

FRIENDS of VULKATHUNHA-GAMMON RANGES NATIONAL PARK Inc.



NEWSLETTER No. 20 January 2022

Edited – Graeme Oats Lake Frome

BRIEF HISTORY of BALCANOONA

In 1897, George Noble established Balcanoona Station, adding today's "Plains block" a year later. In 1909 the consolidated Balcanoona was owned by Margaret Ness, Mary Smith and Ellen Kemp. In 1917 Balcanoona, together with Worturpa and Illinawortina Pounds, was transferred to P.M. Morrison.

There was a poignant episode in 1918 when John Grindell, who was running cattle in Worturpa Pound, furtively shot his son-in-law in the stone hut that still bears Grindell's name. His crime was uncovered, and he was convicted of murder (Bailey, 1986).

Roy Thomas bought Balcanoona in 1925, and Hurtle Lord took it over in 1938. Byron and Ian MacLachlan assumed ownership in 1943.

First suggestions for a national park came in 1946 from Sir Kerr Grant and C. W. Bonython. the Government in 1970 dedicated 11400 ha. (Later increased to 15538ha.) as the Gammon Wilderness National Park – to be renamed Gammon Ranges National Park in 1972'

The information above came from - "Natural History of the Flinders Ranges" (1996) edited by Davies, M., Twidale, C. R. & Tyler, M. J. (published by Royal Society of South Australia) on p 180.

WORKING BEES – 2022

BALCANOONA RE-VEGETATION

Thursday 7th to Thursday 14th April

Friday 17th to Friday 24th June

Friday 19th to Friday 26th August

OOCABOOLINA RESTORATION

Sunday 22nd to Saturday 28th May

Sunday 24th to Saturday 30th July

WEETOOTLA SPRINGS MONITORING

Thursday 7th to Thursday 14th April

Friday 19th to Friday 26th August

The working bees in red are combined groups.

GRANTS UPDATE

There was good news on the grants front in late 2021. Martin and Graeme both applied for a grant through the 2021/22 Friends of Parks Small Grants Program.

Martin's application for funding of sodium, potassium and nitrate meters, a pH meter, chloride, calcium and nitrate test kits and an allowance for fuel was successful. The grant including GST is - \$3,551.00.

Graeme's application for a grant for the supply of 2 steel security doors and security screens for the eastern & western entries of Oocaboolina was not successful.

We were however, successful in obtaining a grant of \$4,000.00 through an Australian Government's 2021 Volunteers Grants program for the partial reimbursement of fuel used in going to and from the working bees. The funds from this grant will be distributed between all members who provide a vehicle at one or more of the working bees at the end of the working bee program as described on the previous page.

Details on how these funds will be distributed will be advised to you all at a later date. **The important thing is that the drivers keep receipts for all fuel purchase during and immediately after the trip/s.**

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BUT WAIT.... MORE GOOD NEWS

Since the AGM of 2020, the Committee has pursued the possibility of establishing a tax deductible **GIFT FUND** to the donor. First it required a major inclusion and change to the group's Constitution requiring a Special Resolution which was passed at the 2020 AGM, and then having approval of the State Government's Business & Consumer Services Dept. before lodging an application with the Australian Taxation Office to be listed on the Register of Environmental Organisations.

It's been a long road for the Committee, but good news arrived in the form of a letter from the Australian Government, Dept. of Agriculture, Water & the Environment on the 30th November last year. Here is an extract from that letter.

Friends of Vulkathunha-Gammon Ranges National Park Incorporated

Dear Mr Oats

REGISTER OF ENVIRONMENTAL ORGANISATIONS—SUCCESSFUL APPLICANT

"I am pleased to advise that Friends of Vulkathunha-Gammon Ranges National Park Incorporated and its public fund have successfully been entered onto the Register of Environmental Organisations (REO) as of 17 November 2021.

Donations made to the public fund from the date of entry may now be eligible for a tax deduction under the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997 (the Act). The Australian Taxation Office (ATO) has been notified of the organisation's entry onto the REO and will update the organisation's Australian Business Register entry to reflect the public fund's endorsement as a Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR)."

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The Committee have established a **GIFT FUND** bank account to which members (and the public) are able to make tax deductible donations: Donations can be made via EFT to:

Account Name: - Friends of Vulkathunha-Gammon Ranges National park – Gift Fund

BSB 105 078 Acc. No. 066 435 640 Please include your surname in the reference location.

