

FRIENDS OF WAITE CONSERVATION RESERVE Inc.



COMING EVENTS

Walking Bees
1st Saturday &
3rd Sunday of Autumn
Springwood Park
Entry off Old Mt Barker
Road

AGM
27th MAY 7.30 pm
Pam Catcheside
Fungi of the Adelaide
Plains and Reserve

**Friends of Waite
Arboretum
Woman in Gold**
Capri Theatre
31st May
2.45 pm \$18

Fungal Foray
Saturday 11th July
9am – Noon
Start Springwood Park
Bring your refreshments for
lunch to follow



THE UNIVERSITY
of ADELAIDE

President's message

I have an admission to make. I have for a long time struggled with working bees. I believe emphatically in ecological rehabilitation of the reserve and firmly believe that working bees are an integral part of achieving it. And it's not that I dodge hard work; I have participated in volunteer working bees of some form for most of my life. It's just that I have never wholeheartedly enjoyed them, seeing them more as some form of penance. Until now!

I suspect that part of the reason was that working bees got in the way of my passion for natural history. The bush has always been my time out, my recreation and spirituality all rolled into one as well as a source of scientific inspiration. Going bush for working bees and being surrounded by all those plants, birds, lizards and natural wonders without being able to immerse myself completely in them, had its frustrations.

I suspect that the other thing is that it doesn't matter how much work we do at working bees, there is always a sense that there is more to do and we'll never reach the destination.

Well I'm here to say I've turned the corner. Last year, for the first time, I actually looked forward to working bees, and was almost disappointed when a weekend approached and there wasn't a working bee to satisfy my craving. I've always pulled a few olive seedlings on my regular natural history rambles through the reserve but I found myself seeking out and targeting olives for longer periods each time I went. So what has changed?

When I look around at working bees the vast majority of the bended heads are greying. I suspect most people need to be of a certain age to stop and 'smell the roses', or in this case to 'pull the weeds'. I remember long ago the manager of the Dog Fence telling me that he was reticent to employ anyone younger than about 50 as a fence inspector because anyone younger was usually still in too much of a hurry to do the job properly. They were always rushing to be somewhere else rather than living in the moment. Not to say you can't be young to enjoy working bees, and I certainly don't want to put off anybody who is.

Our goal last year was to concentrate exclusively on pulling regenerating olives from all corners of the reserve cleared of primary olive growth – amounting to 96 hectares. I gained great satisfaction from each fortnight systematically crossing off completed sections on a map of the reserve. While we did not ultimately complete an entire pass of the reserve, we ended up doing a fair chunk.

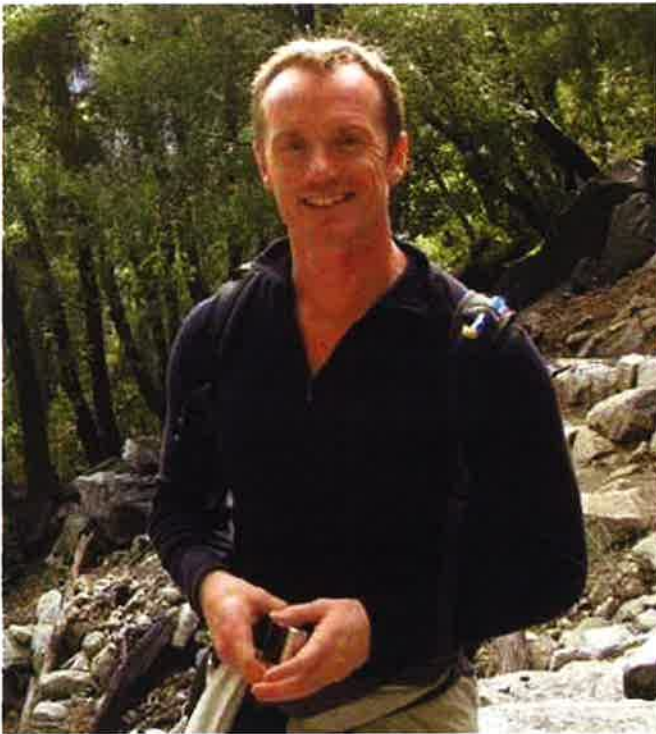
And lastly, the very wet winter last year meant that even large seedlings came out like butter. There is immense satisfaction from pulling 1000 seedlings in a single session knowing you have saved countless hours down the track by tackling the job in a timely manner.

