

August 2016



Biddip



Newsletter of the Toodyay Friends of the River

Volume 10, Issue 2



Above: Andrew pondering...

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The Toodyay Friends of the River are grateful to the Wheatbelt NRM for their support in producing the August 2016 newsletter



wheatbelt
natural resource
management

Outgoing Presidents message

by Robyn Taylor

It's been another good year - and with excellent rains, our Avon has never looked so good for so long.

I am sure we all appreciated the decision made last year, to have January a 'TFOR commitment free month'. So instead of meeting after the Australia Day celebrations, we held our annual planning meeting in early December after a BBQ breakfast in Duidgee Park. It was a great way to end the year.

I'm pleased to say our plans since the last AGM have largely been on track, combining working bees with excursions - the big one last November to Yenyenning, and revegetation projects involving the community at Millards Pool. An unexpected highlight was the start we made to restore the old citrus orchard as part of the interpretation of this old farming area along Millards Pool. I will leave the details about our projects for Greg to report on.

Banners. We now have two beautifully designed pull-up banners for display at various functions. Thank you Wayne for organising these. They also provided very handy wind-breaks at our successful raffle fundraiser outside the IGA in May this year.

'Thank-yous'

As outgoing President, I would like to say a very big thank you to all the committee members, the support crew, who made this role so much easier for me. For volunteer groups such as ours, we have to acknowledge our members have other commitments with work and family, homes and properties that need maintenance – so our weekends are precious. It's a tribute to our members that they consistently give up their time for our special cause - to restore the health of our waterways.

For this I thank everyone.

I would like to give special thanks to committee members:

Sarah Dudley, our Vice President – for the energy and enthusiasm she has displayed since our last AGM. The time she has put into matters relating to organisation and management has been invaluable.

Wayne Clarke – your superb job as Treasurer can't be overestimated. Wayne sets the bar very high for club treasurers. Thank you Wayne for the hours of work you have put into TFOR, including keeping our TFOR website interesting and up to date.

Desrae Clarke, our Secretary extraordinaire and Editor of our newsletter Biddip. What more can I say!

Greg Warburton –our Project Officer simply does a fantastic job.

I would also like to thank Rebecca, and Ric, for their ongoing commitment to the water testing project.

Community Depot

This is almost ready for occupancy, the Seed Orchard is now based there, and eventually the TFOR trailer will be housed in the lock-up shed, making it more accessible for our working bees.

A new home?

A high note to end on at this AGM is the prospect of something we have been angling for, for years. Fingers crossed we may be sharing street-front premises with the Toodyay Naturalists' Club and the Toodyay Historical Society. The attached building next door to the Bendigo Community Bank has been vacant since Bauxite Alumina moved out. We were approached by the bank to find out if we would be interested in using the building and to submit an amount we would be prepared to pay on an annual basis.

Persistent letter writing to the Shire over the years, repeated again this year, seems to have produced results. We are now waiting to hear the outcome. To have a shop-front onto Stirling Terrace will provide an excellent venue for interacting with the community and, at long last, provide us with a 'home base'.

STOP PRESS:

At time of going to print, news has been received that the Toodyay & Districts Community Bank Board have considered our proposal favourably, and a lease agreement will be discussed over the coming weeks.. Congratulations to the hard-working community groups involved.

Cover: Artwork by Parker about his day planting trees. He described it as "Me planting a tree; it's a beautiful day, there's a plane in the sky and it's muddy."

Tyre Recycler to the Rescue

by Greg Warburton

Every year, in Australia alone, over 50,000,000 tyres are disposed of with only 5% recycled, the rest go to landfill or are illegally dumped. Current legislation does not permit tyre customers to take their old tyres away from the Tyre Fitters. Instead, a recycling levy is placed on the cost of the tyres and the worn items are sent for recycling by the tyre business. This helps with the problem but does not address the countless tyres that are already out there in the landscape or those arising from back yard tyre changes.

