

Friends of Willunga Basin

Newsletter, June 2010

Willunga Walking Trail Report

Since our last newsletter, FOWB committee members have been busy walking in and around the Willunga Basin, investigating possible route for the Willunga Basin Walking Trail. Areas walked so far include:

Top of Louds Hill Road to top of Old Sellicks Hill Road

This section of 4.5Km has magnificent views, and half of it is along well made gravel roads and half across paddocks, which necessitated scaling barbed wire fences.

Ownership of the old road reserve is uncertain. Council are supposed to be checking for us but so far we have heard nothing from them about this.



Old Sellicks Hill Road

Kirk Richardson from Council advises that Council did vote to close the Old Sellicks Hill Road to cars last November. There will be locked gates, with landholders and emergency services holding keys. He sees no problem using it as a walking trail, but there may be some theoretical difficulty for bicycles (as they are considered vehicles), but he thinks that this problem can be surmounted with some adjustment to the wording of the closure.

Sellicks Beach Road

(from South Road to the beach) is due for major upgrading. There will be a public consultation process. The road reserve is not very wide, but he suggests that one good option for the Trail would be a shared use path on one side.



Maslin Beach to Moana

Members also walked from Maslin Beach to Moana to investigate possible routes for the trail, walking both the high and the low roads. The high route over the cliffs is quite easy walking, although considerable erosion occurs in places.



The track passes by Ochre Point, the small ravine with the magnificent ochre is clearly visible.



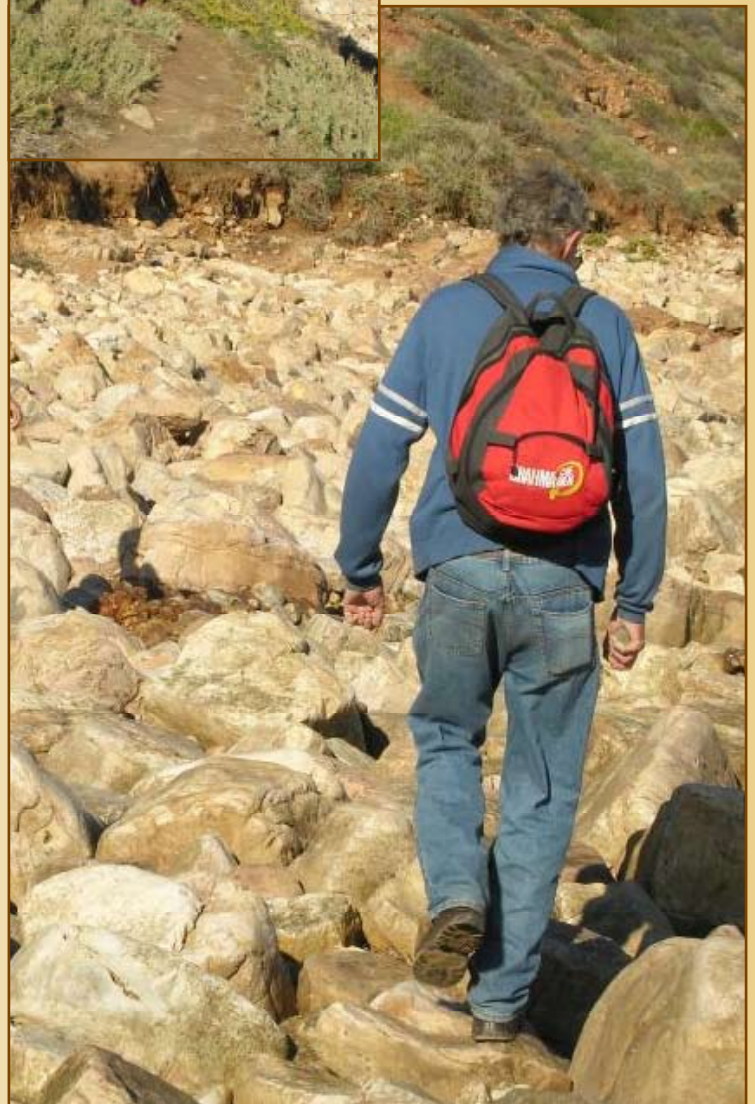
Ochre Point

The views looking south from the high track are impacted by the old sand quarry site, and to the north by housing, and there is a lot of weed growth. Near Moana, as the route descends to the area of open space under the care of Moana Sands group, it is quite desolate and unappealing, and in need of a lot of remediation.

The low route consists of easy walking south from Moana along the beach for the first part, then over an area of large tumbled rocks that would be a serious challenge to other than nimble walkers. This patch extends for about 1Km, passing Ochre Point, but there is also an alternative narrow, rough track above the rocks for some of the route.



Alternative track above rocks



This newsletter is written, compiled and published by the committee of Friends of Willunga Basin Inc. Views expressed do not necessarily represent Friends of Willunga Basin Inc.

Letters to the editor are welcomed.

FOWB can be contacted by writing to: PO Box 710, Willunga SA 5172

emailing to: info@fowb.net or phoning the secretary, David Gill: 8556 2289 Visit us at www.fowb.net

CORE

Community
Owned
Renewable
Energy



City of Onkaparinga residents and businesses can save over 10% on the purchase of solar panels.