The very dry spring and summer just gone means the seedlings will be harder to pull this year but hopefully there will be fewer of them.

Peter Bird

Vale: Scott Field

The Waite community was saddened to hear of the untimely death last year of inaugural president of the Friends of Waite Conservation Reserve, Scott Field. Scott died in a climbing accident in the French Alps on 12 September 2014. He had just taken up a post with the United Nations office of the Special Envoy to Syria and was pursuing one of his many passions; he was an adventurer in every sense of the word.



Scott Field

Scott was a remarkable man who had several remarkable careers. He played with the Sturt Football Club for six seasons. He won the club championship in his final year, but immediately retired to pursue a career in entomology. In 1995, he won a Golda Meir Scholarship, one of two offered worldwide, to complete a PhD in entomology and work in Israel for four years.

Returning to Australia he joined Hugh Possingham's lab to work in population ecology and mathematics and went on to write several high-ranking scientific papers. It was during this period that he

spent time in the reserve, conducting surveys as part of a study to monitor declining woodland birds in the Mt Lofty Ranges. When a call came to set up a Friends group for the reserve, his intelligence, drive and enthusiasm were a natural fit for him to become the inaugural president. He was instrumental in setting the course for the ecological recovery of the reserve in the first three years 2001-2003.

I first met Scott in June 2000. I was looking to conduct a 'Walk with Nature' in the reserve and joined him on a reconnaissance walk to find a route and to compile 'nature notes' for the participants. I was very impressed by his knowledge and passion which later helped convince me to join the Friends group. Scott published the comprehensive nature notes in the Autumn 2002 Newsletter. As an aside Scott told me he had recorded Varied Sitellas and Yellow-Rumped Thornbills in the reserve, neither of which I have seen in the last 10 years.

At the height of his scientific powers he again switched careers, winning a Peace Fellowship to University of California, Berkeley in 2005 where he gained twin Masters degrees in international conflict and peace and reconciliation in the Middle East. Long fascinated with this area, he worked in both the US and the Middle East until his death. Only at his funeral did many of us realise his stature in this field with recounted stories of meetings with Jimmy Carter and Desmond Tutu and a personal message of condolence sent by UN Secretary-General, *Ban Ki-Moon*.

Scott had a supreme intellect and drive but with it great humanity. Scott was just 45 when he died but left a great legacy, not least being his personal stamp on the Waite Conservation Reserve.

Peter Bird

WALKING BEES 2014

Last year's 'walking bees' concentrated almost exclusively on 'search and destroy' missions to remove olive seedlings from the reserve. Each fortnight we chose to systematically target seedlings in a section of the 96 ha area from which mature olives had previously been cleared.

On some days we encountered thousands of seedlings and covered only 0.5 ha; on others we walked for kilometres and covered 10 ha. By the end of the year, we had treated 80 ha of the 96 ha. In the process our volunteers removed tens of thousands of seedlings in an area amounting to 83 percent of cleared portion of the reserve.



Looking west from Harold's Lookout showing areas cleared of olives on the upper slopes (left

In that time 34 individuals attended the 15 working bees for a total of 367 hours. What was especially pleasing was the dozen or so new faces including several who became regulars. Not that it is a competition but the winning volunteer was our secretary Helen Pryor who attended all 15 working bees. Amazingly not a single day was lost to rain or heat – I suspect that this is a record.

