

FRIENDS of the GREAT VICTORIA DESERT PARKS

Newsletter Number 33, April 2008

PRESIDENT'S REPORT from Bill Dowling

I'm pleased to be the new president of Friends of the Great Victoria Desert Parks. As I said at the AGM, I was able to accept this position because I have great confidence in the membership – so many of you have taken on so many responsibilities and projects with such good grace that being president will be a breeze!

For those who don't know me, I'm a retired bureaucrat, teacher, builder's labourer, photographer, factory hand and computer operator. I was reared in Ballarat, but have lived in Adelaide for 40 years. I'm a botanic gardens guide and 'Friends' tragic, being a member of Friends of the GVD, the Simpson Desert, the Botanic Gardens and the ABC. I am married to Arlene, who was president in 2005 and 2006, so we're a bit like Fidel and Raul Castro.

I'd like to offer my personal thanks to outgoing president Marlene Friebe for all her hard work over the last year. In acknowledging this, I must also acknowledge the efforts of Terry, Marlene's right-hand man and husband. May you both enjoy a quieter year and happy travelling.

Reprint of *Shrubs and Trees of the Great Victoria Desert*

Our field guide to the vegetation of the GVD has now almost sold out and the AGM of 22 February authorised a reprint. The committee has obtained quotes and the reprint and distribution of 2000 copies are now in the capable hands of Doug Smith. Contact Doug at dougsmith@picknowl.com.au or on 08 8268 4625 if you have ideas for sales outlets or can help with the distribution.

As we are financing this reprint without grant money, the committee has set new prices for the book - \$10.00 retail, with a 40% discount for wholesale sales.

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President: Bill Dowling arbill@internode.on.net

Vice President/Secretary: Neville Hudson nhudson@senet.com.au

Treasurer: Shelagh Bond jameshe@bigpond.com

Membership fees are \$20 pa payable to Treasurer, Unit 12, 108 Fendon Road, SALISBURY 5108 S.AUST. on 1st January of each year.

Newsletter Editor: Jan Forrest OAM - forrestjan@adam.com.au

Articles for newsletter may be posted to Editor, Friends of the Great Victoria Desert, C/- South Australian Museum, North Terrace, ADELAIDE, 5000

Meetings: three meetings are held annually in the Camden Community Centre, 7 Carlisle Street, CAMDEN PARK.

Website: www.fgvd.org.au



New Patron

At the February AGM, our existing patron, Anne Beadell, proposed that we offer Dr Mark Shephard OAM the joint patronage of the Friends. This motion was enthusiastically supported and I am pleased to report that Mark has accepted the position. Mark was the founding president of the Friends and his superb book, *The Great Victoria Desert*, has done much to bring the biodiversity and need for conservation of this unique part of Australia to the attention of the public. Mark received his Order of Australia Medal in 2006 “for service to public health through medical research, to the environment through conservation organisations and to aviculture”.



Working Bee

The 2008 working bee will be held in the Mamungari Conservation Park. The proposed dates are 31 August to 14 September. We will carry out vegetation surveys on six of our twelve existing survey sites and make photographic records of the remaining six and of some Department for Environment and Heritage sites. At the same time, Friends member Jan Forrest of the South Australian Museum will carry out invertebrate survey work. See our website for more details on the working bee as they come to hand.

Friends of Parks Activities

Friends of Parks Inc is the ‘umbrella’ body for parks support groups like us. I plan to represent us at two of its forthcoming activities. Please make your own arrangements, but you might let me know if you are definitely going:

Friends of Parks AGM, 5 May at Farrell Flat – I have forwarded the details to all members with email. Other members please call me for details.

Friends of Parks Forum, 15-17 August at Wilpena Pound - Interesting talks and tours. Full details at: flindersfriendsforum.org.au

Communications

From now on, we will be making extensive use of email and our website (www.fgvd.org.au) to communicate with members. For those without these electronic gadgets, we will post out paper minutes and anything else of importance, but I would encourage you to look at the website at your local library, even if you don’t have a computer.