The Council has joined five other SA metropolitan councils for a 12 month pilot program, which has been set up by the Local Government Association of South Australia in conjunction with ZEN Home Energy Systems.

The pilot program aims to help residents and businesses save money on their electricity bills and reduce their carbon footprint by using renewable energy technology.

You are invited to attend drop-in information and registration sessions on the pilot to be held on:

- *Monday 7 June between 2-7pm
Council's Noarlunga office*
- *Thursday 17 June between 2-7pm
Council's Noarlunga office*
- *Thursday 1 July between 2-7pm
McLaren Vale Visitors Information Centre*
- *Tuesday 6 July between 3-7pm
Aberfoyle Community Centre*

Alternatively you can contact Zen Home Energy Systems on 1300 ZEN HOME or on line at www.zenhomeenergy.com

This is the first step rollout of a broader scheme for City of Onkaparinga residents. The Council's aim is to establish a panel of local providers offering solar panels at reduced prices.

Council's involvement in the pilot forms part of the implementation of the Community Owned Renewable Energy Project (CORE).

For information on CORE please contact Ben Calder on or 8384 0686 bencal@onkaparinga.sa.gov.au.

Willunga Basin Preservation Legislation



Following the actions of Rob Brokenshire last year in successfully getting the Legislative Assembly to adopt his Willunga Basin Preservation Bill, Friends of Willunga Basin were delighted to be involved in negotiations with the Government, which decided to not support Robert's bill. At a meeting organised by Leon Bignell, David Gill and 3 other reps from the Willunga Basin (along with people from the Barossa) met with Planning Minister Paul Holloway Leon Bignell and other planning staff. We were given a firm assurance that the Government was keen to proceed with legislation for the region's preservation as a rural area.

With the interruption of the State election action stalled, but fortunately it has been recently re-activated, with a new workshop session scheduled in 2 weeks. This meeting will consist of regional representatives of both Willunga Basin and the Barossa as before, plus heads of Departments of Planning and Local Government; of Primary Industries and Resources; Environment and Heritage; Department of Water, Land and Biodiversity; and of Primary Industries and Resources. Leon Bignell has stated that since the previous meeting held in November last year he has been working with the Urban Development and Planning Minister, Paul Holloway, on the need for a whole of government approach to ensuring the right legislation is developed to protect the Willunga Basin and Barossa Valley. The group has been called the McLaren Vale and Barossa Valley Agriculture Preserve Group. (We note that McLaren Vale name seems to have supplanted Willunga Basin).

Legislative protection has been the goal for FOWB virtually since our inception, and although we have concerns about how well it will play out we are extremely pleased to be involved in its planning with the Government. With our fellow representatives Jim Hullick from the Southern Community Coalition and Dudley Brown of McLaren Wine Grape and Tourism we will aim to ensure the continuity of rural activity as the prime land use of the Willunga Basin.

WASHPOL LAGOON UPDATE

Chas Martin, May 2010



In 2008 a Washpool Restoration Plan was adopted, including the following features.

1. Closing Button Rd and creating a new carpark and boardwalk access to the beach at the far southern end of the site.
2. Excavation at the northern end of the lagoon to create a deeper area which would stay wet longer into summer.
3. An animal underpass at Norman Rd to allow native fauna to move between the Aldinga Scrub and the Washpool / Blue Lagoon areas.

Unfortunately an application put forward by Onkaparinga Council on behalf of the Project Steering Committee for federal funding to take the project forward was unsuccessful. The council approached the other state agencies involved, including S. A. Water, Coastal Management Board and National Parks and Wildlife to see whether they (with Council) would jointly fund the project, but nothing came of this initiative either.

Some traditional owners and environmentalists including Friends of Willunga Basin have strong objections to the extensive earthworks (see 2. above). These groups feel such earthworks are a threat to the integrity of the Washpool Lagoon. Perhaps a less interventionist and less expensive plan which would not threaten its integrity but would substantially meet the objective of keeping it inundated longer into the summer could be adopted.

This could be achieved by reinforcing and raising the existing weir by 150 to 200mm and some minor increases of embankment heights. In addition water detained upstream in wetlands (already contemplated by Council) or by future detention works at Selicks could be released in early summer to further extend inundation. This would mimic the original water regime, where water trickled down from upstream swamps and springs into the summer season.

The closure & removal of Button Rd and building a new carpark and boardwalk access to beach at the southern end of the Washpool reserve might be desirable, perhaps even necessary in the long run. However Button Rd could be left as is for the time being.



A project which might provide significant environmental benefits at relatively low cost might be as follows:

- (1.) Raise and reinforce the weir and some embankments.
- (2.) Bring forward a detention project (eg the one between Norman and Cox Rds) and tailor it to supplement summer water supply to Washpool Lagoon.
- (3.) Build an animal (perhaps combined with pedestrian and cycling) underpass on Norman Rd.

Options (1.) and (2.) would provide improved forage and nesting opportunities for migratory birds into the summer.

Option (3.) would allow safe access for Kangaroos and Echidnas, which have lost a lot of fringe habitat to the north and east of the Aldinga Scrub over the last two decades.

The much less ambitious Washpool Management project described above could possibly be funded via a combination of Adelaide & Mt Lofty Natural Resource Management Board and Council sources, and the other stakeholders might be persuaded or perhaps even inspired to chip in too.

