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Biddip



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Newsletter of the Toodyay Friends of the River

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The Toodyay Friends of the River are grateful to the Wheatbelt NRM for their on-going support in producing



wheatbelt
natural resource
management

Presidents message by Rev. Peggy Ludlow

WHAT can I say?

As the seasons march on, weeds have been on my mind and at the end of the shovel! As TFOR they have been too. The plantings at the Pelham Outlet are going well, enjoying the rain we have had. Hopefully, they will be healthy and established and like the garden plants they can take on the weeds.

Much hard work went into a very special event at Red banks and the work parties of path creators, weed control and painters over these last years were an important part of the continuing story of the bird hide.

A very special occasion, at Red Bank pool on the 3rd August saw the opening of the Redbank Noongar Interpretive signs at the bird hide. It was a wonderful occasion and an affirmation of all the work that the Naturalists Club and TFOR have done with the Noongar Aboriginal Corporation to create and develop the Red Bank site and bird hide. This is such a special and significant site and a delight to see the cooperation and working together of the groups. Many commented and the good relationships and the general celebration of the occasion.

The River Avon banks are a continuing delight to the many who walk along the river and explore the region. It's fun getting stuck in and together I believe our TFOR organisation, makes a difference. This has been a strange year, but we manage to keep our projects going and events happening. Do continue to join the work parties to enjoy this great land and each other's company. Weeds and all!

Below: Bob Frayne cutting Castor Oil weed near the Pelham Brook outlet

Photo: Beth Frayne



Cover Photo: Gya Ngoop Traditional Dancers performing a Keeninyarra

Photo: Wayne Clarke

Unveiling of Noongar Interpretative Signs

by Wayne Clarke

ON Monday 3rd August 2020 a large number of people gathered at the John Masters Bird Hide to celebrate the unveiling of the Redbank Noongar Interpretative Signs: ‘*Gnulla Moort* (Our Family) @ *Redbank*’. The event was hosted by the Noongar Kaartdijin Aboriginal Corporation (NKAC) from Toodyay, led by Chairperson Robert Miles, a Yued Leader.

The **Welcome to Country** ceremony was conducted by Ballardong Elder (and NKAC Director) Sharmaine Miles. Rodney Garlett, a Yued Elder performed the traditional **Smoking Ceremony** – a ritual to cleanse and purify the area and also the spirit, body and soul while in Noongar Boodja (Noongar Country). It helps to ward off the ‘warra weirn’ (bad spirits) and brings in blessings of the ‘kwop weirn’ (good spirits).

The Vice Chairperson of NKAC, Bernie Green, gave acknowledgements. This was followed by Rodney Garlett who’s **Cultural Speech** about Noongar connection to Boodja, and the importance of Redbank Pool, a registered heritage site and Noongar cultural place, was emphasised. It’s a mythological site (part of the Waugal story within the Toodyay Valley region), a camping and gathering place, and a food and water source.

Right: Yued Noongar Elder Rodney Garlett presenting the Cultural Speech at the Unveiling Ceremony

Photo: Wayne Clarke



Ms. Gail McGowan, Director General of the Department of Planning, Land and Heritage, addressed the gathering as **sponsor of the project**.

Following Gail’s address, the Gya Ngoop (pronounced Jaa-ngoop, and meaning one or first blood) Traditional Dancers performed a very moving **Keeninyarra or Kobori** (Corroboree). This was part of an ancient and authentic dance, something most of those in attendance had never witnessed.

It was then that Noongar Elder Auntie Pat Davis and the Hon. Darren West MLC (Member for the Agricultural Region) **unveiled the magnificent interpretative artwork**.

Congratulations are extended to all of the NKAC Board Members, with particular thanks to Helen Shanks for coordinating the project.

Riparian Restoration, a long term project

Part 4: The Plan

by Dr. Bridget Leggett

Since the last edition of BIDDIP, we have made exciting progress with the *Pelham Brook Outlet Restoration Project*. We now have an agreed plan and a strategy for implementation. Partnerships, volunteers and *Communities Environment Program* funding will enable us to do at least most of the work and we have permission to ‘go ahead’. We have even made a start on the revegetation work.