The newly-established Members’ Area of the website has the latest information. You’ll find things there that you have not been able to get between meetings before now, eg committee decisions and a correspondence list. The password for this area was included with the last minutes.

Governance Guidelines

Following a fair bit of discussion on governance in recent times, the committee agreed on some guidelines for 2008 – see the committee decisions of 12/03/08 on the website.

Bill Dowling
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Marsdenia australis – Bush Banana

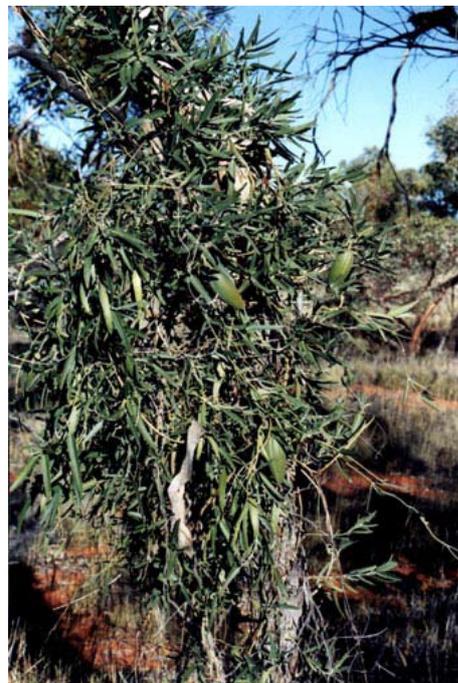
The *Marsdenia australis* is classified as a climber or a creeper with a habit of twining and climbing over other trees or shrubs (top photo). The flowers are cream to green and occur in clusters of between 6 and 15 and are between 6 and 8mm long. The short, stalked leaves are thick and narrow. The green pear shaped pods (see photo) are the fruits and are thick walled growing from 6-15cm long. Upon maturity the pods split on one side exposing numerous black seeds containing white, silky, feathery plumes. It is wide spread but never abundant.

This species was an important food for Aboriginal peoples although the stems and roots were not eaten. (Latz (1996) cited in Kutsche et al, p.266). It is also one of the host plants of the Lesser Wanderer butterfly *Danaus petilia*. It is sometimes known as the Native Pear.

References:-

Urban Anne, 1990, Wildflowers & Plants of Central Australia
Kutsche F & Lay B, 2003 Field Guide to the Plants of Outback South Australia

Photos:- M Friebe, sighted near the Anne Beadell Highway in the Great Victoria Desert in 1999. The specimen was identified by the State Herbarium. Marlene Friebe reference S105. State Herbarium AD Sheet Reference AD122413.



Calandrinia reticulata – Parakeelya

Calandrinia reticulata is a forb with an erect, leafless flowering stalk that has a tap root. The leaves are succulent and fleshy. This specimen has 5 roundish dark pink/purplish coloured petals. This species has 3 stigmas and many yellow stamens.

Both Aboriginal people and early settlers used parakeelya as a vegetable.

References:-

Urban Anne, 1990, Wildflowers & Plants of Central Australia
Kutsche F & Lay B, 2003 Field Guide to the Plants of Outback South Australia.

The specimen was identified by the State Herbarium. Marlene Friebe Reference S134. State Herbarium AD Sheet Reference AD122386

Photo right:- M Friebe, sighted this specimen near Serpentine Lakes in The Great Victoria Desert in August 2001. Of interest, is that *Calandrinia polyandra* was also sighted in a different location in 2001.



M.Friebe.

NEXT MEETING 20th June, 2008

Our guest speaker will be John Zwar who will talk about “Port Augusta’s Arid Lands Botanic Garden”.

<http://www.australian-aridlands-botanic-garden.org/general/history.htm>



2008 FRIENDS OF PARKS FORUM



From August 15th -17th 2008 at the impressive buildings of the Old Wilpena Station with Wilpena Pound as a backdrop. The forum will be hosted by the Friends of the Flinders Ranges National Park.

