



Newsletter

Friends of Stirling Linear Park Inc.

Summer 2012

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2010-11

This is the fifteenth Stirling Linear Park Chairman's Report and the fifth that I have presented. I have divided this report into the following sections:

- ongoing activities - bushcare and weed control, revegetation, monitoring and working with Council
- specific or once-off events
- some other comments.

Ongoing activities

Bushcare and weed control

Our major focus has continued to be on Bushcare and weed control in the park. We have continued our program of monthly Sunday bushcare working bees in Woorabinda, Stirling Park and Madurta. Between four and ten people have attended. The main reason for numbers being on the lower side on a few occasions is that most members have been away on holidays at the same time. Our periodic Newsletters provide information about our working bee program and results.

Our working bees have continued our overall long term strategy of working outwards from areas of good bush. We have continued our approach of targeting specific weeds at certain times of the year such as *Watsonia* in Spring but for most of the year have followed a broader approach of working on a wider range of weeds in a given area of bush. This is often a more satisfying approach for our volunteer weeders.

We have not scheduled working bees in Hender for some years as a result of the progress made over a long period by Bob James in reducing the level of weeds in a large proportion of the good bush within Hender. There are still significant weeds to be cleared from within and adjacent to the good bush areas in Hender but these are mainly large scale infestations that need to be worked on by dedicated teams.

Earlier this year we introduced regular weekday working bees. Jane Schoettgen, who has been working regularly in Woorabinda, agreed to be convener of weekday working bees which have been publicised in our Newsletters and on our notice boards. Jane is building a group of regular weekday volunteers, has continued her personal weed control work and has also attended a Bush for Life bushcare course.

The Central Hills Green Web (the local area Landcare Group, of which FSLP is a member) has again employed contractors on swabbing *Watsonia* infestations in the good bush in Woorabinda. This work was funded through the NRM. Green Web is also continuing to fund work on another long term project: controlling large infestations of periwinkle and other weeds encroaching on good bush in Hender.

FSLP, with Council endorsement, recently received a 2011-12 NRM Community Grant of \$5,000 for *Watsonia* control. The grant was supplemented by an amount of \$500 from the Friends of Stirling Linear Park Public Fund. Total grant funding to FSLP for this project is now \$15,000 over three years in addition to contributions of \$5,000 from the Friends of Stirling Linear Park Public Fund, ongoing FSLP volunteer working bee contributions over many years and significant funding by the Central Hills Green Web.

The results of the concentrated efforts on *Watsonia* in Woorabinda and Madurta over the last four years are now showing. Most of the large scale *Watsonia* infestations in the good bush areas have been reduced to close to manageable levels. There are still large areas of *Watsonia* to be tackled but these are outside the good bush areas.

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Chairman's Report, AGM 2010-11 continued

Early in the year Council released a consultant's report titled 'Evaluation of Conservation Values in AHC Reserves'. The consultant assessed the conservation significance of over 50 reserves to arrive at a score and a ranking for defined precincts within each reserve. The four reserves making up SLP were included in this process and each was divided into three precincts. One of the three precincts within Woorabinda was given easily the highest score of all precincts within AHC reserves. The remaining Woorabinda precincts, all of the Hender precincts and two of the Madurta precincts were also assessed as being of high conservation significance. These results highlight the significance of our bushcare and weed control work.

Revegetation

Council approved plantings of seedlings this year to backfill the existing revegetation area in Madurta. 400 seedlings grown by Anne Hicks were planted in September by a group of local Rover and Venturer Scouts, organised by Tim Ganguly, as part their work towards scouting awards. I would like to thank them for their efforts.

Monitoring

Over the last year we have continued the Bushcheck bird survey observations from 16 sites within SLP eight times per year. We have not resumed our long term photo monitoring program.

Working with Council

In February FSLP committee members held a meeting with the Mayor and local ward (Manoah and Mount Lofty wards) councillors. Four of the five councillors were able to attend. At the meeting, I gave a presentation highlighting FSLP's role and ongoing work in the park. This was followed by a discussion covering FSLP's and AHC's respective roles in SLP and the need for additional weed control resources.

