

FRIENDS of the GREAT VICTORIA DESERT PARKS

Newsletter Number 35, November 2008

FIELD TRIP REPORT 31 August to 13 September 2008

OBJECTIVES

The prime objective of this field trip was to carry out rigorous vegetation surveys to produce high quality data for the Environmental Database of SA (EDBSA), strictly adhering to Biological Survey of SA methodology .

Additional objectives were bird and invertebrate recording, seed collection, and the correction of information provided for our interpretative trail.

We were also keen to consolidate our links with the Oak Valley community and the Department of Environment and Heritage rangers.

OUTCOMES

These objectives and some additional outcomes were achieved. More specifically:

1. Five one-hectare quadrats in the Mamungari Conservation Park were surveyed, three south of Voakes Hill Corner and two near the Serpentine Lakes. A full day was allowed for each quadrat, using a team approach. The logistics team set up the quadrat and a shady base camp, the collection and survey team recorded every plant on the site, the recording team vouchered the specimens and filled out the data sheets and the logistics team cleaned up.
2. New site photos were taken at specified photopoints on over 70 existing quadrats in and around the Mamungari Conservation Park.
3. Bird species were recorded at the vegetation quadrats and opportunistically.
4. Ants were collected from micro-pit lines established at the two major camp sites.
5. Seeds of several desert species were collected for the Arid Lands Botanic Garden at Port Augusta.
6. A stand of the rare *Eucalyptus wyolensis* was located and photographed. Specimens were vouchered for the State Herbarium.



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CLUB OUTING

26th JANUARY
at APEX PARK on
Burbridge Road
(directions page 4)
from 11.00am
Bring everything
including a chair, tennis
courts available

**MEMBERSHIP FEES
ARE NOW DUE
\$25pa**
payable to: Treasurer,
Unit 12, 108 Fendon
Road, SALISBURY

President: Bill Dowling arbill@internode.on.net, 08 8339 6562

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

Treasurer: Shelagh Bond jameshe@bigpond.com

Membership fees from 1st January 2009 will be \$25 pa payable to Treasurer, Unit 12, 108 Fendon Road, SALISBURY 5108 S.AUST. payable 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



7. The seven interpretive posts along the Anne Beadell Highway were located, their co-ordinates checked and the descriptions of the surrounding vegetation on the Friends' Information Sheet were brought up to date.
8. Links with those who care for the Mamungari Conservation Park were consolidated. Rangers Robbie Sleep and Tammy Cox from Ceduna were able to join us for two days, providing valuable information and guidance on a number of issues. At Oak Valley, we had productive discussions with community leader Chris Dodd.
9. Extensive mining company activity was noted just south of Mamungari. Several newly-bulldozed tracks were in evidence and at least one camp had been set up.



COMMENT

Friends of the Great Victoria Desert Parks is a volunteer group affiliated with Friends of Parks Inc and operating under a memorandum of understanding with the South Australian Department for Environment and Heritage (DEH). We are supported by district rangers in Ceduna and Port Augusta, and our activities are planned with them and approved by the traditional owners of the area.



Twelve members in six private vehicles participated in this field trip, travelling around two thousand kilometres from Ceduna to Ceduna, plus travel to and from home. For DEH accountability purposes, we estimate that the participants contributed 2200 hours of voluntary labour to this field trip, including travel and planning time.

No major difficulties were encountered. All participants had thoroughly prepared their vehicles, communications were effective and there were no health problems or reportable injuries. Towards the end of the trip, the weather became a little too warm and a recommendation on the timing of future trips appears below.



The cost of travel to the area was a major issue. A Volunteer Support Grant was sought for assistance with fuel costs and \$2,500 was provided. As previous applications for fuel costs had been unsuccessful, members were very appreciative of this grant. The amount was most welcome, but it must be borne in mind that it covered less than 50% of members' fuel costs for this trip. The GVD is a huge area covering several parks, so vegetation surveys and other work in parks closer to Ceduna could be considered for future years.



We found the Mamungari Conservation Park in reasonable condition. A good number of the smaller plants were dead or in poor health, but the larger trees and shrubs appeared to be doing well. Weed infestation remains very low, although some Ward's weed (*Carrichtera annua*) was detected at Voakes Hill Corner. There was very little rubbish in evidence. Compared with previous years, the number of travellers we met along the Anne Beadell Highway was small.

