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Friends of Sturt Gorge Newsletter

No. 28: January 2013

This edition: *Logania*; *Acaena*; *Books of interest*; *Trails & maps*; *Finances*; *Membership*; *Work reports*

Looking through the DEH **Fire Management Plan 2009-2019** I came across this reference to one of the plants of high conservation significance in the Gorge:

- Rock *Logania* (*Logania saxatilis*) – rated as Rare at the state level

Rick Coyte has identified a cluster of *Logania saxatilis* at the lower end of the Marri Track (which we've been keeping clear of the usual competition, such as olives) and Rick Koehne has taken some excellent photographs, one of them featured below.



Other photographs will shortly be available on the FOSG website.

Is that a weed or what?

Some Australian natives can look like escapees from a European garden. A notable example is the evergreen herb commonly known as “sheep’s burr” (*Acaena echinata*). This lovely little plant is as tough as boot leather and has a beautiful blue flower spike in springtime. Once you recognise its distinctive leaves you tend to see it everywhere. A real jewel in the Gorge.



Image source: www.natureshare.org.au Photos by Russell Best

Books of interest

It's blue with 5 petals

Here is good news indeed. The long-anticipated second edition of Ann Prescott's comprehensive survey of South Australian flora is finally available and due for release in February. Orders can be made direct to the author through the website <http://www.itsbluewithfivepetals.com.au>

The biggest estate on earth: how Aborigines made Australia

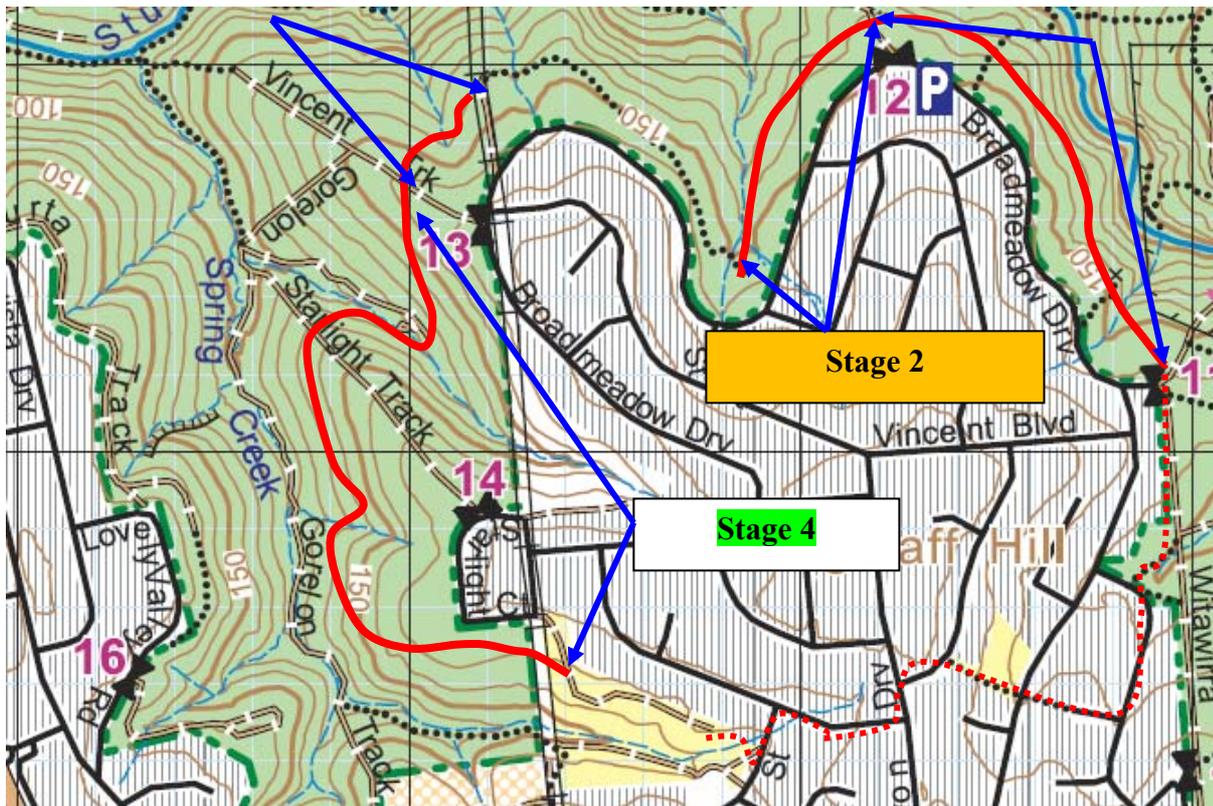
Another book likely to be of interest is Bill Gammage's *The biggest estate on earth*. He assembles and examines a considerable amount of evidence to argue that Aborigines not only used fire in a purposeful, repetitive and judicious way (to discourage some vegetation types, encourage others, attract game and assist with hunting) but also that this was done over the entire continent and as of 1788 had been done so in a consistent way over many thousands of years. This activity left a record on the land which the author – in parallel with other historical documents – deciphers and interprets.

