



Newsletter

Friends of Stirling Linear Park Inc.

Autumn 2005

please write now right now please write now right now please write now

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Stirling Linear Park Management Strategy

Please write now to let Council know what you enjoy about the Park and how you want it managed. See inside for some background on the Park.

Adelaide Hills Council has engaged a team of consultants, led by Urban & Regional Planning Solutions, to prepare a Management Strategy for Stirling Linear Park. A core aim of the project is to ensure that recreational activities within the Park and the Park's environmental functions are managed in such a way as to complement each other.

Council has invited community participation in the preparation of the Management Strategy. At this stage Council wants information that provides useful background for the Strategy.

There will also be a second stage of consultation when Council seeks general comment on the background research/site analysis work, as well as establishing the criteria for the Strategy. This will be done as part of a public meeting to be held in Stirling in June.

For more information please contact Kieron Barnes, Strategic and Statutory Planner, Adelaide Hills Council: telephone (08) 8408 0504 or email kbarnes@ahc.sa.gov.au. Your comments should also be sent to Kieron Barnes (postal address PO Box 44, Woodside SA 5244).

write now right now please write now right now please write now

What Future for Stirling Linear Park?

Stirling Linear Park has been developed over the last 15 years from a youth camp, a disused market garden and a couple of areas of remnant bush.

While there are still large areas to revegetate and plenty of weeds to be removed, the present state of the Park is the result of much community effort. Those efforts and consequent achievements are outlined below. Please use this information to let Council know what you want as the future for the Park.

What you have done already

Written letters, signed petitions, kept up membership and come to public meetings to counter threats such as:

- Subdivision and land sale
- Roads through various parts of the Park
- Ovals
- A nursing home

Thousands of hours of volunteer effort have gone into ridding the bushland areas of weeds, revegetating the bare areas, refurbishing the buildings and making the walking paths. Council supervises this work and has also done a lot of spraying weeds and preparing areas for replanting.

What that has achieved

Many people appreciate the beauty and tranquillity of the Park. A lot of native species call it home, too:

- Southern Brown Bandicoot (nationally endangered)
- Yellow-footed Antechinus (Hopping Mouse)
- 93 bird species, 27 of which are threatened
- Mountain Galaxia (native fish)
- Long-necked turtles
- Native water rats.

Who uses the Park?

The buildings have been transformed into an Environmental Education Centre with Onkaparinga Waterwatch Network and Conservation Volunteers Australia as the main users. Other environmental

organisations also use the buildings.

Thousands of walkers, both local and visitors, come through the Park each year.

The Park's value

Woorabinda Lake, in particular, is an area of high conservation value. The Department of Environment and Heritage surveyed 80 wetlands in the Mt Lofty Ranges and found Woorabinda was one of few intact wetlands and one of the best in terms of biodiversity.

DEH has applied for the area to be included on the List of Wetlands of National Significance. The Lake was also included in the BHP Billiton Wetlands Revive program as one of the most important 100 wetlands in Australia.

What does it cost?

Most projects in the Park are funded from external sources: grant funding has been obtained from State and Federal Governments for many environmental projects. \$126,806 of grant funding has been obtained since the park's inception. Most work is done by volunteer labour.

If the Park is managed for conservation, there is increased potential for future National Integrated Natural Resource Management funding. The Park is already part of the 'Green Web', which includes seven Friends groups:

- Green Web budget is \$430,000 (grants and in-kind, 2004-5)
- Council provided \$39,000 of the Green Web budget.

FOSLP can apply for business sector funding, e.g. from BHP Billiton and Ian Potter Foundation, as the group has Tax Deductible Gift Recipient status. The Park has already benefited from work done by CVA with funds from BHP Billiton.

Who benefits?

All Park users benefit from having such pleasant surroundings to walk in and through.

Local traders benefit from the extra custom of visitors from outside the district who come to walk in the Park and shop in Stirling and Aldgate while they are here.

The good vegetation cover of the Park helps to keep the water quality in the lake and creek high – a benefit to Adelaide’s water supply.

Recent Events

The classifications of Woorabinda and Hender have changed. Council has classified Woorabinda for Community Use instead of Conservation. This allows a wide range of uses: tennis courts, playgrounds, halls, health centres.

