

Friends of Vulkathunha-Gammon Ranges National Park

NEWSLETTER No. 4 - AUGUST 2017



Hello Friends and Supporters of the Vulkathunha-Gammon Ranges National Park. Since the February Newsletter we have taken the first steps towards a couple of projects in the Park.

In April seven members travelled to Balcanoona and met with Barrie Cotton (DEWNR Regional Asset Manager – Port Augusta) and Arthur Coulthard (DEWNR Senior Cultural Ranger Adnyamathanha Ranges District) and Sian Johnson (Acting Ranger at Balcanoona).

The two projects were – inspection of the Oocaboolina Outstation and establishing a plan to monitor the water quality of the Weetootla Spring.

Oocaboolina Outstation

Barrie Cotton & Arthur Coulthard showed members, Jan & Ray Hutchinson, Wally Joosens and Graeme Oats the building, below. The building was substantially renovated around 2010 by DEWNR, including re-roofing and guttering, made secure by placing bars over windows and locking doors. The interior is reasonably sound, but is in need of a clean-up, removal of wasp's nests, some plastering of walls, and replacement of window and door frames and more.



Weetootla Spring Project



The first visit to Weetootla Spring, made for the purpose of setting up an environmental monitoring project there, took place over the period 19-22 April. This visit was mainly to take a good look at the spring and assess the feasibility of members of the Friend's group sustaining a useful monitoring project there. An account of the visit is posted on the Activities page of the group's website at: <https://friendsofgammons.org.au/trip-reports/> and scroll down to April 2017 report. The participants in this initial visit were satisfied that a meaningful environmental project can be established there by the mix of people who have expressed interest. Now there will be a second visit to the spring over the period 23-27 August.

Only one species of fish has been recorded in the both Weetootla and Nepouie Springs which is the Flinders Ranges Purple-spotted Gudgeon which is rated as endangered because it is only known to inhabit these two springs. The aim of the August visit is to establish a set of activities to be carried out over the next few years.

On this trip we will have the benefit of the presence of Robert Brandle, the DEWNR ecologist working in South Australia's arid lands. Robert will be spending time out in the field with our group advising us on different things but particularly on the monitoring of the fish living in the spring. During the August visit the group will take its first look at Nepouie Spring.

While fish monitoring will be the group's highest priority there will be other activities going on also. The possibilities for these other activities are:

1. Physical measurements of water quality (pH, conductivity, dissolved oxygen)
2. Recording of frog sounds
3. Survey of aquatic macroinvertebrates (water bugs)
4. Presence of weeds
5. Yellow-footed rock wallaby surveys
6. Assessment of grazing by goats
7. Estimate of the spring flow rate

Just which of these activities get underway, and when, will depend on who is available, willing and able to take a lead in the activity.

If you have expressed an interest in participating in the Weetootla project but have not yet been contacted about going to the park please be patient and maintain your interest. There will be at least two visits next year and once this August visit has been completed the emphasis will be on giving every interested member of the group the opportunity to participate in the project.

If you are interested in this project please contact Ray Hickman – raywen@bigpond.net.au



To incorporate or not to incorporate - that is the question!

The Committee has discussed the whether the group should incorporate or remain unincorporated. The Committee will put this proposition to the members at an Annual General Meeting (AGM) which is to be late October this year.

Prior to the AGM we will circulate among members the advantages and disadvantages of being unincorporated or incorporated. In the meantime, if you wish to find out more about the advantages and disadvantages here are two links to the SA Government organisation types: -

Incorporated

<https://www.sa.gov.au/topics/family-and-community/community-organisations/types/incorporated-associations> and

Unincorporated

<https://www.sa.gov.au/topics/family-and-community/community-organisations/types/unincorporated-associations>

Meeting costs of activities

The Committee is conscious of the fact that people going to a remote location such as the Vulkathunha-Gammons Ranges National Park to engage in friends group activities do so at some personal cost in fuel expenses, wear and tear on vehicles and time. The readiness to do this is much appreciated and the longer-term future of the group will depend on people continuing to support its activities in this way. The Committee also acknowledges the support available from the Park authorities in the form of free accommodation at Balcanoona.

Annual Fee

The fee of **\$10 p.a.** for membership of the group mainly serves the purpose of formally identifying people as members of the group but also provides some income to meet basic expenses. The committee thanks all those who have paid a fee or made a donation since the group started up again in 2015.

The group is operating on a July-June financial year and so fees are **now due for the 2017-18 year.**

However, if you joined the group for the first time after 1 April 2017 and paid a fee your membership will run until 30 June 2018.

While it is not essential to be a financial member in order to participate in group activities in the park, at this early stage of the group's development it is convenient to call first on people who are financial members.

Payments can be made direct to our bank account: **BSB 105078 Acc No. 053063140** or by posting your cheque direct to PO Box 495 Blackwood SA 5051. This address is temporary until approximately 31 October 2017. If paying online please include your name and send a confirming email to gdoats@bigpond.net.au

WEBSITE AND FACEBOOK

Committee member Ray Hickman has produced a website and is now available for all to visit. Please feel free to visit the site and we welcome suggestions as to the content and format: -

<http://www.rayh.id.au/vulkathunha/> (← This website has been retired, the new one is:
<https://friendsofgammons.org.au/>)

Committee members Tim Newbery and Bob Setton have been working with students at the University of South Australia to develop a website to replace the current one. When the new website is ready the current one will be closed down and members advised of the address for the new one. In the meantime the current website will stay in place.

We are also on Facebook: - <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Friends-of-Vulkathunha-Gammon-Ranges-National-Park/768759336575053>

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Preliminary Notice: - The Annual General Meeting will be held on Friday 27th October 2017 in the Parkview Room at Fullarton Park Community Centre on the corner of Fullarton Road and Fisher Street at 7.30 pm. A formal notice of the AGM will be circulated prior to the meeting which notice will include an agenda, call for committee nominations and details of the proposed guest speaker.

Please put this date in your diary.

OUR ANCIENT LAND



The photo, left of pine fossil was presented to Griselda Sprigg in May 1975 – below is a transcript of the information on the plaque.

“Petrified conifer pine log

This 150 million year old Jurassic age fossil tree trunk discovered at Coombs Catch on Urinella Creek South East of Lake Frome in September 1968.

Mr Frank Kelly then manager of Quinyambie Station generously presented it to Griselda Sprigg for display at Arkaroola in May 75.

The tree was part of widespread “pine” forests that existed about the southern margins of the Great Artesian Basin. This was at a time of inland lakes, swamps and sluggish rivers throughout central and eastern Australia.

After burial, the original woody matter was replaced particle by particle by silica dissolved out of the enclosing sands by underground water. In

this way the original wood was completely converted to rock, or “petrified” in meticulous cell detail.”

Reg Sprigg Arkaroola Village April 1983.