This poses interesting questions from a conservation perspective, if we accept that concepts such as “natural vegetation” and “wilderness” have a much reduced application and significance after Gammage's analysis. Read the book and be stimulated!

Trail maintenance & development

Trail maintenance continues to focus on clearance of encroaching vegetation and weed hot-spots.

However, on the development front FOSG members have GPS'd a possible continuous trail from Gate 11 along the contour line below Broadmeadow Drive and Starlight Crescent trail, crossing over Parrianna, Vincent and Starlight Fire Tracks to finish up in the vicinity of Renwick Street where the loop can be completed along various local streets Back to Gate 11 (see below).



A trail of sorts already exists between Stages 2 & 3 so a trail from gate 11 to Vincent track shouldn't be too difficult, although it will involve us in a fair amount of work, clearing unwanted vegetation, replanting indigenous and rarer plants where possible, and of course some spade work on the trail itself. Stage 4 would complete the loop and details will be considered if and when stages 1, 2 & 3 are completed.

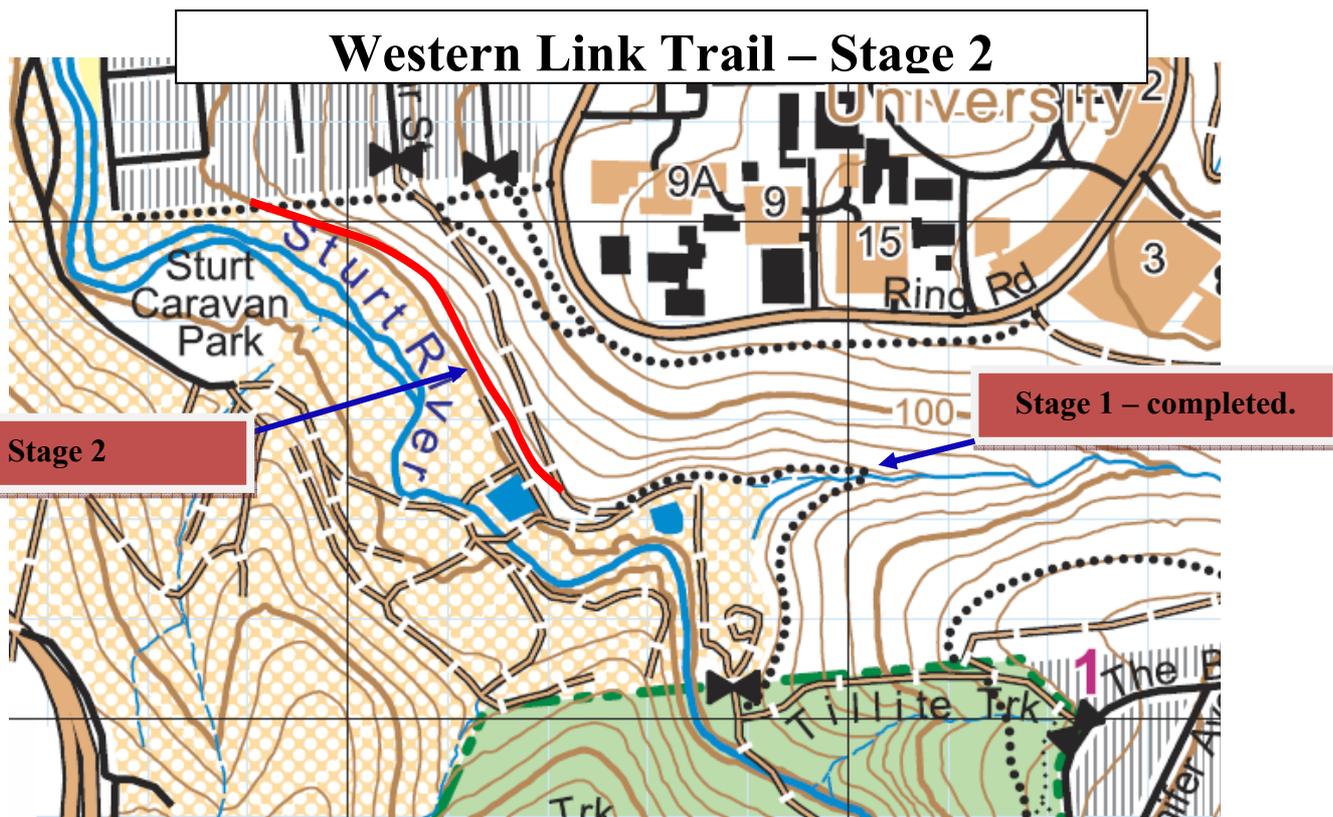
The idea of the trail came as a result of searching for suitable loops as part of the trail plan for Sturt Gorge with limited existing loop opportunities on the south side of the river.

The trail could also join up several other existing trails which would connect with those at the back of the Scout Hall to the east and the River Trails and Spring Creek to the west.

DEWNR are already looking at Stage 1 and it is hoped they will get back to us with an approval by the time winter sets in again, so that we can get a good start on it before the end of this year.