During the year the FSLP committee members also had a meeting with Council's then new Manager, Engineering, David Waters, including a visit to SLP. On several occasions I also met Council's Natural Resources Officer, Steven Brooks and 'man on the ground' Rod McBeath who I would like to thank for his work in getting the Landcare trailer back on the road.

The second SLP Advisory Group recently completed its two year term. One of its main tasks has been to oversee the completion of a fire management plan for SLP. Earlier this year, Council appointed a consultant to prepare the plan and wrote to residents of streets adjoining SLP and to me seeking comments about the approach to fire management within the park. Comments from FSLP committee members were in line with FSLP input to earlier stages of the process of developing the plan.

FSLP representatives were invited to the final meeting of the second SLP Advisory Group to discuss

preparation of a vegetation management plan for SLP. We discussed the benefits of a comprehensive vegetation management plan setting out: vegetation management priorities and the respective capabilities, roles and responsibilities of FSLP, Central Hills Green Web and AHC and any other parties.

During winter Council constructed a new creek crossing at the point where the Stirling Park Track crosses the main creek through Stirling Park. The crossing consists of a concrete roadway over four separate pipes and provides access to Woorabinda for emergency services vehicles. It replaced a low level foot crossing which could be difficult to cross in wet winters and could not be used by CFS fire trucks.

Friends of Stirling Linear Park has long advocated a new creek crossing and in about 2002 funding was available to build a crossing but Council did not approve it. More recently, FSLP proposed in submissions to the SLP Advisory Group:

- a foot crossing in the form of a boardwalk, similar to that downstream at the eastern end of Stirling Park, and
- a parallel low level ford created removing a hump on one side of the existing crossing, allowing fire trucks to cross the creek in summer. The CFS tested the crossing with a fire truck as part of a review of CFS vehicle access and considered that this plan would provide sufficient summer access for fire trucks.

Council staff met FSLP representatives on site just before construction of the new crossing commenced and outlined the reasons for adopting their design.

The final stage of the project involved revegetation of the surrounding area. In response to a request from Council staff, FSLP supplied seedlings and assisted in planting them.

Specific or once-off events

Clearing of Vegetation in Woorabinda

In August this year a FSLP member discovered that a large area of remnant vegetation in Woorabinda Reserve had been cleared of all vegetation including ground cover except for a few large pines, Stringybarks and some native cherries. The area cleared lies just above the outlet drain that takes the Woorabinda lake overflow into the main creek. It is located well away from the edge of the park, the Woorabinda buildings and adjacent houses. Nearly all the cleared vegetation had been piled into the drain leaving largely bare earth and the large piles of woody material have effectively blocked the over-flow.

Continuous and detailed records of the nature of the vegetation in the cleared area have been made during Bushland Condition Monitoring training from three sites in and adjacent to this area from 2005 to 2011. While it contained several species of woody and herbaceous weeds it largely retained the natural structure of an open Stringybark/ Candlebark forest that supported a large and diverse range of native

species including some with high conservation ratings. It was one of the localities where Southern Brown Bandicoot sightings have been made.

FSLP advised Council's Manager Engineering and Assets, David Waters, who inspected the site with AHC staff and responded, expressing concern at what had happened. Subsequently, Council engaged a consultant to prepare a vegetation rehabilitation plan.

FSLP sent a letter to AHC elected members advising of the clearance and noting that while we were satisfied with the initial action proposed, FSLP, as members of the community, needed assurance that Council is putting in place the necessary internal processes to reduce the risk of this sort of damage to vegetation happening again. In response the Mayor provided an assurance.

David Waters has offered to discuss the consultant's report with FSLP. Rehabilitation work has started and will require a long term commitment of Council resources without reducing resources available for use in other areas of the park.

Dog control

On 22 March this year Council, with the support of the second Stirling Linear Park Advisory Group, adopted a dog control policy for SLP requiring that dogs be on leash at all times, thus reverting to the policy that had existed from the formation of the Park until 2006.

From 2006 until 2009 an interim dog control policy applied. In 2009 Council adopted a complicated policy which varied considerably from the approach recommended by the first Stirling Linear Park Advisory Group which had set out to produce a balanced dog access policy.

