



Friends

Belair National Park

Volunteers working for Conservation

Established 1985



Best Newsletter 1996 - Friends Group of the year 1998

JUNE 1999

PRESIDENTS REPORT FOR MAY 1999

I was expecting a normal routine year when I accepted the position of President. How wrong I was.

Starting in February I attended a special meeting to discuss a proposal for extensions to the caravan park into the National Park. At about the same time I was pressured by the media for the Friends point of view of the proposal, especially the extension into the Park. The items that did appear in the press were a mixed bag. I tried to be non committal, some expressed that notion, others bore no resemblance to the notion.

Following an inspection of the proposed area of extension, there was a special meeting at which a majority of members voted to issue a pamphlet to the local residents with details of the proposal, and a request, that if they did not want the extensions to occur, to either write to the Blackwood Times or to the Minister expressing their objections.

These actions caused a reaction from the Staff of the Park. e.g. they no longer consider us as internal stakeholders privy to confidential information or funding. The change from internal stakeholder apparently does not change the way work is carried out in the Park.

It is hoped that one of the outcomes of all this will be a review of the Friends Groups on a State wide basis. Times are changing and it would seem that such a review should address perceived current problems and future directions. It is anticipated that there will be a segment at the forum to initiate this review.

There is a sub-committee looking at ways and means of averting any extension into the Park. One of the best ways is by objecting to any changes to this or any other parks management plan which sanctions trading off sections for financial gain. Trade off enough pieces and there are no parks.

One of the best ways to save the park is to make sure it doesn't degrade, and this can be achieved by the prevention of the spread of aggressive plants. Where an area has been degraded removal of weeds and planting of local species will enable an area to regenerate over time. It's up to all of us to participate if possible and encourage everyone to attend working bees. Check the attached flyer for times. If none suit let me know.

Brian DuBois

NEW MEMBERS

Since the last newsletter we have a number of new members. On behalf of all the members I would like to extend a warm welcome to Valmai and Deane RADBONE, Ross HANDSACKER, Janne CHANDLER, Vesna JANKOVIC, Trudi-Ann MERCURIO, Bette and Doug SMALL, Shirley ALFORD, Elaine MEFFIN, Elizabeth DICKSON and Sharn LUCAS. Also a welcome back to Patricia OAKSHOTT who has rejoined our group. If I haven't already done so I look forward to meeting you all at the working bees or the monthly meetings.

Barbara Warburton. Membership Secretary.

TUESDAY WALKS

We commenced our regular twice monthly walks in the park on 13th April, when we were fortunate to find the "Parsons Bands" orchids in profusion. It was surprising to see them growing in the fire break area, near Upper Sturt Road, Upper Sturt, as well.

On our second walk, we walked in the North West corner of the park and were pleased to note some of our previous tree planting's were still thriving - among the weeds! Ron Tamlyn shared some interesting historical knowledge of the area. "Astraloma" was the only native in flower - the park was very dry.

Judith O'Hara led the walk on 11th May and this was interesting as usual. On the fourth Tuesday in May, now that it has rained, we should see the "Vitata" orchid in flower as well as a variety of flowering heath.

If in doubt about the weather, please phone me at 1pm to check, 8278 2623.

Lynda Knight.

FRIENDS OF PARKS INC. 15TH FORUM 13-15 AUGUST 1999 AT PINNAROO.

Friends of Belair National Park will attend as usual. Last year about 20 of us went to the Meningie Forum, some from Friday to Sunday, some just for a day.

If you have not received applications forms and notices for this year and would like to go or just know more about it, please ring Jill Salvi on 8278 6736 and I can send you forms and information. We are considering a bus for those who do not want to drive, but we need about 18 passengers and only have 5 so far. Advise Jill if you need transport.

Registrations to attend the Forum need to be in by 31st July 1999, and accommodation needs to be arranged. See notices in this newsletter.

NATURE WALK IN BELAIR NATIONAL PARK.

This year's free guided walk in memory of the late Professor, Sir John Cleland, will be on Saturday 18th September 1999, and, after the most enjoyable walk he gave us in 1997, we are very pleased that Dr. Ralph Foster has consented to lead us again.

Final details in next newsletter, but we usually meet at the Main Oval Pavilion near the Office at 10am, break somewhere for lunch between noon and 1pm, and finish at 3pm back at the Pavilion. You can come for a full day or a half day, but bring your own food and drink, a hat and sunscreen and comfortable shoes. Pace is suitable for children. Come along and have a great day.

Note the date in your diary. Saturday, September 18th 1999.

WORKING BEES.

Working Hours Worked.

March 99.

Unit 23.	14 hours
Unit 16	62 ..
Unit 17	<u>3</u> ..
	<u>79</u> .. total

April 99

Unit 16	80 hours
Unit 17	<u>17½</u> ..
	<u>97½</u> .. total

To May 21st.

Unit 16	44 hours
Unit 17	17 ..
Removing Guards (Gov. Fm)	<u>4</u> ..
	<u>65</u> .. total

A splendid effort by all concerned. There are a number of friends whose main interest is working in the park and for personal reasons we do not see at our meetings. They have made a considerable contribution to the above results and I thank them as well as all our other regulars.

The above figures do not include any for Saturday working bees which our President is trying to get off the ground nor does it include time worked by individuals on their adopted units and so I can say with confidence the April total will comfortably exceed 100.

Unit 23. We have completed random weeding which included mainly boneseed, olive and a small quantity of broom. To be traversed at some future date.

