



Friends
of
Belair National Park
Volunteers working for Conservation



Established 1985
Friends group of the decade 2004
Best Newsletter 1996 - Friends Group of the year 1998

NEWSLETTER 3, SEPTEMBER, 2007

Please note this is a quarterly newsletter. 4 per year. March, June, Sept and Dec.

Deadlines are the 3rd Monday of the month preceding its issue.

Contributions can be emailed to Michael Cerchez at cerchez@chariot.net.au

Friends of Belair National Park are on the web at the following address:

www.communitywebs.org/friendsofbelairpark

If you would like to receive this Newsletter as an electronic version as an email attachment instead of a hard copy, please let either Carol Parrott or Michael Cerchez know.

CLELAND MEMORIAL WALK IN BELAIR NATIONAL PARK

We invite you to take part in the annual free* Prof. Cleland Memorial Walk, guided by The Friends of Belair National Park, on Sunday 14th October, beginning at Pines Oval 2, at 9.45am for the morning or full day walk or 1.45pm for the afternoon only walk. BYO lunch/snacks, water, comfortable shoes, sunscreen and hat. Come and learn about the flora, fauna and history of the Park or just come for an enjoyable walk. *Free entry to the Park for participants. For further information, ring Shirley on 82781525 or Jenny on 82788986.

FRIENDS OF BELAIR NATIONAL PARK. ABN 38 093 387 757

PO Box 2 Belair SA 5052

Email

friendsofbelairpark@msn.com.

Website

www.communitywebs.org/friendsofbelairpark

OFFICE BEARERS FOR 2007

PRESIDENT Mike Cerchez
8339 6801

VICE PRESIDENT Jim Trueman
8278 9359

SECRETARY Jill Salvi 82786736
4 Colton Rd BLACKWOOD SA 5051

TREASURER Carol Parrott 8278 6783
COMMITTEE MEMBERS.

Eric Cole, Brian DuBois, Faye Loffler, Barry Palmer, Ron Tamblyn.

VOLUNTEER CENTRE BOOKINGS

Jill Salvi 8278 6736

GUIDED WALKS

Shirley Alford 8278 1525

LIBRARIAN

Pam Tamblyn 8278 6593

NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Mike Cerchez 8339 6801

WORKING BEES

Eric Cole 8278 3816

SIGNIFICANT TREES

Ron Tamblyn 8278 659

CALENDAR 2007

REGULAR EVENTS

General Meetings on the first Saturday of the month. 1.00pm at the Volunteer Centre, Long Gully, Belair National Park. Visitors welcome. We usually have an interesting speaker.

Barbecue

Meeting of 3rd November is at 12.30pm for a barbecue.

Please bring plate of salad or sweet slice to share, and \$2.50 donation for meat.

Working Bees on Tuesdays and Fridays, meet outside the Information Centre, Belair National Park before 8.30 am in the winter, or 8.00am daylight saving time. **NO WORKING BEE IF THERE IS A TOTAL FIRE BAN.**
Enquiries Eric 8278 3816

Guided Walks are from April to December, on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday afternoons.
Meet outside the Information Centre, Belair National Park at 2.00 pm. The public is welcome.
Enquiries Shirley 8278 1525.

SPECIAL EVENTS

October – Sunday 14th. From Pines Area 2. 9.45 am & 1.45 pm. Professor Sir John Cleland Memorial Walk.

December -Wednesday 19th Belair Park 116th Birthday and Friends 22nd Birthday.

Feral Olive and Lavender control demonstration

A Field Day demonstrating feral Olive and Lavender control will be held in Shepherds Hill Recreation Park in September. The Friends of Shepherds Hill, the Mount Lofty Ranges NRM board and the Department for Environment and Heritage will be demonstrating how to effectively control these weeks. Work carried out by the Friends of Shepherds Hill has previously been highlighted by Anne Prescott to demonstrate best practice methods of Olive control.

During the day, participants will learn about:

- *Urban forest in the Adelaide Hills*
- *Face Zone Feral Olive control*
- *Effects of infestation and control methods for Topped Lavender*
- *Practical demonstration for best practice Olive and Lavender control*

A great opportunity to meet other volunteers, brush up on best practices and enjoy parks!

