



Biddip

Newsletter of the Toodyay Friends of the River

Volume 2, Issue 1

New look *Biddip*

Welcome to the new look *Biddip* newsletter. This has been a little while coming, but we hope that in the future - with the help of some regular contributors - we may be able to give you some interesting reading on a regular basis.

The *Friends* have been very busy in the period since the last *Biddip*, which was in February

2000, and made a considerable contribution toward the recovery of the Avon River. Assisting us with that achievement have been our friends from the Ministry of Justice (the MOJ Team). Although they have moved on, their achievements have been an inspiration for us! We can actually see the wood from the ~~trees~~ weeds.

To ensure that our *Biddip* continues to provide interesting and up-to-date articles, we are appealing to its readers for contributions. Although a busy person, the Editor is prepared to make the time available to produce our *Biddip*, now it's up to you to assist. **Your** contribution will be a most welcome addition.

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Special points of interest:

- *Lloyd Reserve has now been declared officially*
- *The Friends of the River are again sponsoring the Avon Ribbons of Blue Project*

Beetle joins war on Bridal Creeper

The recent release of a foliage-eating beetle in Western Australia marks the third full-frontal attack mounted by the CRC for Weed Management Systems

against one of Australia's most destructive plant pests - bridal creeper.

The Friends are anxious to add this weapon to their armour, and will be

seeking a local release.

Details on the beetle can be found on the CSIRO Website at:

www.ento.csiro.au/bridalcreeper

Presidents Message

by Andrew Marsden

Welcome to all our readers and busy volunteers of the Toodyay Friends of the River. This year has continued to be successful with regular monthly Sunday working-bee meetings and the occasional social function.

We have had some successes against the weeds, principally tamarix and castor oil plants from below the Miniature Railway track right through to the back of the township. Regeneration of these plants is inevitable, but the really big infestations, particularly of tamarix, seem to have been well controlled.

Bridal creeper remains a nightmare, all along the River, particularly downstream towards the West Toodyay Bridge. The 'rust'

control has been successful in some areas, however, the leaf hopper insect control will not be so successful in the Toodyay area, because they have difficulty staying alive through the long hot summer (don't we all...?).

We are keeping an eye on the potential spread of the arum lily, which has been appearing on the banks near the Miniature Railway.

On the other side of the coin, our efforts at planting and regeneration have been very good. It is such a pleasure to see thriving sheoaks and various gums planted over the last two to three years, both on the walkway near the miniature railway, and also on the riverbanks behind the town. The clumps of sedges planted last year have done really well.

The other main success of the *Friends* has been the major tidying up of the area behind the town along the river bank, with the removal of much bamboo, tamarix, and dumped trees, as well as all other manner of other debris.

I would like to thank the Water and Rivers Commission for their continued support. I would particularly like to thank all those members of the Toodyay Friends of the River, who turn out willingly every month, and to those who do a lot of work behind the scenes, to help redevelop the beauty of the Avon River as it passes through the Toodyay area.

Andrew Marsden



Salinity Investment Framework

by Wayne Clarke

The Avon Natural Resource Management Region has been chosen for the State Government's Salinity Investment Framework (SIF).

The framework is to establish how funding to tackle salinity is to be allocated, both in principle and in broad terms. The process

for this is to set broad objectives and goals, assess assets at risk, set specific goals for action, assess options, set priorities and take action.

The Avon Catchment Council was successful with a bid to run the SIF trial, which will enable the Avon to become the model for investment across the state.

The project will be at two levels—State and Regional, and will involve action groups that include both technical and community aspects.

Details on the project can be found on the State's salinity website at:

www.salinity.org.au

On the first of January this year, the Avon Waterways Committee replaced the Avon River Management Authority to begin a new era of community involvement in river management.

The Avon River Management Authority (ARMA) was formed in December 1993, under the Waterways Conservation Act. In the eight years of its existence, ARMA developed the Avon River Management Programme, initiated the development of River Recovery Plans, provided fencing materials (through NHT grant money), and developed Policies for various activities along the river (including Recreation, Fire, Feral Weeds and Animals and Foreshore Management).

Support for ARMA was provided by the Water and Rivers Commission

(formerly the Waterways Commission). Viv Read was the first Regional Manager, followed by Martin Revell, while Doug Morgan Chaired the Authority throughout its existence.

