



# Friends of Sturt Gorge

## Newsletter

www.fosg.org.au

**No. 23: Mar 2011**

**This edition:** 2011 AGM; Upcoming events; Glycine monitoring; Clean Up Australia Day; Cypress Trail report; A young member's perspective; Beetling along; New plant for Gorge; Ash impact on groundwater; Calendar.

### 2011 AGM

Our February 2011 AGM started with a very comprehensive presentation by Department for Environment and Natural Resources Fire Ecologist Kirstin Long. She gave us some general fire ecology and fire management information then elaborated on some of the prescribed burns in the Sturt Gorge and their monitoring programs. Reports and election of the committee followed, with most people returning to the same role as last year. We thanked Liz Sawyer, our outgoing Grants Coordinator, for her successful work in finding additional financial support for our work. In recognition of the increasing complexity of the role, we have decided to move to a grants committee model as there is too much work for one person.

### 2011/2012 Committee

**President:** Amy Blaylock

**Secretary:** Brian Blaylock

**Membership Officer:** Bob Grant

**Grants Committee Chair:** Amy Blaylock

**Northern Biodiversity Working Bee Coordinator:** Ronn Reid

**Southern Biodiversity Working Bee Coordinator:** Chris Thomson

**Trail Maintenance Working Bee Coordinator:** Bob Grant

**Occasional Trail Maintenance Working Bee Coordinator:** David Clark

**Refreshments Coordinators:** Gordon and Valerie de Rose

**Vice President:** Liz Sawyer

**Treasurer:** Bob Grant

**Librarian:** Chris Thomson

### Upcoming events

Join us for a trip to Hindmarsh Island on **Sunday April 17th** to visit members Pat and Dave Glazier, and see the Landcare project they are working on. BYO lunch. We will meet at the Hindmarsh Island Nursery at 11am. If the weather isn't suitable, we will try again for Sunday May 15th. RSVP to [moreinfo@fosg.org.au](mailto:moreinfo@fosg.org.au) so that you receive confirmation of the date.

### FOSG Showcase

Later this year we plan to run a showcase day to promote the projects we have been working on in the Gorge. Members, particularly those who aren't able to get out to working bees, staff from our funding bodies, and the general public will be invited.

We will visit weed control sites, areas where we have used grant money for work by contractors, walking trails that are being maintained or created, and revegetation sites on both sides of the Gorge. The date will be finalised in the next calendar.

Please see page 5 for dates of working bees and meetings to the end of July.



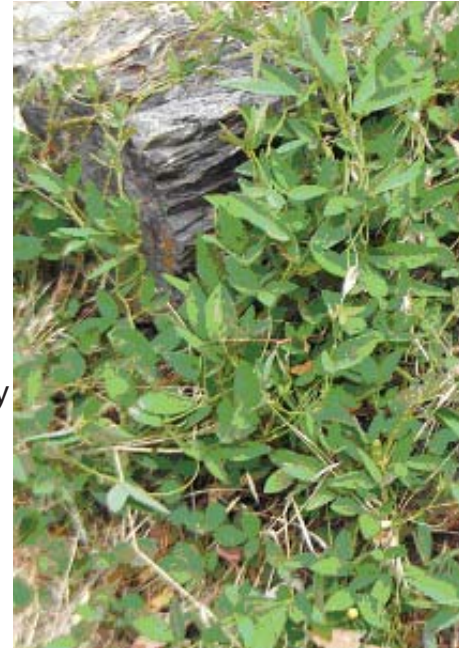
We enjoyed our January picnic celebration using part of our Award money

## ***Glycine tabacina* population monitoring**

*Glycine tabacina* is a small herb with a purple pea flower that grows along the ground or twines up through other vegetation. Kieren Brewer in his 2010 report *Surveys for Threatened Flora in the Mount Lofty Ranges* has recommended that due to the restricted range of the plant, small number of individuals, and pressure from weeds, this plant should be listed as 'critically endangered in the Mount Lofty Ranges'.

Member Rick Coyte has a keen interest in identifying and preserving populations in the Gorge. He has been extensively surveying and recording plant sightings with GPS - he has already added over 170 individual plants to Kieren's records, and the number keeps rising.

