

## Friends of Belair National Park

### Three Year Plan

## **Rationale:**

Below are the objectives of the group as set out in its constitution – extract below:-

*The objects of the Group shall be:-*

*3.1. to provide **voluntary assistance** to Belair National Park in close cooperation and **liaison with the staff.***

*3.2. to raise funds for special projects to benefit Belair National Park and for administration and social activities of the Friends of Belair National Park.*

*3.3. to provide cultural and social activities for the enjoyment of Members and the public.*

*3.4. to provide support for the protection and preservation of the natural and **historic** values of Belair National Park.*

This document is designed to define the parameters within which the group will work to achieve these objectives, measurable and specific goals and methods for the immediate three years. These goals and methods will be ratified and agreed by a “Friends” subcommittee, to include expert DEWNR representation ( DEWNR ecologist or the liaison ranger), reviewed and updated at least annually by that same group.

All work is to be done under DEWNR OH&S guidelines, refer DEWNR Forms nos. 1-6.

## **Goals and Actions**

### Bushcare

- a. Carry out bushcare activities to continuously improve the biodiversity (flora and fauna) of the park..
- b. To do this by reducing the weed infestation (particularly invasive woody weeds) of the park below levels existing in December.
- c. At a minimum this should be to prevent areas from deteriorating below Dec. 2014 weed free status.
- d. To do this in accordance with the Bradley method (see definition below) of bush care.
- e. Do no harm
- f. Seek funding for contractor work under advice from the liaison ranger in areas of the park not easily accessible to volunteers
- g. Appoint bushcare co-ordinator to be contact between the Friends and liaison ranger for all bushcare work.
- h. Publish our preferred seasons, days and times of day for these activities – Facebook, website, newsletter -
- i. Plan for people who could accommodate requests for activities outside those.
- j. All VMUs need to be judged to rate areas as significant areas for their conservation priority.
- k. Only work in areas already under care (and their associated buffer zones) until volunteer resources increase to allow widening the scope.
- l. Define priority areas for current work and those to be addressed when labour/funds become available.

- m. Revisit all worked areas within 2 years to assess need for follow up work. This period to be varied according to weed species invasion characteristics.
- n. Schedule work by seasonal conditions (planting likely success) and time of year (species development, flowering, seeding etc).
- o. Employ DEWNR approved bushcare techniques ( most effective and least risk of off target damage) Train all weeders on site and supervise their work. Encourage all weeders to attend Bush for Life courses.
- p. Work in concert with rangers and fire officers to follow up burns with bushcare.
- q. Schedule 3-4 bushcare events per annum with ARTC – starting Feb. 2015.
- r. List areas outside those worked by volunteers but worthy of conservation work by contractors, and prioritise their order of need. We need to appoint a contract work follow up person, not necessarily a weeder. An expert who will re-visit contract sites and report back to the liaison ranger after a specified period to assess the efficacy of work done. Allied with this is the need to ensure that contracts let are clear in their objectives/requirements and that these are measurable.
- s. Develop communication structure with other groups operating within the Park, such as TPAG, NOSSA, Greencorp, Conservation Volunteers etc.

## **The Bradley Method:**

The Three Principles

1. Work outwards from good bush areas towards areas of weed
2. Make minimal disturbance to the environment
3. Do not overclear.

Ref:

Bringing back the bush –the Bradley method of bush regeneration-Joan Bradley

Weeds and their control – Bradley – 1967

Bush Regeneration – Joan Bradley – 1971

Bradley, J; (eds) Larking, J. Lenning, A. Walker J. (1988). *Bringing back the bush*. Sydney: Lansdowne Press.

Overlaying all these principles is the injunction to Do No Harm.

The method places great emphasis on careful and timely weed control follow up during the recovery phase. The process showed that, once native vegetation was re-established, continuing weed control was needed infrequently, mainly in vulnerable spots such as creek banks, roadsides and clearings. Regular monitoring is essential.

## **Principles and Guidelines:**

Principles to prioritise VMUs and areas to work shall be:

- Current native biodiversity in the site.
- Presence of threatened species.
- Presence of significant species.
- Threat of invasive weed population.