“To work with the [Avon] community and government agencies to sustainably manage the waterways”

The new Avon Waterways Committee (AWC) is an incorporated body, and membership is sought from the community within the Avon River Basin, the area covered by the new committee. This is in contrast to ARMA, where membership was by appointment by the Minister for Water Resources.

The objects of the AWC are to “work with the community and government agencies to sustainably manage the waterways of the Avon River Basin within a framework of natural resource management (NRM)”. It will be seeking partnership agreements with the community, government agencies and other NRM groups in the region, and focus on such issues as education, coordination of priority works, the commissioning of research and acting as a facilitator to resolve conflict on waterways issues.

For more information on the Avon Waterways Committee contact the Water and Rivers Commission office in Northam on 9622 7055 or visit the WRC Website at

www.wrc.wa.gov.au

Birds of the riverine environment

by Desraé Clarke

Compiling a list of birds in the riverine (river and adjacent vegetation) environment is integral to the furtherance of our objects. The following is the beginning of an inventory of our bird sightings to date:

Carnaby's Black Cockatoo, Eura-

sian Coot, Little Black and Little Pied Cormorant, Black-fronted Dotterel, Mountain Duck, Wood Duck, Great Egret, Grey Fantail, Western Gerygone, Little Grebe, White-faced and White-necked Heron, Brown Honeyeater, Sacred Ibis, Magpie, Tree Martin, Ringneck Par-

rot, Scarlet and Red-capped Robin, Common Sandpiper, Grey Shrike-thrush, Silvereye, Yellow-billed Spoonbill, Black-winged Stilt, Welcome Swallow, Grey Teal, Western and Yellow-rumped Thornbill, Willie Wagtail, Red Wattlebird, Rufus Whistler and Splendid Wren.

Natural Resource Management in the Avon Region

by Wayne Clarke

Exciting changes are happening to Natural Resource Management (NRM) in Western Australia, and it will have a huge impact on the future directions of rivercare and landcare activities.

It has been announced that the Commonwealth will be channeling Natural Heritage Trust (NHT) funding through regional groups in the future. Western Australia has signed an Inter-governmental Agreement with the Commonwealth, paving the way for bilateral arrangements on how funding will enter our state. The Commonwealth proposal is to empower regional groups (such as the Avon Catchment Council) to administer projects. All project applications (including the recently closed Envirofund) must address the regions NRM plans and strategies.

Following the signing of the bilateral agreements, the state will be in a position to receive funding from the Commonwealth's initiative "Our Vital Resources", which is a National Action Plan (NAP) for Salinity and Water Quality in Australia. Under the NAP, Western Australia

is to receive \$158 million over a seven year period of NAP life. With the Salinity Investment Framework trial being conducted in the Avon, assurances that the money will be directed at priority projects is certain.

The Commonwealth has also announced an additional \$1.032 billion to be funded over the next five years on

*New Commonwealth funding
earmarked for the Avon
Natural Resource Management
Region*

the second Natural Heritage Trust round (NHT2). Meanwhile, regions across Australia are busy preparing applications for an interim funding round to carry them through from September 2002 (when the initial NHT funding ceases) until the NHT2 funding is available. The Ribbons of Blue Coordinator position that the *Friends* support falls into this category.

The Avon Catchment Council is our regional NRM group. Formerly the Avon Working Group, it was formed in 1994 as part of the

Swan Avon Integrated Catchment Management Program. The Council comprises three community members each from the Avon, Yilgarn and Lockhart sub-catchments, who are nominated and elected through both Land Conservation District Committees and Local Government, each serving for a three year term. Regional managers from lead government agencies complete the membership.

The Avon Catchment Council is currently developing its NRM Strategy. It has been through the process of community consultation on its Draft Strategy, and is now close to finalising its strategy (the Draft has been presented to Canberra for initial accreditation). This will then be the basis on which all future funding applications in the region will be approved.