Unit 16. Random weeding virtually complete. A small area in the exotics to be done also the hakea laurina to be dealt with. This was a steep area in parts. Near the railway the olive infestation was quite dense with many very mature trees and numerous seedlings. The area of exotics contained much sollya. Boneseed was everywhere. To be traversed at some future date.

Unit 17. This area has been adopted by Judith and Mary who requested help in removing masses of boneseed and some olive and in consequence we are now working here. This area was first worked by "Weedbusters 97" and we are continuing with random weed removal. Maintenance work is required in the areas which weedbusters cleared.

A final word. During this time Doug has spent all his time poisoning olive and what a good job he has done. Doug will be taking on the job of working bee coordinator while I am away enjoying myself.

Loie



FRIENDS OF BELAIR NATIONAL PARK

PO Box 2
BELAIR SA 5052

Volunteers working for conservation



Save Belair National Park

The best way to save the Park is to make sure it doesn't degenerate and where it has, spend time to rehabilitate it. Give a couple of hours a month. If you can, give more. You can make a difference.

Working Bees

Every

**Tuesday - Friday - Saturday
morning**

9.00 am to 11.00 am
central standard time

8.00 am to 10.00 am
central daylight saving time

meet at the Information Centre

Please bring gloves and if you have a light mattock bring it too. We do have some tools so don't let the lack of a tool stop you. If the weather is warm bring something to drink.

**The Park needs you
to help preserve the native flora and fauna.
No native flora or fauna - no National Park.**

ADOPT - A - BLOCK.

This scheme, a development of the traditional method of working in the Park of one or two people to look after a particular area of the Park is being formalised. It is extremely important that a vegetation management unit, that has been thoroughly weeded, should be maintained. If there is no follow up then we are wasting our time.

This follow up is light weeding and with time should only mean a walk in the Park that is healthy and satisfying.

If you have the skills then please give this scheme serious consideration. If you do not have the skills, please join a working bee, acquire them and then adopt - a - block.

Since the above appeared in the last Newsletter several members have adopted blocks. There are still plenty of blocks to adopt. If you feel a block is too big for you, join with others e.g. fellow members, neighbours or relatives, to make your own team.

To make sure our records are up to date could you please fill in the attached forms.

1. Vegetation Management Units map. Fill in the unit or part of unit that you have adopted

2. Quarterly Time Sheet. We do need to know how long you have worked on your block. This is important as it lets us know that work is still being carried out on your block. Also the Community Liaison Group wants this information.

Could you please hand in the completed forms at the next meeting or at the Information Office addressed to the Friends of Belair. When I know who is active I will get some more time sheets to you. If you have filled in the work book I'd appreciate it if you would fill out the sheets as well.

Brian DuBois

DARREN'S FIRST LETTER FROM CANADA

Dear Friends
G'Day from Canada,

We arrived safely after a long, but not too stressful flight. No major jet lag but it has taken a while for the body-clocks to adjust to the time zone. It is hard to go to bed before about lam and a lot harder to get up in the morning!

We are all settled in now - the house is nice and warm, which is very important at this time of the year. We have only had one heavy snow fall in Summerland since we arrived - the town looks absolutely beautiful when covered in snow.

The high country has had excellent snow falls this year - the ski areas have between 3 to 5 metres of pack snow base and usually 150 to 450mm of powder on top - very hard to take - actually the powder snow does take a lot of getting used to ski on - it requires a completely different technique (which Aussies, and certainly the Willis's, don't have).

Meghan, Cameron and Myles are well settled in school and are all finding the school work relatively easy - despite having to step up half a year. The Canadian's are a very ordered society by comparison to Australia (which is very casual) and the school system certainly reflects this - very structured and "rule" focused. Despite this the "Canuck's" and the Aussie's are very much like long-lost-cousins - very similar "outdoor" lifestyles - very dry sense of humour (the Aussie and Canadian sense of humour mesh very well) -and very welcoming and social personalities.

Meg is enjoying Summerland Secondary School and has made a lot of new friends - as expected, she is a real social butterfly. She has a phone in her bedroom (for the time being anyway) and spends a lot of time on it talking to her friends - fortunately the local calls are free!

Cameron has been a little bit more reserved in starting at school, but has settled in well and established some good friends. He has been going skiing with his class each Friday - and surprisingly is one of the more experienced and capable skiers. He was invited to a Valentine's Day party last Friday and had a great time. The kids here in Summerland seem generally to be a really nice group of kid, and pretty responsible.

Myles has hit the ground running (as you would expect) and is taking it all in his stride - he loves the outdoor lifestyle and all the winter sports. His teacher has identified a few "behaviour issues" at school (as you can probably guess, his personality does not automatically sit well within such an "ordered society") but I'm sure that this will be sorted out in the near future.

Sylvia is playing the housewife at the moment (much to her chagrin), but will be commencing her Psychiatric Nursing Qualifying Course (a BC requirement for overseas nurses) in the next week which will include several weeks of theory modules, by external studies and several shifts of clinical experience in hospital. With any luck she will have this completed by the end of March and be able to obtain a permit to practice in April. The hospital are VERY keen to get her on staff.

For me, the work with BC Parks is very interesting - a big learning curve -and obviously a different organisation with its own systems, procedures and issues.

Many interesting similarities with National Parks and Wildlife SA, but with equally as many peculiarities. Aside from the stunning nature of the landscape itself, there remain enormous areas of mountainous forest held within crown lands, that suggest an abundance of natural environments for conservation of natural ecosystems and species - however when one takes into consideration the extent of forestry operations, cattle ranching (open rangeland grazing) and to a lesser degree mining, the impacts upon the landscape and its ecosystems are significant and widespread (if not immediately apparent to the eye). Add to these a strongly entrenched cultural orientation towards game hunting (even within protected areas) and you have a fascinating range of issues to get your head around.