A somewhat longer-term proposal which DEWNR is supposedly thinking about involves the construction of an access-way across the top of the flood retention dam. I'm sure we'd all love to see and use it, but you can well imagine that cost and security issues might keep this idea on the back-burner for a while.

And 2013 should see a substantial development of the **Western Link Trail** connecting the existing trail network with the Sturt Linear Park (see below). The Stage 2 trail line is on the western boundary of Flinders University land – recently cleared of obstructing olive trees - and David Clark’s group has done initial alignment work. This will be followed up by “benching” when the soil is easier to work with, ie when there’s been some rain. The new trail is flatter and connects directly to the Riverside Drive reserve, so will make access to the western end of Gorge a more pleasant experience for walkers and cyclists.



Any feedback on existing trails – including suggestions for future work - would be gratefully appreciated: phone Bob Grant on 7329 8296 or by e-mail at bobgrant@adam.com.au.

Maps of Sturt Gorge

Our maps have just been updated to include the most recently constructed DEWNR trail in the south-western corner of the Park. This forms a loop accessible from Horners Bridge and follows the Sturt River at a high elevation before swinging north then east to join the existing trails by the lake.

Maps are A3 size, printed on Monsoon Waterproof paper, show all watercourses, trails, contour lines and access points and are still just \$10 each.

To get your copy contact Bob Grant on 7329 8296 or by e-mail at bobgrant@adam.com.au.

Treasurer's report

Our Treasurer, Bob Grant, has prepared a ***Statement of Receipts and Payments for the Year ended 31/1/2012*** which is being forwarded to members as a separate item. It's always handy to have an explanation of what's significant about the numbers so Bob has kindly provided the following notes to be read in conjunction with the actual statement.

