



Friends of Parks Inc

Walking Trails Support Group

NEWSLETTER Summer 2008

Our motto: Reliable and sustainable access to natural areas.

Volume 6 Issue 2
5 December 2008

ANNUAL REPORT 2008

Field work

- the regular programme of trail maintenance was carried out this year, in the Flinders Ranges and Barossa regions and on Burnside Walking Trails.
- in addition two members earned some money for the Group by working with the National Trust Overland Corner Branch in re-establishing an old walking trail – see Winter 2008 Newsletter
- pedestrian counts on walking trails in Barossa parks, Chambers Gully and Mount Osmond Hills Face have continued, now for two years – see graph below
- assistance was provided to Trinity College for the development of a trail adjacent to Para Wirra Recreation Park
- thanks are due to the members who participated in these physical activities

Office work

- correspondence, both snail mail and email continues, mostly with DEH
- revision of text for leaflets which are being modified for web and for cheaper hard copies to be available at Flinders Ranges trailheads.
- digital maps with contours are being developed for the Barossa walks, so that they too can be downloadable from the web – sample tabled or see website www.walkingtrailssupportgroup.org.au
- our website is regularly brought up to date as leaflets are modified
- many thanks to those involved with these back-of-house tasks

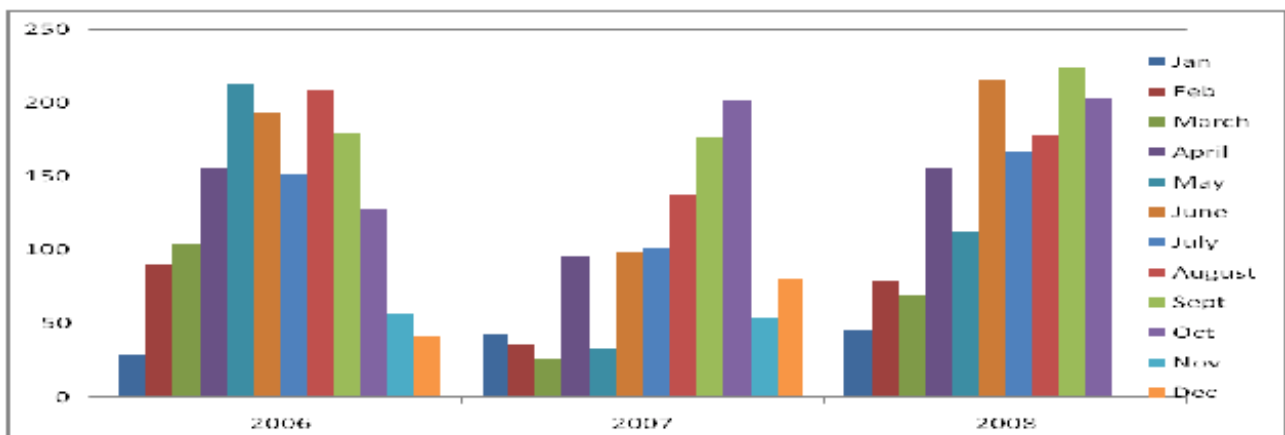


Using the mower to clear walking track of unwanted grass in Para Wirra Recreation Park.

Meetings

- views of the Group have been presented at four meetings to those in government who are involved with trail planning and developing strategies – see more below

Pedestrian Tracker Counts in Hale Conservation Park 2006 - 2008



Trail Strategy and Trail Master Plans

The Department for Environment and Heritage has produced a Trail Strategy called Linking with Nature (copy tabled). We would generally endorse the principles in the plan because it emphasises the benefits of properly designed and constructed trails.

However we do have some concerns because we believe it is covertly encouraging the development of cycling opportunities. We have no objection to that provided that they are not using walking tracks – walkers and cyclists have different requirements in sensitive areas.

The term 'Priority trails' is used in the strategy and we fear that those trails will soak up all the resources leaving no support for the narrow bush trails we like for bird watching, botanising, rock hunting or merely taking in the view. We learnt from a Ministerial Press Release that there are \$2.7m for this work. We wonder where it will be spent – on expensive Trailheads, car parks and on hardening rather than rerouting unsustainable trails? We have expressed our concerns in a letter to the Chief Executive.

The arrival of the Strategy is strangely timed because Trail Master Plans are already under way for Cleland Conservation Park, Belair National Park, Hallett Cove Conservation Park, Mount Remarkable National Park and Flinders Ranges National Park (FRNP). Two of us attended a meeting with consultants at Wilpena in February 2007, with promise of a draft Master Plan for comment in mid-March. We are still waiting. The process for Mount Remarkable seems more encouraging.

We have a concern that some of the trails we have worked on for 15 years may be 'closed'. We await the Master Plan for FRNP anxiously. Our work program in FRNP for 2008 may be affected by its recommendations.

Grants and Sponsorship

We are encouraged by recent advice that we have received a grant for \$1750 to upgrade the waymarking on the Weetootla Network in Vulkathunha-Gammon Ranges NP. As most of you would know the Monarch Mine track is well-marked, but the sections from Weetootla camp up Balcanoona and Wortupa creeks are still as they were installed 15 years ago. This upgrade will build on work started last year.

As reported in our Winter Newsletter we also had sponsorship from Skyline Walkers which enabled us to install a lookout 'topograph' on the top of Acacia Ridge in Arkaroola.

Leaflet Proposals

We are pressing ahead with the production of walk notes downloadable from the web or as hard copy leaflets. We are unclear quite where we stand with DEH on the hard copies, but we do have some funds from the donation boxes which we feel could be applied to interim leaflets for trailheads.



Post and plate, Acacia Ridge



Section of 'topograph' plate

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