This coming year we aim to continue with the proverbial 'a stitch in time saves nine' strategy to again concentrate on olive seedlings. We will start on the 16 hectares remaining from last year then gradually retreat past visited areas. Hopefully there will be less working and more walking this year.

This will mean that the first 'walking bees' will be held in the eastern end of the park.

In principle there should be fewer seedlings left behind from last year and poorer germination and survival due to the very dry spring and summer just gone. The proof will be in the walking. In between we will again target a couple of other nasties including Perennial Veldt Grass on Quartz Hill and False Caper at the top of Wild Dogs Glen.

There is a list of Walking Bee dates on page 8 of this newsletter.



Fountain Grass *Cenchrus setaceus*
Be on the lookout for this one as you walk

From the Committee

The first committee meeting of the year was held on Wednesday 17th March, Peter Bird welcomed members to a new year of work for the reserve.

Treasurer's Report.

Our bank balance is healthy, but there are currently only 27 financial members. See the reminder below.

Fountain grass

There are two known locations for Fountain Grass (*Cenchrus setaceus*) in the reserve. This species is now a declared plant and could have a significant effect on the reserve. Clint and Erinne have sprayed the plants in the Caves Gully area with some success. There will need to be further monitoring of these plants, plus the area adjacent to the quarry on the SE Freeway. Clint and Peter will use Jennifer's GPS to map the outbreaks. See page 8 for details.

Walking Bees

Peter reported on the 2014 program, which was quite successful. This year, the walking bees will continue to target seedling olives as well as other weeds. Re-growth from large stumps of olive trees that have previously been cut down and poisoned, continues to be difficult to manage. There were fewer African Weed orchids in 2014 due to the dry spring.

Waite Arboretum App

Jennifer said that feedback has been very positive on the recently released app which contains label information on all 2,300 trees, interactive themed walks and enables users to search, locate and bookmark their favourites. The soon to be released version 1.1 will include social sharing on Facebook and Twitter functionalities and more images and descriptive text. The app can be downloaded FREE from App Store or Google Play.

At some stage a similar app could be developed for the Reserve as much of the geospatial data has already been collected and prepared. An app for the Reserve would enhance visitor participation and promote the Reserve to a wider audience. A location tracking walking trail would increase safety and save trees and money compared to the printed guides (as pleasing as they are).

AGM & Fungal Foray

Pam Catcheside will be the speaker for the AGM. She will speak on the Fungi of the Adelaide Suburbs and Hills.

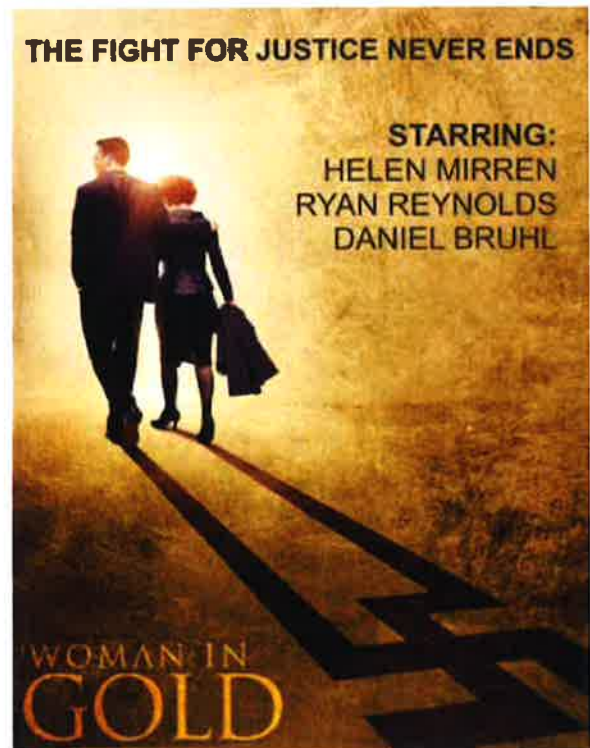
The Fungal Foray will be held on Saturday July 11th in the upper section of the reserve.

