

## NEWSLETTER — March 2010

### *Our First Weed Identification Workshop*

Friends of Willow Park was very fortunate to have Sue Brunskill share her extensive expertise in weed identification with us recently at our first ever Weed Identification Workshop. David Saxton from Parklands Albury Wodonga also came along to share his experience in identifying and removing weeds, which was an unexpected and welcome addition to the workshop.



Sue Brunskill (left) and David Saxton (blue cap, left) showing us how to identify weeds.

Sue took workshop attendees through a very simple process for identifying weeds – look at it and feel it. We were all amazed at how easy it was to work out if a plant was a weed or not when we took the time to look at it and describe it to each other.

Once we understood what we were looking for we took a walk along the creek to see what else we could spot. We were all amazed at how we could now so easily see the weeds almost everywhere we looked! There are many weeds along the creek line, but we noticed that the *Phragmites australis*, the native reed in the creek, was doing a great job of keeping weeds in check. The reed shades the creek so that weeds can't get enough light to grow.

A bit of weeding was done before a nice drop of wine was shared by all as the sun went down.

We cannot thank Sue enough for her expertise in botany and for her expertise in keeping things simple. We easily understood what we needed to do to identify a weed and felt we had learnt so much in such a short time. Thanks also to David who shared so much with us.

We look forward to welcoming Sue and David back for another workshop. We will be running another one on a Thursday afternoon. We will send out a flyer as soon as we have determined a date. So, watch your inbox or letterbox for news of our next fascinating workshop.

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

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

**Website:** [www.friendsofwillowpark.org.au](http://www.friendsofwillowpark.org.au)

**Email:** [president@friendsofwillowpark.org.au](mailto:president@friendsofwillowpark.org.au)

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

**Fax:** (02) 6056 2694

## *What IS That Red Stuff on the Water?*

Have you noticed that there has been quite a lot of “red stuff” floating on our wetlands recently? Not only is there quite a lot of “red stuff”, but there is big “red stuff” and little “red stuff”. So, what is it?

The big “red stuff” is a floating native fern commonly called “Azolla” and known to botanists as *Azolla pinnata*. *Azolla* provides many benefits to our waterways including:

- Food for fish, water bugs and waterfowl;
- Habitat for water bugs;
- Discouraging algal blooms and the growth of exotic plants by shading the water column and using nutrients; and
- Discouraging the growth of mosquito larvae.

However, *Azolla* can become a bit of a problem if it completely covers a water body as it can stop the growth of submerged native plants by blocking the light they need for growth. We also know from experience that a basset hound can confuse the *Azolla* for a solid surface and go bounding out only to find themselves submerged! Another potential problem with an *Azolla* bloom is that if the bloom dies suddenly it can cause the water to become deoxygenated. This can be a serious issue for aquatic organisms.



*Azolla pinnata* on the surface of the storm water treatment wetland in Willow Park.



A close-up view of *Azolla pinnata* on the surface of the storm water treatment wetland in Willow Park.

Another organism that causes a red, scum-like appearance on the surface of waterbodies is *Euglena*. These very interesting organisms have a tail (“flagellum”) that they use to move around the water column.



*Euglena* on the surface of the storm water treatment wetland in Willow Park.

*Euglena* are single-celled organisms and can eat organic material or photosynthesise like an algal cell. If they are photosynthesising they can use chlorophyll that is red in colour and, hence, the red colour of the blooms.

Like *Azolla*, *Euglena* is quite harmless to humans and is a natural and vital part of the ecology of our water bodies. So, we quite like them being there unless they “take over” these systems and become problems for other organisms living there.

## *Play and Say Day 1 May 2010, 10 am to 1 pm – Biodiversity by Design*

Many of you will be aware that we received funding from the Victorian Government through the Second Generation Landcare grants for our Biodiversity by Design project. We have engaged Liesl Malan Landscape Architects to develop two draft concept landscape designs for the Pearce Street entrance to Willow Park.

