

CREEK LINES

NEWSLETTER

Issue No. 16 NOV 2025



We care for the falls

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From the Chair

Outgoing - Mick Davis

Thank you to everyone who's been involved in FOULF's activities across the last year. We are so lucky to have a growing group of volunteers to help us achieve our goal to look after Upper Lesmurdie Falls – almost every month we see a few new members, joining a strong group of regular volunteers who have supported FOULF for many years – I'd like to extend my thanks to you all. Without our amazing volunteers and through them our strong connections to our community, FOULF would not be the smooth operating, well known, amazing environmental group we are known to be. Thanks to this reputation, we have support from many local groups and organisations - I'd like to thank you all for your ongoing support.



**In December, we celebrate
13 years of restoring
Lesmurdie Brook and Falls.
A big well done to all our
amazing volunteers!**

Our propagation team are hard at work preparing next year's planting from locally collected seeds.



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FOULF has overcome some big challenges this year; but also had some big wins and we continue to thrive, like the thousands of plants we have planted over the years. The long dry-spell over summer really tested out plantings, but after the rains broke we had some of the most rain we've had in a short period for a long time.

That rain really made the Falls flow strongly; with that we also saw the attraction that Upper Lesmurdie Falls has for tourists from all across Peth. Not only does this give FOULF a chance to showcase our hard work, it highlights the important economic and social benefits tourism bring to our hills community. This year we lent heavily on the great propagation work led by Terry and Carmel Ballinger, who along with their committed team propagated thousands of native plants from locally collected seed, which we have been using for planting, in lieu of grant funding. This brave decision gave FOULF the space we needed to continue our work, on our own terms, still run busy bees and do work along the Falls. We were also lucky to have local bird experts Rachel and Michael Green perform bird surveys along the tracks and bushland around Upper Lesmurdie Falls, helping us understand which birds are present (and which are not present) at different times during the year, which we were also able to share with our members in previous editions of this newsletter.

With our outstanding grants now wrapped up, and plenty of moisture in the ground, I'm looking forward to seeing FOULF pursue new funding opportunities to support our important work. With a continued focus on weed control, re-planting, maintaining pathways and working with our volunteers to undertake busy bees, FOULF is sure to continue to thrive – continuing to offer our community a great experience when they come to visit Upper Lesmurdie Falls while they volunteer or when they come to enjoy our special places' unique natural beauty.

As outgoing Chairperson, I'd like to thank our Committee for their hard work, patience, and support over the last 12 months - and welcome Nick Underwood as FOULF's new Chairperson! Nick's vision, passion and community spirit is a boon to our group and I'm looking forward to supporting Nick and the new Committee in the coming years.

Sincerely,
Mick Davis

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Changing of the Guard - Nick Underwood

A big "Hello" to all our loyal supporters from myself as 'New boy' in the chair and our refreshed committee steering FOULF into 2026.

First up, I must thank Mick Davis for his guidance and enthusiasm in the chair for the last two years.

His was a difficult task juggling multiple hats over a tyranny of time and distance, but he was up to it and his positivity never waned. Mick will continue with our grants portfolio and we look forward to witnessing his expertise in drawing valuable sponsorship to our cause.

To say you have a very committed committee would be a bit of an understatement, with all members sticking solidly with their portfolios or taking on new ones. In some cases even extending their workloads, with our Weed Warriors joining the propagation team by including midweek busy bees to stay on top of their respective commitments.

One cloud that overshadows most volunteer organisations is burn-out which can so easily end in the loss of very talented contributors to a cause. So at FOULF we're taking steps to future-proof our workforce by adding co-managers to each committee activity - which means at any time when a committee member is away, another drops seamlessly into the role and it's business as usual. Loads shared, life balance maintained.

Spring has sprung this year more vigorously than previous years with rain events continuing into November and this has caused weeds to rocket up along the creek.

Fortunately the softer-for-longer ground has also made it easier for our Weed Warriors to root out bulbs like watsonia while, up in our propagation centre, shade houses full of happy little seedlings are reaching for the sky on their journey to planting out next season.

Down along the creekline big winter/spring rain has left its mark, eroding bends and hammering riffles. Our pathways have also suffered erosion from the onslaught. So over summer we'll shore up the creek line, start making the walkways navigable, hit the weeds even harder and, when the rains return, take on the joyous task of getting thousands of natives into the soil.

Of course all of this relies on you, our wonderful volunteers, joining us down at the creek to make the magic happen. So please enjoy reading of our successes in this edition of 'Creeklines' and grab the opportunity over coming months to become an active Friend Of Upper Lesmurdie Falls.

Your community will thank you for it.

Yours in anticipation,
Nick Underwood



A major grant has landed at our door.
Go to '**Grant Success**' for more.

Busy Bee - 8 June

Report from Mark Simpson

For the June Busy Bee, we celebrated the deluge of rain we have had over the last week by taking on two main tasks – planting out some of the seedlings we have prepared for this winter, and protecting the banks of the brook from further erosion at Guys Crossing. We had fine weather conditions for our tasks.

Carmel and Terry Ballinger led a team which included Jackie Anderson, Susie Underwood, Kathy Twine and Sally Ballinger, which set about planting more seeds, pruning seedlings which are ready to plant, and tidying up and sterilising some old pots at the propagation units, further adding to the stock of seedlings ready for planting out.



Carmel is making sure all our plants are looking their best.

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Marie Jacquier led the planting team, which included John Greenwood, Mark Simpson, Coralie Flatters, Chantel Stillisano and Julia Henry. First off, we planted Warrine, an edible local native yam, in the northeastern part of the site. Their edible milky white tuberous roots were once a vital food source for Indigenous Australians and can be eaten raw or cooked. That completed, the team went on to plant out a mixture of other native species.



Another successful planting session done.



Everyone loves planting on a fine day.

Dick Parker led a team consisting also of Nick Underwood, Jared Harvey, Dave Anderson and Adrian Jess to shift some massive rocks to protect the banks near Guy's Crossing. The plan was to deflect water away from erosion of the left bank out to the middle of the stream. Involved were Dick and his ute-mounted hiab (which, although an inanimate object, nonetheless deserves a special mention), Jared in the creek, Adrian, Dave and Nick on rock supply.



What boys don't like playing in the creek.



Job well done.

Three big rocks formed the wall extension with the rest behind to fill the gap. It seems to be doing its thing quite nicely, but we still need additional rock work to prevent it hitting the southern bank. Mike Robinson braved it alone to tackle some invasive exotics, removing about 20 or 30 Sydney golden wattles in the erosion gully area - some up to three or four metres tall. In those damp fertile soils they grow very differently to how they grow in dryer ground, shooting up like a karri tree rather than spreading. He also removed a few lantanas and Polygala up there, and, not content with that, after morning tea, he sprayed all the Paterson's curse he could find in the picnic area - there was a surprising amount. Mike Mansfield, meanwhile, went up the hill towards Falls Road and noticed that the drain that comes under the road and onto the park was seriously blocked. There was enough junk backed up for about two metres in the pipe, and then more beyond the outlet, to cause the water to spill over away from the rock lined channel we had created. He had his hoe with him, so he spent some time unblocking and clearing it, before joining the Guy's Crossing crew. Holding fort at our basecamp was Joanna Anderson on first aid duty and public liaison: she achieved six people signing up to help out at future busy bee sessions. After our tasks we settled down for a delicious morning tea masterminded by Angie Parker. A great time was had by all of us who were there.



Looks like they're doing the job.



The waterflow from Guys Crossing after torrential rain a few days later - more rocks needed.

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On The Wing

Bird News and Views

By Rachel Green

Survey Results August 2024-July 2025

We began our year-long bird survey of Upper Lesmurdie Falls (hereafter called "the park") on 21st August 2024. We have now made 20 visits up until 21st July 2025, which concludes the survey. Typically, two of us spent an hour on each visit and did the full loop walk.

Numbers

We saw 41 bird species in total. We recorded birds that we both saw and heard and also those flying over. The number seen on each visit varied considerably.