The Avon Catchment Council is located with the Department of Agriculture in Northam. To contact them, telephone 9690 2250, or you can visit them on their Website at:

www.avonicm.org.au

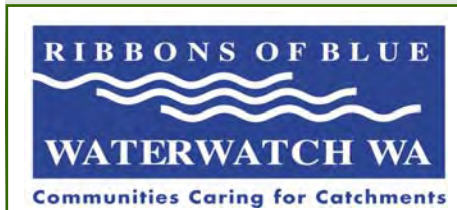
**Visit us on the web at:
www.avonicm.org.au/avonicm/2jfriends/**

Ribbons of Blue

Halfway through the year already – it is hard to believe that it was a little over nine months ago that I took over the position of Regional Coordinator for the Avon Ribbons of Blue (RoB) Program. In the short time I have been granted the position of Avon RoB Coordinator, I have already had an overwhelmingly positive response from community and school groups who are keen to continue their involvement, linking their interest in an awareness of the health of their local waterways into the RoB education program.

Recently the Toodyay Friends of the River participated in WA's inaugural Saltwatch event within the Avon Region. Sponsored by Ribbons of Blue/Waterwatch WA, Saltwatch is a week-long event designed to collect a 'snapshot' indication of salinity within WA.

Participation throughout the Avon region was hindered by a lack of water, but was nonetheless met by enthusiastic samplers who were keen to provide data on their local waterways to be



included in an annual snapshot of surface water salinity throughout WA. Results should be up on the Ribbons of Blue/Waterwatch WA website shortly – check <http://www.wrc.wa.gov.au/ribbons>.

The Avon RoB Program recently won National recognition when York District High School were awarded National runners-up in Schools Category for the 2001 Waterwatch Australia 'Race Around the Catchment'

by Patricia Janssen

Competition. They produced a video, 'Bridal Creeper Uncovered', which depicted the student's contribution towards fighting Bridal Creeper along their local waterways. Well done York District High!

Currently, the State RoB team, in conjunction with Toodyay Friends of the River and the Water and Rivers Commission are putting up a state bid to NHT to continue funding the Avon RoB Program on a half-time basis throughout 2002/2003. Thank you for your support over the last few years.

There are many things on the horizon for the coming financial year, and I hope to see some of you involved with the National Macro invertebrate Snapshot that is being held between 2-8 September. We are also planning to hold a couple more Rivercare Workshops throughout the region, to give community members the



The Toodyay Friends of the River are one of the major sponsors of the Avon Ribbons of Blue Project.

Right: Samples being tested in Duidgee Park during Saltwatch



Seen testing water samples during Saltwatch are (from l to r): Rae Kolb, Val Tanner and Desraé Clarke. Bethan Lloyd standing.

Tamarix in Toodyay—can it be controlled? *By John Stretch and Wayne Clarke*

Tamarix (also known as Athol Pine or Salt Cedar) has been widely planted in the Wheatbelt and other parts of Australia for its salt tolerance. However, recent research has discovered that these trees are actually 'salt pumps' - that is, they take in salt through their root system and then shed it through their leaves. After a time, the surface beneath the trees becomes saturated with salt, defeating their original purpose of lowering the water table.

Tamarix aphylla is the species that is causing most concern in Australia. In 1974, flooding along the Finke River marked the commencement of extensive naturalisation, while naturalisation in the lower Gascoyne River in W.A. was noted in 1992. Today, this latter infestation poses a significant risk to the Shark Bay World Heritage Area, as parts of the Gascoyne River and Wooramel deltas lie within its boundaries.

In Toodyay, *Tamarix* has become naturalised along the Avon River, and has been the subject of extensive work by the *Friends* and the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) work teams. During 2001, specimens of *Tamarix* were taken, and

sent to the Water and Rivers Commission in Northam. These were then forwarded to a scientist in the United States of America, also working on *Tamarix* (where it has been a weed in New Mexico from as early as 1890). It was then discovered that the *Tamarix* species in Toodyay was not *aphylla*, but *parviflora*. This has opened a large can of worms, particularly now that it is suspected to be reproducing from seed.

New methods of control for our *Tamarix* plots have been



Photograph by John Stretch, taken upstream of Duidgee Park, Toodyay

advised, and we are in the process of obtaining stump injecting tools, and some special herbicides, the idea being to inoculate the trees in situ and then allowing the trees to rot. This will provide minimal disturbance to the ground where they are growing, reducing the possibility of erosion.

It is a long term project, and, like Bridal Creeper, will

not produce spectacular results overnight. Full eradication may never be possible, however, a concerted effort on our behalf will make sure that this *Weed of National Significance* does not mirror the problems it has caused on both the Finke and the Gascoyne Rivers.