Hender’s classification is now Passive Recreation instead of Conservation. This would allow a kindergarten or playground to be built.

Both classifications are inconsistent with zoning under the State Planning Act, which gives a strong emphasis to conservation for both areas.

Stirling Park and Madurta sections of the Park remain classified for Conservation.

Council has employed consultants to develop a new Management Strategy for the Park, despite the existence of three planning documents funded by the Natural Heritage Trust.

The future of the cottage adjacent to the Environmental Education Centre is to be considered in the Management Strategy. CVA has offered to rent the cottage for use by the family of a staff member working at the Centre. This person would also act as a caretaker after hours.

Council has put the construction of a footbridge over the creek below the lake on

hold, despite the offer of funding by FOSLP and labour by CVA.

Conclusions

FOSLP Committee believes these events are consistent with Council seeking to provide for other community uses and more active recreation in the Park, such as kayaking on the lake and cycling. Neither of these activities can be conducted safely under existing conditions and together with existing users.

Safe kayaking would require removal of snags which provide habitat for aquatic species. Waterbirds could be adversely affected, particularly in the breeding season. Safe cycling would require all paths to be much wider (2-3 metres) so would require clearing of bush and plantings.

Other community uses such as kindergartens or tennis courts would be quite inconsistent with the tranquil natural setting which the Park has become.

Regarding the cottage, the Committee regards CVA’s offer as an excellent one, that should be taken up by Council.

Please tell Council what you want for your Park.

Recent Working Bees

| Date | No | Area | Work Done |
|-------------|-----------|---------------------|---|
| 20/2/05 | 7 | Walkways to Madurta | Cut & swab gorse, blackberries cotoneaster and broom |
| 20/3/05 | 8 | Madurta | Cut & swab erica, broom, watsonia and gorse |
| 16/4/05 | 8 | Hender | Cut & swab broom |

Russell wins National Environmental Award

Friends Committee member Russell Seaman has been awarded the President's Award of Excellence 'for a project of national or international significance' by the Planning Institute of Australia. Russell's Management Plan for the Coorong in SA's Southeast extends over four councils, covers over 50,000 hectares and includes nearly 1000 wildlife habitats. The Plan had previously been awarded the South Australian Award of Excellence in Environmental Planning and then the Planning Minister's State Award for Planning. Russell is a Scientific Officer with the Department of Environment and Heritage.

The Friends group and Adelaide Hills Council are extremely fortunate to have Russell as a volunteer, using his skills to help with planning the management of Stirling Linear Park. Over the last few years

he has prepared the revegetation plan for Stirling Park; a new management plan for the whole Park; and is currently working on a weed control and revegetation plan for Madurta Reserve.

The Friends group worked hard to obtain National Heritage Trust grants to fund the wildlife surveys that helped underpin the Park management plan and for Australian Government Envirofund money. The latter is funding the Madurta plans and subsequent on-ground work. We are frustrated that Council does not want to accept these professional plans and has employed consultants to prepare another strategy.

We express, on behalf of the community, our congratulations for the awards and our thanks to Russell for his long-term support of the Park with planning and regular attendance at revegetation and bushcare

Environment Centre Expands

Onkaparinga Waterwatch Network (OWN) is soon to be joined at Woorabinda by Conservation Volunteers Australia (CVA). CVA has been working hard to upgrade the second of the two bunkhouse buildings at the old Woorabinda campsite, turning it into a training centre.

The centre will enable CVA to conduct all its training programs from Woorabinda. The whole of Stirling Linear Park benefits from these programs as trainees work in the Park as they learn about bushcare, weeding and other aspects of park maintenance. CVA hopes to sign a lease with Council in the near future.

Ray Emmerson, Environmental Training Manager with CVA, says the training programs have been successful in helping participants find employment.

As well as housing OWN, CVA and the educational programs of both organisations, the Project Officer for the 'Green Web' (an Integrated Natural

Resource Management Program) is headquartered at the Environment Centre. The Centre is also used by Bushcheck, Trees for Life, Greening Australia, several Water Boards, National Parks Service, FOSLP, Green Web and Council for meetings and workshops.