Our highest numbers were 17 on 10th September 2024 when we surveyed the full loop, and 22 on 2nd September 2024, when we spent 2 hrs doing the full loop plus a little extra.

Our lowest numbers (except for a 10-minute visit when we saw 4) were 6 and 7 on two days in August 2024. Most commonly we saw or heard between 11-12 birds.



Splendid Fairywren in the rain.

Full species list

1. Australian Ringneck - 28 Parrot
2. Australian Magpie
3. Australian Raven
4. Australian Wood Duck
5. Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike
6. Brown Goshawk
7. Brown Honeyeater
8. Baudin's Black-Cockatoo
9. Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo
10. Common Bronzewing (Pigeon)
11. Galah
12. Grey Butcherbird
13. Grey Fantail
14. Inland Thornbill
15. Laughing (Senegal) Dove
16. Laughing Kookaburra
17. Little Corella
18. Little Pied Cormorant
19. New Holland Honeyeater
20. Pacific Black Duck
21. Rainbow Bird
22. Rainbow Lorikeet
23. Red-capped Parrot
24. Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo
25. Red Wattlebird
26. Red-capped Robin
27. Rock Pigeon
28. Sacred Kingfisher
29. Silvereye
30. Singing Honeyeater
31. Splendid Fairywren
32. Spotted Dove
33. Spotted Scrubwren
34. Square-tailed Kite
35. Striated Pardalote
36. Weebill
37. Western Gerygone
38. Western Spinebill
39. White-cheeked Honeyeater
40. Yellow-plumed Honeyeater
41. Yellow-rumped Thornbill

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Capturing the birds on camera – successes and failures

In the park, a lot of the birds are small, often at tree-top height and constantly on the move. This makes bird photography frustratingly difficult! As an example, recently we were thrilled to see a Splendid Fairywren in male plumage but it was raining, the wren was wet, it was on a steep wet slope, and it kept hopping about in a thick and prickly display of *Hakea erinacea*. There was no chance of a brilliant photo, but I took one anyway.

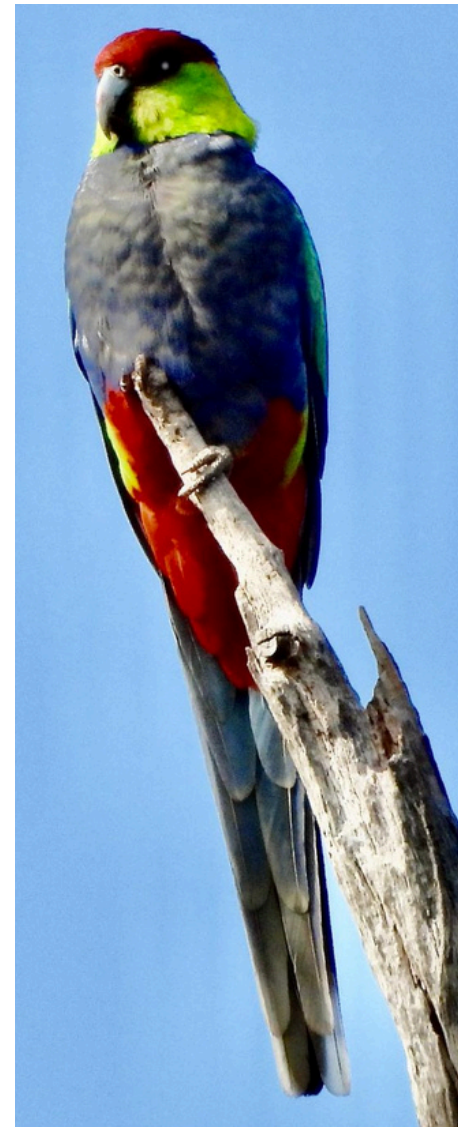
Why? Because it is an 'evidence shot' and these are important in recording the birds in the park. It provides proof that the bird really is there. Please photograph the birds you see and be happy with 'evidence shots' - they are important Citizen Science.

Bird Highlights

A good sign of healthy bird habitat is having birds breeding. We found four birds nesting.

1. A Striated Pardalote nesting in a Wandoo tree in the upper carpark. Look out for them this spring as, in our experience, they often return to the same nest site.
2. A female Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo appeared to be sitting on a nest high up in a tree hollow. The Red-tails were one of the commonest birds we recorded, having seen or heard them on 50% of our visits. Sadly, there was also a dead Red-tail on the ground nearby.
3. Australian Ringnecks were seen going into a nesting hole.
4. A Grey Fantail was found nesting in the shrubs having used spiders' webs to hold its nest together (see evidence shot, below).

Keep a lookout for other nesting birds, we are sure there will be some.



Red-capped Parrot.



Grey Fantail on its nest,

Bird food in the park

Marri trees in the park are an essential food supply for Red-tailed Black-cockatoos (see photo of a Red-tail eating a honky nut). They also supply food, shelter and nesting opportunities for Baudin's and Carnaby's Cockatoos and other birds including the Red-capped Parrot. Our local insects and birds evolved alongside the Marri trees and they provide food and shelter all year round. Banksias and Hakeas also provide nectar-rich flowers essential for honeyeaters, and seeds and nuts for seed-eating birds such as parrots, finches and pigeons. We were pleased to see *Calothamnus sanguineus* in flower during late summer as this provides much needed food for birds.

Many birds also eat insects for protein in their diet. We noticed insect attracting Blue Lace Flowers – *Trachymene coerulea* growing wild in the park and flowering in Summer. Adding more may help the smaller birds survive over summer.

Birds we expected to see but didn't

At first, we anticipated seeing a total of around 55-65 species. This has not eventuated, and we are mystified as to why. We have no clear evidence as to what is going on. Maybe it's the presence of cats, dogs and foxes, or a lack of insects, or limited honey-bearing plants, or predators such as Kookaburras, escaped European Honeybees taking over nesting sites or more. We can't simply explain it on climate change because we went immediately after our last trip on to Wallis Park, also in the Lesmurdie area, and saw many more species.

As all the new plants grow it would be interesting to see if the birds increase. We would expect to see birds such as a Fantail Cuckoo, Red-winged Wren, Shining Bronze-Cuckoo, Varied Sitella, Scarlet Robin, Golden Whistler, Red-eared Firetail, Red-browed Finch, and more.

It has been a privilege for us to get to know the beautiful Upper Lesmurdie Brook area and to see the flowers, the birds and the dedicated and wonderful hard work so many of you have put into the area. We offer you these findings and comments for discussion. We hope you can add to the list. Thank you.



Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo eating a honky nut.

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Busy Bee - 13 July

Report from Mark Simpson

The July Busy Bee was our major planting day for the 2025 season and therefore solely dedicated to planting activities. We had great weather conditions - the rain held off, there was no fog, it was warm for the time of year and there was even a bit of sunshine. After 40 or so volunteers gathered together at the marquee for registration, Marie gave a chat about how to best successfully plant out the seedlings, including tips on the best ways to get the plant out of the pot, dealing with pot-bound roots by scraping the edge of the trowel along the sides of the extracted root bundle to make it easier for the roots to spread out into the surrounding soil, how to firm the plant in place and the importance of clearing the area around the hole so that it is relatively free of competing vegetation.



Getting the kids involved when they're young is a great stepping stone.



The new trailer rack made plant deliveries more efficient.

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You're never too young to start planting out.

In preparation for Sunday's Busy Bee, Mike M., Mark, Paul, Terry and Mike R. had pre-drilled enough planting holes on the Saturday to allow us to get a flying start. On Sunday Mike M, Jared, and Dick continued drilling so that there were always holes ready to be filled by the planting teams and this ensured we maximised the number of plants planted on the day. In addition to the drillers and planters, we had volunteers watering plants in and others washing used pots ready for storage and use in next year's propagation work. Some of our more experienced members circulated throughout the morning offering advice where it was requested.