Because of the strength and durability of tyres they are virtually indestructible and present a massive environmental problem by leaching toxins into soil and both ground and surface water. They pose an extremely serious fire and air pollution risk. A burning tyre is very difficult to extinguish and gives off thick, acrid toxic smoke.

Toodyay has certainly experienced its fair share of tyre dumping even on an industrial scale. Many 1,000's of tyres have been put into a pit at Morangup and countless tyres have ended up in our bushland, reserves and road verges over the decades.

Recently, there have been some audacious examples of tyre dumping in Toodyay with large numbers of tyres discarded in culvert drains along River Road and actually in the middle of Balgaling Road along with a number of other sites. A hundred tyres were dumped over a several week period on a reserve by the river at the Dumbarton Bridge. The selfish irresponsibility of certain members of our society never ceases to amaze.

It has always been a dilemma as what to do with these tyres. Our Waste Transfer Station will not accept them and with good reason because the sheer bulk and the fire and environmental risks require special approvals and facilities.

Over the years I have been stock piling dumped tyres at my place that have been gathered during roadside litter pickups and since taking on the Reserves Management Officer (RMO) position with the Shire I have gradually collected over 200 dumped tyres of various sizes and stored them at the Shire Depot. I knew this was going to be unsustainable and the ever increasing pile would have to be disposed of at some point. The only acceptable option in my opinion was to send them away for re-cycling. However, this comes at a cost of about \$3.00 per tyre.

In a very timely way the Department of Environment and Regulation through our community reporting heard about the good work our environmental groups, Tidy Towns and the Shire Rangers were doing to address the problem of illegal dumping. In response, the Department sent a Senior Officer to meet with us. This has resulted in a beneficial partnership with Department of Environmental Regulation (DER) that will assist greatly with illegal dumping investigations and prosecutions.

At about this time I received an e-mail from Giacci Tyre Recyclers highlighting the services they offered. The company provided exceptional customer support and I got the feeling they loved their work and were motivated by



the fact they were driving initiatives to solve a serious environmental issue. Before long we had an arrangement in place and in early August the Giacci truck arrived punctually to load the stock pile of tyres. The three of us were wet and covered in mud from the loading operation but I, for one could not have been happier.

The crew continued on their way with more pick-ups to do before they would off load at the re-cycling plant in Naval base. Those tiresome tyres will now be converted into a range of useful products such as surfaces for sports areas and building material.

Left: Giacci team members load the tyres for recycling. "I love it!" said Jeanette as she and Peter heaved the tyres onto the truck.

Photo: Greg Warburton

A fertile Mothers' Day - with a cutting edge!

by Sarah and Laraine

Sunrise on Mothers' Day, May 8th, heralded a bee-hive like flurry of activity in this special part of the Avon Valley.

From the east (Northam) - the Greening Australia team, led by a very thoughtful and competent Julia Murphy, headed for Millards Pool at Glencoe Estate laden with marquee, generator, portable toilet, straw bale seating, samples of riparian species, relevant literature, beautiful food and the most vital item of all on a chilly morning - the magical potential to make hot drinks on the river bank!

From the west, Chris Ferreira from the 'Forever Project', wended his way to the old citrus orchard on the banks of the Avon, laden with special gardening gifts for deserving recipients. The 'Forever Project' is a small business dedicated to empowering communities to develop sustainable landcare and management strategies. Many of us have participated in the informative and challenging 'Heavenly Hectares' programme which is but one of the many community education workshops Chris and his team lead.

Simultaneously, from other parts of the compass, the Toodyay Friends of the River trailer with all its tools and new coat of paint, members from TFOR, Toodyay Naturalists Club, the Toodyay Historical Society and other interested local families - all wended their way to the citrus orchard alongside the River Avon in Glencoe Estate.

Why all this activity, you might well ask...?



Above: The assembled participants

All were participating in the first stage of revitalising the remnant citrus orchard (consisting of 30 trees still bearing fruit despite being 80 years or older) growing alongside the section of the Bilya Walk Track between the Millards Pool Picnic Shelter and the antique Windmill near Extracts.

