

FRIENDS OF WAITE CONSERVATION RESERVE Inc.



COMING EVENTS

Walking Bees

1st Saturday &
3rd Sunday each
month

August—October

Springwood Park
Entry off Old Mt Barker
Road

November & December

Gate 82
Entry off Hillside Road
Springfield



THE UNIVERSITY
of ADELAIDE

President's message

Welcome to our new 'winter' newsletter. At our last meeting, the committee decided to produce four newsletters per year rather than our standard two - in autumn and spring. This will necessarily mean a little more work for our Editor - thanks Clint - although each newsletter will be a slimmer version. Most newsletters are already sent electronically so there will be little extra cost, but the benefit will be that we keep in better touch with you, our members. Please let Helen know if you wish to receive your newsletter via email if you do not already do so.

This issue is a fungal tour de force with reports from our wonderful AGM speaker and from our recent fungal frolic. I thank speaker Pam Catcheside, and frolic leaders Helen Vonow, Julia Haska and Tony Robinson and to committee members who helped out.

On the Committee front, thank you to last year's members, all of whom have climbed aboard again this year Helen, Lynda, Clint, Erinne, Penny and Peter Lang plus Jennifer as ex officio.

At its core the Friends group is a band of dedicated and friendly people who enjoy being in the bush helping the University to protect the plants and animals that inhabit a glorious patch of local native bushland. We do this mostly by systematically walking through the reserve weeding out the baddies and encouraging the goodies. Please join us any first Saturday or third Sunday morning of the month 9.00am - noon. We'd love to show you around.

Ring me on 0418 853 834.

Peter Bird



Just because it has pink gills does not mean that it is safe to eat.

Yellow Stainer mushrooms look quite similar to button mushrooms, but for many people, they are poisonous. If eaten, the Yellow Stainer can cause stomach cramps, nausea, vomiting, sweating and diarrhoea. For a few people they cause no problems at all. Do you want to take the chance?

Pam Catcheside advises that you buy your mushrooms and be safe.



One of the nice things about Friends Working Bees is the view. Details of our Spring Working Bees are on Page 5.

Come and join us on one of them.

The wonderful world of fungi

Pam Catcheside's passion for fungi came through very clearly in her presentation to the Friends AGM.



Pam Catcheside is thanked for her presentation by Peter Bird

Without fungi the world as we know it would probably not exist. They have lived for at least 1500 million years, but our knowledge of their evolution is limited by their poor fossilisation. Their soft fleshy fruiting bodies are easily crushed and degrade quite quickly and hence do not turn up often in the fossil record. What can be found as fossil fungi, are their spores, which are hard to detect.

In many ways, fungi are more like animals rather than plants. It would be wrong to think of them as being simpler than plants, on the contrary, they are heterotrophs like us ie they have to break down other material to gain their food. Like us, they breath oxygen. Whereas plant cell walls are made of cellulose, fungal cell walls are made of chitin, which we would commonly see as the outer body of an insect or a crustacean.

Imagine if there were no fungi **destroying** dead materials. Very quickly, we would be engulfed in a rising mass of dead matter. Fungi have the ability to digest lignin, which makes them useful in decomposing plant materials. In a tropical forest a typical fallen leaf takes just 21 days to transform from leaf to nutrients on the forest floor. Much of that transformation is due to the work of fungi.

Many plants (90-95%) have formed associations with fungi. These mycorrhizal

associations are important for the health of the plant as the mycelia are much finer than a root hair, which enables them to extract nutrients and make them available to the plant. The plant in turn provides sugars and shelter for the fungus. In some forestry operations, seedlings or the soil are inoculated with fungi to kick-start these mycorrhizal associations.

Fungi provide us with beneficial drugs for example the penicillins and cephalosporins. They also are the source of diseases such as ringworm and thrush. But because fungi are more like animals than plants, finding the right chemical to kill them, without doing damage to us, is tricky.

We usually do not think of fungi as weeds, but Pam showed several examples of this phenomenon. The "toadstool" of many children's tales Fly Agric *Amanita muscaria* is now well established, especially in moister climates such as Tasmania. Yellow Stainer *Agaricus xanthodermus* is a species which is increasing its distribution in South Australia. It has the added problem for humans that it is poisonous, but looks quite similar to the button mushrooms one would find in a shop.

The species which is of most concern is the Death Cap Mushroom, *Amanita phalloides*. If eaten, the victim will probably not experience symptoms for 3 days, by that stage, major damage to the liver and kidneys has already happened. **Be safe—buy your mushrooms.**



Fly Agric *Amanita muscaria*

Pam's talk was illustrated with photographs by David Catcheside. We are fortunate that we have two such talents in South Australia.