For this planting day we targeted the area from the Weir Car Park east to the upper flowdam and covering bare or sparsely covered land on both sides of the brook. An additional planting target this year was the two newly installed irrigation sand pads for the biological sewage treatment of the effluent from the toilet block at the Bitumen Car Park. These were bare yellow sand pads and they were planted out with wandoo and Calothamnus to help hide them. It will take some time but eventually they will blend in with the surrounding bush. These two species were chosen as we believe they should be able to handle the relatively high nutrient load, something that would be deadly to many other native species. Getting 1,900 plants (across 28 species) planted over a few hours on a Sunday morning was a mammoth effort and a testament to our fantastic volunteers.



Here are two volunteers showing off their augers. Although many holes were dug the day before, there were still plenty more holes wanted on the day.

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A great turnout.

At around 11am we all moved back to the marquee where Angie and her team had a sumptuous morning tea ready for us.



Another legendary spread provided by Ange.



A well deserved cuppa.

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Featured this issue -

Clematis pubescens

Clematis pubescens (locally known as Old Man's Beard or Common Clematis). This is a climbing shrub of the family Ranunculaceae and is found in coastal regions of southern Western Australia. It is a vigorous woody stemmed vine with ovate to lanceolate leaves 7cm long and has attractive creamy white, to white, star-like flowers that are 5cm across and appear in winter to spring. The resulting fuzzy, hairy fruit that appear after flowering has earned it the nickname "Old Man's Beard".



(ReWild Perth, iNaturalist, Florabase, FOULF Flora Base)

This is a beautiful plant to re-wild your garden as it is adaptable to sunny and light-shade positions, it is waterwise and drought-hardy, generally easy to grow, and attracts butterflies. It grows up to 5m tall and grows in various soil types including sandy clays, gravel, and limestone. There are several *Clematis pubescens* growing along both sides of the creek in the eastern end area.

Busy Bee - 10 August

Report from Mark Simpson

Just as we predicted, the rain stopped falling shortly before we set up for the August Busy Bee. The most important job for us to do was to plant out the 200 remaining cuttings that we had nurtured in our greenhouses over the past year.



One of the first jobs was to remove some exotic (as in 'don't belong here') bulbs, and we removed some wire and barbed wire from around the fence posts of one of the three or four residential lots that once existed on our site. Then we drilled holes ready for planting out the cuttings. This enabled our team of planters to plant out the seedlings that had been gathered from the site the year before.

Great weather for planting.



Getting out those bulbs.

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Another important job was spreading out the mulch we had delivered to the site earlier. The mulch is very useful as it reduces competition for the trees by suppressing weeds, conserving available water, preventing erosion and moderating temperature.



All smiles.

We were joined on this Busy Bee by our Bullwinkle MP, Trish Cook – she's the one with the red cap – who took to all the tasks we put her way with enthusiastic gusto. Thanks for coming along to join us, Trish.



Good to see our local member getting her hands dirty – Well done Trish.

Then back to the marquee for some nosh and a cuppa or two – thanks to Angie.

Whilst we were doing all this, the abundant rainfall we've been having of late was causing water to come gushing down the brook in torrents, putting to the test the various structures we have either put in place or repaired, to guide its flow and retain some of the water for longer, which helps more plants to survive through the long hot summer.



Another memorable morning tea.

Bits 'n' Bobs

Alcoa Volunteers on-site

By Mike Robinson

Around twenty Alcoans fronted up on Friday the 13th of June for a corporate day helping us kick off our annual planting spree down at Lesmurdie Brook. Nick, John, Dick and I were there to meet them and guide them through the planting process.

The day was a great success, not solely because of what was achieved work-wise but because we all enjoyed our time together. They were willing workers from a great variety of backgrounds and some interesting exchanges took place. My very limited geological knowledge got another boost from an Alcoan geologist who explained a bit more about the dolerite dyke at the top of the Falls and a bit on granitic gneiss and how to distinguish it from ordinary granite. Another Alcoan was an authority on invasive species at a strategic level and there were quite a few biologists among the throng. I'm sure Nick, John and Dick also had some interesting conversations.

We set up our information marquee down on the water's edge where Nick welcomed them to our site and gave them a brief run down on our past work.



Alcoa team getting their hands dirty.

On the ground we planted about 600 plants in mostly fine weather. All the planting was done down below the Bitumen Car Park in the areas we have planted previously or close by. We formed three teams led by Dick, John and Nick and the plants went in really quickly. All were watered in and should have a good chance of establishing over the coming months.

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Over 600 plants in the ground today.



A well-earned break.



What a great team.



Mike sharing the progress we've achieved.

The planned weed walk was cancelled due to time constraints so the time available was used to take the Alcoans on a tour of the site, which was well received.

In terms of learnings from the day, I think the main one was that we have to be able to get more plants onto the trailer. Since we started using the larger pots, numbers per load have halved from roughly 1,000 to 500. With a large group like that, by the time we got the teams underway it was already time to dash up to the Men's Shed for another load. So, Dick has made a frame for my trailer that can be lifted on and off. That will allow us to have two layers of plants and get us back to the 1,000 per load/trip. As an initial foray into corporate volunteer involvement on our site, the interaction with the Alcoa team was an extremely valuable exercise for us and has established a template that we can apply to other corporates looking to get involved at the Falls. So, a big 'Thank you' to Gay and her team of motivated environmentalists and we hope we'll have the pleasure of your company again sometime down the track.

Upmarket Action

By Nick Underwood

After a long weather-dictated hiatus, the FOULF promotional machine finally re-visited Rotary's Artisan markets in November. Even then a couple of showers kicked off the day but lovely sunshine followed and with it, plenty of happy visitors with Spring in their step.

For us it was a change of location into the middle of the action and some rewarding conversations (with subsequent sign-ups) ensued.

A big thanks to organiser and Rotarian, Sheryl for the kind donation of space and, all going well, we plan to be back among the artisans on the first Saturday of February.

But don't wait that long to be among the artisans. The quality and creativity displayed at these markets is a joy to behold and the last date for the year (first Saturday in December) will be the perfect time for you to find a special Chrissy present for a special person in your life. Search Kalamunda artisan markets for more detail.



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Whistlepipe work

By Nick Underwood

At long last the tide is turning for the fortunes of the highly invasive wonga wonga vine in Whistlepipe Gully. A group of concerned Whistlepipe Gully locals, and other concerned individuals, have come together to address the issue of invasive weeds, particularly the dreaded wonga wonga vine, impacting this beautiful local attraction.



The wonga vines tower above Mike as they invade the tree tops.

The Friends of Upper Lesmurdie Falls wish them every success in this challenge.



Enthusiastic vollies hit the wonga hard.

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Busy Bee - 14 September

Report from Mike Robinson

Well despite weather predictions dire enough to scare away the devil himself, we actually had a very successful Busy Bee on Sunday. Very little rain fell before 10 am and by then we were safely under cover, in the marquees, enjoying Angie's wonderful morning tea when it bucketed down – with plenty of room in which to stay dry.

Given the possibility that we might need to find cover quickly, we elected to have a single task on site (located reasonably close to the marquees) and a propagation group up at the Men's Shed. Total numbers were a very respectable 19 with eight in each of the two groups, Andrew weeding in the erosion gully, Joanna manning the first aid post and Angie rewarding us with her wonderful tucker.

The on-site task was weeding the large patch of periwinkle on the north side of the brook between the Weir and Terraces car parks – near the bathtub for those familiar with that area. Steph, Margaret, Phil, Jared, Dave, Colin and I tackled this patch. Steph and I have tried weeding this plant when the soil is dry and it was quite hard work. Today the moist soil and the good numbers of volunteers made for a very successful first assault on this large patch. We filled both car park bins and cleared approximately half of the infested area. So a really wonderful effort. If we target the remaining half at the next Busy Bee (while the soil is still soft) I think we should be able to finish it off. We also have one other patch of periwinkle, south of the Cascades, which I think will be easier to attack and it would be nice to get onto that one as soon as we can too. Then, apart from small numbers of resprouts, we will be periwinkle free across the site.

A big welcome to Colin who joined us for the first time when he saw what we were doing and wanted to be a part of it. Great to have you onboard and we look forward to seeing you at future Busy Bees. We hope you enjoyed your first outing.



Jared pauses over a soon-to-be-pulled periwinkle.



Luckily the ground was wet enough to aid extraction.