Robyn Taylor, President of the Historical Society, gave a brief history of this part of the river and environs, followed by Julia outlining

the proposed 3 acre understorey and tree planting programme scheduled for the area this June.

Then Chris took over and introduced folks to the basics of good river management, sustainable soil care, correct pruning techniques plus the need to reduce weed competition for available nutrients as well as an impassioned introduction to the 11th and 12th Commandments.

This was followed by a practical demonstration by Chris (*see right!*).

Photos: Wayne Clarke



PROJECT PERSON

by Greg Warburton

I have been a member of the Toodyay Friends of the River (TFOR) for quite a number of years now and during that time I have performed different management committee roles including President. By far my longest term has been the role of Project Officer. That is due to the fact that not only do I love TFOR and what it stands for but it is the role that I am most comfortable with.

The beauty about working with a dedicated group like TFOR is that everyone can contribute their particular skills. I, for example would not be particularly good at the treasurer's role not having much of a head for numbers but get me out on a revegetation site and I am in my element. That's not forgetting that all committee members need to have a good idea of everything that's going on from communications, events, meetings, work programs, grants and of course the all-important finances.

It is not hard coming up with TFOR Project ideas. There is so much to do and so much we could be doing. The challenge I think is to tailor our project work to fit within our capacity and to ensure we are sustainable into the future. Our people must always come first and that means for me providing a balance of on-ground activities with the need to effectively manage and administer our incorporated group.

I feel privileged to have been directly involved in some of TFOR's big successes such as the Bilya Walk Track and have put down to experience the disappointments. Working with partners such as the Shire, community environmental groups in the Avon, Vernice Pty. Ltd. and of course in the days the Department of Water has been rewarding and inspiring.

I was fortunate to be able to spend a lot of time with Gaven Donegan and observe the way he operated when he was Project Officer. It gave me a head start and I hope I can perpetuate and honour the unwavering commitment Gaven had for the "work along the river" as he would often say.

So, this Project Officer has no plans to go anywhere and I look forward to getting down and dirty by the river, sharing the camaraderie and laughs for some time to come.

...continued Page 11



Above: Project Person Greg with the re-badged works trailer

Photo:

THE LONG-NECKED TURTLE

by Desraé Clarke

THE ARTICLE re creates of herpetology placed in the May edition of the community newspaper, The Toodyay Herald, was that of the Long-necked Turtle (*Chelodina oblonga* Gray 1841). A reader wrote to the newspaper editor stating that the use of 'turtle' was incorrect as turtles are sea creatures only. This statement prompted a search with the resulting information.

From the Webster Dictionary

Turtle: Any of a large and widely distributed group of land, fresh-water, and salt water reptiles of the Chelonia, having a toothless beak and a soft body encased in a hard shell into which, in most species, the head, tail and four legs may be withdrawn; although fresh-water and particularly, sea species are usually called turtle, and land species are usually called tortoise, the terms are properly interchangeable for all species.

From 'Reptile and Frogs of the Perth Region' by Brian Bush, Brad Maryan, Robert Browne-Cooper and David Robinson, ISBN 1 875560 42 4.

Freshwater Turtles (Family Chelidae)

A family of aquatic and semi-aquatic reptiles found also in New Guinea and South America. They belong to a group described as pleurodirous or side-necked turtles. This refers to the way they retract their head by folding the neck into a horizontal groove under the front edge of the upper shell. This differs from other freshwater turtles, which fold the head into an S-shape to withdraw it. The limbs can also be withdrawn to some extent. All have distinct ankle joints, webbed feet and four or five claws.

We refer to the members of this family as turtles because of their webbed feet and aquatic behaviour. The term 'tortoise' is used for the dome-shaped, predominantly land-based tortoises, such as those found on the Galapagos Islands. Sixteen species occur in Australia, two are found locally.

The Short-necked or Western Swamp Turtle, discovered in 1839 (in Western Australia) and described in 1901 was feared to be extinct. However, it was re-discovered in 1953 by a young amateur herpetologist from Bullsbrook; there are very few animals left in the wild. Since that time the Perth Zoo has been able to breed a number of what is known as 'the world's rarest reptile'.