Field day: Shepherds Hill Recreation Park

15 September 2007

9:30am - 12:30pm

Meet at Ayliffes Road Carpark at 9:30am

To register, please contact Jacob at Mitcham City Council, phone 83747762.

THE 23RD FRIENDS FORUM



The theme of this forum was Catastrophe or Sustainability, and this was certainly brought out by the speakers at the forum. The Catastrophe side was brought out in two ways. Captain Flinder's catastrophe at the tip of Eyre Peninsula where he lost 8 men and our catastrophe, Climate Change. Sustainability came to the fore as a way of surviving Climate Change. Some 240 Friends attended the forum. The first speaker Terry Krieg was quite a controversial choice. He was a passionate advocate for Nuclear Power as a means of combating climate change and making us more sustainable. The next day Steven Pocock, the Forum Chair, who runs a local Eco Tourism business, gave an interesting talk on the Early European explorers of Eyre Peninsula. Europeans may have visited the area much earlier than recorded. The next speaker, Brian Foster, who was chair of the Eyre Peninsula Natural Resources Board, began his talk by emphasising the looming Catastrophe of Climate change and the mentioned the efforts being made for sustainability in the farming sector on Eyre Peninsula. It was then DEH's turn. Their first speaker was John Schulz, Regional Conservator who released the Corporate Plan 2007/ 2010 for DEH

and spoke of some of DEH objectives. He emphasised that DEH was expected to do more with less money. John O'Malley, who was Assets Manager for DEH, followed him. He had a very controversial message for the Friends, regarding assets. Assets costs money to build and they cost money to maintain. Therefore the fewer assets built and kept, the more money there is for other things like conservation. Assets include heritage buildings, amenities, toilets, trails, signs etc. He encouraged the Friends not to create assets. This view was not at all popular.

An interesting talk on SA offshore islands was given by Jason van Weenen . SA has 150 off shore islands. The majority of these are located off Eyre Peninsula. A sea level rise is going to reduce the number and size of these. This will be a catastrophe. At present many are valuable in the sustainability side as they are helping in the conservation of fauna.

The Saturday night dinner was an excellent occasion, great food, the presentation of some well deserved awards, and speeches by the Minister for the Environment Gail Gago, and Rontheo van Zyl from Electronet, the main sponsor of the dinner. He emphasised what Electronet was doing with regards to conservation as responsible corporate citizens.

On Sunday first speaker was Simon Clark, manager of The Nullarbor Marine Park who spoke on the new multiple use marine parks which will be implemented over the next few years in SA. This was followed by a very positive talk on how the prawn fishing industry has achieved sustainability by Samara Miller from the Spencer's Gulf and West Coast Prawn Fishermen's Association. They are now managing to catch a sustainable 2000 tons of prawns each year for far less effort (fewer fishing nights).

There were 2 panels, one on Saturday consisting of DEH personnel, and one on Sunday consisting of volunteers, including Jill Salvi, and Brian Dubois, which covered such topics as the need to communicate between groups on weed control, the need to recruit younger members.

We went on 3 of the excursions on offer, one to Memory Cove, one to Lincoln National Park and Coffin National Park.



The food during weekend was excellent. The catering was in the hands of Kris Bunder, owner and chef of the Del Giornos Restaurant, which won the title of South Australian Finest Seafood Restaurant during the weekend.

As Brian Dubois remarked, the current forum always seemed to be the best. The Eyre Peninsula Friends certainly set a high standard. I'm sure the Flinders Ranges Friends will match them, when they host they 2009 Forum at Wilpena. This forum will have the theme; "Footsteps in the Flinders". It's hard to do justice to the Forum in a short report. ***Why not plan experiencing one for yourself in 2009 in the Flinders Ranges?***

Report by Mike Cerchez

POST FORUM TAG-ALONG TOUR

On the Monday after the Friends of Parks Forum Jill and I went on the tag-along tour of Coffin Bay National Park. We left Port Lincoln earlier than Friday's tour as this was to be a longer trip and the first part of the journey was in fog, but it did lift on reaching the entrance to Coffin Bay National Park. The sealed road to the camping ground at Little Yangie Bay passes through densely vegetated sand dunes, gradually thinning out to more open woodland in the higher areas. The vegetation is diverse in the Park.