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Terry, Carmel, Nanette, Chantel, Jackie, Sally, Marie and Margaret potted up 144 Gahnia decomposita (sawsedge) which they had sown in April and 54 wandoo which were sown back in June. Both are important species for our replanting. Wandoo is a species where we have been trying to boost numbers right across the site for many years now and some of our early plantings are now getting to a good size. Saw sedge is a species we are just starting to plant out. We have a healthy patch in the erosion gully area but very few anywhere else on the site, so these new plants will help us address that. In addition, the propagation group is working its way through a mountain of used pots – all have now been washed and they are about a third of the way through the sterilising.



Happy potting.....



.....and happy sterilising.

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While the two groups were going about their work, Andrew continued his one man weeding campaign in the erosion gully area. His principle target today was the wonga vine which he noted was in full flower and therefore easier to spot than at other times of year. So we should take advantage of that to at least note where we need to remove the vines. Thanks to Joanna and Margaret for taking photos, Joanna for manning the first aid post, Dick for bringing all the gear down and Angie for morning tea.



Luckily the heavens didn't open up till we were under cover with a hot cuppa in hand.



Volunteer Profile

Fresh out from merry old England (somewhere north of Watford), Phil and Margaret Sorah have re-embraced the Hills lifestyle and thrown themselves enthusiastically into volunteering – much to FOULF's benefit. Here's how they got to the here and now:

BACKGROUND: lived mostly in WA or elsewhere?

Phil and I are from the north of England and we emigrated to Western Australia in 2001. We had no idea what Perth was like as a place to live having spent a whole three days in Perth during a year-long stay in the country in 1996.

What attracted you to the Darling Scarp lifestyle?

We initially lived on 'the flats' for about three years and loved being close to Perth City. However, a lady I worked with, who lived in Kalamunda, suggested we come up to Kalamunda and have a look around 'The Hills'. It felt like we were going into the countryside as we climbed the hill and left the city behind. There was just a lovely relaxed 'vibe' about the place; people were friendly, the market was vibrant, there were cafes, restaurants and plenty to do but still very close to nature.



Phil and Margaret Sorah.

How long have you lived in the Hills?

We moved to the hills in 2009 and immediately loved the life style. Unfortunately, we had to return to the UK for personal reasons in 2015 but there was no doubt in our minds that we would return to our 'Home in the Forest' when we returned to Perth in 2024 and make our home there.

How did your affinity for the bush start?

Well, that came from our decision to see a bit more of WA when we lived on 'the flats'. We had been south to Albany and Esperance and north to Kalbarri and Coral Bay but no further. With a view to 'travelling', we visited the Caravan and Camping show to get some idea about how and where we would travel and quickly realised a caravan wouldn't cut the mustard. However, just as we were leaving the show we spotted a stall with some fabulous photos of the Outback and details of organised 4WD trips operated by Tag -A Long Tours around the Kimberley, along the Canning Stock route and further afield.

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That was it! If we were to head into the outback, we had to learn how to drive a 4WD and how to camp. We were so naïve, for a start we didn't even own a 4WD and our camping experience was pretty much zero. As a necessary starting point, we bought a 4WD and shortly after met Nick Underwood and his colleague, Ray, joining them on many of their Campfire Escape trips and 4WD training events.

It took us a couple of years to get to grips with this new way of life...I mean NO TOILETS for a week was a real shock! However, with the help and patience of Nick and the lovely people who went on the trips we picked up so much knowledge about driving, camping and surviving in the outback. Our confidence grew with each trip and we've never looked back. The bush, the wildlife, the aboriginal cave paintings, 'bush T.V.', the silence and ability to look in every direction and not see a building, was something we had never experienced in our life.

Have you had any work/personal milestones with your involvement with nature, flora and fauna etc?

I assisted as a project manager on designing a computer system/Database for the Department of Parks and Wildlife (DPAW). The project involved working with scientists located in remote areas who were capturing and recording all fauna and flora in WA. It was fascinating and opened my eyes to the detailed work going on in WA and the hardships faced by dedicated people trying to preserve the native species for generations to come.

When did you join FOULF and what was your motivation?

I joined FOULF in 2024. We had previously seen the signs asking for volunteers during our time in Kalamunda but we both worked and never seemed to have the time. When we retired and moved to Lesmurdie we came across the FOULF stall at the Kalamunda Saturday Market showing images of the work undertaken by FOULF. Joanna, a volunteer, walked me through the stories behind the pictures and I was in awe at the difference a group could make to maintain and restore the beautiful Hills environment. I love gardening, being outdoors and helping in a community so I felt I should do my bit. You have to give something back to your community, don't you?

What do you enjoy most about your connection with FOULF?

I love being outdoors and helping with the cycle of nature from planting the seeds, 'potting on' in the shade sheds and then ultimately planting and replenishing the Falls. Last July busy bee I was so focussed on getting water from the creek and taking photos that it wasn't until the volunteers left that I looked around. The area had been transformed with hundreds of new plants. It is just astonishing what was achieved in a single morning.

Busy Bee - 12 October

Report from Mark Simpson

The FOULF group would like to extend a huge thank you for your volunteer hours over the last months and years. The results of your efforts are visible and remarkable.

As predicted, last Sunday was a very pleasant sunny day for the October Busy Bee. The jobs we set for ourselves were some weeding, some propagation work, improving the rock and path arrangement at Guy's Crossing, and some path repairs, and we managed to make good progress with all these tasks.

A wonderful band of nine weeders threw themselves at several blue periwinkle patches. The weeding conditions were near perfect with most of the soil remaining moist given the cool weather following some great rains. The main obstacle to removal was the tendency for the plants to embed themselves under, between, and within cracks in rocks. The area around the 'bathtub' was completely weeded as a follow-up from September's Busy Bee. Some variegated periwinkle was cleared there too. Two small patches north of the creek and directly north of the Weir carpark were cleared, along with some jonquils, thanks to Mike and Elenor. A significant patch south of the creek and near the Cascades concrete bridge was attacked by John, Yvonne, Amelia, Emma, Valarie and Steph. Great to have you join us, Yvonne and Valarie. This was a quite challenging site due to the amount of periwinkle amongst rock and in drier soil conditions. Some bluebells and freesias were also removed. There is a significant patch left to weed here. Many thanks to all the dedicated weeders, including Margaret.



In this regard, our group is continuing to evolve, and we would like to extend an invitation to you all to join the band of weeders that Steph is forming, to work outside the Busy Bee Sundays - the Weeding Group or 'Weed Warriors'. We plan to meet in a week or two between the monthly Sunday Busy Bees. This could be a weekday or weekend day. We will finalise the day and schedule once we have an idea of what might suit the majority. For some, this may give you more flexibility than just the Sunday BB if you are keen to help out but can't make Sundays. We are blessed to have experts in the field of weeds in our group, and they are keen to share their knowledge. Not only will you learn about weeds and how to eradicate them, but as a wonderful bonus you will also learn about our beautiful endemic species in the creek valley. Your expression of interest does not mean you have to commit to every Weed Warrior day, but it will mean you will be informed of days that we will be down along the creek valley clearing it up. If this is something that piques your interest, please email Steph Bewick at steph@bewick.org

We also had a very productive morning on Sunday for our propagation session (as usual), and we continued with the job of sterilizing the pots and trays from our big planting day – that job should be finished soon. The team potted on 168 Kangaroo Paws, planted the following seeds – 189 Prickly Moses, 126 Acacia alata, and 1 tray each of Isopogon dubius and Calothamnus – and planted 126 cuttings of Swan River Myrtle, in addition to weeding the area near the gate at the Men's Shed.

Meanwhile, Dick, Hayden, Phil, Paul, Jared and David started moving some big rocks around at at Guy's Crossing, so as to better direct the flow of water at times when the water flows over the bridge, with the aid of a Toro mini loader. These were then secured with cement in places, and the pathway widened with road-base gravel using a compactor to keep it in place.



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Brendan from **Magic Garden Supplies** on Welshpool Road kindly provided us with some road base gravel, delivering a lorry load for us on the Sunday morning. We then set about transferring the gravel to some of the most-eroded sections of the pathways, which we then stabilized using the compactor.