I had a go at cross-country skiing in Manning Park last week, which I really enjoyed (even though it nearly killed me). I'm heading up to Monashee Provincial Park this week to do a survey of some of the snowmobile trails - it's tough I know, but somebody has to do this stuff.

From a family perspective, the exchange, even at this early juncture has offered some great experiences. We have enjoyed some excellent skiing, including night skiing on a mountain overlooking the lake and the beautiful lights of Kelowna. This last weekend we were treated to ice-fishing for trout in frozen Darke Lake and snow-mobilling.

We haven't seen any bears yet (they're all still sleeping at this time of the year), or cougar (although there has been one hanging around close to town and the elementary school has warned the kids not to play near or outside of the township - cougar will stalk small children). Plenty of mountain goat and bighorn sheep on the high country (although we haven't seen any rams at this point) and white-tailed deer in the forests.

So all in all everything is going well at this stage. We'll be in touch again soon. All the best.

Darren, Sylvia, Meghan Cameron and Myles.

JUDY MILLAR, EXCHANGE RANGER

Judy Millar is here on exchange while Darren Willis is away, and has agreed to come to our General Meeting on Saturday August 7th 1999 to show slides and tell us about British Columbia.

FREE BUSHCARE SUPPORT WORKSHOP AT BELAIR . Sunday 26/9/99.

The Nature Conservation Society of South Australia, Trees for Life and Greening Australia have been contracted to run Biodiversity Workshops throughout South Australia as part of the Bushcare Support Program. Our president, Brian DuBois, attended a workshop at Lenswood in March and pronounced it to be excellent.

A series of Free Bushcare Workshops is now being arranged for September 1999 for Biodiversity Month, and one will be at the Volunteer Centre, Long Gully, Belair National Park on Sunday 26th September from 10am.

In the morning there will be several speakers. Botanist Rick Davies will talk on the Grey Box grassy woodlands, such as the conservation zone threatened by the proposed caravan park development, and, we hope, Patrick O'Connor on fungi and Janet Pedlar on birds. The emphasis is on biodiversity and the value of revegetation and a wildlife friendly environment.

After lunch the workshop and the speakers will visit relevant areas within Belair National Park.

The workshop will be open to any interested persons, but Friends of Belair may gain new insight into their Park.

Bring your lunch. Tea and coffee will be available.

Pencil this date in your diary. Further details in our next newsletter, but for any enquires, ring Jill Salvi on 8278 6736.

HASSELL
70 Hindmarsh Square,
ADELAIDE. 5000

Attention Kieron Barnes.

Dear Sir,

PROPOSAL FOR DEVELOPMENT IN BELAIR NATIONAL PARK

Friends of Belair National Park oppose any more encroachment onto public areas in Belair National Park.

The proposal to expand the current special use area by up to six hectares in order to build a 300 person Conference Centre, two areas of permanent huts, with a new site for the caravan park and camping area is a proposal to seize a large area of the recreation zone, and to surround a valuable remnant of grassy woodlands, zoned for conservation, with a car park and dense holiday accommodation.

If the area is leased for the Country Club and caravan park, then the Park will lose the use of a large area north and west of the Main Oval for the new access road, and all the area south of Minno Creek from Upper Sturt Road up to and including the old soccer ground. This proposed sprawling ribbon development is a waste of the precious resource that is Belair National Park. A conference centre adds nothing to a National Park, and the Park adds nothing to a conference centre except a pretty setting. This would be an unwarranted intrusion by private enterprise into a National Park.

However, more modern accommodation facilities contained within the area currently leased for the Country Club and caravan park could be an asset.

THE CONSERVATION ISSUES.

BELAIR IS A SMALL PARK

More than 93% of the Mount Lofty Ranges has already been cleared. Only half of what remains, or about 3% of the total, is inside a national park. Even this amount is not in one or two large parks but is divided up between more than 30 parks. All but three of these parks are less than 1000 hectares - a trivial size compared to the region. At 840 hectares and close to a city which has everything, Belair is far too small to accommodate more developments that are only suitable for huge parks that are remote from such facilities.

THE DEVELOPMENT THREATENS THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

While the areas of high conservation significance have been established, the proposal does not set out to protect them - only to avoid building on them. In fact the whole area is of conservation significance being part of South Australia's grassy woodland - one of the most endangered ecosystems. The development will bring hundreds of people daily right into the area to live, sleep and relax. No matter what controls are put in place, this enormous pressure will be felt by the natural environment to its perpetual detriment.

THE DEVELOPMENT IS CONTRARY TO THE PRESENT MANAGEMENT PLAN

The management philosophy of the present Park plan has four components.

First, the Park should be managed to provide a high quality, natural environment which the public can appropriately use and experience.

Second, areas within the park where the natural systems remain structurally intact, or where species or communities are of particular value, should be actively managed for their long-term preservation.

Third, the park should be a place where the public awareness of the role of the National Parks and Wildlife Service, its aims and objectives, and the reserve system that it manages, can be improved.

Fourth, the park should provide for the pursuit of only those recreational activities which are not in conflict with the intention of the preceding philosophical elements.

The present proposal is not in accord with any of these management commitments.

The Friends of Belair National Park welcome this opportunity to make known their views.

Yours faithfully,

(Mrs.) J.R. Salvi
SECRETARY.

