

NEWSLETTER – JANUARY 2003

GENERAL INFORMATION FOR MEMBERS, FRIENDS & NEIGHBOURS

It is now over 12 months since the Bunkers Conservation Reserve was opened by the Hon Robert Hill, then Federal Minister for Environment and Heritage. The Reserve has been de-stocked, re-fenced, and regular fox baiting and other pest controls and wildlife/vegetation surveys commenced.

The establishment of the Reserve has been a slow, time consuming and costly process. All correspondence, history, reports, minutes are on file, so please do not hesitate to make contact and ask, if you wish to know anything. The Association's policy is to be part of the local community and considers its interests at all times, and expects that policy to be reciprocated.

Recently there appears to have been some concern in the community and among members at the construction of a Government Radio Network (GRN) station at Mt Caernarvon. The Association would like to clarify its position on this matter.

- (a) Firstly, it should be noted that the Association was not consulted on the general location of the GRN facility. Early consultation occurred only between GRN/Telstra and NPW-SA (who did not want it on Mt Sunderland), and possibly with Brendan Reynolds, who did ask the Association about the possibility of siting a "telephone" tower on Mt Caernarvon, and was advised that it would be considered if the local community was in favour and in need of such a facility.

- (b) The Association had a preference for the GRN station to be located outside the Reserve, but accepted it because it was an essential service to the State government and the local community. Also, GRN project management indicated that compulsory acquisition could (as a last resort) be used on their part.
- (c) The Association agreed to a location and layout plan, which was considered to have the least visual impact on the area.
- (d) When site works commenced, a local resident was asked to monitor progress. Her reaction was very negative, and on checking, it was found that the site layout had been changed and site area increased by 50%.
- (e) Work was stopped, and after considerable consultation and site inspections open to all concerned, it was accepted that the Dept of Environment and Heritage would plan and execute remedial works to minimise the impact of the GRN installation with all costs to be covered by Telstra.

It should be noted that the Association has insisted that the GRN station include a professional standard UHF channel 4 repeater to replace the existing CFS/ local communications unit.

Again we would like to stress that the Association is very happy to supply detailed information and discuss matters with any Association or community member.

THE AGM

The attendance was comfortably adequate for a forum, and the attendance of members from Whyalla and Port Pirie was very much appreciated. Reports were presented, questions answered and progress discussed. Copies of proceedings can be obtained from the Secretary. Elections were held for Committee positions, and we welcome Ian Bittner. Mark Spencer was to take a break, but due to a country posting and workload by our Treasurer, Mark has offered to fill that position – thanks!

Your contacts will be:

- President – Gil Hartwig tel: 82604752(h), fax: 83594032
- Vice-President – Kaz Herbst tel: 83393507(h)
- Secretary – Jim Kennelly tel: 0419 866 978(m), 82265116(w) kennelly.jim@saugov.sa.gov.au
- Keys – Christine Arnold tel: 0439 829 368(m), 82936808(h)

SHOOTING

The latest version of this “rules” sheet is enclosed for your information.

CAMPING FACILITY

The good news is that we now have working showers – cold for the present, but a gas (bring your own bottle) fired unit will hopefully be functional before winter. Many thanks to Jim Kennelly and to Bob Temby for completing the plumbing during their Christmas holiday.

We have omitted to include a specific telephone number for booking a camp site, as this would put undue pressure on a single individual – so please book through the Pres, Vice-Pres or Secretary, whichever is easiest to contact.

THE DROUGHT

Those who have been in the area recently, would have noticed the effects:

- the “lake” in the abandoned mine has been dry for over 6 months.
- Minnitinni springs are reduced to a few damp “scrapes”
- much of mallee, native pine and gum regrowth is stressed, if not dying
- goats are appearing in higher numbers from other areas

This is placing high stress on Yellow Footed Rock Wallabies, and, as a pair with a juvenile has been sighted near Minnitinni, goat culling has been stepped up and a destruction permit for euros obtained to reduce pressure in the area and maximise chances of survival for the andu.

Some patchy rain has fallen over Christmas/New Year – can we hope for a wet 2003?

A note of warning from those who were there when it rained: - 15 Mile creek can rise quickly and flow very hard – so get out quickly if you have to, or be prepared to sit it out!

VOLUNTEERING

Most of the work is being done by “the few”. The Committee understands work and family commitments, but will appreciate help at any time, so please give us a call if you can spare two or three days. The tasks will be matched to you skills, fitness and comfort limits.

The PROVISIONAL program for fox baiting for 2003 is: 10-12/02/03, 5-7/05/03, 11-13/08/03, 10-12/11/03 – the baiting consists of walking and/or driving in pairs – you see a lot of scenery!

Kaz

Stop Press: Substantial rain has fallen in the week ending 24 February and it is hoped this will take some pressure off the environment.