Then back to the marquee for some nosh, a cuppa or two and a chat – thanks to Angie.



CONTROLLED BURN BY DBCA

By Mike Robinson

For quite a long time now we have been aware that a controlled burn by DBCA was planned for the block on the south side of Falls Road, east of Nelson Crescent. After a false start a couple of weeks before, we received a message on Monday the 3rd of November that the burn was underway. The vegetation was quite dry and with a stiff breeze blowing it resulted in a hotter burn than we had anticipated. So large patches of the site are now bare of anything except large trees. The hot burn also meant that the fire penetrated the swampy area above the kangaroo enclosure on the erosion gully and we have lost most of the vegetation in there. This was a surprise as the 2014 controlled burn failed to penetrate this area and a small localised burn there to clean up the patch, after we had removed all the woody weeds as part of the erosion gully rehabilitation, also failed to take off. We will just have to hope that it makes a spectacular recovery – particularly the potentially sensitive species such as four sided sedge and saw sedge. We will also almost certainly need to undertake erosion control work across this swampy patch as the exposed bare dirt will be highly vulnerable to water borne erosion until it has a reasonable cover of sedges.

A hand raked mini firebreak was created by the DBCA staff some months ago to protect the erosion gully fencing and our plantings in that area. However the fire was allowed to cross that break and burn a short distance into the gully before it was stopped by the bare ground within the enclosure. Thus the wire netting has been exposed to fire (and will have lost its protective galvanising) and the lone rare *Commersonia* plant has been cooked. The literature claims that the genus is a resprouter after fire, so we are hoping it will recover – however we have now lost any chance of collecting seed this year.



DBCA have undertaken to replace the fencing and we have requested that that be completed as a matter of urgency to protect the remaining vegetation (plus germinations or resprouting) from kangaroos that now have limited food options in that area. The new fencing will include some extra ground to protect potential germinations of the *Commersonia*.

There are lessons to be learnt from this controlled burn and we will be looking for greater interaction between the DBCA fire team and ourselves for future burns. This year (and also the 2014 and 2015 burns) saw almost zero consultation with, or involvement from, us. We are not looking to hamper their work but there is knowledge within our group that could help ensure a better result than we had this time. That is important as it is likely that the north side of Falls Road will be burnt within a year or two. Whereas we had planted only a relatively small area – just the erosion gully itself – within the southern block, we have extensive planted out areas north of Falls Road. A huge number of hours of volunteer time has gone into those planted areas and we can't afford to have fire escape into them.



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Busy Bee - 9 November

Report from Mark Simpson

Firstly, thanks to all of you who have put in volunteer hours over the last months and years. The results of your efforts are visible and remarkable.

Just as predicted, the weather was pleasantly warm and sunny for the Busy Bee at the Upper Lesmurdie Falls on Sunday 9 Nov. Our main activities were some site-weeding, propagation activities (including putting down some weed matting), and whipper snipping the tall grass in the orchard area and along the adjacent pathway, before tucking into some lovely grub and drinks, and sitting around for a chat.

There was a great band of energetic weeders - Margaret, Sarah, Mike R, John, Andrew, Steph and me. Margaret, Sarah, Pete and I took to the brook's eastern boundary fence about two thirds the way up the hill along the firebreak to tackle an oyster plant patch (*Acanthus mollis*) that had made its way into the park from a proliferation of the plants in a neighbouring garden. The area was shady, so the soil still had some moisture, and the approach was to lever around the plant 4 or more times and then pull it out. The tool was a robust long handled and long levered homemade digger - perfect for the job. This was quite successful however some small roots tended to break off. A pitchfork was suggested as a possible effective alternative worth experimenting with. Satisfyingly, all plants were removed and put on a trailer. Monitoring the patch will enable us to determine if our strategy was successful. Poisoning may need to be used depending on the outcome.



Dancing with the wonga.

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Working in the same area, Mike R and John removed and poisoned an olive and kurrajong (*Brachychiton populneus*), and along with Steph began a tedious battle with Wonga Vines, large, small, some obvious some concealed, but oh so numerous! Margaret, Sarah, Pete and I joined in after weeding out the oyster plants. Some tiny plants could be dug out but most required disentangling, unravelling, unsnarling and extricating, cutting and poisoning. Working in teams of two and three made for efficiency, all disentangling and then one cutting, one poisoning. The poison jar-holder designed by Mike R and manufactured by Dick was excellent in action.



A stark contrast along the fenceline. The oyster plant infestation remains dense on private property.

All vines were thrown in the trailer to be taken to the transfer station. It was rewarding to free native trees and clematis from the Wonga's strangling tentacles, but we have a big challenge ahead as we work downhill before we reach the ultimate web at the bottom of the firebreak. We invite, welcome and encourage volunteers to come and experience (and enjoy) Act 2 of the Wonga dance and battle at the next Busy Bee. A huge thank you to all the weeders today.



Our weed warriors did an amazing job.

Andrew Mitchell did his usual one-man weed eradication. Andrew's focus was on the Erosion Gully which experienced a planned burn earlier in the week. He targeted the small Wonga Vines that had escaped the flames in the granite area after the prescribed burn, had another go at a nearby olive, pulled out 10 young veldt daisies, and a few Watsonias. Some Paterson's Curse in the picnic area and along the Falls Rd verge was also poisoned.

Our propagation group - today it was Kathy, Vivienne, Chantel, Marie, Terry and Carmel - achieved almost all that we set out to do. Chantel and Terry raked back the blue metal, then spread the weed matting, then re-covered the matting with the blue metal. It looks very professional and will go a long way to helping us solve the weeding problem.



Chantel wields a wicked rake.

Also, many seeds were planted out, including trays of 'honeypot dryandra' (*Banksia dallaneyi*), 'blue devils' (*Eryngium ovatum*), 'false boronia' (*Phyllanthus calycinus*), 'winged stackhouseia' (*Tripterococcus brunonis*), 'dwarf sheoak' (*Allocasuarina humilis*), 'graceful honey-myrtle' (*Melaleuca radula*), 'paper lily' (*Laxmannia squarrosa*), 'woolly waitzia' (*Pterochaeta paniculata*) and 'narrowleaf mulla mulla' (*Ptilotus drummondii*). We also managed to put the overhead shade cloth on the three shadehouses, to protect the seedlings etc from the expected hot sun. Due to time constraints, spreading mulch on the small garden area up at the Men's Shed was saved for Marie and guests to do the following day, which is excellent timing because the Open Day at the Men's shed was the following weekend.

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The orchard team consisted of Nick, Paul and Jared on whipper snippers and Mike M on clearing around the trees. We got the orchard cleared, noting as we went that almond husks were lying on the ground to indicate the parrots are enjoying them.



You could barely see the trees for the forest of weeds.



Ahhh, that's better.

We also cleared more long grass from along the paths and around the weir, but we still have a lot more to do.

Dick manned the stand, effectively making sure it was still there when we returned to the marquee for some nosh, a cuppa or two, and a chat. Thanks to Katrina for her donation of savoury muffins and Angie's wonderful (as usual) homemade spread.



How spoilt we are!