10th April 1999.



NATIONAL PARKS - BELAIR

The present issue facing people concerned about SA's national parks (all categories) is the direction of their management, and of course who pays. The present and ongoing strategy by government of all persuasions is to co-opt the parks into paying for their own management - or at least as much as can possibly be wrung out of them. Theoretically there is nothing wrong with this approach - the practical difficulty is in finding an activity that is both economically successful (to provide the money for management) and ecologically sound (to maintain, if not improve the protection and functioning of the natural environment). There are in fact very few activities that can achieve both these outcomes to a satisfactory degree.

Because such activities are few and far between there is not much happening within parks to make money. However, there is always activity with suggestions for developments in parks that are quite inappropriate and time and effort must be devoted to opposing them. The protection and restoration of a park are compromised by a thousand well-meaning and good-intentioned actions until such time as a portion of biodiversity has been irrevocably lost and can never be restored.

How to get round this? Environmentalists and supporters can increase the management input into parks by money or donating their time - exactly what Friends do. Their only weapon is to shame governments into matching their efforts with increased commitment to parks. In practice governments are not prepared to do this because they are so scared that they will be called upon to significantly change their priorities which has environment near the bottom. The only other way is for park supporters to constantly clarify their perceptions of the role of parks and maintain agreement of what the outcomes of a parks system are to be as we become more ecologically literate. This is far harder to do than to sit and maintain an adopted position that might have been correct in the past but is less relevant, even counter-productive in the modern world.

The specific situation for Belair National Park and the present development proposal needs a great deal of thought.

What, for example, is the best possible environmental future for a park of less than a thousand hectares, major roads on 2 to 3 sides, with medium dense urbanisation surrounding it? Certainly it is reasonable to expect it to maintain its present biodiversity and in such a way that it can be expected to continue in perpetuity. Next, it can be expected that at least some of the species presently locally extinct can be returned to the park, not as the prime focus of a restoration effort, but as a location where previously endangered or locally extinct species can be placed when their numbers have been restored to reasonable levels through captive breeding elsewhere. It should be possible to envisage the return of the brush-tailed bettong and the brush-tailed phascogale to Belair within a decade or so (and possible even the bilby). However the real test would be the consideration of returning not herbivores, but a native carnivore like the eastern quoll. Can we really expect Belair to reach that level? If we can't - because the park and its history has made that no longer feasible - then the possibility for development must be real PROVIDED it compromises the park no further.

In considering any development proposal the first question is: does the area need such a development? In the case of a conference centre at Belair NP, why not make more use of the Nunyara Centre? If it needs to be upgraded, then why not do it? Does the area around Belair need a caravan park? If the answer is yes, does it have to be in the park? Could a caravan park be established in a nearby location? Can the area presently occupied by the caravan park be restored so as to enhance the environmental function of the park? Of course, such questions initially fly in the face of economic reality, but they need to be asked, because if they are in fact achievable then the grounds for the development diminish, leaving the economic pressure more exposed for what it is, rather than some concern for park management.

The ultimate goal is to produce a situation resembling that of 200+ years ago - ie one big national park with people living comfortably within it in a fashion that is ecologically sustainable, or rapidly approaching that state. This does not mean that under these circumstances there is no change, but that all changes improve wildlife protection standards AND ecologically sustainability at the same time.

The general question: what is the role of a national park is easily answered. It is to provide for the protection on the natural environment and the recreation and education of those visiting it. The more difficult question is: what is the role of THIS national park (Belair)

Personally, I have only ONE reason for supporting any national park system - and that is its contribution to the restoration and protection of native wildlife. For me the only judgement to be made about park management or park development proposals is: does it advance the cause of wildlife protection? When this occurs directly, there is no obvious problem. However, it might be necessary at times to concede actions to ensure that a park (or park system) is not so alienated from people that it threatens being undermined. The more the public supports parks the less necessary it is to make such concessions, but that possibility must never be forgotten by park supporters, because of what value would it be to win the present battle but to lose the war?

The biggest single threat to native wildlife (anywhere) is the perpetuation in any form of the separation between humans and wildlife(natural environment). Unless and until that gap is eliminated then both humankind and wildlife are threatened with extinction. That does NOT mean that we turn back the clock and live like aborigines in the past. What it does mean is that we must live KNOWING and ACTING on our dependence on wildlife and the proper functioning of the natural environment. The path to reconciliation leads through invention and application of developments that are ecologically sustainable.

John Hunwick.

My thoughts on the proposed Park development

I came to Belair in 1924, we lived on Upper Sturt Road opposite the Park. Most of my childhood was spent playing in and enjoying the Park.

The then developed part of the Park where ovals, tennis courts etc were established was planted with exotic trees and shrubs. The fact that these trees and shrubs were not indigenous to the area did not concern me nor did it concern the thousands of people who enjoyed the Park. The same applies today, the majority come into the Park to play tennis, have picnics, play football, orienteer, ride horses, ride bicycles and generally enjoy the Park and are quite willing to pay for this privilege.

As more and more people are coming into the Park to indulge in these activities, damage will result to the native bushland. the Park has to be managed properly to sustain this increased usage, some walking tracks have been established, an example of Park management. Before this happened people walked anywhere thus damaging sensitive bushland.

I spent 26 years fighting fires in the Park, 10 years of that time I was Chief Fire Officer of the Mitcham Hills E. F. S. (now C. F.S.). the Park was part of the E. F. S.'s responsibilities in those days, this was before the Park had its own fire control set up.

