



Newsletter

Friends of Stirling Linear Park Inc.

Summer 2008-09

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2007-08

It doesn't seem long since we were here for the last Annual General Meeting. In fact, it's not all that long since the last one, less than 11 months.

Advisory Committee

In view of the importance of its role to the future of SLP, I'd like to start with a few comments on the Stirling Linear Park Advisory Committee, beginning with a brief refresher on its purpose. The Management Strategy Plan for Stirling Linear Park, adopted by Adelaide Hills Council in mid 2006, provided for a Management Advisory Committee to make recommendations to Council.

The Advisory Committee commenced meeting in the latter part of 2007 and has been meeting on a monthly basis. Members of FSLP gave a presentation to the Committee in November 2007, immediately after the previous AGM. Our key points were:

- the need for reclassification of Hender and Woorabinda Reserves
- flowing from the first point, dog control
- reinvolvement of AHC on-ground staff in work in the park
- specific infrastructure needs such as re-fencing around degraded areas of the Woorabinda Lake.

In terms of progress on these issues, I understand that the Advisory Committee has been gathering information and coming to grips with key issues in preparation for decisions on recommendations. The Committee has also made progress on specific issues including facilitating the development of the SLP Fire Management Plan.

In last year's Annual Report I concluded by stating that:

"In the coming year I see the main challenge as being to work effectively with the Advisory Committee while at the same time continuing to redefine our role."

As far as working with the Advisory Committee goes, what have we done?

- We have had input into two main aspects related to the SLP Fire Management Plan; CFS access, I'd like to thank Brian Donaghy for his work on this; and controlled burning, highlighting the need for careful consideration and seeking expert advice including a significant vegetation and weed survey and the need to exclude areas containing sensitive flora and fauna.
- We have also provided information, mainly details of monitoring and surveys and copies of management/revegetation plans.

We are keen to see outcomes on our key points, although we recognize that there are some difficult issues to be resolved.

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Working with AHC

At this time last year, AHC had recently taken on a new Natural Resources Officer after not having one for some months. At that time, the AHC person mainly responsible for 'on the ground work' in SLP had resigned. He was not replaced until well into this year. Consequently, over the last year, our emphasis has been on re-establishing working relationships with AHC staff. We have also spent a lot of time clarifying the roles and responsibilities of AHC staff for activities such as weed control and maintenance of revegetation areas (in parallel with FSLP initiated bushcare and revegetation work).

Part of the process of allocating responsibility involves setting priorities in terms of work to be done in SLP by AHC staff, FSLP and other volunteers. For this reason, we are working on a bushcare/weeding operational plan setting out weeding and revegetation priorities for the park. The purpose of this plan is, starting from existing management/revegetation plans, to provide a framework for working with the Natural Resources Officer and a basis for working towards formalising an overall process for coordination of bushcare/weeding and planting work done by all those involved – AHC, FSLP, Green Web and other volunteer groups.

Our thanks to Natural Resources Officer, Steve Brooks and to Rod McBeath, who became a member of AHC staff a few months ago, for their efforts towards SLP. Without wishing to detract from their efforts, it is clear that additional AHC resources are needed in SLP and as well as in other similar parks and reserves. This is a widely held view within volunteer groups working in parks and reserves within the community. It takes into account the fact that regular work that is normally the responsibility of AHC staff fell into arrears due to long term vacancies in the 'on ground' work force. Even without these arrears, it appears that there is more work than can be handled by the current AHC resources.

Bushcare and Weed Control

Turning to our normal bush care and weed control work: weed control in the park has continued to be a major focus. Over the last year we have continued our monthly bushcare working bees in Woorabinda, Stirling Park and Madurta. They have been attended by seven to fourteen people. The main reason for numbers being on the lower side on a few occasions was members away on holidays.

I would like to thank Bob James for continuing

his role organising our monthly working bees and also for his ongoing daily work in Hender. As in the last few years, we have not been scheduling working bees in Hender as a result of the progress made over a long period by Bob in clearing a large proportion of the good bush of major weed threats. While there are still significant areas of weeds to be cleared from Hender, these are mainly large infestations of weeds that need to be worked on by dedicated teams or under Council supervision.

We have continued to modify our rotation approach to working bees to focus on specific weeds at particular times of the year such as *Watsonia* in Woorabinda during the period August to October and blackberries in Woorabinda in Autumn. We recognise that a potential downside of this targeted approach is a reduced focus on broader weeding in given areas.

At about this time last year, contractors employed by the Central Hills Green Web (of which FSLP is a member) undertook work on swabbing *Watsonia* infestations in and around the margins of the good bush in parts of Woorabinda and Madurta. This year they are currently undertaking follow-up work in these areas and work in new areas of Woorabinda and Hender. This work is funded by grants obtained through the NRM.

In recognition of the seriousness of the *Watsonia* problem in SLP, FSLP is directly contributing \$3,000 from our public fund to extend work by the Green Web contractors in Woorabinda. We are also discussing with AHC the possibility of a contribution from AHC to complement our contribution to this work.

