

Friends Of Willow Park Inc.



Educating and involving the community in protecting, preserving and valuing parklands

NEWSLETTER — January 2010

Welcome to 2010 and another great decade ahead for Friends of Willow Park

Friends of Willow Park is looking forward to a number of exciting projects and new activities in the next decade and we look forward to you joining us. Watch our newsletters, flyers and website for details of upcoming events and activities.

Friends of Willow Park would also like to take this opportunity to thank our many members and friends for your invaluable support over the past three years since our incorporation.
Thank you!

Storms Hit Willow Park

Friends of Willow Park had to cancel its End-of-Year Party as storms hit Willow Park on 17 December last year.

While we were sad to have to cancel our party, it was wonderful to see the rapid response by City of Wodonga to cleaning up the many fallen branches and trees in the park. We are also pleased to say that, to our knowledge, nobody was injured by falling branches as people headed warnings to stay indoors.

Fallen Branches and Nesting Hollows

Things are not all bad when branches fall as they did in the recent storm that lashed Willow Park. Although the fallen branches will not create habitat as they would in the bush because they will be removed from the park for safety reasons, the site on the tree from where the branch fell is now well primed to become a nesting hollow for native wildlife.



Fallen branches in Willow Park following the storm on 17/12/09 and the beginnings of nesting hollows in the trees.

It is estimated that more than 300 species of vertebrates (birds, mammals, reptiles and amphibians) in Australia use hollows to nest and shelter in at some stage in their lives and that loss of these hollows threatens some of these species.

Patrons: Professor David Mitchell, Professor Allan Curtis, Dr Juliet Bird

Postal Address: c/- P.O. Box 1083, Wodonga, 3689

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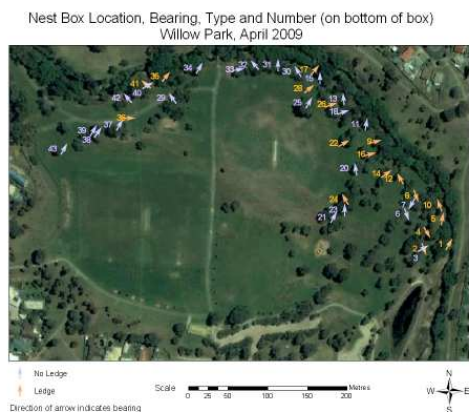
Phone: Julie: (02)6056 1787, Ali (02) 6056 1938

There has been a consistent loss of hollow-bearing trees throughout Australia as a result of land clearing and forestry practices and we are only just beginning to understand how long it can take for these hollows to be created and alter our practices. A study by Mawson and Long (1994) in south-west Australia determined that the average age of hollows used by four species of parrots was 275 years and 446 years for a cockatoo species! The age range of hollows in this study was 75 to 1300 years.

Most of us will not see the “damage” to trees caused by the storm of 17 December from nesting hollows in the trees of Willow Park. However, we can rejoice in the knowledge that there are now many more sites for potential hollow-formation that will provide habitat for wildlife that our grandchildren can enjoy in future.

Nest Boxes – What Did we Find in There?

Friends of Willow Park members Pauline and Stephen Anderson, Wolfgang and Jenni Huber and Alison Mitchell did an audit of our nest boxes on 13 December 2009.



Map of our nest boxes in Willow Park.

We are thrilled to report that we have two nest boxes being used by rosellas – a 100% increase in the use of nest boxes by parrots in 2008!

We also observed evidence of possums in another box. These are great results and go some way to alleviating the lack of hollow-bearing trees in our urban areas.



A ledged nest box in Willow Park.

We also recorded the height of the nest boxes in this audit so our research program is well underway. It is interesting to note that the two boxes used by the rosellas were ledged and facing north-east and east.

We are planning to add to our nest box program in 2010 and we would love to hear from you if you would like to get involved in the program or see anything using the nest boxes. Call Alison on 6056 1938 or email coordinator@friendsofwillowpark.org.au

We will be checking the nest boxes regularly so watch this newsletter for more great news.

Next Community Gardening in the Park & Waterwatch

Community gardening in the park will resume on 28 March 2010 at 9.30 am

Waterwatch will continue over Summer

**24 January 2010
28 February 2010
4.30 pm**

**BYO refreshments, sunscreen, hat
Meet near the BBQ area in Willow Park**

**Phone Pauline – 6056 6275 (Gardening)
or Ali - 0409 032 490 (Waterwatch)**

Next Information Evening
Guest Speaker: Dr Alison Mitchell

*Title: Sustainability: What is it
and what can I do about it?*

Alison is not only Vice-President of *Friends of Willow Park*, but she is also a Board member of the North East Catchment Management Authority and the Albury-Wodonga Community College. She was a Research Scientist and Knowledge Broker at the Murray-Darling Freshwater Research Centre for 20 years and has taught at TAFE for 10 years in a range of areas including sustainability and environmental management.

When? Thursday 18 February 2010

What time? 7.30 p.m.

Where? Belvoir School, 4 Bowman Court, Wodonga

Light supper provided

Further information: Contact Julie on 6056 1787 or email president@friendsofwillowpark.org.au

*Friends of Belvoir Park/Sumsion
Gardens*

Friends of Belvoir Park/Sumsion Gardens are currently planning an exciting range of activities for their first full year of operation.