Gifts for Speakers—Leaders

Penny suggested that we provide a gift for speakers or leaders of walks. Erinne will look after this.

Next Committee Meeting

Tuesday 12th May. 6.00pm



Film Show

The Friends of Waite Arboretum and Urrbrae House have organised the screening of **Woman in Gold**, at the Capri Theatre on Sunday 31st May. The theatre will be open from 2:45 pm, with a performance on the theatre organ at 3:30, prior to the screening of the film at 3:45 pm.

FWCR members can purchase tickets (\$18) from Jennifer or Marilyn and nominate FWCR to get the profit (\$8 for each ticket sold), or purchase at the door from FWA and nominate FWCR to get the profit.

Jennifer Gardner

jennifer.gardner@adelaide.edu.au

Marilyn Gilbertson

[8271 6112 marilyng@adam.com.au](mailto:82716112marilyng@adam.com.au)

Mountain Bikes

How many mountain bikes do you think were sold in Adelaide last year?

It might surprise you that the estimate is 42,000. That was the figure given at a workshop that Clint & Erinne attended in December 2014.

The workshop was a joint effort between the Dept of Environment, Water and Natural Resources and BikeSA. The Government has a vision to make Adelaide (Adelaide Hills) a major destination for mountain biking. They believe that it is possible to do this based on the success of the Tour Down Under, the number of bikes being sold and the community interest in getting outdoors.

In March 2014, the South Australian Government committed to establish the Adelaide Hills as an international mountain biking destination. The government believes that this would provide significant economic benefits to the hills area through improved tourism business opportunities and spin-offs in other types of outdoor recreation and sectors such as food, wine, accommodation and retail.

This plan is part of a large-scale vision that will bring together State Government departments, local councils, the tourism sector, business, sporting groups and the wider community.



ForestrySA and SAWater are joint partners in this project and funding has been made available for trail development. So far, trails have been developed at Craighburn, Cleland and Belair. DEWNR is looking at closing some existing trails as new bike/people friendly trails are being opened. It is significant that *“DEWNR is changing direction and is becoming more focused on people using parks, rather than pure conservation “*

Further details of this approach can be found in the DEWNR publication

“Linking Adelaide with Nature”

http://www.environment.sa.gov.au/managing-natural-resources/Park_management/people-and-parks

To assist the various departments with developing this vision, the government has brought an expert from the International Mountain Biking Association, Joey Klein, to Adelaide. Joey said, that for a cycle trail to work it has to have: a land manager who will look after the project, a community which will support this ie volunteers, and a bike club. A trail must have sustainability, ride-ability and respect for the land.

He claims that users don't need trails, the land does, because proliferating trails do damage, while managed trails minimise it. The main reasons for land managers closing trails are: resource damage, conflict with other users, public liability concerns, and a lack of sustainability.

Waite Conservation Reserve lies between the Adelaide suburbs and the Mountain Bike Park at Eagle on the Hill. It is very likely that at some point there will be an approach to the University to create a linking track, which would allow riders to move between these two locations. Indeed, it would not be at all surprising if some of the riders seen using the southern boundary track, were not already doing this.

As a group, we have no power to tell the University how to respond to such a request. However, it may be useful to gather members ideas on the role of the reserve and mountain biking. **Clinton Garrett**

GBCVMPVT!GVOHJ

Did you ever wander through the reserve and wonder what all those toadstools, mushrooms, earthstars, puffballs and brackets were and what they were doing? Fungi are some of the most remarkable life forms on Earth and they might be a lot more important than you realise.

It might surprise you to know that there have been 25 species of fungi recorded for the arboretum. The number of species in the reserve is unknown, but after our Fungal Foray in July, we should have a better idea of the range of fungal species.



Pam Catchside, B.Sc. (Hons.),
A.R.C.S., Dip. Ed.

This year's AGM talk will feature Pam Catchside, who will talk about the fungi of the Adelaide Suburbs and Hills.