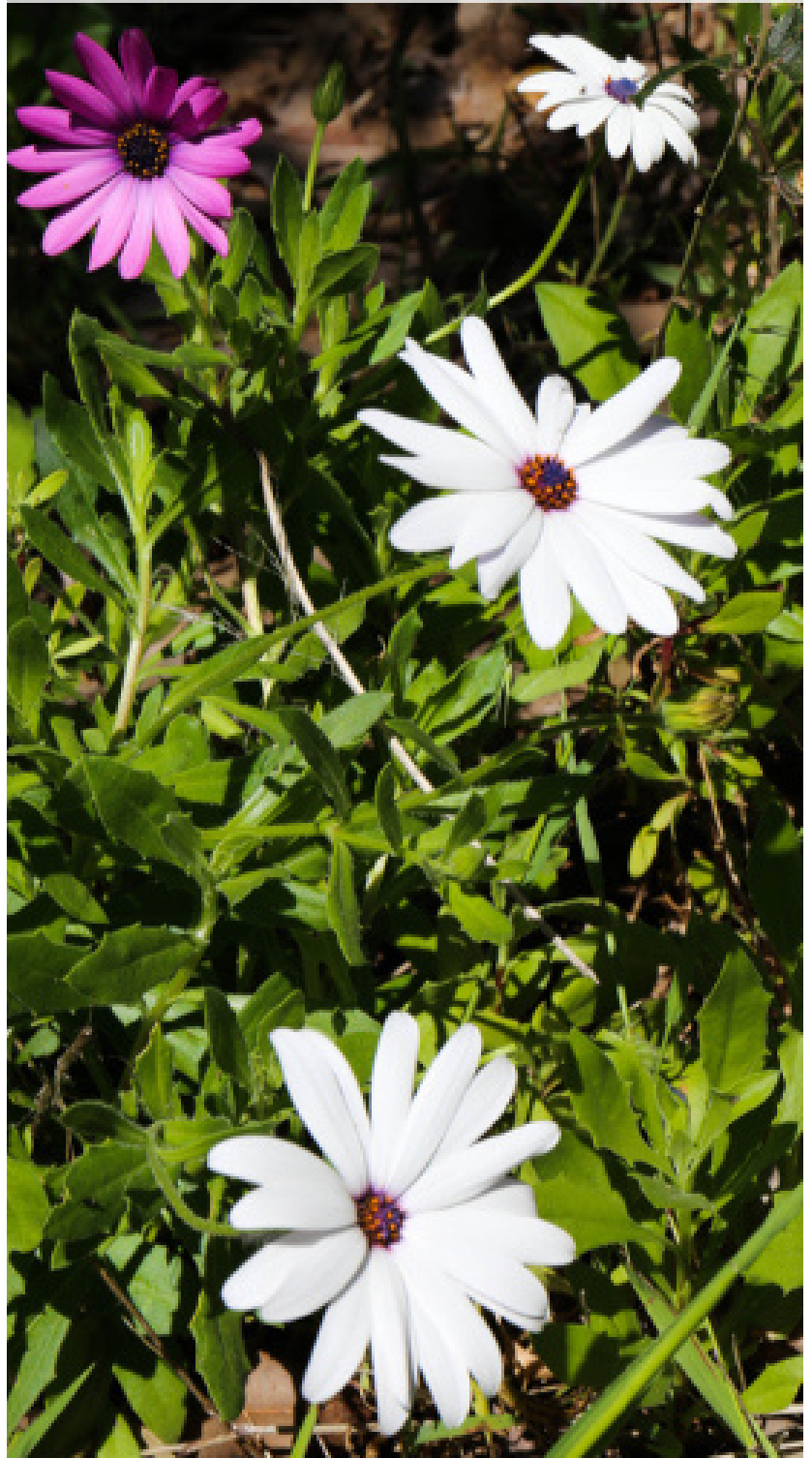
WEED WARRIORS

By Steph Bewick and Mike Robinson

Weed Warriors Alert!

Veldt daisy (*Dimorphotheca ecklonis* – was *Osteospermum ecklonis*) is a woody perennial that can root at the nodes. The large daisy flowers have bluish-white ray florets and blue disc florets. A purple colour form can also be found. It flowers in winter and spring. It is native to South Africa. It readily spreads and is persistent due to its drought resistant nature.

There are large numbers of this weed throughout the park. However, they are not evenly distributed and generally occur in discrete patches. Known spots are at the end of Ashurst Drive, on the south side of Falls Rd at the eastern end of the park on the cul-de-sac adjacent to the houses, at the very top end of the erosion gully, and along Falls Rd from Nelson Crescent down to the bitumen carpark. Control is by hand pulling, taking care to bag any seedy plants and to dispose of them safely. Vigilance is the key to ensure eradication so many of the sites already targeted will need to be monitored and re-weeded.



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FOULF Midweek Weeders 2025

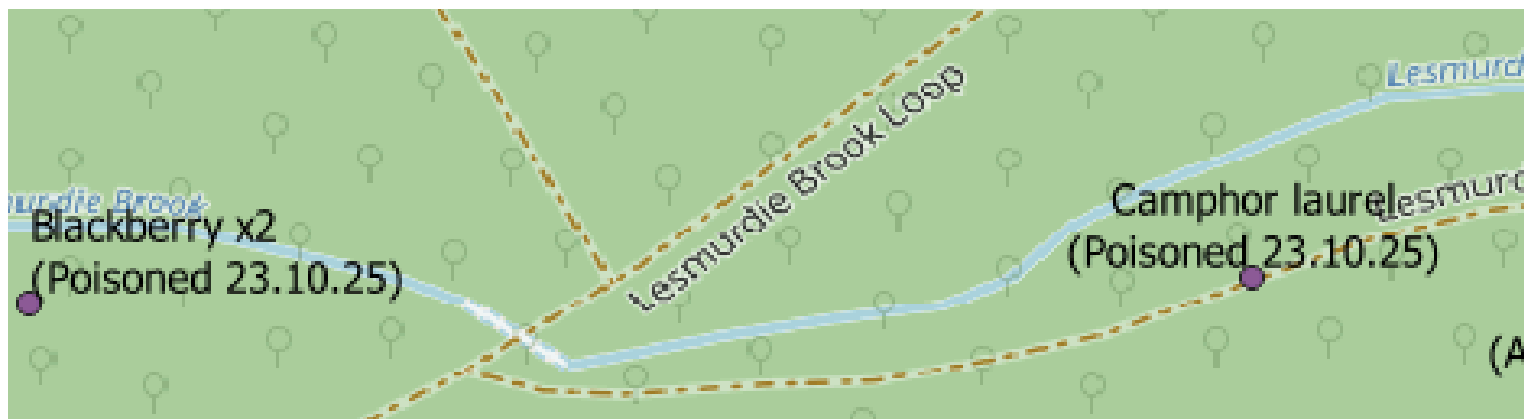
By Steph Bewick

October 24 2025 Inaugural Midweek Weed Day

Weeders, Mike R, Jackie, Andrew, John and Steph met at 8am in the Terraces carpark. The group split into two with Mike R and Jackie heading off to the "hockey stick" to tackle veldt daisy, nasturtium and watsonia. 99% of the veldt daisy and nasturtium was removed as was the watsonia adjacent to Falls Road heading west from the "hockey stick". The veldt daisy and nasturtium will need continual monitoring both now and in coming years to ensure they never get large enough to flower before they are removed. This is the only way we can get to eradicate them - and eradication is definitely very achievable. So let's all keep an eye on that area whenever we are down on site and remove all seedlings while they are still small. Also found was a large well established Wonga Vine which was flowering and had many nearly mature seed pods. It was removed and the stump poisoned. All the weeds removed were loaded onto a trailer and taken to the transfer station - a very full load.

John, Andrew, and Steph tackled the path and bush south of the creek from the Terraces carpark to the eastern end of the path. Many and varied weeds were attacked: African feather grass (3-4 pulled out), agapanthus (1 pulled out), arum lily (1 pulled out), some taro (only a few pulled out), curled dock (3 pulled out), wattle (2 pulled out), numerous small clumps of three-cornered garlic (pulled out), blackberry (1 pulled out, 2 poisoned), Wonga Vine, South African weed orchid (3 pulled out), a blue gum (1 poisoned), a camphor laurel (1 poisoned), and a Callistemon (1 poisoned). There are many medium (6-10) and many more small species of Wonga Vine between the path and Falls Rd. Some of these small specimens were pulled out and some were poisoned as were some of the medium sized plants. The more we looked, the more we saw.

A planned approach to eradicating Wonga Vine is required in this area as many medium plants are taking hold and thriving and many more small ones have potential to do so. There is a large infestation of three-cornered garlic and nasturtium at the culvert and on the creek side of the path there. Contract spraying is recommended for this area but won't happen this year unless we spray ourselves. Many of the three-cornered garlic are flowering in this area and seed pods are forming. Spraying will not kill off the seeds at this late stage so collecting the seed heads and flowers before they drop/develop might help contain some spread before next season and this strategy may be much quicker than pulling out the plants at this late stage. If you get the chance to pull off some seeds/flowers they will need to be bagged and binned.



