

FRIENDS OF WAITE CONSERVATION RESERVE

NEWSLETTER

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From the President

Dear members and friends,

I'm writing this President's page today, as Scott Field has had to resign as President due to work and other commitments. As Vice-President I will fill his shoes until the next AGM.

I would publicly like to thank Scott for his leadership of the Friends of the Waite Conservation Reserve over the last three years. He was both a good spokesperson for the reserve and for the natural values of the Mt. Lofty Ranges as a whole.

In addition he helped instigate a successful *Walk with Nature* and he wrote much of the text for the new signs that have been placed in the reserve over the past 12 months.

We are pleased that Scott will maintain an active link with the management planning for the reserve.

The new committee will continue in its role of providing much of the support for the working

bees and the other work crews who are continuing to battle our collection of olives and other assorted weeds.

The spring weather and wildflowers means this is a good time to help out at the working bees. The damp soil makes it easy to remove olive seedlings and other weeds. It's also been particularly pleasing to see some of the native plant regrowth in areas that have recently had olives removed.

I hope to see you at a working bee soon or if there are other ways you would like to help the committee please do not hesitate to contact us.

Chris Kaczan

Working Bee Update

Spring working bees will be held on the following dates:

Sat Oct 11
Sun Oct 26

Sat Nov 8
Sun Nov 23

9 am - 1 pm

Meet at Garrett's gate, unless advised otherwise.

Dear friends,

Welcome to spring! The weather is improving and the reserve is looking lush and colourful, so it's the best possible time to come and enjoy it before the summer break.

Recent Achievements

There's not as much to report on recent activities as I would like, due to the cancellation of several winter working bees.

The last two successful WBs have targeted African feathergrass. (At least, that is what it's been known as, but checking the Native Grass Resources Group's 'Grass Identification Manual', I suspect the one we have is actually *Pennisetum setaceum*, or fountain grass, rather than *P. villosum*.) This is a tough, tussocky grass with soft, feathery purple flowers, often seen in gardens. It has made itself at home on some of our drier slopes and, although it doesn't seem to spread rapidly, it certainly has the potential to become a problem, so I'm keen to control it before it becomes too established. Spraying has not worked in the past, so we've resorted to simply digging it up – after removing any flowers or seeds. So far this seems to be effective, as long as the entire root system is dug up. Any part left in the ground will shoot again.

Another achievement which will be warmly welcomed by many walkers is the installation of the second Innovation Engineering vehicle / walking gate at the Hillside Road entrance (bottom of the tanks track). No more fence climbing! Thanks to IE's Andy "Barbeque" Baker.

Coming Events

One project coming up is the grey box rescue. Our northern neighbour, Dr Brazier, has been a generous supporter of the Friends, and the committee has decided we should show our appreciation by undertaking a bushcare project on his land. A particularly ancient and stately grey box has been identified near our boundary on Urrbrae Hill (North of U. Ridge), which is under threat from olives. A good morning's work should see it rescued. This will involve a relatively easy (not very steep) walk of a couple of kilometres, with some nice things to see along the way. At this stage we'll aim for Oct 12, with the 25th as a backup.

Waldo has identified a small area, rich with significant species, in the Urrbrae Ridge area, also under threat from various weeds. We'll need to be very circumspect about our weeding here. A good opportunity to learn about some more plants, and about absolute minimum disturbance techniques. Virtually no walking needed. Probably whichever October date we don't spend on the grey box rescue.

These are the only definite things I have planned at this stage, but don't worry, there will be plenty to see and do on the remaining dates - as well as good company and fine sausages. If you'd like more details closer to a certain WB, by all means give me a tingle.

See you soon.

Bryan Both
working bee co-ordinator
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Springtime – Bulb time

The lilies and iris species of the Reserve are putting on a great show at the moment and the understorey in some parts of the Reserve, such as Urrbrae Ridge, is currently ablaze with whites, oranges, yellows, blues and purples. Naturally, some of the bulbous species are introduced, such as the yellow and purple tinges on the petals (*Synnotia villosa*) and one-leaved Cape Tulip (*Homeria flaccida*) with its pale orange flowers. Like so many other weeds these are escaped garden ornamentals.

However, many others are native. You can easily spot the yellow bulbine lily (*Bulbine bulbosa*), the pinkish Chocolate or Vanilla lilies with their lovely scent (*Arthropodium* species) and the spectacular blue flax-lily (*Dianella revoluta*), one of my favourites. Even more excitingly, a working bee recently cleaned up some olives around a gum tree and subsequently a specimen of the rare *Dianella longifolia* was discovered.

If you enjoy the native lilies you can also easily grow them in your garden. The three species mentioned above are all commercially available and are extremely easy to grow (potted or inground) and propagate.

Tanja Lenz



Arthropodium strictum



Bulbine bulbosa



Homeria flaccida



Dianella revoluta



Yurrebilla Trail

If you have been walking in the Reserve recently you might have noticed new trail markers in the Urrbrae Ridge area. These denote the Yurrebilla Trail, which is a brand new 54 km walking trail that runs between Belair National Park (starting at Belair Railway Station) and Black Hill Conservation Park (starting at Ambers Gully).

It links up various reserves, parks and other remnant vegetation of the Adelaide foothills along single file tracks and fire tracks. Further information and maps are available from

<http://www.environment.sa.gov.au/parks/yurrebilla/>. According to the web site, a guide book and bushwalking maps will be available later in September from tourism outlets and national park offices.

Friends of Urrbrae Wetland

Public Open Day Sunday 12 October, 2.00 - 4.00 pm. Children free, adults \$2.00 donation please. PowerPoint display about construction and development of the wetland. Guided tours, and explanation of major earthworks currently under way to improve water quality by better managing inflows. Fabulous examples of natural regeneration of plants, including Blue Devil, Native *Ranunculus*, Native Flax, Ruby Saltbush and *Atriplex*. Enter Urrbrae Wetland onto Agricultural High School land, off Cross Road, just west of corner Cross Rd and Highgate St. Park inside.

Free Talk by David Paton: Tuesday 14 October at 7.30 pm. Topic: "Birds of the Adelaide region - and their survival". Urrbrae Wetland.

For further information contact Joe Haslam (see letterhead for details).