Receipts

Receipts and donations for the year were up on 2011 reflecting the increase in memberships this year . We had 22 new members for the year, finishing the year with 90 members within 60 memberships.

Map sales were well down as we were waiting for new maps to be printed showing all the new trails in the Craighburn Estate.

New maps are now available and we have sold 21 in the first two weeks of being printed.

Grant receipts for the year were actually up considerably in 2012 but a Community Action Grant (CAG) from the Dept of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities for \$13,552 did not reflect in our books having been directed through Friends of Parks.

Bank Interest earned was down reflecting lower interest rates generally and the fact that we were holding lower balances in our bank account.

Payments

Work done by contractors does not reflect the CAG grant mentioned above, but equipment purchases highlights other grants received during the year.

The apparent operational deficiency for the year resulted from funds not yet spent as at the end of the 2011 financial year but spent during 2012.

Subscriptions 2013

It's the start of another year and membership subscriptions are due. The current rate remains at \$10 – excellent value – and can be paid to our Treasurer, Bob Grant, or by transfer to the Friends' account.

Details of payment methods are on the new look **membership renewal form** which is attached to this mail-out

And if you would like to make a donation along with your renewal be assured that it will be used to buy equipment and materials for bushcare and trail maintenance work.

Working bees in high conservation areas

Chris Thomson reports from the south side of the Gorge

- Both Panasonic drills have had problems this year. Most recently Gordon de Rose was able to get a drill working again and it is such a good feeling when Gordon says he will have a look at it and a few days later the door bell rings and there is Gordon with the drill and the problem remedied.
- The group that has been working in MU8 & Starlight Crescent continue to see the yellow tail black cockatoos fly over and we are still keen to plant some more food plants for them as they are rated 'vulnerable', and a lot of the Aleppo Pines in the southern areas are gradually being removed.
- The work being done in MU8 along the gully is progressing very well. It has been going for over 4 and ½ years and during that time ash and olive trees, dog rose and kikuyu have been controlled, and in recent times work has centred on nasturtiums and 3-corner garlic. The olive removal along Starlight Crescent is 'powering' along with input from Dennis Rowe, David Beaton, Liz Barry and Peter Szell.
- Rick Coyte has raised and planted out hundreds of seedlings and some of the wattles and native hollyhocks are over 6 feet tall and the aim has been to keep planting so that the desirable plants will out-compete the weeds. Rick's work is particularly valuable as very often he has grown plants that are quite scarce in the Gorge, so he is ensuring they do not die out altogether.
- The bird surveys along Starlight Crescent are continuing every 2 months and each month a slightly different composition of birds is being recorded. While doing the last bird survey on the slope that Dennis cleared we were pleased to see there were a lot of large *Austrostipas*, which Rick believes to be *A. multispiculus* which is a rated species and he has estimated that there are about 200. It is interesting to watch an area that has been so heavily infested with olives and boneseed change, and fortunately there have not been a large number of weed seedlings to deal with.
- Rick has helped the children at the Flagstaff Hill Kindergarten plant native plant seeds and if the seedlings are successful they will be planted in the Gorge. On 28th November Rick led a walk for the kindergarten children and staff to look for plants and koalas.

On the north side of the Gorge working bees have continued on both sides of Magpie Creek, especially below Bushland Drive as continuation of our contribution to the 'Bushland Olive Blitz' grant. This involves Friends putting in volunteer hours in more accessible areas to complement work put in by a paid contractor dealing with ash and olives along the creek line and on steeper slopes. This area has good understorey shrubs and grasses so it is very satisfying being able to protect them from the encroachment of olives. Keep an eye out next newsletter for some before and after photos, and the latest update from the north side.

That's all for now – please let me know of any topics you'd like to see covered in the next issue (Phone: 8278 2646 or email: mgoldie@vtown.com.au).