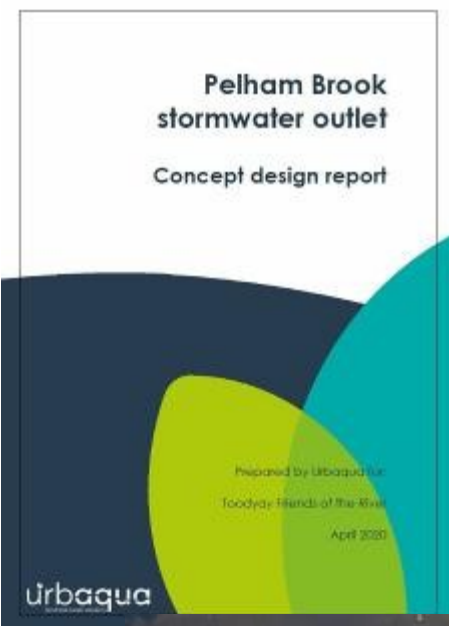
The plan

Early in May, Toodyay Friends of the River Inc (TFOR) received the Report from Urbaqua providing a blueprint for action. There

The Report starts by documenting community involvement in the project and the history of collaboration between TFOR and the traditional owners, the Ballardong People of the Noongar Nation.

It then provides the hydrological context, mapping the water catchment and modelling the discharge to predict peak flow rates and volumes including the one in ten year and one in a hundred year scenarios. These inform the design.

The concept design for the project has a number of elements (see *Overview* diagram). Construction work is needed at the outlet and to enhance the drainage channel (yellow) immediately below the outlet. A culvert needs to be installed where the track crosses the channel (blue). The surrounding area (green) needs revegetation work.



Below: Overview of the project area

by Greg Warburton



Riparian Restoration, a long term project (cont)

The main elements of the construction work for slowing the water involve the following:

- *Extending and rectifying the existing outlet apron* – the concrete platform on which the water first falls when it gushes out of the drain. Inevitably there is erosion around the edges, so the platform needs to be constructed with this in mind.
- *Reconstructing the rocky chute at the base of the apron* so that the flow is interrupted as much as possible. The idea here is first to allow a place for the water to collect and then an area for it to spill over and continue slowly towards the river. Guidance is provided as to the design of the chute and the size of the rocks to be used.
- *Widening and lengthening the rocky transition zone and stabilising the drainage channel* (shown in yellow). Some modification to the channel bank slopes will enable the channel to withstand the typical flow velocities predicted in the report, and maximise the retention of water in the riparian zone. The recommended bank slopes also enhance the likelihood of successful revegetation.

Together, these three elements will slow the water much more effectively and so reduce its erosive power.

The fire access track and Bilya Walktrack pass near the outlet and cross the drainage channel. A culvert will be needed to enable the tracks to function throughout the year (blue).

Revegetation will play a crucial part in stabilising the soil and restoring the riparian zone.

Implementation of the design

Partnerships with the Toodyay Shire and the Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES) are making it possible to get the plan implemented. Shire Officers are assisting with the planning and project management and the Shire has agreed to supply the rocks. DFES is helping with the track crossing and culverts. The grant TFOR received from *Communities Environment Project (CEP)* funding will pay for the construction work at the outlet. TFOR members will undertake the revegetation work.

After reviewing a Section 18 application submitted by TFOR, Officers within the Heritage Section of the Department of Planning, Land and Heritage were able to determine that the project will not impact on the Aboriginal heritage value of the area, and that the construction work may start forthwith.

Revegetation

TFOR's Seed Group is growing the plants for revegetation and had the first batch ready for planting at the June working bees this year. Then the weather was kind, with some rain before the planting and follow up rain – but now we seem to be in a dry patch! Further plantings will occur in 2021 when the construction work is completed. Revegetation may remain a 'work in progress' for a number of years.

Bethan Lloyd, who runs the Seed Group provided the following information on the choice of species.

The initial focus is on Sedges (which have flat or triangular stems) and Rushes (which have round stems). Their main function is to bind the soil together, absorb excess nutrients and filter out some pollutants to prevent these from entering the Avon River.