In advance of the 22 March Council meeting, FSLP made a comprehensive submission to Council supporting dogs on leash. This submission was summarised in our deputation at the Council meeting. Extracts from our submission were included in our Winter 2011 Newsletter.

Woorabinda Environment Centre

Following the withdrawal of NRM staff, the future of the Woorabinda Environment Centre buildings is uncertain. FSLP considers that the buildings and the surrounding land are a valuable community asset and an integral part of SLP.

Other Comments

Publicity

In the last year, FSLP has been involved in a number of activities in which the objective has been to raise community awareness of our role, ultimately leading to increased participation in our core roles of bushcare, revegetation and monitoring.

This year FSLP again had a stall with a very interesting and informative display at the Autumn Garden Festival. Many people visited the stall and showed interest in our work with a number even volunteering to attend our working bees. I would like to thank all those who assisted, including Jane

Schoettgen for her effort in setting up the display; Marilyn Forward for her work on the display and for providing her display material from last year as she was away before this year's stall; Brian Cartwright for the use of his photos and for the help he had provided on the day; and also all those members who helped set up the FSLP tent and who were on hand to highlight our activities.

Early in the year, I was invited to submit information about FSLP to the Weekender Herald and I would like to thank the Herald for producing a most informative article accompanied by a photograph of five of our members in the Park.

We have continued our newsletter to members. This year we issued a Summer newsletter in January and a Winter newsletter in June.

Meetings

Over the last year, the Committee has met on a monthly or bi-monthly basis.

Volunteer Resources Used

During 2010-11 over 2,000 volunteer hours were donated to the Park.

Contributions

Thank you also to all of those who contributed to FSLP during the year. This includes all Committee members and other members, particularly:

- Bob James for his support as Deputy Chairman, convening working bees and his daily bushcare work in Hender;
- David Ragless, for his contribution as a Central Hills Green Web committee member and much other valuable work;
- Jane Schoettgen for her bushcare efforts and convening weekday working bees;
- Brian Donaghy for his high quality minutes;
- Ian Perrin for his efficient work as Treasurer over the last four years. Ian is retiring from the committee and was also a member of early FSLP committees.
- Kath Bowman for maintaining our membership list and website;
- Merilyn Browne for her expert work in editing our newsletter;
- Jane, Marilyn Forward and Lorri Ragless for their work in publicizing FSLP;
- Rob Tanner for his work on analysing the Bushcheck bird survey information;
- All others who contributed to our activities and who carried out individual bushcare/weeding work.

Philip Hicks

Chairman

Friends of Stirling Linear Park

22 November 2011

2011 Annual General Meeting

The FSLP Annual General Meeting for 2011, held on Tuesday 22 November, was well attended as usual. Our guest speaker, Janet Pedler, gave us a fascinating account, accompanied by outstanding slides, of the

revegetation of her family's property in the mid north.



Recent Working Bees

The September working bee in Woorabinda was held in good weather and included two new members for a total of six as many of our regulars were away on holidays. However, we cut and swabbed the *Watsonia* around the northern and eastern sides of the lake, complementing the work of contractors funded by our Natural Resources Management grant of \$5,000 and hopefully eliminating much of this weed from this area. It was a good result from a good morning's work.

In October, only four members were available to tackle broom, *Cotoneaster* and *Watsonia* at the western end of Madurta. Because of this, we worked again in Madurta in November to eliminate the remaining *Watsonia* from the western end. Again the weather was good and the eight members who attended produced an excellent result, tackling broom etc. as well. We look forward to seeing the benefit of this work next season.

Unfortunately, the December working bee was a washout, with rain starting at 9:00 am and continuing

all day. Four members decided to work on despite the rain and hand pulled woody weeds.

2011 will be remembered for our assault on *Watsonia* and the 'proof of the pudding' will be in the growing season this year.

Our monthly Sunday working bees have produced a great improvement to the vegetation over the years and to continue our good work and to make an even faster impact we would love to have more volunteers attending. We send out monthly advice notices to the 'regulars' and if you would like to join us, please ring Bob James on 8339 1903 or email bojames@chariot.net.au to be added to the list.