Some GPS data, recorded for the weeding session. We aim to produce maps for contractor and grant reports as well as mud maps for the group's weeding sessions.

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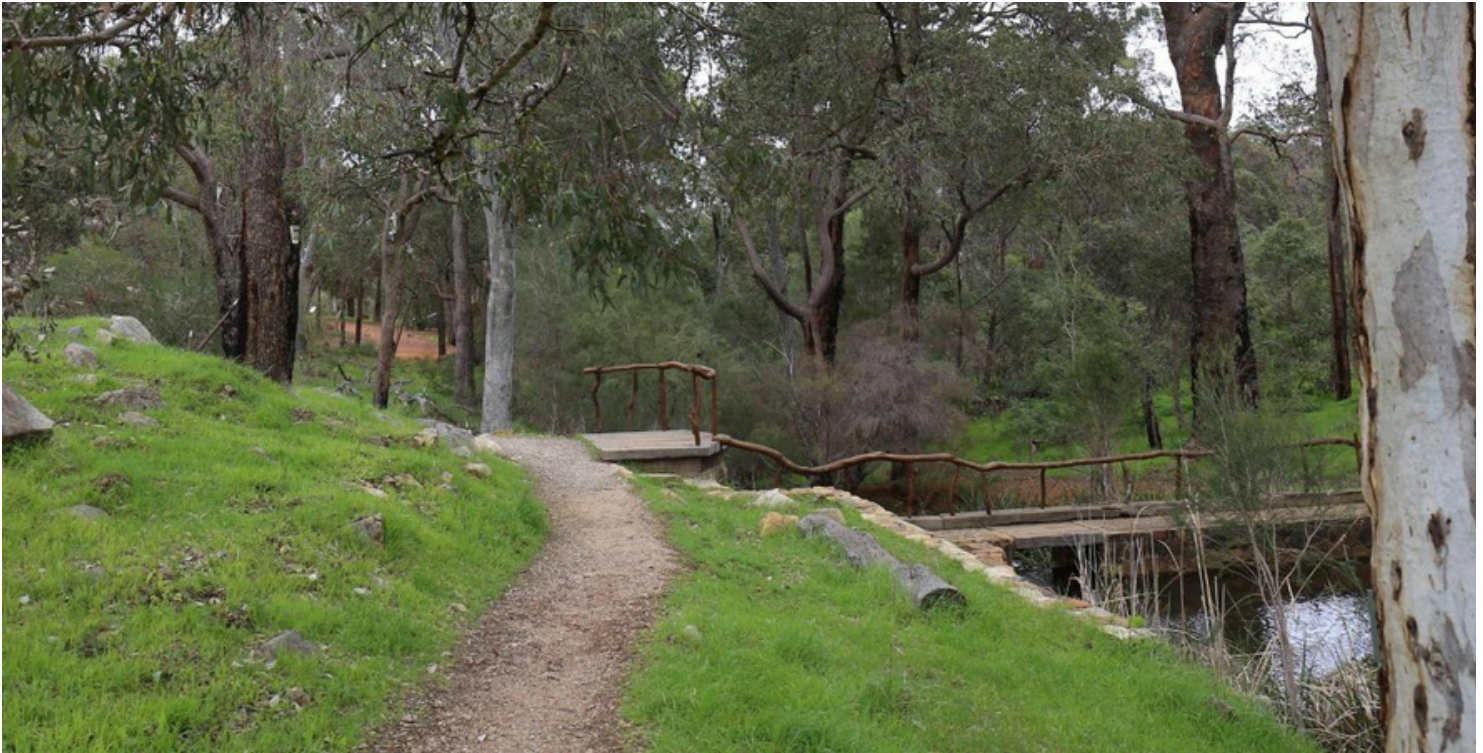


THEN AND NOW

Back in 2013, the upper weir adjacent to the terraces was in a sorry state and crying out for attention. 12 years on and the pumphouse base has been turned into a 'pulpit' and bespoke railings giving safe passage across a section of our path network as it winds its way to the middle car park. Much of the slope on the left has recently been planted with natives so watch this space grow.



The Upper Weir was a sad sight before its transformation.



The Upper Weir has been magically transformed.

Propagation

From Carmel Ballinger

Planting Season 2025:

For the 2025 season we had some 3000 plants ready for planting out. The majority of these were propagated from seed collected in the local area, though some were from cuttings.

All seedlings were raised in the glass houses and shade houses located behind the Kalamunda Men's Shed in Lesmurdie.

For those with the patience, keep an eye on the area immediately east of the Terraces carpark where we planted 150 *Xanthorrhoea gracilis* (meaning "graceful"). These are very slow growing and have taken two years to get to their current size.

For those who have read the signage about the Native Yam or Warrine, (*Dioscorea hastifolia*) and wondered what the plant looks like, we have planted about 200 in the vicinity of this sign at the eastern end of our area.



Getting our hands dirty sorting seed.

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The mainstay genus of the season was *Hakea* because of their versatility and survival rate. We planted several species including *amplexicaulis*, *erinacea*, *incrassata*, *petiolaris*, *prostrata*, *stenocarpa*, *trifurcata* and *undulata*, all of which grow well in the area. *Acacia pulchella* (Prickly Moses) was targeted because of its beauty and resistance to dieback which is known to be pervasive in the area. While most of the plants were propagated by seed, *Lechenaultia biloba* (Blue Lechenaultia) and *Hypocalymma angutifolium* (Swan River myrtle) were successfully propagated by cuttings. These were selected because of their attractiveness.

Some species were specifically targeted for the riparian zone close to the creek; this included *Melaleuca preissiana*, *Acacia alata*, *Taxandria linearifolia*, *Trymalium odoratissimum* and *Lobelia anceps*.



Sally and Terry contemplating refilling the greenhouse.



It's fiddly work.

After the recent drought, even large Wandoo trees were affected, so an effort was made to propagate this species and more will be done next year. The only beneficiary of dead Wandoo trees are the parrots that use the hollows for nesting. Although Marri trees were also affected, these tend to propagate easily in nature. If you have them at home, you will have noticed seedlings sprouting from where the cockatoos have been feeding on the honkey nuts.

Isopogon dubius and *Hovea pungens* were propagated for their sheer floral beauty. Although not long lived, *Gastrolobium ebracteolatum* and *Paraserianthes lophantha* (Albizia) were planted because they are a good coloniser and provide cover while other plants develop.

We have started propagation for our 2026 planting season, both at Busy Bees and at mid-month meetings. Our goal is to have 2000-3000 plants available, covering a wide variety of local seeds and cuttings. A huge thanks goes out to all who participated.

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Grant Success

By Mike Robinson

Renewed funding for weed control and plant propagation work



In April this year we applied to State NRM for further funding to pursue our weed control and planting programs over the next three years. On Friday the seventh of November we received the exciting news that the grant has been awarded in full. Our association with State NRM has been a long and fruitful one, with grants since 2012 now totalling over \$300,000. It is an association valued by us not just for the funding provided but also for the genuine interest and encouragement they have extended to us for the entire 13 years of our existence. This grant is for just under \$75,000 over three years and is split approximately 60/40 on weed control and the planting program respectively.

Since 2012 we have made a major assault on perennial weeds on our upper Lesmurdie Falls site. We have had to work progressively from east to west as resources, both funds and volunteer time, have become available. This means that the far eastern end has had nearly 13 years of weed control but the western end only about half of that. Thus the eastern end is almost "clean" of a range of weed species and the further west we look, the weedier it gets. This grant will allow us to tackle weeds such as watsonia, freesia, African feather grass, blackberry, three species of eastern states wattles, tagasaste, Pavonia, Genista, blue broom, wonga vine, taro, bulrushes, three cornered garlic, and many other less numerous species. It is a long list. As the grant is spread over three years, it means our contractors can hit them repeatedly and bring their numbers down to a level where our volunteers can take over. Following each visit by the contractors we will have the chance to follow up with consolidation work by our volunteers. This program will enable us to bring a number of species to the point of local eradication. Mapping has the potential to improve our outcomes in many other areas besides weed control. Location of certain species of plants – for seed collection or rarity, prospective work areas for repairs and maintenance, planting areas, Dieback control, geological formations etc. The plans will be layered so that each layer can identify locations for a specific subject, such as just planting areas or just one species of weed. Then we will be able to combine layers, as we need, to give us a plan for a broad range of tasks. When we eventually develop a comprehensive Management Plan for the site, mapping will be an integral part of that.