...continued Page 6

Riparian Restoration, a long term project (cont)



Above: TFOR working bee, June 2020

(cont. from Page 4)

This year, the following have been grown and planted:

- *Spiny flat sedge*: an excellent soil stabiliser and nutrient stripper for areas that are wet in winter, due to its network of roots and dense foliage at the soil surface; it pumps oxygen into the sediment.
- *Marsh club rush*: a quick coloniser that dies back to underground parts in winter, therefore it has reduced capacity to control surface erosion; it provides a great resource for water birds to build their nests.
- *Saw sedge*: it tolerates a wide range of water levels from inundation to 0.5m to mild drought tolerance; provides habitat for frogs and wetland birds.
- *Finger rush*: a tussocking rush with pale brown flowers; tolerates heavy soils and dry periods once established.
- *Loose flower rush*: forms bright green arching tussocks 1m high with loose red flowers; tolerates drying out once established.
- *Creeping saltbush*: this covers the ground, tolerates salt and drought and provides food for many insects and birds including the saltbush blue butterfly.
- *Ruby saltbush*: produces fruit that is an important food source for fauna in saline ecosystems; it is tolerant of waterlogging, drought and mildly saline conditions.

In conclusion

The project got underway in April 2019 when TFOR received a grant from the Wheatbelt NRM's *Healthy Soils, Healthy Rivers* program. That money was used to commission Urbaqua to devise a blueprint for erosion minimisation and ecosystem restoration. How rewarding it is to see the plan starting to come to fruition.

Riparian Restoration, Boyagerring Brook



WITH the slight relaxation of the COVID-19 restrictions members have welcomed the rain and cool misty mornings to revegetate two areas ripped and prepared for planting.

The first site, close to the Boyagerring Brook on farmland, had previously been planted but visiting sheep and the long, hot and dry summer months resulted in a very low survival rate. The replanting over two days by 14 volunteers in mid-July was with 700 beautiful healthy species grown from seed by the Seed Orchard team. These included Eucalypts, Melaleucas, Hakeas, Casuarinas, Acacias, Labicheas, Callistemon and the hardy Atriplex species and the rip lines prepared the year before were used. Just let's hope the sheep don't revisit and the farmer erects a secure fence!

A second site along the Brook and close to the school, saw 7 members working in the heavy rain in early August planting about 300 rushes and sedges on the banks. Hopefully these will stabilise the denuded banks and provide future habitats for the local riparian invertebrates and vertebrates.

Above: Pelli loves planting - Gary Payne planting along the Boyagerring Brook at Foggathorpe. Photo: Sarah Dudley



Left: The weather was not quite so friendly when the next planting took place. The attire tells a picture.

Photo: Bridget Leggett

Toodyay Seed Group

by Bethan Lloyd

WE are a subgroup of Toodyay friends of the River and grow plants for community planting projects and individual landholders. We do our magic down at the community shadehouse at Toodyay Junction on Railway Road. We will have mostly distributed all our native plants around the Shire by the time you read this.

This year two main community projects were at Pelham Brook Outlet where we planted a range of sedges and ground cover plants closer to the river, and a repeat planting along Boyagerring Brook at Foggarthorpe where we planted a range of riparian species including *Melaleuca viminea*, *Eucalyptus rudis* and *E. loxophleba*, *Labichea lanceolata*, *Casuarina obesa*, *Acacia microbotrya* and *Hakea preissi*. Thanks to Matt the farm manager for spraying the area prior to planting.

We estimate for this year we distributed close to 2,500 plants including private landholders and some for Shire of Toodyay 'Parks and Gardens'.

It was good to see other landholders along Boyagerring Brook also undertaking planting and fencing projects with support from our local natural resource management group WBNRM. All we need now is some substantial rain to bed everything in and for it to continue through to September.

Many people ask me for plants at this time of year. It's a bit late but if you missed out on plants for your project this year let us know before the end November of 2020 your requirements for 2021. By ordering early you are much more likely to get what you require. Otherwise you are stuck with leftovers. To request an application form please email bethanlloyd_8@msn.com, you can download it from the TFOR website under 'Seed Orchard' or paste the link below into your browser—

<https://www.toodyayfor.org.au/PDF/Tree%20and%20Understorey%20Application%20Form.pdf>.

We supply free plants for community projects and low priced plants for landholders. We are on a recess at present and will return in late September to start getting things ready for the next season.