Numerous very new tracks have been bulldozed immediately south of the park in the Voakes Hill Track area. A mining camp has been established in the same vicinity. It was noted with concern that all these tracks had been bulldozed "blade-down", that is, all the vegetation had been removed for at least two vehicle-widths, making substantial inroads on this previously undisturbed area. The new tracks extend for many kilometres. Two vehicles which were thought to be mining vehicles were noted within the park. While it is assumed that they were travelling through with the appropriate permits, their presence suggested the need for more regular ranger patrols in Mamungari.



The Ceduna rangers indicated that substantial biosurvey work is being conducted in the GVD area by the Alinytjara Wilurara Natural Resources Management Board. It was suggested that Ceduna-based Sophie Keen be contacted regarding contributions the Friends could make to this work. By chance, we met Sophie at Nundroo while returning to Ceduna and she would be pleased to discuss this.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many people contributed to the success of this field trip. Neville Hudson was the trip leader. He and Peter Facy put a large amount of very productive time into planning and managing an exercise that 'went like clockwork'. They were assisted by Ian Jackson and Bill Dowling. Phil Gaukroger, who has travelled extensively in the area, was our cultural adviser, providing substantial information to participants on local history and features as we travelled. As this was our first field trip using EDBSA-compatible methodology, a lot of training was required. Our thanks go to Janet Pedler and the Nature Conservation Society for an excellent two-day session, and to State Herbarium staff Sue Kenny, Kate Graham, Helen Vonow and Jeff Foulkes for specific training and information on Biological Survey of SA methodology. We were very pleased that Ceduna rangers Robbie Sleep and Tammy Cox could join us for part of the trip and their thoughtful ideas and suggestions around the campfire were greatly appreciated.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Two sets of recommendations appear below – one set for our future field trips and a further set for consideration by DEH and the Mamungari Management Board. This second set is offered in a spirit of cooperation and partnership. It is not a list of 'demands'.

Recommendations for Friends of the GVD Field Trips

1. That the Friends replace the term 'working bee' with 'field trip'.
2. That future field trips are held no later than August.
3. That bulk copies of the current edition of our Information Sheet, Bird List and other publications are placed in the boxes at Voakes Hill Corner and Serpentine Lakes on all field trips to Mamungari Conservation Park.
4. That we investigate vegetation survey work in the closer GVD parks, ie Yumbarra, Pureba and Yellabinna.
5. That direct contact with the Oak Valley community is maintained and that copies of correspondence to the Maralinga Tjarutja Ceduna office are sent to the Chairperson, Maralinga Tjarutja, Oak Valley.
6. That the bulldozing of new mining tracks adjacent to the Mamungari Conservation Park is raised with Primary Industries and Resources SA (PIRSA) with a view to possible monitoring by the Friends and the eventual rehabilitation of the disturbed areas.
7. That images of all or most plant and reptile species found in the GVD parks be placed on the Friends website.
8. That the Friends contact Sophie Keen of the Alinytjara Wilurara Natural Resources Management Board regarding ways in which we could assist the Board in conducting biological surveys in the GVD.

Recommendations to DEH and the Mamungari Management Board

1. That the impacts of mining exploration around the Mamungari Conservation Park are monitored in collaboration with PIRSA and that appropriate rehabilitation of the area is undertaken.



2. That the DEH budget for Mamungari be increased to allow more frequent patrolling of the area by rangers.
3. That, in collaboration with the Friends, interpretative signage is developed and installed along the Anne Beadell Highway.
4. That the high cost to volunteers of travel to the GVD continues to be offset by DEH grants for approved projects.

*Bill Dowling, President,
Friends of the Great Victoria Desert Parks
November 2008*



Pics taken on the recent field trip.
 Thorny Devil *Molloch horridus*, one of the knob-tailed geckos; Ooldea Mallee *Eucalyptus youngiana*, Mulga ant nest and Grass-leaved Hakea, *Hakea francisiana*.
 Photos: Ian Jackson

CLUB OUTING TO APEX PARK
 on Burbridge Road (200m west
 Sir Donald Bradman Drive and Tapleys Hill
 Rd junction)
26th January, 2009 at 11.00am
 bring everything including a chair

**2009 FRIENDS OF
 PARKS FORUM**



The 2009 25th Annual Friends of Parks Forum entitled **REDISCOVERING ADELAIDE Urban Biodiversity and Heritage** will be held 30th October - 1st November at Sunnybrae Farm a historic venue at Regency Park.