From Little Yangie Bay the track is narrow and sandy, and only for 4WDs, so tyre pressure was reduced before moving on. We stopped to look at quandongs (native peach) growing along the track, where one of our guides had us looking for old quandong stones, as the kernel inside is edible. He wanted to find them in emu scats as they needed to pass through the digestive track of an emu first, so we all immediately lost interest.

There are many wetland areas and lakes fringed by swamp paper-barks and some tidal inlets to navigate between the mallee open scrub on the higher ground between. Further west along the peninsula drooping sheoak and tea-tree dominate, but there are large areas where only the dead trees remain. This is the area where the Coffin Bay Ponies were before they were removed from the Park. Friends groups, 4WD clubs and other interested parties have planted a number of exclosures with local vegetation (i.e. the feral horses and kangaroos which do the damage have been excluded from these areas). Even though the horses have been removed, kangaroos are a major problem in revegetation (plantings and direct

seeding) outside of these areas. It was interesting to hear that native grasses and orchids have returned naturally inside these planted areas.



We visited Point Sir Isaac on the northern tip of the peninsula, named by Matthew Flinders after Sir Isaac Coffin, from which the name Coffin Bay is derived. After lunch we saw Sensation Beach on the Southern Ocean.

This exposed beach gets its name from



a tuna boat that drifted ashore. Photographs of the attempted retrieval of this boat were part of a display of the Forum. Initial attempts at towing the boat out to sea were unsuccessful, so it was planned to load the boat on a trailer and use two very heavy duty trucks to haul it over the sand and scrub over 5 km to the sheltered waters of Coffin Bay, a very ambitious project which was unsuccessful. The boat was eventually towed out to sea using a heavy duty oil rig tug.

We returned to Little Yangie Bay late in the afternoon when the kangaroos were out grazing. Now that the horses have been removed they do not have to share the grazing areas and kangaroo numbers are increasing rapidly. We watched the sun setting beyond the islands near Point Avoid and returned to Port Lincoln in the early evening after a very full, enjoyable day.

Report by Ron Tamblyn

EYRE PENINSULA'S 3 NATIONAL PARKS

On the way to this year's Friend Forum at Port Lincoln, Peggy and I visited 3 National Parks on Eyre Peninsula.

The Gawler Ranges National Park in the central north of the Peninsula is reached by following 40 kms of reasonable dirt roads from either Wudina or Minnipa. Inside the park there are a few camp areas that can be reached by 2 wheel drive. To see the park properly and stay at the better campsites a 4 wheel drive is necessary. We stayed at Kolay Hut campsite, near the Kolay Mirica Falls, with its interesting Rhyolite formations.



The Park comprises the former Paney Station and parts of Pine Lodge and Scrubby Creek Stations. The Gawler

ranges are a volcanic formation over 1500 million years old, with rocky gorges and hills reaching over 400 metres above sea level. It was a pastoral area, which only proclaimed a national park in 2002 and is in the stage of recovering from previous grazing activities.

Coffin bay National Park is located on the southwestern tip of Eyre Peninsula. We stayed in Coffin Bay Caravan Park, which seemed to be over run with emus, and drove out to the National Park. There are 20 kms of bitumen road in the park at the eastern end. However to see the other 4/5 of the park a 4-wheel drive is needed, as there is a lot of sand driving. We visited Yangi campground where the Friends have be doing a lot of revegetation and other development work. We did the Yangi Bay Walk, which goes along the coast of the bay. We also drove to the southern beaches with its views over Golden Island.

Again this area of the National Park is a former grazing area which is being revegetated to re-establish the Grassy Sheoak Woodland. Coffin Bay National Park has coastal landscapes with cliffs and dunes, and the pounding surf of the Southern Ocean and the sheltered bays with its beaches and samphire swamps.

In Lincoln National Park we were fortunate enough to be able to hire Donnington Cottage which was built by the original farmer and lighthouse keeper on this Peninsula 42 kms from



Port Lincoln. It is well fitted out for guests to enjoy the spectacular views of the beach, the plentiful wildlife and peace and quiet of this end of the park.