Andrew Goldie / Editor

Friends of Sturt Gorge

Statement of Receipts and Payments for the year ended 31st December 2012

	<u>2012</u>	<u>2011</u>
Receipts		
Membership Fees	\$605.00	\$530.00
Donations	\$180.00	\$95.00
Hire of Air Pots - Riaus	\$30.00	
Map sales	\$41.00	\$451.00
Grants (Only items passed through FOSG books)	\$2,245.00	\$4,990.00
Bank Interest	\$157.23	\$213.80
	\$3,258.23	\$6,279.80
Expenditure		
Contractors (Only items paid through FOSG books)	\$2,000.00	\$3,500.00
Equipment purchases	\$2,374.39	\$269.00
Equipment Repairs and parts	\$425.79	\$155.40
Consumer Items (Diesel, Poison, Fuel, Safety)	\$296.27	\$235.59
Committee Expenses - Other	\$354.37	\$476.85
Subscriptions (Trees for Life & Friends of Parks)	\$86.00	\$85.00
Map Production	\$100.00	\$150.00
Web Site	\$22.50	\$0.00
Healthy Gums on Starlight grant	\$812.12	\$0.00
First Aid Courses (Office of Volunteers Grant)		\$314.00
Part refund of grant to Mitcham Council		\$360.70
Bank Interest Charged (A/c Overdrawn)		\$0.22
	\$6,471.44	\$5,546.76
Operational Surplus/ (Deficiency)	-\$3,213.21	\$733.04

Bank situation as at 31st December

	<u>2012</u>	<u>2011</u>
Balance Brought Forward	\$6,167.44	\$5,434.40
	<u>\$3,258.23</u>	<u>\$6,279.80</u>
	\$9,425.67	\$11,714.20
	<u>\$6,471.44</u>	<u>\$5,546.76</u>
Balance of Funds as at 31st December	\$2,954.23	\$6,167.44

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Bob Grant, Treasurer

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Auditor

**FRIENDS OF STURT GORGE
ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL – 2013**

DEAR MEMBER

Your annual membership renewal is due as at 1st January and remains at \$10.00 per member or family living at the same address.

The preferred method of payment is by direct or electronic credit to our bank account as detailed below. Ensure your name is quoted in the reference panel so that it will appear on our bank statement and also request your bank to advise us by email of the transaction (if this service is available).

BANK ACCOUNT DETAILS:

NAME: FRIENDS OF STURT GORGE
BSB No: 105-078
ACCOUNT NO. 054419440
REFERENCE ***YOUR NAME***
E MAIL bobgrant@adam.com.au

You may also pay in person at any meeting or working bee. A favourite place is at our annual picnic meeting at Karinya Reserve, Shepherds Hill Road, Eden Hills which will be held on Tuesday 15th January 2013 at 7:00pm. If remitting by the postal service please do not send cash. Have your cheque made payable to Friends of Sturt Gorge and post to c/o 14 Gorge Road, Bellevue Heights 5050

In all cases it would be helpful if you could complete the attached renewal notice and e-mail it to bobgrant@adam.com.au or hand it to the treasurer or send it to the above address with your remittance. A receipt will be issued and an acknowledgement sent by e-mail where appropriate.

Yours sincerely
Bob Grant
Membership Officer
Phone: 7329 8296
e-mail: bobgrant@adam.com.au

**FRIENDS OF STURT GORGE
MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FOR YEAR 2013**

Name 1:

Name 2:

Address:

..... **Postcode**.....

Email:

Telephone: (day)

(evening)

Membership Fees:

Single & Family **\$10.00**

Donation **\$.....**

Total Enclosed **\$.....**

Date:.....

Send to:

The Treasurer

Friends of Sturt Gorge

c/o 14 Gorge Road

Bellevue Heights SA 5050

Payment may be made by electronic or direct credit through your bank.
Please show your name on the Direct Credit Entry.

Bank Account details:

Name: Friends of Sturt Gorge
BSB No: 105-078
Account No. 054419440