We are reducing the pressure on these remnant plants by carefully hand-pulling weeds around them such as plantain and introduced grasses, and making sure we watch where we walk. Keep an eye out for them next time you visit the Gorge.



## **Clean Up Australia Day 2011**

This year we headed south for Clean Up Australia Day - Sunday March 6th - to the Sturt River, downstream of Horners Bridge, Murrays Hill Road, Coromandel Valley. We had a great turn out with 14 members, plus two general public who found our site listed online.

With the trails team killing off big mounds of blackberries by the River, we were able to uncover old beer bottles, metal pipes and even a cat scratching pole. A chest freezer full of undelivered 'junk' mail was also brought up the hill.

We estimate our haul weighed about 800kg in total, with 8.5 Clean Up bags and a big pile of other assorted items (see photo right). The City of Onkaparinga kindly came past when we'd finished and picked it all up for proper disposal.





## Trail Maintenance Report - Cypress Trail 28/2/2011 by Chris Thomson

**Location:** Management Unit 8, Cypress Trail, between council reserve behind kindergarten and Gorelon Fire Track

**Hours:** 9 members X 3 hrs = 27 volunteer hours

**Tasks Undertaken:** Ash and olive trees were cut down in preparation for autumn native seedling plantings and to improve the aesthetics of the area as the ash and olives had been previously poisoned.

A chainsaw was used for large trunks and limbs and loppers and secateurs were used to cut up smaller branches which were then scattered.



Area of trail completed in February 2011 that allows people to walk just above the gully floor - very useful when there has been quite a bit of rain. Originally this part of the gully was difficult to walk through because of the high kikuyu which is now pretty much under control.

The kikuyu was sprayed with glyphosate, and Garlon was sprayed on sprouting ash trees that had been cut down previously, a sprouting fig tree, and numerous dog rose plants. At the Gorelon end of the track weeds were cut using a brush cutter. Parts of the existing track were levelled and a new track was started by cutting into the hill side and benching on the north facing side of the gully near the Gorelon Fire Track. This track will be completed at a future working bee.

### Comments

It's nearly 3 years since the FOSG started work in this area. The area was heavily infested with olives and the original track was impenetrable because of olives and a large area of thick, high kikuyu. There is still work to be done but after one more working bee on-going maintenance only will be required to keep the track in good condition rather than the present heavy work of track development. The track is used frequently by dog walkers and bushwalkers and the improved accessibility of this area has increased the recreation values of this part of the Gorge.

### A young member's perspective

At our March Saturday working bee I caught up with Simon, 18, who is one of our youngest members. *So you're at uni now?* Yes, I'm a first year student studying engineering which can be busy sometimes, but I always manage to set time aside to come to the monthly working bees on Saturday. *How did you find out about the group?* Well, in the Messenger there was an ad, Mum pointed it out to me and I was interested. *What were you interested in?* I'd been walking around the Gorge a lot so I was really interested in being able to help out the Gorge and help preserve it - with trail maintenance and getting rid of all the pests and introduced species. *What is your favourite thing about working bees?* I like the laid back socialising atmosphere and the rewarding feeling you get from being able to help clean up the environment, and help preserve Australia.



## New plant for Gorge

As reported at the February general meeting, Rick Coyte has discovered a new plant species for the Gorge. It is *Lasiopetalum behrii*, a shrub which grows about 1.5m tall with pink and white flowers. When it flowers, we will send a sample to the State Herbarium for their records and confirmation.



## Beetling along

Groups of these vividly coloured beetles were found under leaf litter and bark on the ground, off Gorge Road Bellevue Heights, during a working bee in December.

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## Ash trees impact on groundwater *a conversation with Gordon de Rose*

I've noticed some changes over the years in the creekline off Renwick Street (Flagstaff Hill).

*You said it used to be much wetter in that spot...*

Well, that's where the soak was, there, down from the well a bit.

*And your family used the well?*

We used to have a siphon in the well and it used to come out of the well and run down the creek and go to a trough for the sheep and cattle. It had a ballcock on it and it used to just open and close and kept siphoning, you didn't have to pump or anything, it just siphoned out of the well.