Since the Park has been fenced, fires have been almost non existent, another example of Park management. Establishing management procedures and policing them is expensive, it needs lots of money. The policy of Governments in most countries is that Parks should become self funded. In Canada sponsors are being used to fund Parks. I've seen hoardings advertising products and stating that they sponsor a certain section of a Park. Could this development proposal be a better option?

Park users pay for the established facilities that exist in the Park. With the proposed development private enterprise will provide the finance for the facilities that will be used and paid for by the users.

Our eradication program of introduced weeds has already saved some important bushland containing a big variety of plants species, each area is many times larger than the area concerned in the development proposal. Have we considered this fact, are we paying too much attention to this tiny area in the development plan, should we concentrate more on eradicating Boneseed, African Daisy, and Olives etc from spreading like a Cancer in our pristine Bushland.

I urge all Friends of Belair Park to keep an open mind. We should be able to obtain a proposal that is beneficial to both parties. the plan that has been presented by the developers does not provide enough details on how the whole concept will provide protection for the sensitive areas within the proposed plan. I would like to see more benefit to the Park, apart from the Interpretive Centre and Staff offices. Maybe by rejecting plan A as we have done at our special meeting, the developers may have plan B or even plan C or D, until we have a plan that suits the Friends of Belair. In so doing we must consider other Park users.

The Park is for **all** the people not only for the Friends of the Park and single minded people.

Doug. Riley,
10/4/99

BELAIR NATIONAL PARK AGAIN UNDER THREAT!

Rick Davies

Not only is Belair National Park South Australia's oldest, it is one of the most significant parks in the Mount Lofty Ranges for threatened plant species and plant communities. The western-most third of the park contains the largest and most intact example of Grey Box (*Eucalyptus microcarpa*) grassy woodland remaining in the Mount Lofty Ranges, containing the largest conserved population of the nationally threatened Pale Leek-orchid (*Prasophyllum pallidum*) in the region.

The park also contains extensive areas of Blue Gum (*Eucalyptus leucoxylon*), Manna Gum (*E. viminalis*) and Red Gum (*E. camaldulensis*) grassy woodlands with relatively intact understoreys. Such areas are now extremely rare in the Adelaide Hills. It is in these habitats in the park, that the last large population of the nationally vulnerable Leafy Green-hood Orchid (*Pterostylis cucullata*) in South Australia occurs. While the park as a whole has serious weed problems, volunteers in both the Threatened Plant Action Group and the Friends of Belair have spent enormous amounts of volunteer time controlling weeds in the most significant areas.

Unfortunately, past history has not been kind to the highly significant flatter western half of the park. Grassy woodland was cleared for ovals, tennis courts, and a golf course and caravan park. As recently as 1973, grey box grassy woodland containing the Pale Leek-orchid was cleared for extension to the golf course. However, it seems that lessons of the past have not been learnt, since a new proposed \$10 million development in the park threatens to clear further areas of this precious grassy woodland.

As well as constructing a 300 person Conference Centre in the existing golf club lease and 50 four star lodges in the existing caravan lease, this development proposes to excise an area of 12 hectares of the park currently zoned in the Management Plan as being for Conservation and Recreation purposes. On this excised area, the developer proposes to construct 30 three star eco-cabins, 30 powered caravan sites, a 45 person camping ground, and 15 bush camping sites. Carefully down-played in the proposal is the increased car parking areas and roads and tracks which will need to be constructed to cater for this enormous influx of new visitors.

A botanical assessment of the proposed development area by consultants to the

Department of Environment Heritage and Aboriginal Affairs (DEHAA) found that approximately five hectares of the area proposed for rezoning contained native vegetation of "high conservation value" containing in excess of 13 indigenous plant species with conservation ratings. While the developer has proposed that the cabins and camping areas be sited so that they avoid such areas, these areas will become less viable by being isolated from the remainder of the park, as well as being subject to increased trampling.

Significant areas of native grass understorey including some areas described by the consultant as being of "some conservation value" would be destroyed directly. These contain *Dianella longifolia* var *grandis*, listed as threatened in the Southern Lofty Ranges.

At a time when the importance of grassy woodlands is becoming recognised and volunteers are making major efforts to rehabilitate such vegetation, the South Australian community would rightly expect that significant grassy remnants in a major National Park would be afforded the highest degree of protection.

The proposal is an unacceptable example of alienation of public national park land for private purposes. It will require an amendment to the Belair National Park Management Plan, rezoning part of the park from Conservation and Recreation to Special Uses. The proposal is classified as non-compliant development in the Hills Face Zone in the Mitcham (City) Development Plan, therefore the Development Assessment Commission will be the approval authority. The Park is also on the State Heritage Register and the DAC will need to consult with the State Heritage Branch.

Nature Conservation Society will be submitting comments on any draft amendment to the Management Plan and would like to hear from you, the members.

Protest **now** to the Minister for Environment Heritage and Aboriginal Affairs, Dorothy Kotz that no proposals for native vegetation clearance in national parks for major developments should be countenanced.

Contact the NCSSA Office for further details of the proposed development, the vegetation survey and the development approval process.

Reproduced from Xanthopus, Journal of the Nature Conservation Society.

BELAIR NATIONAL PARK - PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

There are many lovely things to be enjoyed in our delightful Belair National Park, and amongst them one can find mistletoe. There is an old custom of including a spray of mistletoe above a doorway in traditional Christmas decorations. There was a lovely reason for this, which may have come down from the ancient Druids, who held the mistletoe to be sacred because it does not put roots into the ground. (The Druids believed the earth to be corrupt.)