If you are interested in participating in these activities or, better still, becoming a member (membership is free), contact belvoirpark@friendsofwillowpark.org.au.

Master Plan - Update

Friends of Willow Park is continuing to work with City of Wodonga to develop a Master Plan for Willow Park that will guide management of the park over the next 25 years.

Julie Hind is currently working with Matthew Fleet, Landscape Architect for City of Wodonga, interpreting the results of the Community Conversations project. Matthew will develop a Draft Master Plan based on what you said about Willow Park as part of that project.

The Draft Master Plan will be presented to you as soon as possible. We look forward to your feedback on the draft plan before the final Master Plan is adopted and priorities for the next five years are determined.

*Biodiversity by Design – Project
Update*

Friends of Willow Park announced in our July 2009 newsletter that we had received a further grant from Landcare. The project this grant is funding has been informed by the Community Conversations project and is titled “Biodiversity by Design”. The project recognises our community’s desire to enhance the bush-like nature of Willow Park and includes a landscape design that will increase native biodiversity at the Pearce Street entrance to Willow Park.

A Steering Committee was formed in November 2009 and is comprised of members of *Friends of Willow Park* and representatives from City of Wodonga and Wodonga TAFE. The committee meets again this month and we will keep you informed of the project’s development and invite you to have your say on the design through this newsletter, flyers and other media.

During the development of the Biodiversity by Design project we had a number of queries about what “biodiversity” means so we thought we would try to explain it briefly here. Biodiversity, or biological diversity, refers to the variety of life forms, the genes they contain, and the ecosystems they form in any given area. We prefer to use the term “native biodiversity” to reflect the desire to have Australian native species dominating.

For information on biodiversity see: <http://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/publications/series/paper1/what.html>

Mistletoe – Not just a Parasite

A member of *Friends of Willow Park* recently told us of his new-found interest in mistletoe after asking around for advice on removing it from his prized *Eucalyptus* tree. We also found this learning journey interesting so we thought we would share the key points with you.

- There are 12 species of Mistletoe in Victoria. All are native and have coevolved with other native species of plants and animals so they are an important part of the ecology;
- Mistletoes are only partly parasitic – they produce their own energy through photosynthesis, but depend on their host plant for water and nutrients;
- Forty-one species of birds have been recorded feeding on the flower, fruit and foliage of mistletoe along with many other nectar-eating insects and mammals;
- Mistletoes are spread by the Mistletoebird (*Dicaeum hirundinaceum*) who eats the fruit and then wipes its bottom on another tree or branch spreading the seed. Although this bird is quite common it is also quite elusive;

- The Painted Honeyeater (*Grantiella picta*) is also dependent on the fruits of mistletoe for survival, but they are not as efficient in spreading mistletoe;
- Mistletoe can mimic their host plant very well and are only detected when they flower. It is possible that this camouflage helps protect the mistletoe by appearing to have the same toxins that their host has, deterring predators from eating it;
- Mistletoe can also be quite obvious, particularly if its leaf is a different colour to that of its host or if it is prolific;
- Many people believe that prolific mistletoe causes the death of a tree, but prolific mistletoe may be more symptomatic of an ill tree rather than causing the death of the tree;
- Mistletoes is referred to in ancient legend and mythology and have been used in folk medicine; and
- Mistletoes have helped researchers understand the origins of vegetation in the southern hemisphere, the evolution of mimicry in plants, the development of different sexes in plants (dioecy) and the biology of parasitism.



Mistletoe Bird photographed by LPJC via Flickr "Not an easy bird to photograph. I have never been able to get such a good view anyway."

For more information about the interesting and important mistletoe and for the source of the image above, see this website: <http://www.anbg.gov.au/mistletoe/>

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FRIENDS OF WILLOW PARK

MEMBERSHIP FORM

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CONTACT PHONE NUMBER: _____ EMAIL: _____

DATE: _____

MEMBERSHIP IS FREE
Donations always welcome

I wish to join *Friends of Willow Park*. I agree to be bound by the rules of the Association and to support the group's objectives (below).

Donation: _____

Payment: (circle) Cash/Cheque
Cheques payable to: Friends of Willow Park Inc.

Receipt Number: _____

SIGNATURE: _____

Send your completed form to:

Friends of Willow Park Inc.
c/- P.O. Box 1083, Wodonga, 3689
Email:
membership@friendsofwillowpark.org.au
Fax: 6056 2694

Participating in Friends of Willow Park

Friends of Willow Park is an active group and we encourage you to get involved. Please indicate how you would like to participate (you can tick as many of these as you want). I would like to help out with:

- Helping with the campaigns to save Willow Park from undue development
- Being part of the Committee of Management
- Helping with the newsletter
- Walks, talks, tours, socials
- Hands-on environment projects
- Water quality testing
- Information stalls and publications
- Interest Groups
- Fundraising

Our Objectives

- (a) To promote the protection and preservation of Willow Park as public open space parkland;
- (b) To promote the protection and preservation of the social, economic and environmental value of Willow Park including the flora, fauna and features (scenic, archaeological, geological, historic or scientific);
- (c) To educate and inform the community about the role and value of Willow Park; and
- (d) To foster community involvement in, and enjoyment of, Willow Park in accordance with the above objectives.

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