



Newsletter

Number 54, Autumn 2013

FRIENDS OF STIRLING LINEAR PARK ANNUAL REPORT 2011-12

This is the sixteenth Stirling Linear Park annual report and the sixth that I have presented. I have divided this report into the following sections:

- ongoing activities
- 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 (*to the extent that we have not been distracted by one other issue: dog access*). We have continued our program of monthly Sunday and Thursday bushcare working bees.

Our Sunday working bees, convened by Bob James, have been in Woorabinda, Stirling Park and Madurta; between five and ten volunteers have attended. The main reason for numbers being on the lower side on a few occasions is that working bee members have been away on holidays at the same time.

Our Sunday 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.

Our Thursday working bees in Woorabinda, introduced last year and convened by Jane Schoettgen, have continued this year. The results of this work are clear those who visit Woorabinda. Like Bob, and to a lesser degree, other FSLP

members, Jane has continued her personal weed control work.

We have not scheduled working bees in Hender for some years as a result of the progress made over a long period by Bob 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 adjacent to the good bush areas in Hender but these are mainly large scale infestations that need to be worked on by dedicated teams.

Our periodic Newsletters and our notice boards in the park provide information about our working bee program and the results are also summarised in our Newsletters.

The Central Hills Green Web (the local area Landcare group, of which FSLP is a member) has again employed contractors to target particular weeds in and adjacent to good bush areas in SLP. In the last year the Green Web has continued to fund work on the long term project of controlling large infestations of *Periwinkle* and other weeds encroaching on good bush in Hender. It has started work on controlling *Onion Weed* which is encroaching on good bush in Woorabinda.

FSLP, with Council endorsement, recently received a 2012-13 NRM Community Grant of \$5,000 for *Watsonia* control in Woorabinda. 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 \$20,000 over four years in addition to contributions of \$5,500 from the Friends of Stirling Linear Park Public Fund and ongoing FSLP volunteer working bee contributions over many years. In the initial stage of the project, significant funding was also contributed by the Central Hills Green Web.

The results of the concentrated efforts on Watsonia in Woorabinda and Madurta over the last six years are now evident as most of the large scale infestations in the good bush areas and adjacent 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. This means that we are in a better position to concentrate on controlling other less obvious but nevertheless threatening and difficult-to-deal-with weeds such as invasive grasses and onion weed, in areas where they are encroaching on the margins of the good bush.

Overall, we are making good progress but the sort of weeds I just mentioned are difficult to remove and we need to develop the skills and techniques to deal with them.

Revegetation

During 2012 600 seedlings were planted to backfill existing revegetation areas in Stirling Park and Madurta. 500 of these were grown by Anne Hicks using materials supplied by Trees for Life, of which FSLP is a member, and another 100 were grown by Mark Fagan. Of these seedlings:

- 400 (mainly *Leptospermum lanigerum* and *Acacia melanoxylon*) were planted in the section of the Stirling Park revegetation area centering on the creek line between the Branch and Ethel Trails to replace short lived *Acacia retinodes* which are starting to die off.
- 200 were planted as understory in the section of the Madurta revegetation surrounding the Candlebark (*E. dalrympleana*) regeneration area to supplement larger scale plantings over the last few years.

There is scope for similar plantings in other existing revegetation areas in Stirling Park. We are seeking approval for plantings in these areas, as

part of our input to the Vegetation Management Plan for SLP (covered later).

Monitoring

Over the last year we have continued the Bushcheck bird survey observations from 16 sites within SLP eight times per year.

Working with Council

Over the last year the effect of Council's allocation of additional resources towards Council reserves, including SLP, has become evident through:

- Initiatives such as developing an Environmental and Nature Conservation Strategy resulting from the employment by Council of a second Natural Resources Officer (Rena Eden)
- Commissioning of a vegetation management plan for SLP
- An increased spraying program for large scale weeds areas such as blackberries in lower quality bush and other areas of SLP (not yet started for 2012-13).

This follows FSLP and Green Web meetings with Councillors and Council staff to council over the previous two years (reported in detail last year's annual report) and earlier representations by FSLP and individuals.

A vegetation management plan for SLP is currently being prepared in consultation with the SLP Advisory Group, by a consultant contracted by Council. FSLP's initial involvement in this process was in November 2011 when Bob James, our working bee coordinator, and I provided our views on a vegetation management plan at a meeting with SLPAG members.