Liesl and Claire have been working with us and the City of Wodonga to understand Willow Park and how it is loved by our community (see also our update on the Master Plan project, page 4).

Liesl and Claire will present their draft concept designs to you at our next Play and Say Day on Saturday 1 May. There will be a range of family fun experiences for you to enjoy between 10 am and 1 pm.

While there we invite you to view the designs and tell us what you think of them – what you like, what you don't like and what else you would like to see.

For more information on the project visit <http://www.friendsofwillowpark.org.au/projects.html> or call Alison on 6056 1938 or email [coordinator@friendsofwillowpark.org.au](mailto:coordinator@friendsofwillowpark.org.au).



*The site of our Biodiversity by Design project in Willow Park.*

## *Planning For the Future - Membership and Participation*

### *Workshop for Members*

**Facilitator:** *Cathy McGowan*

Cathy McGowan is an excellent and experienced facilitator and we are fortunate to have her assist us with this workshop.

Come along and participate in this important planning session for the future of *Friends of Willow Park*.

**When?** Thursday 15 April 2010

**What time?** 6.00 p.m.

**Where?** Belvoir School, 4 Bowman Court, Wodonga

**Light dinner provided**

**RSVP by 13 April and further information:** Alison on 6056 1938 or email [coordinator@friendsofwillowpark.org.au](mailto:coordinator@friendsofwillowpark.org.au)

## *Next Community Gardening in the Park & Waterwatch*

**18 April 2010  
&  
23 May 2010**

**Community Gardening  
1.30 pm**

**Waterwatch  
3.30 pm**

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

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

## *Friends of Belvoir Park/Sumsion Gardens*

Friends of Belvoir Park/Sumsion Gardens had a "Clean Up Day" on Sunday 21 March. The day went extremely well and ended with a much-deserved picnic lunch and some great social time in the beautiful environs of Belvoir Park and Sumsion Gardens.



*Planting and weeding in Belvoir Park*

If you are interested in participating in any of the group's activities or, better still, becoming a member (membership is free), contact [belvoirpark@friendsofwillowpark.org.au](mailto:belvoirpark@friendsofwillowpark.org.au).

## *Master Plan - Update*

We noted in our last Newsletter that Julie Hind is currently working with Matthew Fleet, Landscape Architect for City of Wodonga. Julie provided the expertise to analyse the qualitative and quantitative data you gave us during the Community Conversations project as part of the development of the Master Plan. A copy of the executive summary of this report is attached to this newsletter for your information. You may also access it on our website (<http://www.friendsofwillowpark.org.au/pdf%20files/Executive%20Summary%20MP%20March%202010.pdf>) Matthew is in the process of developing a Draft Master Plan based on what you said about Willow Park as part of that project.

We hope that the Draft Master Plan will be released before the end of the year. We look forward to your feedback on the draft plan before the final Master Plan is adopted.

## *Things We Would Rather Not See in our Parks*

Many of you noted in your comments during the Community Conversations project that you did not like seeing motorbikes in Willow Park. We agree and we have had a number of comments recently about other things people would rather not see in Willow Park. We do not think you'll be surprised by what these comments are referring to – dog, consumer and garden waste.

City of Wodonga provide bins in all our parks and there are now many bag dispensers for ensuring that dog waste is not left for unsuspecting adults and children alike to step in. Council also provide bins specifically for garden waste for a small fee. Alternatively, you could compost this waste and reuse it to keep your garden happy and healthy. Garden waste dumped near our creeks is one of the biggest problems our community has to contend with in keeping these waterways healthy. We noticed that there are many of these weeds in House Creek including common mint and california poppy.



*Garden waste dumped at the edge of House Creek in Willow Park.*



# Friends of Willow Park Inc.

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

## 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:**

**Mail:**  
Friends of Willow Park Inc.  
c/- P.O. Box 1083, Wodonga, 3689  
**Email:**  
[membership@friendsofwillowpark.org.au](mailto: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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