The forum will be organised by a number of Adelaide-based Friends of Parks groups and the program of events will include excursions to interesting locations in and around Adelaide.

Put the date in your 2009 diary now - it promises to be a great weekend.

USEFUL WEB SITES and EMAIL ADDRESSES

- DEH Volunteer support unit email** (for information on courses) dehvolunteers@saugove.sa.gov.au
- DEH volunteer news:** www.environment.sa.gov.au/dehaa/volunteer_news.html
- Friends of Parks:** www.communitywebs.org.FriendsofParks/
- Weeds Australia:** www.weeds.org.au
- Weeds in Australia:** www.weeds.gov.au/index.html
- Butterfly Gardening:** www.butterflygardening.net.au
- EcoVoice:** www.ecovoice.com.au
- Carbon Market:** www.carbonmarket.com.au
- Backyards for Wildlife:** www.backyards4wildlife.com.au/
- Urban Forest Biodiversity Program:** www.urbanforest.on.net/
- South Australian Museum** (includes Butterfly Watch): www.samuseum.sa.gov.au/
- Dept. Primary Industries and Resources:** www.pir.sa.gov.au/
- RAA:** www.raa.net/
- The Map Shop:** www.mapshop.net.au/

our website address: www.fgvd.org.au

COOKS CORNER

- RACK OF LAMB .
- 4X4 Cutlet racks of lamb
- 1 clove garlic, crushed
- 2tbspns fresh rosemary leaves, finely chopped
- 1tbspn olive oil
- 1/4 tspn sea salt



Heat camp oven
 Trim excess fat from lamb and wrap some aluminium foil around bones to prevent burning.
 Combine the garlic, rosemary, oil and salt in a small bowl, coat lamb with the rosemary mix.
 Place in camp oven and cook for approx 15--20 mins till well done or to your liking
 Serve with some baked vegies or a green salad.
 Enjoy **Jim Bond**

ST. KILDA MANGROVE BOARDWALK OUTING

Sixteen members arrived, which was an excellent turn out, only to find the boardwalk was closed because of weather damage, the council failed to put on the net, but by sheer luck the cartaker lives close by and seeing all these cars parked in the car park came over and opened up for us, because of the storm damage we were unable to do a complete circuit, so we split up some of us walked clockwise the others anti-clockwise, then changed over. It was a very interesting walk.

After the walk we went over to St. Kilda Playground area for a picnic.

Jim Bond



THE BUSH MECHANIC

After setting up camp & before a beer!

lift the bonnet and check underneath
 check battery is secure
 check radiator hoses
 check & clean air filter if in dusty conditions
 check water level in header tank DO NOT remove radiator cap when hot serious burns & scalding may occur.
 check for any water & oil leaks. It best to do them at night when you have time & not when the convoy is ready to leave.
 check every thing is tight & secure

Under The Vehicle,

Check Brake hoses for damage
 check shockers for leaks, damage & securely fitted
 check spring shackles & springs for damage & breakage
 check the inside of tyres for damage & cuts
 check the outside of tyres for damage cuts & splits
 check for loose wheel nuts especially if you have alloy wheels - they do come loose
 check exhaust & mounts are secure

Before heading off in the morning

check stop & indicator lights so the car behind you knows what you are doing
 check engine oil level in the morning when cold & oil has drained down, also radiator cap may be removed to check level.
 finally check everything is secure in the vehicle & on the roof rack

Happy travelling, Doug.

SPOT

A NEW SATELLITE MESSENGER SYSTEM

www.findmespot.com

The Friends have recently become aware of a new safety device for desert travel. the information below is supplied by the manufacturer and it sounds promising, but please note that the Friends have not tested this device as yet.