More information from the website: <http://flindersfriendsforum.org.au/>

COOKS CORNER

MANGO FRUIT CAKE

1x425gm can mango slices in juice
500gm mixed dried fruit
1/2 cup water
1 1/2 teaspns bi-carb
1 1/2 cups s.r. flour
2 eggs

Chop mangoes. put mangoes & juice, water and dried fruit in pan, bring to boil, simmer for 1 minute.

Cool.

Add bicarb, flour and eggs.

Mix well.

Put in lined tin and bake in a moderate slow oven (160'ish) for approx 45 mins.

Cool in tin.

This is a diabetic cake if you use mangoes in any form of syrup rather than juice its not so good.

Thanks to Shelagh Bond for her contribution

INTRODUCTORY BUSH FOR LIFE WORKSHOPS

These one day workshops cover topics such as the values of and threats to remnant native vegetation, strategic approaches to bush restoration, maximising biodiversity outcomes, and practical minimal disturbance techniques. Contact Secretary Nevill Hudson for information.

CHAINSAW COURSES

Chainsaw courses now available are funded by a Friends of Parks Inc. Envirofund grant

Course One - Room Q6 - TAFESA Urrbrae Campus, 505 Fullarton Road, Netherby - three Wednesdays - 7 May, 15 May, and 28 May (note not 21 May). - 9.00 am – 4.00 pm.

Course Two - at Para Wirra Recreation Park, Friday 13 and Saturday 14 June 8.00 am – 5.00 pm. There will be a theory session followed by practical sessions. Tea and coffee provided.

If you are interested please contact Secretary Neville Hudson

MEMBERSHIP FEES WERE DUE on 1st January, 2008

Please send your annual fee of \$20 to:

Treasurer,
Friends of the Great Victoria Desert,
Unit 12,
108 Fendon Road,
SALISBURY 5108 S.AUST.

our website address: www.fgvd.org.au

THE BUSH MECHANIC

THE BALD FACTS - TYRE TALK

As tyres are the only contact patch you have with the ground, it pays to look after them to extract the best in off-road performance and mileage. With the wrong pressure, inattentive driving, excessive loads or too much speed, tyre failure can become an expensive part of your four wheel driving experience.

When traveling on bitumen at speed, pressure is critical. The tyre placard displayed on all vehicles offers recommended cold pressures for laden and unladen situations. As a rough guide this information is useful, but imprecise. It's better to measure the true weight of your vehicle in its touring fit-out, by taking the car to a public weighbridge (you might be surprised at just how heavy your car is!). Measure the mass of both front and rear axles and take this information to any reputable tyre dealer. They will be able to compare the tyre size to the measured weight it is carrying in the "Tyre & Rim Association Manual", illustrating accurate pressures for inflation.

Once you venture off the bitumen and onto the dirt, the rules change some. On track surfaces like the Birdsville or Oodnadatta, where high speeds are possible, rocks still pose a problem. Fracturing of the tread face will occur, particularly with passenger car patterns, unless you actually let out some air. Remember too, the wider the tyre, the worse the puncture susceptibility on rocks. By reducing the pressure to the minimum recommendation for the load you are carrying, the tyre will become more compliant and envelop and roll over obstacles more easily. A word of caution though! Any reduction in tyre pressure has to be accompanied by a reduction in speed! Speed generates friction and heat and an under-inflated tyre will be less able to cope with the rigors of high speed!

Of real concern to land managers across the state, is the condition that bush tracks are left in after peak holiday periods. There are many sandy tracks along the SA coastline that are looking very secondhand, yet they need not have been, if drivers had taken the time to drive to the prevailing conditions. The greatest advantage you can offer to prevent bogging and preserve the track surface, is to let your tyres down to 125-140 kPa (18-20 psi). This allows a greater surface area of tyre to carry the weight of the vehicle and float over the soft surface, rather than cut down through it in search of a firm base. Next time you're in the bush, inspect the track surface. If there are regular deep corrugations in the sand, it's likely due to a combination of full road pressures and too much throttle, producing track-busting axle tramp and little forward progress.