In recent months, detailed information for the vegetation management plan has been provided by FSLP members. Bob and I have each spent several days working with the consultant who has also made use of a series of existing plans for SLP including revegetation plans for Stirling Park and Madurta prepared some years ago for FSLP with council support. We also recently attended a meeting with the consultant and members of the SLPAG to review progress on the plan.

The final product will include detailed mapping of the areas of good bush and related weeds within the park. From a FSLP perspective, a benefit will be the confirmation, documentation and recognition of our existing knowledge, resulting in an improved ability to convey this to other

interested parties and to promote action by Council. It should also make it easier to define, allocate and coordinate responsibility between relevant organizations for weed control work and to justify further revegetation work.

SLP mapping

Recently I participated in a tour of SLP with an AHC officer who is preparing an updated map of FSLP which will also provide the basis for a replacement of the Walker's Guide to SLP. We concluded that the information in the Walker's Guide was largely up to date apart from the closure of a few minor tracks.

CV project in SLP

With Council support, Conservation Volunteers have successfully applied for a grant for volunteer weed control work in SLP and work is expected to start shortly.

Bushfire management

The bushfire SLP management plan prepared on behalf of the SLPAG has been completed. Brian Donaghy has continued organising CFS test drives of access tracks in SLP and providing information to improve the accuracy of fire access maps.

SPECIFIC OR ONCE-OFF EVENTS

Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges NRM Board Walk-and-talk Day

The Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges NRM Board Central Region held its annual walk-and-talk day for this year in Stirling Linear Park on 3 June 2012. It focussed on SLP and its importance to the Central Hills Green Web. About 50 people including Professor Chris Daniels, Presiding Member of the Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges NRM Board attended. The day commenced with presentations by me and David Ragless on behalf of FSLP followed by David Mussared and Glenn Williams on behalf of the Green Web. A walk in SLP, lead by FSLP members, and lunch provided by the NRM followed, contributing to a successful day.

Dog access

Last year I reported that:

“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.”

At that time, it would have been reasonable to assume that at last there would be a period of stability on this never ending subject. However, dog access in SLP has arisen again this year through Council's obligation to undertake a five yearly open space animal management plan review. Council's Animal Management Advisory Group's final report on dog access in AHC Reserves, including SLP, will be considered by Council in one week's time on 27 November (*unfortunate timing in terms of reporting on this subject*).

The current dog access review commenced when comments were sought and consultation meetings were held with representatives of interested groups in the period from March to May 2012. After seeking input from committee members, I prepared a submission on behalf of FSLP and a number of FSLP members participated in the consultation process.

The Animal Management Plan Advisory Group's draft recommendations were accepted by Council in July. The recommendations provided for an off leash area in Stirling Park which in summary included the Branch Road Track and the area to the east of it as far south as the main creek line. At this meeting David Ragless presented a deputation to Council and a number of other FSLP members also made representations.

Comment was again sought on the draft recommendations. Again, with input from members, I prepared a submission on behalf of FSLP. I won't attempt to summarise the content as a copy was included in our most recent Newsletter. In addition, the FSLP committee decided to prepare a leaflet with the theme “A park for all” to post to the local community, highlighting the public safety and wildlife safety aspects of our case that dogs should remain on leash in the proposed off leash area. I would like to thank Brian Donaghy and Kath Bowman for organising a very high quality leaflet within a tight timeframe.

Despite our efforts, I understand that the recommendations included in the Animal Management Advisory Group's final report are unchanged from their draft report.

Woorabinda Buildings

Recently, Conservation Volunteers officially vacated the eastern building at Woorabinda which they have not used for some time. Last year I reported that: "the future of the Woorabinda Environment Centre buildings is uncertain" and that "FSLP considers that the buildings and the surrounding land are a valuable community asset and an integral part of SLP." The future of the buildings is still uncertain, as indicated in the minutes of a recent Council meeting which state that: "The deferred report on the future of the Woorabinda Buildings (deferred from 24 July 2012) is to be brought back to Council before the end of December 2012 and is to include details and outcomes of the consultations that have been undertaken".

OTHER COMMENTS

Publicity

In the last year, as in previous years, 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 once again had a stall at the Autumn Garden Festival and many people visited it and showed interest in our work. I would like to thank Marilyn Forward, Jane Schoettgen and Marilyn Browne for their efforts in preparing the very interesting and informative FSLP display for the event. This year an additional feature was Marilyn's photos of local bird species accompanied by recordings of matching bird calls (some of which are also accessible on our website). Thanks also to all those members who helped set up the FSLP tent and who were on hand to highlight our activities.

I should also thank Marilyn and Jane for setting up a display at the walk-and-talk day which highlighted FSLP's activities and attracted a lot of interest and Jane for updating the displays on our two notice boards in the park.

