

FRIENDS OF WAITE CONSERVATION RESERVE

NEWSLETTER



**SPRING 2001
NUMBER 3**

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Waite Conservation Reserve receives \$29,000 from Natural Heritage Trust

Adelaide University has secured a grant of \$29,000 from the Australian Government's Natural Heritage Trust for 2001-02 for its project "Conservation & Restoration of Grey Box Grassy Woodland".

The Federal Government has announced that the project, one of more than 2,900 applications received from around Australia, was one of 244 to be funded in South Australia under the Trust's fifth full year of operation. The Natural Heritage Trust funds practical, on-ground works by local community groups that are contributing to sustainable conservation of Australia's unique biodiversity.

As a significant example of grey box grassy woodland, Waite Conservation Reserve is an important link in the integrated bushcare program across the Adelaide Hills Face Zone. Effective pest plant and animal control is the cornerstone of our conservation and restoration work. There is also a strong focus on monitoring and research leading to better environmental management strategies. Community participation is encouraged and supported and information shared through strong Friends' and volunteers' programs. By working with high school and university students we are fostering and educating the next generation of conservation biologists and land managers.

The Waite Conservation Reserve comprises 125 ha and 289 indigenous plant species have been recorded, including 43 which have state or regional conservation status. In addition, a dozen species of mammals, 68 species of birds, and 11 species of butterflies (two of 'rare' or 'vulnerable' status) have been recorded, with most of the remaining fauna still to be documented. Heritage Agreements are pending on the Waite Conservation Reserve and adjacent Stone Reserve.

The 'in-kind' support provided by the Friends of Waite Conservation Reserve was an important contribution to our successful application for Natural Heritage Trust funds.

Jennifer Gardner

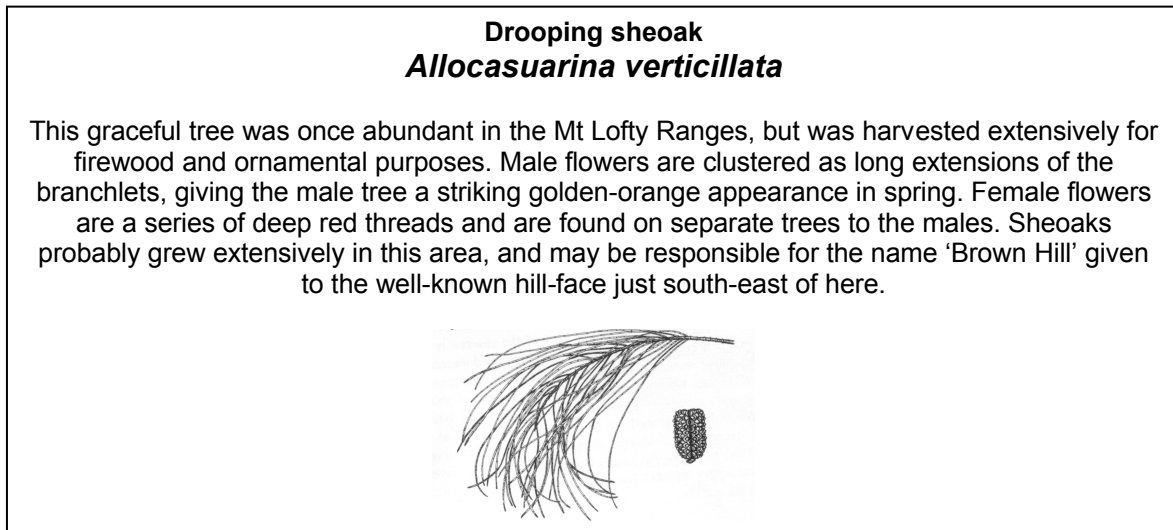
International Year of the Volunteer 2001 Small Equipment Grant

Friends of the Reserve have secured a grant of \$1,560.72 from the Commonwealth Government to purchase small equipment including mattocks, loppers, secateurs, gloves, crowbar and other items. These will facilitate working bees. Congratulations to our Honorary Treasurer Lynda Yates who prepared this successful application.

Mitcham Community Development Grant

Good news has come through recently that the Friends have secured a community development grant from the Mitcham Council for improving community access and understanding in the reserve. This will be achieved by upgrading some of the walking trails and by installing interpretive signage at key points around the reserve, introducing visitors to the unique flora and fauna of the area and encouraging them to work as a community to support its preservation. Hopefully this will help both casual and regular visitors to get more out of their time in the reserve. A new sign for the southern entrance to the reserve has been installed. A draft list of smaller interpretive signs for the nature trail has also been drawn up and will be finalised once we decide on the materials to be used and obtain costings. We hope to be able to install 10-15 of these signs, highlighting historical and geological features, plants, mammals and birds.

An example of one of the signs is show below:



Scott Field
President

Plants and Animals of Waite Conservation Reserve

The Grey Box – *Eucalyptus microcarpa*

This is the dominant plant species over much of the WCR and determines the vegetation type of the Reserve - "Box grassy woodland". Woodland vegetation is characterised by the dominant trees having large canopies relative to their height, and trees being spaced apart such that their canopies do not overlap one another.

The "Box" eucalypts are a distinct group which have a characteristic bark type of short, interlaced fibrous strands which extend up the trunk as far as the major branches. The other main groups of eucalypts are the "Gums" with smooth bark, and "Stringybarks" with thick, long-fibred bark.

In favourable conditions the grey box may reach 25m in height. *E. microcarpa* woodlands can be found in the Southern Flinders Ranges, on the western slopes of the Adelaide Hills and in the South-east of the State.

The flowers appear in late summer – early winter and with a heavy flowering, which may occur only every 7 to 10 years, a good yield of light amber honey can be obtained.

The Yellow-footed Marsupial Mouse – *Antechinus flavipes*

This small, nocturnal, carnivorous animal makes its home in tree hollows and piles of dead wood. It has brown, somewhat bristly fur and a pointed face, which contains the characteristic carnivore's set of sharp teeth, which it uses to capture and eat insects and other small animals.

Mating occurs in winter, and the tiny young are born after about 30 days gestation. 10 to 12 babies attach to the teats of the mother until the time they are able to fend for themselves.

Following mating, which is prolonged and a somewhat violent affair, all the males then die before the end of the year. This is thought to be due to complex hormonal and behavioural changes which occur during the breeding season.

Although these creatures are essentially nocturnal, there are reports of sightings of *Antechinus* foraging during the day and being unafraid of the human observers.