Once again, it is fair to say that while we have continued to make good progress, in some areas particular weed species continue to spread into the margins of good bush with *Watsonia* continuing to be a major threat.

Revegetation

During the last six months FSLP has organised planting 1,300 plants in Madurta and 1,200 in Stirling Park. The focus has been on consolidating and infilling existing plantings in areas of these two reserves. Plantings have been closely in line with the management/revegetation plans for each reserve. Our thanks to Mark Fagan of the Green Web for supplying 1,700 plants and to Anne Hicks for growing the remaining 800.

The majority of the plants were planted by a Green Corps team which worked in the southern

AHC area for a six month period from January to July 2008. The team was sponsored by AHC and the Central Hills Green Web. Over the six month period the Green Corps team spent an average of nearly a day a week working in SLP. Besides the plantings, their activities in SLP included:

- weeding *Acacia longifolia*, gorse, broom and other weeds
- weeding and replanting the garden below the Woorabinda buildings under the able supervision of Rod McBeath of AHC, who has also been involved in many of their other activities.

I thoroughly enjoyed the experience of working with the Green Corps team and appreciated their enthusiastic approach. I would like to thank the team and particularly their team leader, Dana Ryan, for their work. At this stage it is likely that another Green Corps team will be working in the area in 2009, hopefully with Dana as team leader. I would also like to thank Steve Brooks (AHC Natural Resources Officer), Mark Fagan (Green Web) and David Mussared (Aldgate Valley Landcare Group) for their roles in facilitating the project and Rod McBeath for his role in preparation for the plantings and working with the Green Corps team.

The remainder of the plantings were undertaken by FSLP members and on a Sunday morning in July by Emma Howard from the Mount Lofty Venturers group working towards her Queen's Scout award assisted by a team of Venturers.

This year we did not participate in the annual Planet Ark – National Tree Planting as our tubestock sources were already allocated to the planting outlined above. However, I would hope to participate in this event in future years as it is a means of encouraging community involvement in the park.

In the coming year we plan to continue our revegetation efforts along similar lines. We also plan to continue using external volunteers to plant much of this tubestock and will need to find additional volunteer resources from within FSLP membership to supervise volunteers.

Environmental Monitoring

We continued our previous range of programs which included:

- annual photo monitoring from sites in each of the four reserves
- bi monthly water sampling and testing from the lake and creek
- bushcheck bird observations from 16 sites eight times per year.

Publicity

During the last year FSLP participated in a number of local events with displays and members on hand to publicise the park and highlight our activities. The main objective was to raise community awareness of our role and increase involvement in our activities, ultimately leading to increased membership and participation in our core roles of bushcare, revegetation and monitoring.

One event at which we had a display was the annual Opening of the Walking Season, held on the lawns in front of the Stirling Library on Sunday, 6 April. During the day members of walking groups led introductory walks to a number of locations including Stirling Linear Park. The idea of holding the opening in Stirling was that of FSLP member Lorri Ragless who played a major role in organising this very successful event and coordinating with local businesses. Lorri estimated that about a thousand people visited the display area during the day and about 70 people joined in the introductory walks.

We also had a stall at the Stirling Market on 23 May. The stall was organised by Marilyn Forward who put together a very impressive display which attracted a lot of interest from passers-by. Marilyn also organised a display for the Opening of the Walking Season.

We are fortunate to have committee members who have the foresight to see the benefits of participating in such events and are prepared to contribute the time and effort to make our participation a success.

We have continued our seasonal newsletter to members. So far this year we have issued a Summer newsletter in January and a Winter newsletter in July, again expertly edited by Merilyn Browne.

Woorabinda Buildings

Late last year the Waterwatch building in the Woorabinda Environmental Centre and the adjacent ablutions block were re-roofed. The Waterwatch building is used by Onkaparinga Waterwatch for accommodation and displays for visits by school students and its conference room is also used by other environmental and community groups, including FSLP. On behalf of all the users, our thanks to the Adelaide Hills Council and to architect and FSLP member Alistair McHenry for their roles in organising the re-roofing and also to the AHC for providing the funding.

Funding

During 2007-08 we received \$245 in public donations. We express our thanks to the generous donors. This amount, together with amounts already held in our public fund, will be used for on-ground works.

Meetings

Over the last year, the Committee has met either monthly or on alternate months depending on the need at the time.

Volunteer Resources Used

During 2007-08 about 2,400 volunteer hours were donated to the Park.

Contributions

Neil Strong has advised me that he will not be nominating for membership of the new FSLP committee. Neil was an inaugural member of the FSLP committee and was Deputy Chairman for many years. He has been a most effective advocate for FSLP on many issues and as a committee member has always provided sound, well considered advice. Neil had a substantial input to the 2006 consultants' report on SLP and was instrumental in the survey on dogs in SLP. On behalf of us all, I would like to thank you, Neil, for your contribution to FSLP and look forward to seeing you at future FSLP activities.

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

- Bob James for his support as Deputy Chairman, convening working bees and work in Hender.