Indeed mistletoes do not grow in the ground - they are parasites which grow on trees and plants which do, taking from the hosts what they want of their nutrients, leaving the work of extracting nutrients and water from the ground to the involuntary hosts. If the mistletoes on a tree become too prolific, the tree suffers, and may eventually die. The fewer trees there are, the more likely it is that they will die, and when they do, the mistletoe dies with them. In all this unpleasant business, the mistletoe is aided and abetted in rather distasteful ways by birds which feed on the mistletoes' ill-gotten fruits.

Some years ago the Park itself became the source of 'nutriment' for another sort of 'partner'. The 'partner' in this case was a commercial player, and the 'nutriment' was the natural attraction of the Park - bringing in people - and very desirable dollars. The liaison caused a little suffering; but not too much (it seemed) as the partnership worked well enough over the following years. But in the meantime the economic climate has changed quite dramatically, with two very significant consequences. On the one hand the resources of the Park have become increasingly depleted, while on the other hand the appetite of the partner has grown prodigiously, so it wants more of the Park to feed on - to enable it to attract more people - and more dollars. Those putting the priority on dollars see their prospects as good - and, in the short term, they could satisfy those who presently demand to be satisfied. But what they can't - or won't - see is the pricelessness of our inheritance and the longer term consequences of its selfish exploitation.

If luxurious facilities are required to attract people, then the promoters should bear much of the burden of creating the environment needed for them. There is no justification for grabbing more of the Park for the financial benefit of entrepreneurs - not even if it can be made to appear expedient for the government of the day. By way of contrast, the Wirinna project is an example of an enterprise which did not intrude so grossly on our hard won heritage. It is quite clear, however, that the special attractiveness of the Park is sought to be prostituted to maximise the returns, ready availability being a huge bonus.

Our National Park is an inheritance entrusted to each generation for the vital enjoyment of successive generations of children, including the natural child that *should* be in every one of us. If we stand by and allow this heritage to be ravished for the satisfaction of sophisticates, a priceless treasure will be irreversibly degraded. Unfortunately the basic truth of this appears to be *so simple that only a child can see it*. By the time our children's children arrive, it will all be too late. How will history compare us with those who dedicated so much to secure and establish this delightful Park?

J. Burfield

Reproduced from Kangaroo Journal of the National Conservation Council



Friends of Parks Inc

Volunteers working for conservation

G.P.O. Box 1047, Adelaide, South Australia, 5001
Telephone: (08) 8204 9430 Fax: (08) 8204 9175

Patrons:

Mr. C. Warren Bonython, A.O.; Dr. Barbara Hardy, A.O.;
Mr. Verne McLaren, A.M.; The Hon. David Wotton, M.P.

16 April 1999

TO: ALL FRIENDS OF PARKS GROUPS
RE: BROAD-RIMMED BUSH HATS

You may have seen these hats worn by members of the Friend of the Simpson Desert Parks, at the 1998 Friends Forum. The hats featured the logo of the group.

The Committee of Management of Friends of Parks Inc. is considering having hats produced, either with the Friends of Parks Inc. logo, or your own group's logo (both embroidered).

To have your own logo, a one-off set up fee of \$40.00 (maximum) will be charged.

Hats can then be ordered (first order is a minimum of 30 hats with own logo) via the Committee.

The hats will then be priced around \$25.00 each, depending on the work in your logo.

There are five sizes of hat - extra small, small, medium, large, extra large.

There are eight colours to choose from - caramel and rust mesh, caramel allrounder (same as Simpson Desert), grey and grey mesh, grey allrounder, beige and beige mesh, beige allrounder, dark brown allrounder, brown allrounder, black allrounder, black and black mesh.

You can mix and match to suit your members' wishes.



Friends of Parks Inc

Volunteers working for conservation

FRIENDS OF PARKS INC. 15TH FORUM,
13-15 AUGUST, 1999

HOSTED BY FRIENDS OF SOUTHERN MALLEE PARKS
in the Pinnaroo Institute

Theme: *The Hidden Magic of the Mallee*

TO: ALL DELEGATES TO THE FORUM

★ Discussion topics and questions

It is now time to invite you to submit discussion topics and questions so that the agenda can be finalised. Further information and a form is enclosed for your use. Please return questions and discussion topics to the Lameroo Office by 1 July 1999.

★ Display requirements

Once again we encourage you to enhance the Forum by preparing a display, banner, poster or photo exhibit. As the Forum theme is the Hidden Magic of the Mallee, we have chosen "Your Magic Spot in Your Park" as the display theme. However, your display may depict whatever you wish. There is a fantastic General Purpose Room and plenty of hallway. The room has wall rails from which to hang pictures, and has lattice free-standing display screens.

★ Tours

You can choose one of the four tours on Saturday afternoon. Please list your preference. Only the tag-along tour requires a four-wheel drive. We ask if anyone who has some spare seats could indicate this on your payment sheet, as some people without four wheel drive vehicles may really want this tour as their first choice. And if you wish to be a passenger in a 4 w.d. tour, please let us know too.

★ Catering

If you have any special dietary requirement, please advise us on your registration forms.

★ Children's Programme

The Friends have tentatively booked the Pinnaroo Kindergarten. Activities will be organised for Saturday and Sunday morning, depending on the number of children registered - and their ages).

★ Registration forms

Please return all registration forms by 31 July 1999.