It is up to us to be diligent in mapping out the exact locations of these trees, and earmarking them for control. To assist with this mapping project, the *Friends* propose to apply for funding to purchase a GPS unit, and each plant infestation can be accurately recorded for monitoring in the future (the GPS can also be used on other projects by the *Friends*, like the locating and registering of historic pools and crossings).

Next time you see an infestation of *Tamarix* (or other major weed) it is essential that you report it to the *Friends* committee. You may be able to assist with stop-



Miska removing tamarix from behind the Anglican Church. Photograph by Wayne Clarke

Lloyd Reserve now official

On Friday 21st June 2002, the Department of Environment Water and Catchment Protection (DEWCP) were advised by DOLA that the parcel of land donated by Mr. Oriel Lloyd had been lodged with the Titles Office. It will be known as Reserve 46827 for the purposes of "*Foreshore Management*"

The next step is for a *Management Agreement* to be drawn up between DEWCP and the *Friends of the River*,

to enable us to manage the land on their behalf.

The reservation process began in October 1999. Terry Brookes (a member of the *Friends*) has been following the process through at DEWCP, and the *Friends* are grateful to Terry for helping this reserve come to fruition.

The development of a Management Plan will be one of the first responsibilities of the *Friends*, and this will

need to be approved by the Board of the Water and Rivers Commission before it can be implemented.

The *Friends of the River* would particularly like to thank Mr. Lloyd for his most generous donation of the land to the Toodyay community, and the people of Western Australia. It is hoped that the Minister for the Environment will be available to formally receive the reserve in the near future.

River Recovery – Planning for the Future

Viv Read, a consultant of river management, is fulfilling the important role of, (with public consultation) preparing a Recovery Plan for the Avon River. 'The Vision' is a public statement of aims and objectives projected over the next ten to twenty years.

The Avon has been divided

into 18 separate management areas (Sections) spanning approximately 190 kilometres. Towns along the river's route include Brookton, Beverley, York, Northam and Toodyay. Sections 1 to 4 commence from the upper edge of the Avon Valley National Park to the Glen Avon Weir, which is

just within the Shire of Northam boundary.

From public consultation with interested community members, River Recovery Action Teams are in the process of formation.

For more details contact Viv Read on 9358 5630

Assistance from local business with River Recovery signage

Greg and Caroline Downie and Family, of Hallside Rural Agencies, have kindly donated the concrete for the supports of signage.

The *Toodyay Friends of the River* are preparing three areas of signage

to educate the public on the protection of the Avon River and its environs. The signs request that horse riding, motor bikes, trail bikes and four-wheel-drive vehicles do not use the river bed as a roadway or racetrack.

The *Friends* are extremely grateful for this continuing sponsorship from Hallside Rural Agencies, initiated by the former owners Rod and Linda Cook and now continued by Greg and Caroline.

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Friends of the River

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“Make Friends with
our Avon River”



Toodyay Friends of the River

WE'RE ON THE WEB AT :

www.avoniem.org.au/avoniem/2jfriends/

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The objects of the Toodyay Friends of the River are to work towards the conservation and rehabilitation of the Avon River and its environs. In the bigger picture of natural resource management, we are committed to implementing the Avon River Management Program and its associated River Recovery Plans for each of the four sections of river that pass through Toodyay.

Avon Catchment Council Community Grant Scheme *by Val and Neville Tanner*

At the confluence (where two waterways meet) of the Toodyay Brook and the Avon River, the banks are severely eroded. As owners of a property in this locality, it was decided that the best course of action would be to utilise the large tree trunks that had to be removed to build our home, to stabilise the banks. Next we would back-fill with rocks and, finely, stabilise with lots of indigenous (local to the area) plants.

We approached the *Tood-*

yay Friends of the River to help us apply for a grant to assist us with this project. On March 14th 2002, we received a grant of \$1,500 from the Avon Catchment Council Community Grants Scheme, supported by the Natural Heritage Trust.

A machine was hired to place the logs into the banks, and many truck loads of rocks were carted, then, laboriously hand placed along the banks; these joined with the already constructed riffle (a protective structure, usu-

ally of rocks, strategically placed over a waterway to encourage natural scouring). The final stage was the planting out of several hundred trees and sedges.

Our property is open for inspection to landcare and naturalists groups to view our work. The aim of this large project was to provide habitat for turtles and bird life from the stabilisation of the waterway banks and the increased vegetation.

val and Neville