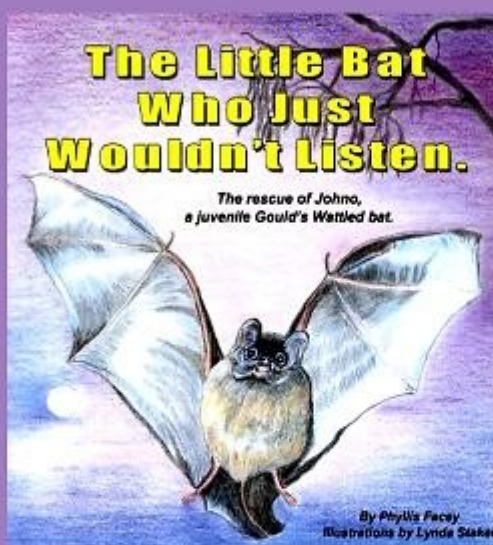
The composting area next to our shadehouse is going quite well. We were excited to hear that the Shire has allocated us some funds as part of its community sponsorship program to improve the facility by the addition of a concrete pad, this will enable us to keep the compost off the ground and will make the process a lot easier and more efficient.

The compost is made from grass clippings from the Shire, donated stubble straw from a local farmer and blood and bone is used as an activator. The Shire manages the turning of the compost and is there on the second and fourth Wednesday of the month to load up trailers. Anyone wanting compost should check availability first by calling 95745882.

An overview of a November 2019 publication entitled
'Johno, the Little Bat who Just Wouldn't Listen'.

WRITTEN by Beverly Naturalists' Club member, Phyllis Facey, and beautifully illustrated by Lynda Staker, this 24 page book would make an ideal children's gift. It also has much general knowledge on bat species to render it an educational tool for both children and adults alike.

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animal?



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Main Roads Wheatbelt

**This
children's
book is a
heart
warming
story of
little
Johno's
second
chance at
life.**

**Wildlife
Emergency
Response
Team WA
Inc.**

The story describes the many scraps that the small bat, Johno, gets into by not listening to his Mum and Dad. However, it also describes how bats feed, carry their young (known as 'pups') and the main predators these tiny, but maligned, creatures deal with. There is a quiz and extra interesting information on bats and how to make a 'bat friendly' garden.

What is WERTWA?

In 2016 a suggestion was made to the Main Roads Wheatbelt Region office offering a trial of education and assistance to on-ground staff that come across injured wildlife in their day-to-day work. It may be a bird with a broken wing or a dead female kangaroo with a live joey in her pouch.

A meeting was held and the suggestion was accepted with the commencement of a *pilot program* and the birth of the Wildlife Emergency Response Team Western Australia.

Two types of rescue kits were developed with one a 'basket' style

and the second kit, a flat pack to be held in vehicles with limited space. The kits also contain 24 hour WERTWA contact data with advice and support for any emergency involving injured wildlife.

The pilot program was successful and now rescue kits are held in all Main Roads Wheatbelt Region work vehicles with the on-ground staff knowing that support and assistance is but a phone call away.

Boyagerring Brook Tree Planting

Text: Sarah Dudley Photo: Scott McCallum

At the end of the month about thirty cadets from the Toodyay District High School volunteered their Friday afternoon to plant 400 hardy native seedlings **donated by Wheatbelt NRM**. These were successfully placed in the prepared rip lines which ran parallel to the waterway. Several days of good rain followed the students' hard work which enabled the seedlings to get an encouraging head-start.



Above and Left:
Cadets from the
Toodyay District
High School
planting trees along
Boyagerring Brook

Photo Gallery



Above: Pelli and Gary

Photo: Sarah Dudley

Above left: Motor-bike or Western Green Tree Frog (Litoria moorei) Photo: Sarah Dudley

Below: Golden Whistler, Ric and Rebecca's Toodyay Property

Photo: Rebecca Meegan-Lowe



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Toodyay & Districts
Community Bank Branch



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Visit our website at
www.toodyayfor.org.au

The Back Page



Above: Launching Ramp for kayaks at Weatherall Pool, West Toodyay. The ramp will assist in protecting the river bank, particularly during the Avon Descent.

Photo: John White

OUR SPONSORS

The Toodyay Friends of the River acknowledges the continuing support of the following sponsors: Vernice Pty Ltd; Bendigo Bank; Lotterywest; P & S Ferguson; Shire of Toodyay; Toodyay Op Shop; Toodyay Garden Centre; Toodyay - Makit Hardware; Wheatbelt NRM