With the SPOT Satellite Messenger, you have peace of mind knowing help is always within reach. SPOT is the only device of its kind, using the GPS satellite network to acquire its coordinates, and then sending its location - with a link to Google Maps - and a pre-programmed message via a commercial satellite network. And unlike Personal Locator Beacons, SPOT does more than just call for help.

Tracking your progress, checking in with loved ones, and non-emergency assistance are also available, all at the push of a button. And because it uses 100% satellite technology, SPOT works around the world - even where cell phones don't.

SPOT gets you tracking and help in even more places! New coverage map is now available.

Spot gives you a vital line of communication from just about anywhere in the world.

Spot determines your exact location via the GPS constellation. Using the GEOS communication satellite, SPOT sends pre-programmed messages and your location to nominated email addresses and mobile phones. These messages can then be opened in Google Earth with a marker at your current location.

In a real emergency, 000 services will be dispatched to your location via the Australian Search and Rescue regional Communication Centre.

MONITORING THE EXPLORERS

The guest speaker at our November 7 general meeting was Rob Langley, senior environmental compliance officer with the Department of Primary Industries and Resources SA (PIRSA). Rob was accompanied by Alan Kane of the same department.

Rob and Alan are responsible for the regulation of the activities of resource exploration companies in South Australia. Their presentation to the Friends was timely, as we had noted a number of new tracks south of Mamungari Conservation Park during our recent field trip.

Several maps showing resource exploration activity were shown and members were interested to see the extent of the licences to explore. We were pleased to note that exploration is not allowed in Mamungari and other conservation parks. Consequently, no licences are issued for these areas. However, parks such as the Yellabinna Regional Reserve, which do not have "conservation park" status, are not exempt.

We were also interested to note the extent of licences issued for geothermal exploration. From a conservation point of view, if anything comes from this exploration it will probably be less damaging to the desert environment than mining. In particular, "hot rocks" energy has the potential to greatly reduce greenhouse gas emissions associated with electricity generation.

Rob and Alan stressed that exploration practices have improved greatly in recent times. Seismic "shotlines" are no longer dead straight bulldozed tracks. They weave around to avoid trees and reduce erosion. The responsibility to rehabilitate is taken seriously and many shotlines become undetectable within a few years.

Editors note:

If you would like more information the link - http://www.pir.sa.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0018/27171/field_guide_seismic_203330_2006_www.pdf will take you to a PDF entitled "Field Guide for the Environmental Assessment of recently completed seismic lines in the Cooper Basin South Australia" this article contains interesting information and images of seismic lines immediately after the line was put in and several years following the event.

OLIPHANT SCIENCE AWARD

A PASSION for birds that consumed holidays and weekends earned a Year 10 student top prize in the Oliphant Science Awards.



St John's Grammar School student Michael Huxley, 15, who made a DVD entered in the multimedia category about the birds of northern Australia, said he was "very surprised" and excited to win the competition.

He received the Oliphant trophy and \$190 in prizemoney for his efforts.

"I'm a birdwatcher, my family is interested in birds and we've gone on a range of different holidays, including a trip to Darwin and Kakadu for six weeks last year in June," he said.

"When we returned to Adelaide, I edited the 14 hours of bird footage taken during the trip and, six months later, produced my DVD, Top End Birds. The narration, which consisted of about 6000 words, took me my entire six-week Christmas holidays to create and finally record."

*CLARE PEDDIE, Advertiser SCIENCE REPORTER
September 13, 2008.*

Michael is the son of members Lynton and Karen and our congratulations go to Michael on gaining this outstanding award.

BIRDS OF THE FLEURIEU CALENDAR are now available from Editor Jan Forrest. All proceeds from sales go towards projects on the Fleurieu Peninsula. The calendar features original photographs taken by Elizabeth Steel-Collins. Cost \$10 plus postage. Contact Jan if you would like one.

DIARY DATES

MEETINGS

NEXT MEETING: Friday 27th February, 2009 at Camden Community Centre, 7 Carlisle Street, CAMDEN PARK.at 7.30.

FUTURE MEETING DATES: 19th June and 6th November

CLUB OUTING: 26th JANUARY at APEX PARK on Burbridge Road (200m west Sir Donald Bradman Drive and Tapleys Hill Rd junction) Bring everything including a chair.

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