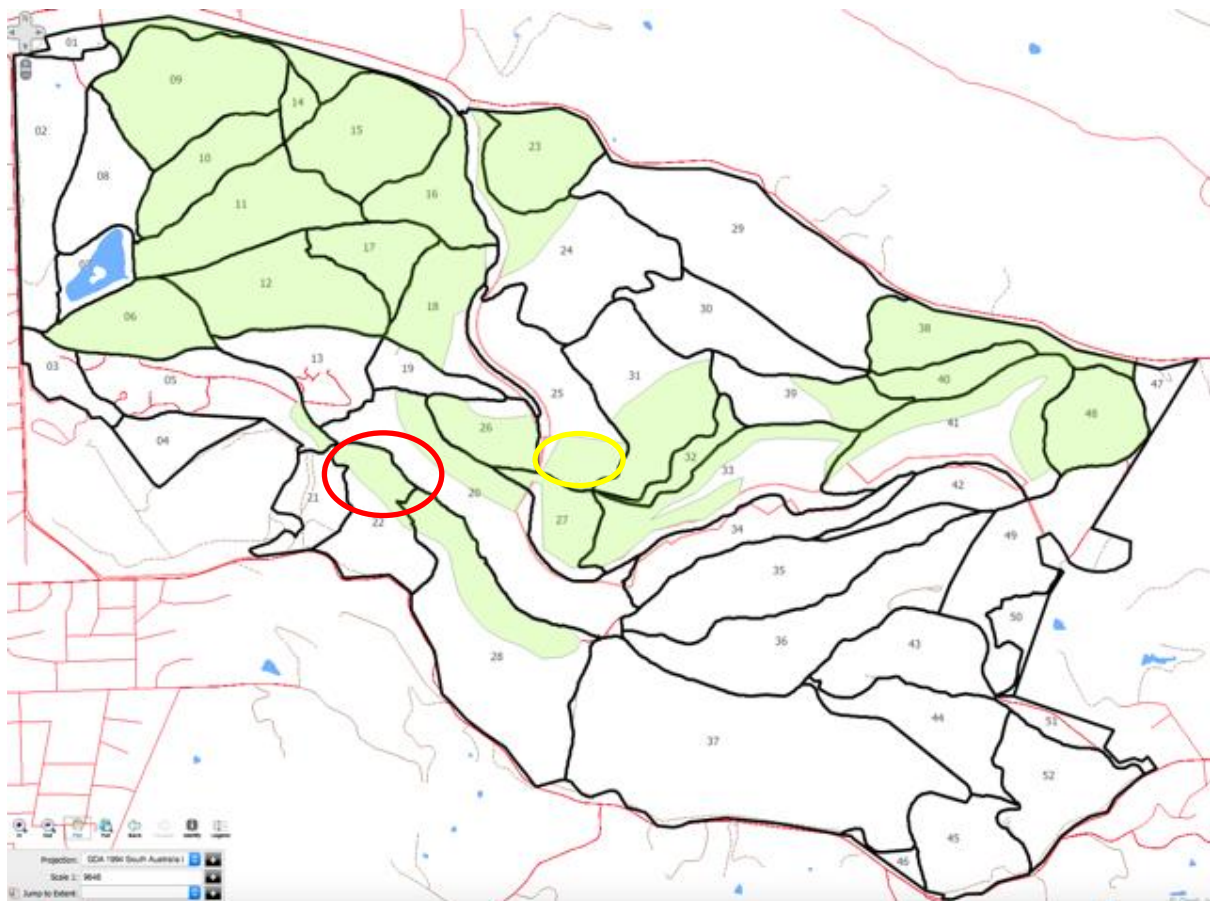
- Nature of terrain – is it too steep or rugged for volunteer work?
- Has the area been adopted by a dedicated volunteer or group of volunteers?
- Political/ Public Interest Value of the area
- Confirmation from liaison ranger that we should work the area.

### Setting Priorities for Future work and Review

At the outset the group will restrict its work in bushcare to those areas worked since Jan 2013.

Further, work will occur in those parts of VMUs worked in 2014 and as shown in the map below. Areas worked appear in green and will be described by their VMU number and their compass point orientation within the VMU.

The area ringed in red would be VMU22 – north, and that in yellow VMU25 – south east



Bushcare coordinators will review weeded areas with the liaison ranger on an annual basis to determine whether regrowth warrants further work or whether the area can be left for a further 12 months. This will ensure regrowth does not get out of hand. If there is no regrowth this will allow labour to be diverted to areas more deserving of effort. A full list of VMUs and the hours of work performed in each over the period 2010-2014 can be seen in Appendix 1.

Given the fact that, at the time of writing the group has about 20 active weeders covering an area of 847ha no extra work will be taken on until labour assets significantly increase.

Where individuals or groups want to adopt blocks they will be encouraged to do so with areas already considered high priority and usually already brought to clean status by the “Friends”. Should such a group or individual have very strong reasons for choosing another area this will normally be agreed.

However, it should not be normal practice for regular working groups to be diverted non-priority blocks. This would simply divert effort from already agreed priorities.

Similarly, where bushcare coordinators are asked by DEWNR staff to carry out bushcare work in areas not already receiving attention it must be acknowledged that this will demand a reduction in work on planned issues.

### **Review Intervals and Seasonal Deadlines**

Bushcare coordinators will revisit weeded areas within 12 months to determine whether further work is needed on regrowth. For some weed species the review interval will be altered in accordance with that species’ development timescale. For instance, some woody species spread mainly by seed and not mature enough to flower within 3 years of germination may not need review for 2 years from work. Others which regrow from vegetative matter left behind may demand review after only 6 months. Bushcare coordinators will develop a list of review intervals by species according to age of the species’ first seed set. There are also preferred times of year, seasons when species respond to bushcare, or areas must be avoided because of *Phytophthora cinnamomi* or flowering /seeding natives. Coordinators with decades of experience in the park know these times for the significant species.

Further information can be derived from publications such as

“Stop Bushland Weeds” by Meg Robertson – 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition 2005, published by The Nature Conservancy of South Australia Inc.

PIRSA’s “.Weed Control Handbook for Declared Plants in South Australia”. - 2013

A rudimentary attempt at such a list is presented in Appendix 2.

### **Record Keeping**

Records of hours worked by VMU are already kept by bushcare coordinators and submitted to DEWNR quarterly. More detailed information is recorded manually with a separate page for each VMU. Photographic records of removal of weeds and growth of natives have been kept over many years.

The “Friends” will record planned activities and actual work as well as species (good and bad) locations in one of these applications.

Appendix 1:

separate excel file

Appendix 2

Seasonal Deadlines for Weed Species

Common Name	Latin Name	Germ to Flower	Flowering time	Seeds Mature
Boneseed	<i>Chrysanthemoides monilifera</i>	2 years	July – Oct	October

Broom	<i>Cytisus scoparius</i>	1 year	Aug - Nov	
Buckthorn	<i>Rhamnus alaternus</i>		Aug - Sept	October
Sollya	<i>Billardiera heterophylla</i>		Summer	
Olive	<i>Olea europaea</i>	5-12 yrs	Late Spring	