Complementing our Sunday working bees are our week day working bees, held on the second Thursday of each month at 9:00 am. Recent ones have been held in the messy area adjacent to the Keroma fire track, which has many larger woody weeds and is looking much better as a result of the work being done. Contact Jane Schoettgen on 8339 7245 if you can join her in this work.

SUNDAY WORKING BEES 2012		
Date	Location	Meeting Place
February 19	Woorabinda	Woorabinda Drive
March 18	Woorabinda	Woorabinda Drive
April 22	Woorabinda	Woorabinda Drive
May 20	Madurta	Madurta Avenue
June 17	Stirling Park	Branch Road
July 15	Woorabinda	Woorabinda Drive
August 19	Woorabinda	Woorabinda Drive
September 16	Woorabinda	Woorabinda Drive
October 21	Madurta	Madurta Avenue
November 18	Woorabinda	Woorabinda Drive
December 16	Stirling Park	Branch Road
Time: 9 am – 11 am		
THURSDAY WORKING BEES 2012		
Date	Location	Meeting Place
Second Thursday in each month	Woorabinda	Woorabinda Drive
Time: 9 am – 11 am		

Recent Fauna Sightings

A large male Kangaroo stood out recently in the grassy area below the dam wall.

The waterbird population in and around the lake has varied considerably over the last few months, with all the Purple Swampheens disappearing about mid-winter. A single Purple Swamphean has recently reappeared. Various Cormorants visit the lake, with a Great Cormorant, Little Pied Cormorant and up to four Little Black Cormorants having been seen.

An Australian White Ibis was recorded and over the

last few months, a Great Egret has graced us with its presence. One morning a White-necked Heron was standing next to the Egret in the sun on the mud bank near the Woorabinda Drive entrance, a striking sight. The White-necked Heron is far less common in the Mount Lofty Ranges than the White-faced Heron, a regular visitor to the lake over the years.

A Nankeen Night-heron was seen on the mud bank in late December. Neither White-necked Herons or Nankeen Night-herons appear to have been recorded in the Park before. Any comment on this would be welcome.

The resident Dusky Moorhens and Eurasian Coots fledged young again this year, which is pleasing.

Various Cuckoos were heard and sometimes seen in spring 2011, including Fantailed Cuckoo and Shining-Bronze Cuckoo. A young Fantailed Cuckoo was recently photographed near the lake.

For pictures and recordings of some of the birds found in the park, go to our website , <http://users.esc.net.au/~slp/> If you go to the birdlist and click on the bird names highlighted in blue, you will find the pictures and sounds. As this is a work in progress, material is not available for all species yet, but we plan to upload more pictures and recordings in future.



Pictures by Marilyn Browne

White-necked Heron



White-faced Heron



Nankeen Night-heron (young bird)



Little Pied Cormorant



Australian White Ibis



Great Egret



Fantailed Cuckoo (young bird)

**Friends of Stirling Linear Park
Committee 2011-12**

Kathy Bowman	8370 9177
Merilyn Browne	8339 6839
Brian Donaghy	8339 2033
Marilyn Forward	8339 3162
Phillip Hicks	8339 3156
Bob James	8339 1903
David Ragless	8339 1038
Lorri Ragless	8339 1038
Jane Schoettgen	8339 7245
Alistair McHenry (Advisor)	8339 5114
Russell Seaman (Advisor)	8398 0626

Web address: <http://users.esc.net.au/~slp/>

Affiliations

The Friends of Stirling Linear Park Inc. is a member of Friends of Parks Inc. We are also a registered Landcare Group and a member of both Greening Australia and Trees for Life.



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 Stirling Linear Park Inc. **Contributors to this issue** include Philip Hicks, Bob James and Merilyn Browne.

Friends of Stirling Linear Park Membership application/renewal

I/we would like to join/renew membership of the Friends of Stirling Linear Park Inc. (strike out words not applicable)

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

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

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

Name.....

Address.....

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

Email address for sending Newsletter.....

Please return to: Kathy Bowman, Friends of Stirling Linear Park Inc., 2 Bogaduck Road, Aldgate 5154