Over the years our planting program has progressively moved towards using plants grown by our Propagation Group from local provenance seed. When raising plants in the numbers that the Propagation Group has achieved in recent years, expenses become quite substantial. The funding provided in this grant will allow us to continue the program over the next three years.



Its full steam ahead to match last season's production of local plants.

We have committed to raising and planting 3,000 local plants each year for the three years of the project's life in addition to the purchase and planting of 4,000 sedges over the three years. Seed collection is a shared undertaking between licensed commercial seed collectors and our volunteers. Seed collection can be very straightforward for some species but can be much more difficult for others and that is where specialist help is required. So we will continue to collect under license ourselves but use the professionals to broaden the range of species that we propagate. Without a grant we couldn't afford to employ the seed collecting contractors, so this grant will allow us to maintain a comprehensive collection of local seed for our propagation work.

This project will result in a very large step towards perennial weed elimination from our iconic site. For some weed species this will mean local eradication and for others we will take a major step towards that target. Seed in the soil can take ten years or more to be exhausted so there will still be work to do after the project finishes but the end will be in sight. In addition we will have at least 13,000 plants planted out on site and an extensive seed collection for future propagation work. That will be a great achievement and is only possible because we have such fantastic volunteers.

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SPONSORS

Once again we would like to express our deep gratitude to our major sponsors, State NRM, Perth Region NRM, the Rivers and Estuaries section of DBCA, the Rotary Club of Kalamunda, the City of Kalamunda, Lotterywest, Forrestfield and High Wycombe Community Bank (Bendigo Bank), SG Enviro, Tree and Palm Solutions and Magic Garden Supplies.

Our project is located within the Lesmurdie National Park and Mundy Regional Park, which come under the control of the Parks and Wildlife section of the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions. The Department was the catalyst for our formation in 2012 and has strongly supported us ever since. We really value that support and particularly the trust that they have shown in us for the last 12 years.

The Lesmurdie and Districts Community Association (LDCA) was a wonderful partner for many years and enabled us to raise considerable funding for improvements that weren't covered by the NRM grants. Paths, bridges, earthworks, car parks, children's climbing frames and more – the Up the Creek (UTC) project.

The Kalamunda Men's Shed partnered with us to build shade houses where we could raise our own plants and where we could hold plants grown for us by nurseries – prior to planting out. We greatly value our association with KMS and hope it will continue and deepen for many years. More recently they have also helped us acquire two green houses to further enhance our plant propagation work. Recently, we formed a partnership with the Kalamunda Youth Swing Band, sharing their premises to foster collaboration and community engagement.



*If you are keen to know more about
Kalamunda Mens Shed phone 08 9291 7172
on weekdays between 8am and noon.*

ABOUT US

Formed in Dec 2012 by a few like-minded people, the Friends of Upper Lesmurdie Falls Inc. have committed themselves to helping to rehabilitate, improve the amenity and record the history of the area – which initially was badly degraded by large infestations of weeds that had taken over and suffocated the native flora.

BUSY BEES

Busy bees mornings are held on the 2nd Sunday of every month - tackling weeding, stone work, propagating, planting, rubbish clearing, exotic tree removal and maintenance work. We make sure there is always something for all ages and abilities.

Everyone is always very welcome to join in - no experience or tools needed.

Want a fun morning at a busy bee for you or your family? Contact us to find out the details.



And we always finish with a well catered morning tea thanks to Angie Parker!

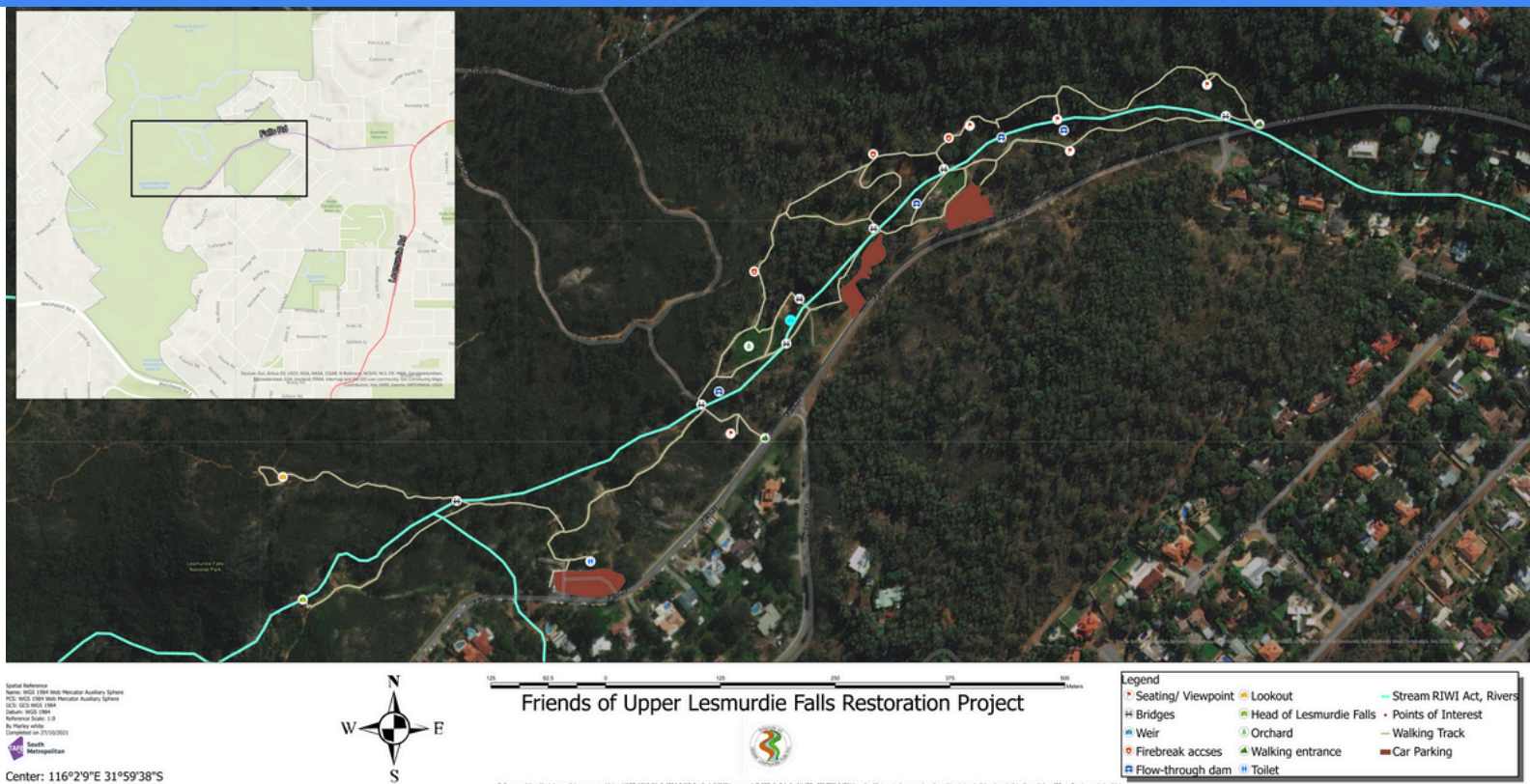
CONTACT US



- Any enquiry phone: **Nick 0409 100 681** or email: **friendsofupperlesmurdiefalls@gmail.com**
- For latest events: Facebook and Instagram @friendsofupperlesmurdiefalls

More info visit our website: www.friendsofupperlesmurdiefalls.com.au

MAP- LESMURDIE BROOK TRAILS AND FEATURES



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