We have continued our newsletter to members. This year we issued a Summer newsletter in January and a Spring newsletter in August. In

addition to thanking Marilyn for editing the newsletters, I would like to thank The Hut for allowing us to use their photocopier to print and collate the newsletters at a very reasonable cost.

Meetings

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

Volunteer Resources Used

During 2011-12 over around 1,700 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 and work on the FSLP dog access brochure.
- Ian Perrin for his efficient work as Treasurer over the last five years. Ian is retiring from the committee and was also a member of early FSLP committees.
- Kath Bowman for her work as membership officer maintaining our website and for dealing with and sometimes responding to questions she receives through the website.
- Marilyn Browne for her expert work in editing our newsletter.
- Jane, Marilyn Forward and Lorrie Ragless for their work in publicizing FSLP.
- Rob Tanner for his work on analysing the Bushcheck bird survey information.
- Nita Clifton for her tireless effort on dog access.
- All others who contributed to our activities and who carried out individual bushcare/weeding work.

Philip Hicks
Chairman
Friends of Stirling Linear Park
20 November 2012

Deidre's seat

The sturdy canvas bag is almost overflowing now.

Childish scribbles, rhymes and drawings have joined the lines of endless love, enduring peace.

It wasn't planned – only the bench. For others to see and share what she had loved.

He wrote a tribute and left it there. Words of love, and loss and memory. Some thoughtful stranger later took care to wedge it, firmly folded, against the breeze.

Who saved it after rain? The same, perhaps. He does not know. The ragged, sodden sheet soon reappeared. Dried, then trimmed with pinking shears. Securely lashed and laminated.

Close on sixty laminates, three years on. Two hundred sheets and more.

The sturdy canvas bag is almost overflowing now.



Brian Donaghy

Thank you letter from the Mayor

The Mayor, Bill Spragg, has sent a thank you letter to the members of Friends of Stirling Linear Park. It includes the following:

“Stirling recently won the prestigious inaugural Great Place Award at the 2012 Awards for Planning Excellence.

The Award submission highlighted that Stirling is:

- Hospitable, vibrant, active, engaging, warm, charming, characterful;
- Provides many opportunities for cultural, social and community service orientated activities and interaction;
- Steeped in local history and representative of the local culture and architecture.

...this award..is a testament to the collaborative efforts of the community, business, residents and Council working together to make Stirling a renowned, special place.

The Planning Institute judges were impressed by the overall community engagement that occurs in Stirling and the range of activities it hosts that are focussed on the existing environment and using it to its best advantage. The purpose of my letter is to thank your organisation and its volunteers for the part they have played in making Stirling recognised far and wide as the great place it is.”

SUNDAY WORKING BEES 2013		
Date	Location	Meeting Place
February 17	Woorabinda	Woorabinda Drive
March 17	Woorabinda	Woorabinda Drive
April 21	Woorabinda	Woorabinda Drive
May 19	Madurta	Madurta Avenue
June 16	Stirling Park	Branch Road
July 21	Woorabinda	Woorabinda Drive
August 18	Woorabinda	Woorabinda Drive
September 15	Woorabinda	Woorabinda Drive
October 20	Madurta	Madurta Avenue
November 17	Woorabinda	Woorabinda Drive
December 8	Stirling Park	Branch Road
Time: 9 am – 11 am		
THURSDAY WORKING BEES 2013		
Date	Location	Meeting Place
Second Thursday in each month	Woorabinda	Woorabinda Drive
Time: 9 am – 11 am		

Stirling Autumn Garden Festival – 5th May 2013, 10am – 4pm

HELP NEEDED

The Friends of Stirling Linear Park will once more join in this charming festival.

We will have a well-presented information board under cover in a spot yet to be allocated.

If you have an hour to spare to help staff our stall and talk to visitors, your help would be much appreciated.

Please ring:

Jane at 8339 7245 or Lorri at 8339 1038

Friends of Stirling Linear Park Committee 2012–3

Kathy Bowman	8370 9177	Janet Pedler	8339 3658
Merilyn Browne	8339 6839	David Ragless	8339 1038
Brian Donaghy	8339 2033	Lorri Ragless	8339 1038
Marilyn Forward	8339 3162	Jane Schoettgen	8339 7245
Philip Hicks	8339 3156	Alistair McHenry (Advisor)	
Bob James	8339 1903	Russell Seaman (Advisor)	

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, Brian Donaghy, Lorri Ragless, Marilyn Forward and Bob James.