From the cottage we were able to get onto the Donnington Loop, a 6.2 kms walk which led us west to the lighthouse, then south to September Beach and then east and north back to the cottage. We were impressed with the new camping area at September Beach. The local Friends group has done a great job on revegetation and providing sheltered campsites.

DEH has built some great shelters, new toilets and steel walk ways to the beach.



On Friday of the Forum we enjoyed a tag along trip to Memory Cove, which is the restricted wilderness area. This had some spectacular coastal and very good coastal Mallee vegetation.



Memory Cove itself had a beautiful beach with sheltered campsites in behind it.

Report by Mike Cerchez

LIFE UNFOLDS

The Friends of Parks Forum this year was an excellent one, but for me there was an added bonus, quite apart from any of the Forum activities. Just as we arrived at the caravan park where we were to stay, we did not realize that a small miracle was about to unfold.

We were greeted by Mike and Peggy who drew our attention to a spur wing plover sitting on her nest about 30 metres from our cabin. The plover's nest seemed to be in an impossible place. It lay on the bare ground under a scrubby mallee between the fork of two tracks over which vehicles passed to other cabins, and was a barely perceptible hollow about 50 centimetres in diameter of dirt, stones



and a few leaves. However, watching carefully, I realized that the mother had chosen wisely – the early morning sun gently warmed the nest, dappled shade covered it during the heat of the day and it was protected from the blustery winds. The male plover always stood sentinel, loitering around nearby. Each time the hen left the nest she would roll over the four eggs, the same colour, size and appearance of the surrounding stones. She knew just how long she could safely leave the eggs and her absence from the nest

could be timed to the split second. At one stage, after one of her sorties, a camper was standing between her and the nest. She became quite agitated, squawking loudly until he left. Later I saw her carrying away from the nest what looked like a stone in her beak, but it was in fact an eggshell, which she hid in the bushes some metres away.



Next day we returned to the cabin to see three chicks, one from the eggshell I had seen previously and two smaller new hatchlings; not the little balls of fluff I had expected, but perfect miniatures of the adult birds down to their black caps and spindly red legs. They were fossicking in the grass a metre or two from the nest watched by both parents. They stayed out for about ten minutes. One egg remained, but the following morning I saw the last chick hatch, take its first staggering steps forward, encouraged by *chip-chip-chips* from the mother, roll over, right itself and stumble after its older and by now bigger siblings. The family immediately moved further afield, carefully shepherded by the adult birds. When the smallest slumped exhausted to the ground, both parents took it in turn to protect the chick, fluffing their wings and settling down over it where it lay. From that point the nest was abandoned. When I looked later, all trace of eggshells, feathers and other detritus had gone,

leaving no evidence that there had ever been a nest there.

Later the same day our daughter and son-in-law took one of our grandsons to look at the chicks, which by now were roaming over a large grassed area some distance away. We stood well away, watching the little birds foraging busily in the grass. The next second they completely disappeared. They, even that morning's hatchling, had rolled themselves into small balls, lying perfectly still to imitate, as our daughter observed, little dollops of mud. The parents then went into action, the mother zig-zagging over the ground, calling to draw us further away, while the father took to the sky, wheeling in furiously over our heads in a shrieking aerial bombardment. After our hasty retreat, the parents returned to where they had been feeding, the chicks bobbed up again and all continued as if nothing had happened. When we finally left the caravan park, in the distance we could see the new plover family ranging over their home territory. The miracle we had witnessed over several days had concluded, but we departed in the hope that life for the plover chicks would continue to unfold.

Text by Pam Tamblyn
Photos taken by Mike Cerchez

e-News

This publication is put out by Friends of Park Inc and replaces the discontinued publication The Chain. It is available in electronic format by Sending your email address to enewsadmin@iprimus.com.au. If you do not have email and would like to receive a printed copy, please send your details to The Editor, PO Box 194, Uraidla, SA 5142



Gil Ross presents Ralph Foster with a boneseed pen. Raph gave an excellent talk on the naming of plants, which was very much appreciated by those who were present at the August meeting which coincided with the forum

Photo taken by Barry Palmer.

DISCLAIMER

The views and opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the authors of the articles and do not necessarily represent the views and opinions of the Friends of Belair National Park.