Another source of information re turtle and tortoise may be found in 'Reptiles & Amphibians of Australia' by Harold G. Cogger ISBN 1 876334 33 9.



Left: Long-necked Turtle

Photo: Clive Millett
(Aged 9)

MILLARDS POOL REVEGETATION

by Dimity Boggs

OUR FAMILY have been members of TFOR about two years but have not made time to get involved with the on-ground activities undertaken by the group. On Sunday however, we were able to come down to the tree planting on Millard's Pool for an hour and brought with us a small army of our friends and their children who were interested to learn about revegetation and do something fun to help the state of our river. Bree Byfield, and her children Parker and Jackson, live on river frontage on MacDonald Retreat near Millard's Pool so they were particularly keen to take part in improving their stretch of the Avon River.

TFOR members Greg and Grahame took on the daunting task of educating our eight enthusiastic children, aged 18 months to 9 years old, in the art of planting sedges around the three dams adjacent to the main pool. With quiet patience they got *all* the kids to get some four to five trays of sedges into the ground. The kids didn't just receive an education in tree planting, but they were allowed to wallow in mud up to their knees and elbows which foremost, is fun, but secondly they learnt some interesting things about clay - *it's so cohesive you can paint yourself with it and make cannon balls that fit in your gumboots!* - and discovered some great wildlife in the mud.

After the sedges were planted, Parker and Angelique Mehl had a tutorial from Greg in using a potti-puki which they both found pretty impressive. The only draw-back was that the inevitably bare-footed children, and one unnamed adult, discovered how the weed caltrop distributes its seed.

Meanwhile the rest of the group were busy finishing off planting on higher ground and along the main river bank. We re-grouped and enjoyed a tasty morning tea where we met some of the other TFOR members. Attention spans started to run-out so we left as rapidly and noisily as we appeared, much dirtier but much richer for the experience!

We'd really like to thank TFOR for so graciously facilitating the experience for our families.



Above, and pages 8 - 9: Millard's Pool replanting

Photos: Dimity Boggs

MILLARDS POOL REVEGETATION cont...



MILLARDS POOL REVEGETATION cont...



MILLARDS POOL REVEGETATION cont...



Above: Millards Pool replanting about to get underway.

Photo: Wayne Clarke

GIACCI TYRE RECYCLERS ASSISTANCE



Left: Peter (orange vest) and Jeanette (yellow vest) loading up the stockpile of tyres recovered from dump sites across the Shire. Only five percent of passenger tyres are recycled, the rest are stockpiled, go into landfill, or are illegally dumped.

Recovered tyres can be converted into products such as road or building construction materials.

Photo: Grag Warburton

MEMBERS GALLERY



Above: Rebecca Meegan-Lowe captures the surrounding flora, and the moods of the Avon River along the Bilya Walk Track.

Top photo is a Labichea species. Labicheas are native to Western Australia., and part of the Caesalpiniaceae Family (of around 2,200 species, including the Sennas and Cassias)

Centre photo is a rather unique photo of Red Banks Pool (with the John Masters Bird Hide on the right). This indicates the view that can be had from the hide.

Bottom photo is again Red Banks Pool - this time indicating the good winter flows. The origin of the foam on top of the water is likely from a number of sources, including nutrients (some as run-off from agriculture and some possibly from the sewerage treatment ponds in Northam. Normally used to water sporting grounds, during winter this is surplus to requirements). Other sources are the tannins (from trees).

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WORKING FOR THE HEALTH OF THE
AVON RIVER

Toodyay & Districts
Community Bank Branch



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WHEN WILL THEY 'TYRE' OF THIS VANDALISM?

Some small minded vandals seem to have taken offence at Toodyay winning the Tidy Towns Award, and are continuing to dump rubbish (tyres in particular) in Toodyay's reserves. Following the removal of a large number of tyres in early August by *Giacci Tyre Recyclers* (see article page 2), further tyres have been dumped at Sinclair's Crossing (Dumbarton Road).

Photo by Ian Whyborn