Friends of Stirling Linear Park lobbied Adelaide Hills Council and provided many hours of volunteer labour over the last five years to develop the old campsite into something that would enhance the Park and surrounding district. More work is planned, as Onkaparinga Catchment Water Management Board has provided funding for a 'Waterwise Garden' around the buildings and down to the lake.

It has taken over two years to prepare for the garden as one derelict building and many exotic trees and plants have had to be removed. Council and CVA have done this work. The plants for the garden will all be local indigenous species, grown from local

Environmental Assessment of Stirling Linear Park

The Committee of Friends of Stirling Linear Park has commissioned an independent environmental assessment of the Park. This was completed in late January. The author, scientist Robby Towill, has a Bachelor of Applied Science and a Post-graduate Diploma in Environmental Management. Since completing the plan, Ms Towill has taken up a position in the Department of Land, Water and Biodiversity as a Scientific Officer.

The 92-page assessment examines your Park using seven established methodologies, namely:

- Choice Modelling Method;
- Delphi Method;
- Hedonic Method;
- Bequest Value;

- Existence Value;
- Educational Value; and,
- Human Capital Expended Value.

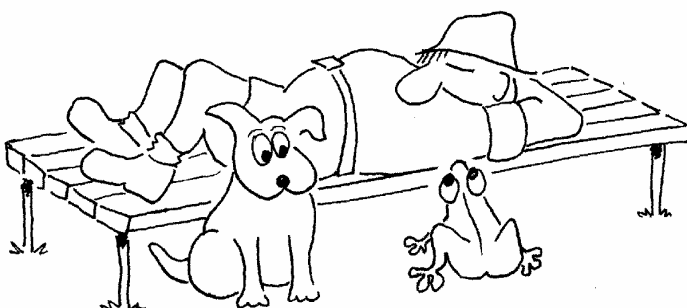
These differing methods explore, from a range of perspectives, community values, scientific values, community and government funding, educational and research values, and attempt to give an idea of economic values.

No-one reading this assessment could fail to be impressed at the amount of work Robby has put in. We paid a very modest amount for this report, which was mostly done for us by Robby as an outside volunteer. We offer our grateful thanks to Robby, who, since completing her study of the Park, has become a Friends member despite living in Adelaide's northern

From the Park Bench

Long-necked turtles have reappeared in the lake.

The whipstick lattice fencing around the lake has been vandalised. Council has been requested to examine the fencing strategy for the future. This task is awaiting the appointment of Council's new landscape architect. CVA has offered to build fencing if materials are provided.



It has been suggested to Council that a five year integrated weed control program should be developed as a matter of urgency. Such a program should integrate the efforts of all who do work in the Park, including:

- Friends volunteers (labour and grant funding)
- Council staff and contractors

- Green Web grant funding
- Conservation Volunteers Australia (labour and grant funding)
- Business volunteers such as staff of National Australia Bank.

Friends of Stirling Linear Park Committee 2004-2005

| | | |
|------------------|--|-----------|
| John Allison | <i>Treasurer</i> | 8339 1577 |
| Shirley Benlow | <i>Displays</i> | 8339 2218 |
| Kathy Bowman | <i>Public Officer, Website Coordination, membership, Working bee notices</i> | 8370 9177 |
| Meryllyn Browne | <i>Newsletter, Waterwatch</i> | |
| Janet Bryan | <i>Minute Secretary</i> | 8339 4639 |
| Marilyn Forward | | 8339 3162 |
| Phillip Hicks | <i>Photomonitoring</i> | 8339 3156 |
| Bob James | <i>Deputy Chair, Working Bee coordination</i> | 8339 1903 |
| Alistair McHenry | | 8339 5114 |
| David Ragless | <i>Chairperson, Grants officer</i> | 8339 1038 |
| Lorri Ragless | <i>Waterwatch</i> | 8339 1038 |
| Russell Seaman | <i>Management Plans</i> | 8398 0626 |
| Neil Strong | | 8339 4085 |

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, th committee or the general membership of the Friends of Stirling Linear Park Inc.

Contributors to this issue include David Ragless, Lorri Ragless and Meryllyn 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.....\$5.00 |
| 5 years.....\$20.00 |

Name.....

Address.....

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

Please return to: David Ragless, Friends of Stirling Linear Park Inc., 6 Branch Road, Stirling SA 5152