Clinton Garrett

From the Committee

The new committee positions were organised at the June 30th meeting following the AGM.

President: Peter Bird

Secretary: Helen Pryor

Treasurer: Lynda Yates

Editor: Clinton Garrett

Committee members:

Jennifer Gardner

Peter Lang

Penny Paton

Erinne Stirling

Treasurer's Report

Lynda tells us that currently we have 25 members.

Our financial position is sound, with just over \$7000 at bank.

We have renewed our membership of Friends of Parks Inc.

We appreciate that some members have donated money to the group over and above their membership fees. Thank you cards have been sent to those members.

Fungal Frolic

To be held on 11th July from 9.00 am to 12 noon. Helen Vonow to lead with assistance from Tony Robinson and Julia Haska. Erinne has organised gifts for leaders . Helen has organised advertising.

Weed Matters

Clinton reported that he had re-inspected the previously sprayed *Pennisetum* plants. About 80% appear to be dead, but the remaining plants are producing flowering heads. These have been removed.

There will be further follow up on this infestation in late spring.

Jennifer reported that EBS had started work on clearing a section of olives up-slope in Wild Dogs Glen. Doing this will remove some of the cover that the deer use. The area will need to be monitored for regenerating olives over the next few years.

Peter has modified the small olive popper so that it works more effectively.

Bridal Creeper control will be done in late July. *Euphorbia* at the head of Wild Dog's Glen will be a target of one of the spring working bees.



EBS workers in action in Wild Dogs Glen. Olive trees are cut down, the stumps drilled and poisoned and the foliage of the olives is burnt.

If you have not done so already it is time to renew your membership.



You can mail your cheque to our treasurer Lynda Yates at:
PO Box 19
Brighton SA 5048

Or EFT

Bank: Credit Union SA

BSB: 805 007

Account No: 7226301

Account Name: Friends of Waite Conservation Reserve

Reference Code: [Your name: eg J. Jones subs or subs+donation

Individuals \$15
Families \$20

Fungal Frolic

The rain, hail and forecast snow turned away all but eight hardy souls, but in reality the weather was mostly rather pleasant with no wind and some beautiful sunny patches.

Helen Vonow, Julia Haska and Tony Robinson from the Adelaide Fungal Studies Group led us on a meandering walk from the BBQ table at Gate 88 to Pultenaea Hill, Sheoak Slope, Quartz Hill and back.



The brave ones!

The fungi are a poorly known group and the taxonomy very confused but the leaders were able to put names to several species, thus making a start on compiling a list of fungi for the reserve.



***Geastrum (like fornicatum)* An earthstar**

Along the way we saw a lovely mix of 18 native species including gilled fungi, earth stars, puff balls, truffles and brackets. Colours ranged from whites, greys and browns through to bright yellows, orange and red. One, Ghost fungus, is even luminescent.



***Omphalotus nidiformis* (Ghost fingers)**



***Amanita* sp.**



Working Bee Report

Working bees this year are concentrating on the systematic removal of olive seedlings from the 96 hectares of reserve previously cleared of mature olives. This was our aim last year as well when we treated about 80 percent of the reserve. In April we started on the 16 hectares unfinished from last year, mostly in Stone Reserve. Despite fine weather and great enthusiasm, we made slow progress due to the need to tree-pop or poison many older seedlings and re-growth as a consequence of several years delay in follow-up after primary clearance.



Olive seedlings removed in the Stone Reserve

Meanwhile, an early start to the growing season meant that weedy grasses were quickly threatening to obscure small olive seedlings elsewhere in the reserve. A decision was made to switch to areas treated last year where, theoretically there would be fewer, smaller seedlings and we could quickly cover more ground before the grasses made our job impossible. Did it work? You betcha – with a record-breaking 20 hectares covered in a single 'walking' bee.

Consequently we are back on track to cover most of the reserve in the allotted 16 working bees. It gives me hope that in a couple of year's time, having removed the larger seedlings and re-growth, we will be able to quickly re-walk the entire reserve in a few days each year, leaving more time to devote to other weeds and other tasks.

Peter Bird

SPRING 2015 WALKING BEES

Walking Bees are held on the first Saturday and third Sunday of the month.
9.00 am—12 noon

September: Saturday 5th
Sunday 20th

October: Saturday 3rd
Sunday 18th

November: Saturday 7th
Sunday 15th

December: Saturday 5th

Bring your lunch, so that we can sit and chat at the end of the session

Working bees will continue to meet at Eagle on the Hill entrance until (and including) Sunday 20 September.

The last five working bees from Saturday 3 October until Saturday 5 December will start from Springfield Gate (Gate 82).