- Brian Donaghy for his high quality minutes and work on fire planning.
- Ian Perrin for his work as Treasurer.
- Merylyn Browne for editing and compiling our newsletter and revegetation work with the Green Corps team.
- Lorrie Ragless, Marilyn Forward and Jane Schoettgen for their Waterwatch work and also for their proactive roles in working to attract community involvement.
- Kath Bowman for maintaining our membership list and website.
- David Ragless, for his contribution as a Green Web committee member and ongoing advice.
- Alistair McHenry for his work towards the re-roofing of the Woorabinda buildings.
- Rob Tanner for his work on analysing the Bushcheck bird survey information from SLP.
- Mark Fagan of the Green Web for his work on the Green Web's contributions to the Park.
- All others who contributed to our activities such working bees and stalls and who carried out individual bushcare/weeding work.

Philip Hicks

Chairman, Friends of Stirling Linear Park

14 October 2008

Abbreviations:	AHC	Adelaide Hills Council
	FSLP	Friends of Stirling Linear Park
	NRM	National Resources Management
	SLP	Stirling Linear Park

RECENT FAUNA SIGHTINGS IN STIRLING LINEAR PARK

The large male Kangaroo reported in Woorabinda in the previous three Newsletters seems to have become a long term resident in the park and has also been seen in the section of Hender Reserve to the south west of Hender Road and in Stirling Park.

The general consensus is that less birdlife has been seen around the Woorabinda Lake in the last few months than in earlier months. Hardheads are still present but the overall number of ducks and other water birds seems to

be down, possibly due to the long term presence of a goose. Two Coot or Moorhen chicks were seen in early December.

Separate Sacred Kingfishers were heard recently in both Woorabinda and Hender. At about this time last year a pair was seen regularly in Woorabinda and Hender and another pair was seen in Madurta.

Any other observations would be welcome for inclusion in future editions.

STALL AT FUN'n'HEALTHY FAMILY FAIR

On Saturday, 18 October the Friends of Stirling Linear Park had a stall at the Fun'n'Healthy Family Fair at the Hut, Aldgate. The stall was organised by David Ragless. Once again, Marilyn Forward put together a very impressive display which attracted a lot of interest from those

attending the fair.

Throughout the day Friends members were on hand to publicise the Park and highlight our activities with the aim of raising awareness of the park within the local community and increasing their involvement in Friends activities.

RECENT WORKING BEES

Our September working bee in Woorabinda was the third straight on which we tackled the edges of the large infestation of *Watsonia* to the south-west of the lake. Our aim with this approach is to clear the thinner outlying *Watsonia* from the good bush so that future possible spraying can concentrate on the thicker areas of *Watsonia* and won't harm the good plants. We made good progress, but there is much more to do in the future.

Watsonia was again the primary focus of our October working bee, this time in Madurta where many of the new plantings had *Watsonia* growing close to them. The aim here was to remove this *Watsonia* by cutting and swabbing plants within half a metre of the new plantings to prevent smothering and to enable spraying of the remaining *Watsonia* without affecting the plantings. We had noticed a large open area infested with *Monadenia* which we eradicated by cutting and swabbing as the seeds were still underdeveloped. In all this was a very satisfactory morning as we finished the tasks at hand.

It was back to cutting and swabbing gorse in Stirling Park for our November working bee; this time in the low good bush area below the Ethel Street entrance. We had worked in this area two years ago, but unfortunately a lot had grown back and needed cleaning up before it seeded once more. Again we noticed a small infestation of *Monadenia* in an adjacent open area which two members cleaned up nicely by careful digging.

The weather was almost perfect for these three working bees, which were attended by 6 to 8 members.

Our next working bee is in Woorabinda in December and will be to clear regenerated woody weeds from an area of good quality bush. This will continue our current plan to keep these weeds from encroaching upon it.

The Working Bee reminder notices are now being sent out by email to the 'regulars'. If you can join us sometimes on the third Sunday in the month at 10:00am, send your email to bobjames@chariot.net.au and Bob will include you on the list of working bee reminder notices. We could certainly do with more hands on the job.

Other weed control work
Contractors employed by the Central Hills Green Web, funded by grants obtained through the NRM, have recently undertaken further work on clearing *Watsonia* from areas of good bush. The main focus was in the area of Woorabinda to the south-east of the lake. FSLP contributed \$3,000 from our public fund to extend the scope of this work. Smaller scale work was done in Madurta as a follow-up to work undertaken last year and in the area of Hender to the south-west of Hender Road.

FUTURE WORKING BEES		
Date	Location	Meeting Place
2008		
December 21	Woorabinda	Woorabinda Drive
2009		
February 15	Stirling Park	Branch Road
March 15	Woorabinda	Woorabinda Drive
April 19	Woorabinda	Woorabinda Drive
May 17	Madurta	Madurta Avenue
June 21	Stirling Park	Branch Road
July 19	Woorabinda	Woorabinda Drive
August 16	Woorabinda	Woorabinda Drive
September 20	Woorabinda	Woorabinda Drive
October 18	Madurta	Madurta Avenue
November 15	Stirling Park	Branch Road
December 20	Woorabinda	Woorabinda Drive
Time: 10.00 am – 12 noon		