Purple Spotted Gudgeon – Take Flight

During May 2021 Robert Brandle, Senior Conservation Ecologist Flinders & Outback Region SA Arid Lands Region Department for Environment and Water & SA Arid Lands Landscape Board led a team of Volunteers and Adnyamathanha Rangers from the Yappala Indigenous Protected Area in the translocation of the Flinders Ranges purple-spotted gudgeon (*Mogurnda clivicola*), Wirti Udla Varri in Adnyamathanha language from the Weetootla Creek Springs to the Flinders Ranges and the Yappala Indigenous Protected Area. Here is an excerpt from a report entitled:–

REDUCING THE RISK OF EXTINCTION FOR WIRTI UDLA VARRI, IDNYA & KENNGOOR Robert Brandle

*Whilst the cute and cuddly mammals have dominated the stage, a slow burning campaign to reduce the risk of extinction to one of South Australia's most vulnerable fish species Flinders Ranges purple-spotted gudgeon (*Mogurnda clivicola*), Wirti Udla Varri in language, has quietly burbled along like a Flinders Ranges spring. An Honours project investigating habitat parameters in 2016 helped to secure the funding required to support the translocation work through the Bounceback and Beyond Project. The work of the Friends of Vulkathunha-Gammon Ranges National Park (FoVGRNP) in monitoring water quality and fish occupancy at the only springs at which the Flinders Ranges purple-spotted gudgeon is known to occur have provided time series data on how these systems behave, useful for comparison with the springs to which 600 fish have now been transported. Pre-translocation assessment work included genetic analyses from fish taken from Weetootla and Nepouie Springs. The results showed very low levels of genetic diversity indicating that the population has suffered some severe declines with only a small number of fish surviving to repopulate the streams. It was also evident that the Nepouie population was a recent offshoot from the lower pools at Weetootla, supporting unconfirmed suggestions that the fish had been translocated to Nepouie during the early 1970s. However, the Nepouie population was more numerous than evident at Weetootla and showed a higher level of genetic fitness. For these reasons the translocation took 420 fish from Nepouie and the remaining 180 from the more divergent upper pools at Weetootla. The release sites received 300 each with even proportions from both source springs being released at each of the new population springs. At the time that I presented this talk to the AGM of the FoVGRNP, we were still planning the translocation and the role that the Friends Group members could play in the translocation and subsequent monitoring. The professional translocation team were very impressed and grateful for the enthusiasm and skill that the FoVGRNP brought to collecting the fish for transport by helicopter to their new habitat in Ikara-Flinders Ranges National Park (IFRNP) and Yappala Indigenous Protected Area.*

Follow this link for the full report by Robert. Please scroll to page 2.

[SEGments-37-2-Sept-2021.pdf \(scientificexpeditiongroup.org\)](https://www.scientificexpeditiongroup.org/SEGments-37-2-Sept-2021.pdf)

FRIENDS WEBSITE SECURITY

You may have noticed, that when you open our website it is reporting itself as 'not secure'. There are other websites for which this is also the case. I wrote the website, and maintain it, but I am self-taught, and do not consider myself as being any sort of an expert on website security. I have had a look online and spoken on the phone to the service provider for the website. It appears that a small difference in the address of the website is sufficient to see it report itself as secure. So, if you are concerned about this issue, here is the address to use- <https://www.rayh.id.au/vulkathunha>. If you click on this address or type it separately into your browser the secure version of the website will open. **Don't ask me to explain why!** If you have trouble getting to the secure status, and you have a teenage grandchild, he/she will probably be able to fix things for you.

Ray Hickman

WEEKLY RAINFALL BULLETIN

Bureau of Meteorology - SA Regional Office

Rainfall for the 7 days to 9am Thursday, 27 January 2022

Far North (17)	
Arcoona Bluff/HYD	129
Arkaroola	75
Beltana	105
Blinman	77
Cordillo Downs	
Innamincka	
Kalamurina	50
Leigh Creek	111
Marree	
Marree AP	81
Maynard's Well/HYD	73
Moomba AP	80
Motpena	32
Mt Dare	
North Moolooloo/HYD	103
Oodnadatta AP	40
Pfitzners Well/HYD	101
The Plateau/HYD	96

Left is an excerpt from the Bureau of Meteorology website showing the weekly rainfall in and around the V-GRNP. It is a useful page – so here is the link: - <http://www.bom.gov.au/products/IDS60130.shtml>

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Another useful website providing information on South Australian Outback Roads Temporary Closures, Restrictions and Warnings

[Outback Road Warnings - Department for Infrastructure and Transport - South Australia \(dit.sa.gov.au\) 6130 ato sept 2021 final.pdf](http://dit.sa.gov.au/6130_ato_sept_2021_final.pdf)
(environment.sa.gov.au)

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ACROSS the OUTBACK

“ACROSS the OUTBACK” is a journal edited and published quarterly by the SA Arid Lands Landscapes Board. This link takes you to their publications page on the Board’s website -

<https://www.landscape.sa.gov.au/saal/news-resources/publications>

Another link - Will take you directly to the October 2021 edition where you will find on page 3 an article on the trans-locating of the Western Quolls (Idnyia) to Vulkathunha-Gammon Ranges National Park (VGRNP) in a move designed to further safeguard the species.

On page 9 there is a story of the threatened Purple-spotted gudgeon (*Mogurnda clivicola*) passing its first test after being released at new sites in the Flinders Ranges. [6130 ato sept 2021 final.pdf](http://6130_ato_sept_2021_final.pdf)
(environment.sa.gov.au)



Photo: Graeme Oats.