FRIENDS OF PARKS INC. 15TH ANNUAL FORUM

Friday 13th - Sunday 15th August, 1999

hosted by Friends of Southern Mallee Parks,
in the Pinnaroo Institute

ACCOMMODATION UPDATE

HOTELS & MOTELS:

Pinnaroo Motel: fully booked
Pinnaroo Hotel: fully booked
'Golden Grain' Hotel, Pinnaroo: fully booked
Parilla Hotel: fully booked
Murrayville Hotel/Motel has rooms still available (ph: 03-5095 2120)
Lameroo Community Hotel/Motel has 12 rooms still available (ph: 8576 3006)

CARAVAN PARKS & CAMPING:

Pinnaroo Caravan Park has 18 powered sites still available
(ph: 8577 8224) All Cabins and on-site van are booked.
Murrayville Caravan Park has a few powered sites available
(ph: 03-5095 2290) or Mildura Visitor Information (freecall 1800 039 043)
There are unpowered sites still available at both caravan parks.
Camping in Ngarkat Conservation Parkring Mallee District Office (ph: 8576 3690)

BED-BREAKFAST:

'Alcheringa' (20km south of Pinnaroo) offers hosted accommodation and has 4 beds
still available. (ph: 8576 6171)
'Peppertree Cottage': booked
'Wattle Farm': booked

***When booking the above accommodation, remember to mention that you will
be attending the Friends of Parks Forum.***

PARILLA SPORTS GROUND 'TENT CITY'

Camping for tent/caravans has been arranged at the Parilla Sports Grounds, where
there are toilet & shower facilities and a large Rec. hut in which to gather . There will
be a fee of \$10/camper/night which includes a continental breakfast (children half
price). These fees are to be paid to Mallee District Office by 31st July so that a
camper registration slip can be issued, to display on arrival at Parilla and each
morning for breakfast.

LOCAL BILLET ARRANGEMENTS

The FSMP are compiling a register of people requiring 'bed-&-breakfast' billeting
within the district. The Mallee is famous for its hospitality ! [For example, Lameroo
Rotary have undertaken to arrange 50 beds] The cost will be \$25/person/night.

***PLEASE CONTACT SONIA WURFEL TO REGISTER FOR BILLET OR PARILLA
SPORTS GROUND ACCOMMODATION***

PHONE: 8576 6171

DIARY DATES.

June 1999

- Saturday 5th Parks & Wildlife Festival, Main Oval, Belair National Park. from 10am.
Tuesday 8th Guided walk. 2pm at Information Centre carpark.
Saturday 12th General Meeting. 1pm Volunteer Centre, Long Gully, Belair NP.
Speaker Harold Crouch - birds of Belair district.
Sunday 20th Working Bee. Meet at Information Centre carpark 10am.
Tuesday 22nd Guided walk. 2pm at Information Centre carpark.

July 1999

- Saturday 3rd General Meeting. 1pm Volunteer Centre, Long Gully, Belair NP.
Speaker Joyce Underdown - Canning Stock Route.
Tuesday 13th Guided walk. 2pm at Information Centre carpark.
Sunday 18th Working Bee. Meet at Information Centre carpark 10am.
Tuesday 27th Guided walk. 2pm at Information Centre carpark.

August 1999

- Saturday 7th General Meeting. 1pm Volunteer Centre, Long Gully, Belair NP.
Speaker Exchange ranger Judy Millar.
Tuesday 10th Guided walk. 2pm at Information Centre carpark.
Friday 13th to Sunday 15th 15TH ANNUAL FORUM - FRIENDS OF PARKS INC.
hosted by Friends of Southern Mallee Parks at Pinnaroo.
Sunday 15th Working Bee. Meet at Information Centre carpark 10am.
Tuesday 24th Guided walk. 2pm at Information Centre carpark.

September 1999

- Saturday 4th General Meeting. 1pm Volunteer Centre, Long Gully, Belair NP.
Tuesday 14th Guided walk. 2pm at Information Centre carpark.
Saturday 18th Prof. Cleland memorial annual guided walk. 10am - 3pm
Leader Dr. Ralph Foster. Meet Main Pavilion 10am.
Sunday 19th Working Bee. Meet at Information Centre carpark 10am.
Tuesday 28th Guided walk. 2pm at Information Centre carpark.

October 1999

- Saturday 2nd General Meeting. 1pm Volunteer Centre, Long Gully, Belair NP.
Tuesday 12th Guided walk. 2pm at Information Centre carpark.
Sunday 10th to Sunday 17th. Weedbusters Week.
Sunday 17th Working Bee. Meet at Information Centre carpark 10am.
Tuesday 26th Guided walk. 2pm at Information Centre carpark.

November 1999

- Saturday 6th Barbecue: followed by General Meeting Volunteer Centre, Long Gully.
Tuesday 9th Guided walk. 2pm at Information Centre carpark.
Sunday 21st Working Bee. Meet at Information Centre carpark 10am.
Tuesday 23rd Guided walk. 2pm at Information Centre carpark.

December 1999

Saturday 4th General Meeting. 1pm Volunteer Centre, Long Gully, Belair NP.
Tuesday 7th Guided walk. 2pm at Information Centre carpark.
Sunday 19th Working Bee. Meet at Information Centre carpark 10am.
Sunday 19th 6pm. BIRTHDAY PARTY. Volunteer Centre.
Tuesday 21st Guided walk. 2pm at Information Centre carpark.

January 2000

No activities.

February 2000

Saturday 5th February Annual General Meeting.

NEWSPAPERS.

To all who brought newspapers for my work on erosion control. This job is now complete so no more papers are required. Many thanks for your help.

Barbara Warburton.

A GREAT YARN FROM THE PAST, THAT WAS ON THE NET.

