.



The ducks launch into Woorabinda Lake

In the spring following the fire, a carpet of flowers appeared in the fire area. The October 2014 photo shows prolific flowering of *Burchardia umbellata* (Milkmaid). Flowering species more evident in other areas included *Kennedia prostrata* (Running Postman) and a number of orchid and native daisy species.

Within a couple of years, the regeneration was so extensive that most of the photo monitoring points set up after the fire were covered in vegetation meaning it was no longer possible to take photos from these points.

By around three years after the fire, most of the regeneration was very dense and difficult to penetrate, while in a few areas regrowth was much slower and more open.

Now, after six years, the boundary between the regenerating vegetation and that surrounding it is still very clear but the vegetation is gradually becoming less dense. This is due to loss of vigour in some of the earlier pioneer species such as *Acacia myrtifolia* and *Ixodia achillaeoides* (Fire Daisy) as well as fallen trees and branches.

A number of large Stringybarks in the fire area have recently died but this may be part of a wider trend after a series of drier than average years. At the same time, new growth Stringybarks are evident over much of the fire regeneration area.

For some years before the fire, the invasive weed *Sollya heterophylla* was a problem in the burnt area. After the fire the *Sollya* problem worsened as multiple plants appeared from seed banks activated by the fire. Natural Resources Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges funded a specialist weed control contractor to work on removing *Sollya* over two successive years. As a result of this work, *Sollya* is more under control than it would otherwise have been but we need to continue our ongoing long term follow-up work.



15 Feb 2014



15 Oct 2014



13 Jan 2015



28 Feb 2020

The 'new' committee

Alas, there was, as usual, a great dearth of nominations for the Friends' committee at the AGM.

With the average age of the committee rising year by year, the issue of succession planning is becoming ever more urgent.

Once again, the meeting was happy to re-elect the existing committee, and to leave it to them to appoint their officers at the first meeting in the new year. A great compliment to the long-serving committee, perhaps, but not a sustainable procedure for the longer term.

The committee does have the power to co-opt new members, so anyone interested in joining at any time should simply contact any member of the committee.

The committee meets every third Tuesday of the month at 7.30 pm in the Environment Centre overlooking the lake for nine or ten months in the year. (There is normally no meeting in January, November's meeting is replaced by the AGM, and the December meeting is usually dropped in favour of a Christmas get-together).

As last year, the 'new' committee is:

Kathy Bowman (membership and website)
Merilyn Browne (newsletter) 8339 6839
Brian Donaghy (chair), 8339 2033
Marilyn Forward (displays)
Phil Hicks (Past chair, treasurer, working bee coordinator) 8338 3156
Iris Iwanicki 0438 535 058
Bob James (deputy chair) 8339 1903
Janet Pedler (volunteer support)
David Ragless (past chair, historian) 8339 1038
Lorri Ragless (secretary and publicity) 8339 1038
Jan Walker 0418 851 266

Contributors to this issue include Brian Donaghy, Lorri Ragless, David Ragless, Kath Bowman, Jan Walker, Philip Hicks and Merilyn Browne.

Affiliations: The Friends of Woorabinda Bushland Reserves Inc. is a member of Friends of Parks Inc. It is a registered Landcare Group and a member of Greening Australia, Trees for Life and the Central Hills Green Web.

Disclaimer: Contributors' views and opinions expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily the views of the editor, the committee or the general membership of the Friends of Woorabinda Bushland Reserves Inc.



Friends of Woorabinda Bushland Reserves Membership application/renewal

I/we would like to join/renew membership of the Friends of Woorabinda Bushland Reserves Inc. (Strike out words not applicable)

Membership fee for both individuals and family: 1 year, \$10.00, 5 years, \$40.00

\$.....membership fee is enclosed.

\$.....donation is included. (Donations of \$2.00 or more are tax-deductible. A separate receipt will be issued.)

*Payment included / Bank transfer made (*please circle your payment method)

Name.....

Address.....

.....**Phone**.....

Email address for sending Newsletter.....

Please return this form to: Brian Donaghy, Friends of Woorabinda Bushland Reserves Inc., 3 Branch Road, Aldgate 5154

Bank transfer details:

BSB: 105-079

Account: 040748240

Ensure you include your name and "Subs" or "Subs/Don)" for identification of your payment.