Pam studied Botany at Imperial College, London University. She has taught Biology and Science in senior schools in England and in Australia.

Pam is an Honorary Research Associate at the State Herbarium of South Australia, investigating the taxonomy and ecology of the larger fungi, particularly the disc fungi, fire-site fungi and inter-relationships of fungi and the environment.

Pam is Convener of the Adelaide Fungal Studies Group and has an active role in education about fungi, giving talks, workshops and publishing scientific papers and articles. Presently she is co-editing a field guide to Australian fungi. Pam is a recipient of the Unsung Hero of South Australian Science Award.

Members and friends are invited to hear Pam talk about these interesting organisms at the May AGM. You can follow this up, by going on the Fungal Foray on July 11th at 9:00 am, Springwood Park.



BHN!NBZ38U!8/41!QN!

VSCSSBF!IPVTF!

SUPPER PROVIDED

Fire Management in Australia in 1788

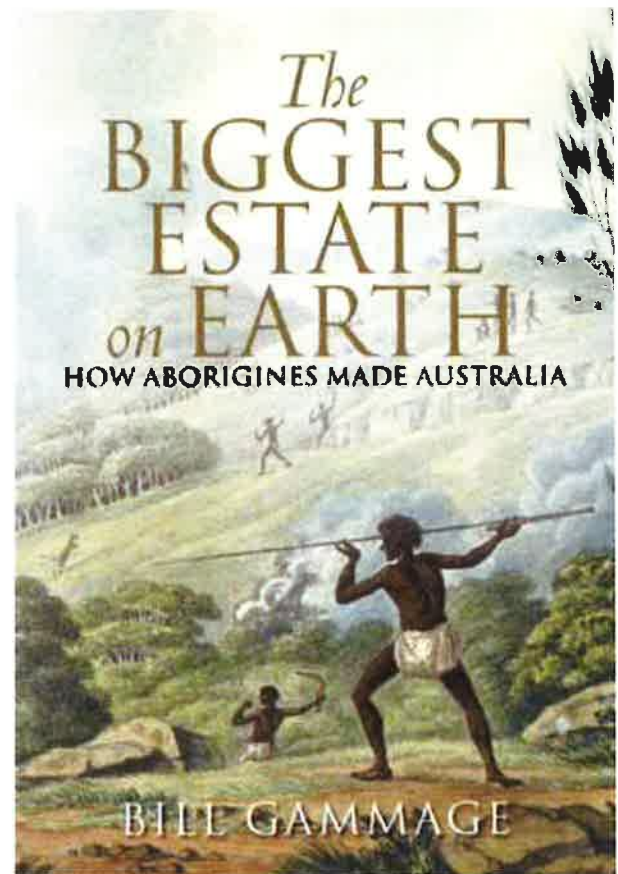
Bill Gammage gave this talk about traditional fire management on Feb 18th at the Charles Hawker Centre, Waite Campus for the Yitpi Foundation

The talk started with the question: "As bush fires are so dangerous nowadays, does that mean that as Australians we need to be permanently at war with the country, continually living with the fear of fire's ability to destroy?"

In 1788, the people saw Fire as an important totem, an ally, quite different from our notion of fire. Fire was predictable, controllable, repeatable allowing the country to be re-born. It was used to regulate animals and plants, ensuring diversity and predictability, maintaining resources in abundance in conveniently located areas. This was backed by a living culture based on the "Dreaming", a cosmology which included what we would call conservation of the environment and farming, enabling society and culture to exist, ceremonies to be performed.

Fire was and still is in some of the communities today, a living part of the "Dreaming". It is first sung by a Senior culture man and seen where it will go. It would then be invoked but is always under the control of the senior Fire man. Fires were not random but particular to a certain area at a particular time for a particular purpose carried out by the experts of that area. However they united the country like the songlines.