I was flying from San Francisco to Los Angeles. By the time we took off, there had been a 45 minute delay and everyone was ticked.

Unexpectedly, we stopped in Sacramento on the way. The flight attendant explained that there would be another 45 minute delay, and if we wanted to get off the aircraft, we would reboard in 30 minutes.

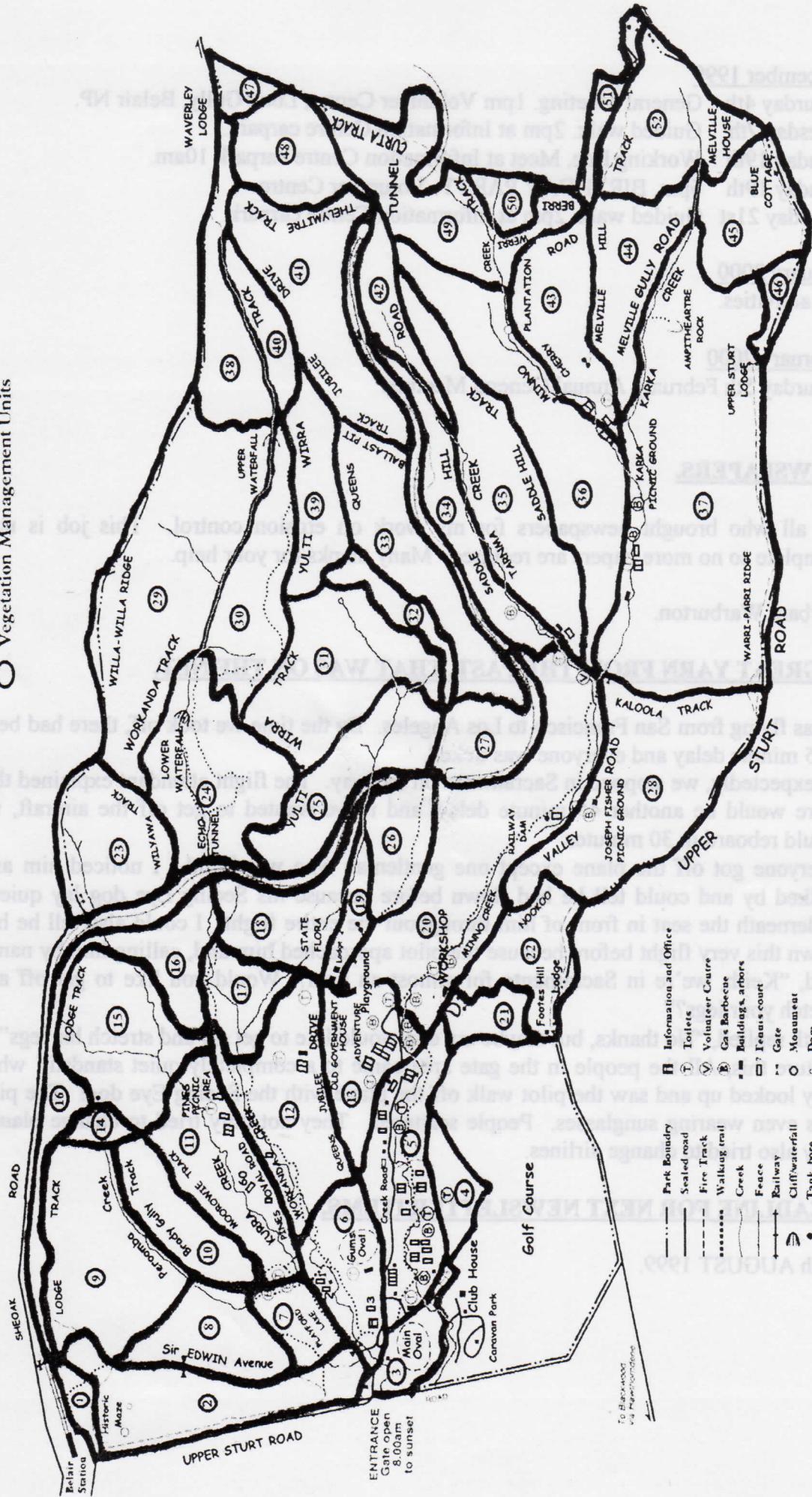
Everyone got off the plane except one gentleman who was blind. I noticed him as I walked by and could tell he had flown before because his Seeing Eye dog lay quietly underneath the seat in front of him throughout the entire flight. I could also tell he had flown this very flight before because the pilot approached him and, calling him by name, said, "Keith, we're in Sacramento for almost an hour. Would you like to get off and stretch your legs?"

Keith replied, "No thanks, but maybe my dog would like to get off and stretch his legs" Picture this, All the people in the gate area came to a completely quiet standstill when they looked up and saw the pilot walk off the plane with the Seeing Eye dog! The pilot was even wearing sunglasses. People scattered. They not only tried to change planes, they also tried to change airlines.

DEADLINE FOR NEXT NEWSLETTER ITEMS.

20th AUGUST 1999.

○ Vegetation Management Units



- | | |
|-----------------|------------------------|
| Park Boundary | Information and Office |
| Sealed road | Toilets |
| Fire Track | Volunteer Centre |
| Walking trail | Gas Barbecue |
| Creek | Buildings, arbore |
| Fence | Tennis court |
| Railway | Gate |
| Cliff/waterfall | Monument |
| Tank, bore | Dam |



BELAIR NATIONAL PARK

ENTRANCE
Gate open
8.00am
to sunset

To RUSHCROFT
via MERRIMAN