Often an argument leveled against deflation on sand, is the prominence of sharp limestone littering coastal track surfaces, that might damage a softer tyre. Because of the slow speeds involved when scrambling over these surfaces (typically < 20 kmh), there is little chance that an impact will cause any real concern. Again this is because the tyre is better able to absorb the rock and simply roll over and off, rather than have it punched through the casing if inflated like a balloon. But remember that there's nothing better than some diligent driving to avoid unwanted tyre damage!

Fast Facts:

- Correct inflation will reward you with exceptional mileage and fewer punctures
- Always carry an accurate tyre pressure gauge and check your pressures daily when in the bush
- Be prepared to lower your pressures on sand (an absolute minimum of 100 kPa or 15 psi)
- Re-inflate your tyres the moment you return to bitumen or good dirt surfaces, driving at increased speeds
- Carry a portable compressor, the ARB compressor is a high capacity unit (24 litres/minute) stored in a neat carry case (or it can be installed under the bonnet) and comes with a long air-line and a handy gauge. It runs straight off your battery for convenience.

Thanks to Doug Smith for his contribution

Article from:

S.A. Govt 4x4 driver training program 2001 presented by David Wilson from Adventure 4wd



PARKING AT KESWICK

Please be advised that as of 1 February 2008, ticket parking was introduced at DEH's Keswick site by the building owner. Signage indicates the Casual (ticket) and Permit Parking areas.

Casual Parking utilising ticket machines will be at the following rates:

1st hour	\$2.00
2nd hour	\$3.00
More than 2 hours / All day	\$4.00

Please note that change is not available from the DEH reception desk.

Friends of Parks Inc Board Members have been provided with Permits to be used while attending Board meetings. The Volunteer Support Unit also has an allocation of three Permits for Volunteer Support Unit Volunteers.

Please let the Volunteer Support Unit know if you are coming to Keswick for a meeting, as we may be able to assist your with parking arrangements.

IDEAS FOR OUTINGS

Jim would like feedback on the following ideas for outings.

St Kilda Mangrove Boardwalk on a Sundays. Cost \$5-30 for adults and \$1-95 children.

Secret Port Haunts - a 90 minute twilight walk in the historic Port precinct, Jim reports that this is a very good night, Cost is \$45 per person.

Sunday afternoon stroll along **Windsor Street** Parkside with information provided on the various indigenous plants. Followed by coffee somewhere perhaps.

Your ideas please to Jim Bond 8258 0934 or via email jameshe@bigpond.com.

AWARD NOMINATIONS

Award nominations for 'Friends of Parks' groups listed below are now being sought. These awards present a great opportunity for a group to be formally recognised for its hard work and dedication throughout the year. Nominations close on **6 June 2008**.

Best Heritage Project – \$500 Award from the Heritage Branch, DEH. Open to all Friends of Parks member groups who have recently worked on a heritage site.

Best Biodiversity Project – \$500 Award sponsored by Nature Foundation SA. The Best Biodiversity Project Award recognises excellence in biodiversity.

Please contact secretary Neville Hudson if you would like to submit a nomination.

NEWSLETTER ARTICLES

Deadline for the next newsletter will be the end of June 2008. Please do not format text. Images are very welcome however, please send them separately as a jpg. or tif. file.

Ed.

DIARY DATES

MEETINGS

NEXT MEETING: 20th June, 2008 at Camden Community Centre, 7 Carlisle Street, CAMDEN PARK. at 7.30. Guest Speaker John Zwar on "Port Augusta's Arid Lands Botanic Garden".

2008 FRIENDS OF PARKS FORUM

The 2007 Friends of Parks Forum (www.communitywebs.org/FriendsofParks/) is being held at Wilpena in the Flinders Ranges 15th -17th August 2008 hosted by the Friends of the Flinders Ranges National Park.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Bill Dowling	President	08 8339 6562
Neville Hudson	Vice President/Secretary	08 8556 6782
Shelagh Bond	Treasurer	08 8258 0934
Doug Smith	Marketing	08 8268 4625
Jan Forrest OAM	Editor	08 8297 8230

WEB LINKS

DEH information on Mamungari Conservation Park:
<http://www.parks.sa.gov.au/mamungari/index.htm>

Friends of Great Victoria Desert: www.fgvd.org.au