*So you can't see where the well was?*

No, you can't see that, but you can see the track that was going to it coming around the side of the hill, but that's about all you can see, they filled it in. They must have had a bulldozer. Parks did it when they first got the land, it was a dangerous thing, someone could get in there and darn drown themselves, but it used to just siphon out there and run down the creek and then come out. It was that high a level, at the top there, that it never used to run out in summer, it would just keep going. So if the animals had a drink at the trough, it would open and just siphon through and keep going.

*And when the ash trees came up, the soak disappeared?*

It was just bare ground there and then all the ash trees came up. It gradually got worse and worse, they were about two feet in diameter, and when we first went down there (with members of Friends of Sturt Gorge) you could hardly walk there. The ash trees were that thick they'd taken all the water, so it wasn't running out.

*How have the Friends been involved?*

There was a big gum tree there and I remember Tom Thulborn said to me 'Listen, we'll clear around this tree' and we started there and then its gone from there, right along the creek, right down to the other end! Such is life. When they took the ash trees out, next thing, the water started to appear again.



Ash trees along the Sturt River





## Friends of Sturt Gorge

### Calendar of Events

April – July 2011

Visit our web site [www.fosg.org.au](http://www.fosg.org.au)

Month	Date	Purpose	Meeting Place/Focus	Management Unit
Apr	Thurs 7th	Working Bee	9 AM Meet Fire Gate 1, York Dr. Flagstaff Hill (opp Pelham St). Work on either side of Birri Track, mainly boneseed but also looking for rare plants to enter into GPS.	MU28 Pty 1
	Sat 16th	Working Bee	9 AM End Gorge Rd, Bellevue Heights – work from end of Gorge Rd property boundary in a southerly direction (site 1). Work on emerging weeds post-fire.	MU11
	Tues 19th	General Meeting	7.30 PM Bellevue Heights Primary School	
	Mon 25th	Trail Maint	9 AM Trail Maintenance – Refer to Bob Grant – See note below	
May	Thurs 5th	Working Bee	9 AM Meet Opp 21 Lilford Way Flagstaff Hill. Continue working along drainage line and adjacent hill slopes, mainly olive, boneseed and buckthorn.	MU21 Pty 3
	Tues 17th	General Meeting	7.30 PM Bellevue Heights Primary School	
	Sat 21st	Working Bee	9 AM Opp 21 Bushland Dr. Bellevue Heights. Brush cut phalaris, grub isolated bridal creeper and small olives. Drill and fill larger olives on creekline.	MU17
	Mon 30th	Trail Maint	9 AM Trail Maintenance – Refer to Bob Grant – See note below	
Jun	Thurs 2nd	Working Bee	9 AM Meet Fire Gate 2, York Dr. Flagstaff Hill (Opp oval). Work along eastern boundary of park, just below houses. Checking for any weed species, there is boneseed and a few olives.	MU28 Pty 1
	Sat 18th	Working Bee	9 AM End Gorge Rd, Bellevue Heights – Continue weed control in burn area. Hand pull small olives, boneseed and broom, and spot spray bridal creeper.	MU11
	Tues 21st	General Meeting	7.30 PM Bellevue Heights Primary School	
	Mon 27th	Trail Maint	9 AM Trail Maintenance – Refer to Bob Grant – See note below	
July	Thurs 7th	Working Bee	9 AM Meet Opp 62 Broadmeadow Dr. Flagstaff Hill Continue clearing weeds around <i>Glycine tabacina</i> plants, mainly olive and scattered boneseed.	MU 9 Pty 2
	Sat 16 <sup>th</sup>	Working Bee	9 AM Opp 21 Bushland Dr., Bellevue Heights. Continue/finish last stand of large olives on creekline. Weed around revegetation across creek and hand pull small olives. Follow up work along creek line and lower northern slope for small ash, dog rose and olives.	MU 17
	Tues 19th	General Meeting	7.30 PM Bellevue Heights Primary School	
	Mon 25th	Trail Maint	9 AM Trail Maintenance – Refer to Bob Grant – See note below	

**Interested in walking trails?** Bob Grant leads regular working bees to maintain walking trails within the Park. These are held on the 4<sup>th</sup> Monday of the month. Please contact him on 7329 8296 or email [bobgrant@adam.com.au](mailto:bobgrant@adam.com.au) for information. **Sunday Working Bees** Extra working bees on a Sunday will be called from time to time – these will be arranged by David Clark .