There are many words relating to fire in the Australian languages:-small, low creeping large, hot, cool, slow, fast, rare, frequent fires to clean up dirty or neglected land, to freshen grass and canopies, for fire breaks, for germinating seeds and distributing plants, reducing fuels, protecting fire sensitive species, burning single trees, good and badly burnt country etc. There were also accidental fires and fires from lightning but these did not culminate in the dangerous uncontrollable bush fires of today. To summarise: "A fire a day kept the big bush-fires at bay!" Five broad varieties of fire regimes were listed but these were only general categories and need to be applied specifically to a particular area.



Over the whole of Australia small groups of people were responsible for their confined area. All people had to help, having a species (totem) to look after, resulting in all species being respected and maintained. An example was given of a person living north of Alice Springs whose totem is maggots. He needs to ensure suitable conditions for their continuation; that the area was not burnt out so that there were enough logs etc left lying around for them.

However since white settlement, over 200 years on, there are now only a small percentage of people in society looking after the environment and farming. Only particular species and habitat are favoured, not all are protected and respected. Some species are extinct, some endangered and there are a lot of feral species. Diversity is shrinking and is not in balance. In most areas of Australia a lot of the traditional land management knowledge, accumulated over thousands of years, has been lost. Meanwhile the western land management practices over the past two hundred years have changed many aspects of the land.

Helen Pryor

Fountain Grass

Fountain Grass *Cenchrus setaceus* (formerly *Pennisetum setaceus*) is now a declared plant in South Australia. At this stage, there are two known locations in the Waite Conservation Reserve where this weed occurs. One area is adjacent to the caves and the other area is adjacent to the quarry on the South -Eastern Freeway.

As a weed, it is of concern because it out-competes and suppresses native vegetation, and in time will eliminate the herbaceous plant layer. The seeds of *C. setaceus* are long lived (up to 10 years) and are easily moved by wind or passing animals. It is very adaptable to a wide range of soils and will tolerate rainfalls as low as 127 mm/year.

Clinton has sprayed the plants near the caves. This appears to have been effective. However a follow up trip showed new plants had germinated since the spraying. This weed will need on-going control and observation. If you are aware of any other localities for Fountain grass in the reserve, please let Peter, Jennifer or Clinton know.



Fountain Grass one month after spraying

Autumn –Winter 2015 Walking Bee Dates

Walking Bees are held on the first Saturday and third Sunday of the month.
9.00 am—12.30pm

Sunday April 19th

May Saturday 2nd and Sunday 17th

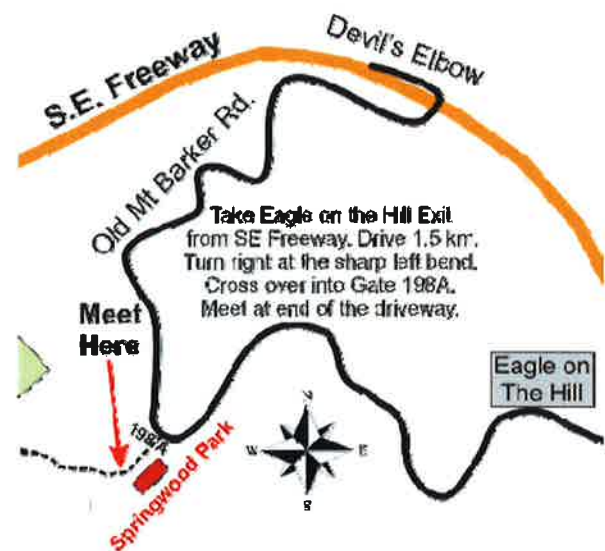
June Saturday 6th and Sunday 21st

July Saturday 4th and Sunday 19th

August Saturday 1st and Sunday 16th.

Meet at the entry driveway to Springwood Park

Wear clothing/boots suitable for the day. Bring a drink and something to eat, so that we can have a chat at the end of the walk.



This year, we will again concentrate on pulling young olive seedlings during our walks. The early walks will be in the eastern section of the reserve.

All tools supplied.