

Central Hills Landcare Network

Green Army Habitat Restoration Project - Stage 2

NEWSLETTER 5 – APRIL 2016



Since settling into my role as team supervisor for the Adelaide Hills Project, many challenges and learning experiences have been encountered over the past few months. All of these instances have been overcome through a strong notion of team work, leaving our Green Army Team with a mutual sense of pride and job fulfilment at the closing of each project at hand, at the allocated job sites.

From January to April, our team has worked on a diverse range of sites, all requiring quite varied services. Such have ranged from weed control to erosion management and planting. Some jobs have proven more straight-forward than others, but nonetheless, there is peace of mind knowing we are all collectively learning along the way.



Furthermore, our experience has been heightened by the wonderful locals we have encountered, as well as attaining great insights from the experts in the Nature Resource Management Sector.

With our strong bond and light-hearted daily bursts, I am looking forward to working on future projects with my team... seeing their passion for the environment develop further and reach new levels of success.

Landcare Association of SA Chairman
Gerry Butler with the team at Cudlee
Creek.

Philip Bagnato, Team Supervisor

LASA congratulates the Stage 2 Green Army team on their good work

The Landcare Association of SA (LASA) is very pleased that the Central Hills Landcare Network Green Army team is enjoying their work with our project partners in the Adelaide Hills. The variety of work, different localities and wonderful community interaction is making the project an enjoyable one for the team and their supervisor Philip Bagnato.

We are also thankful that Philip has fitted in so well with the team and the various landcare groups and the Adelaide Hills Council. We have had a number of short weeks, not to mention the extreme heat in January and February, and so this has put a bit of pressure on the work programme. We are very pleased with the way the groups work together as a team as well demonstrating the effectiveness of the Central Hills Landcare Network.

We have had many favourable comments on the successful model of the Central Hills Landcare Network Green Army Project. At the recent Steering Committee meeting in Cudlee Creek, we resolved that we would apply to the upcoming Round 5 for continuation of the Project in 2017. There is never a guarantee, but we hope that irrespective of the competition and the federal election this year that the Green Army programme will still be in place and that we will be successful in getting a team to support the activities of our Project Partners.

LASA welcomes any comments or ideas on how we can improve the Central Hills Landcare Network Green Army Project so if you have any thoughts please send me an email on gbutler@landcaresa.asn.au or call on 0407 972 149.

On a national level the Landcare Association of SA works with the National Landcare Network in liaising with the Department of Environment about the Green Army programme and keeps Minister Greg Hunt informed about the strengths and weaknesses of the programme. Minister Hunt has acknowledged our work in promoting the Green Army and we hope to continue this work throughout the life of the programme.

Further information about the activities of LASA can be found on www.landcaresa.asn.au
Cheers,

Gerry Butler,
Chairman, Landcare Association of SA
0407 972 149



Right: The Central Hills Landcare Network Green Army Steering Committee from l-r Andrew Fairney, Sue Campbell, Sandy Edwards, Greg Jaensch, Gerry Butler, Stephen Anderson and Joan Gibbs

Sixth Creek Catchment Group

Habitat Restoration at Burdett's Scrub Conservation Park, Basket Range

The Green Army returned to Burdett's Scrub on 15 March to assist the Friends of Kenneth Stirling and the Sixth Creek Catchment Group in their effort to clean up the park following the 2013 Cherryville Fire. This was a short week and we were grateful that they were also able to return on the last two days of the following week. There is no shortage of work to be done and the results of their efforts were fantastic and much appreciated!

In the first week the Team split into two Groups, one improving public access to the park by widening the steep foot track in and forming steps where necessary, the second continuing the effort to clear an access track along Pound Creek for future weed control activity. This was no small feat with head high dead blackberry and broom to be cleared, fallen dead trees to be sawed and stacked and bridges to be constructed across the narrow creek channel.

On the Wednesday of the second week the DEWNR Park Ranger Nick Dinan, the DEWNR District Officer Catherine Austin and David Jarvis, member of Friends of Kenneth Stirling and donor of funds for post fire spraying (two years) inspected progress along with Sue Campbell, Chair of the Sixth Creek Catchment Group.

Everyone was very impressed with the work done by the Group and the access opened up for future spraying of woody weeds. This site is now an impressive demonstration site, for best practice to follow up weed control. Previously weed infested the bush following a fire event; We will be closely monitoring and documenting natural endemic species regeneration and follow up weed control requirements.

We will require ongoing funding for weed control and the contribution of the Green Army provides valuable leverage in this regard.

The last day provided the Team with an opportunity to explore further into the Park and the upper reaches of Pound Gully, potentially connecting with work done at the beginning of this round on the Huffman – Billings property, on which a house was tragically lost but bushcare work continues unabated.

We hope the Group enjoyed the opportunity to venture further into these remote and difficult to access valleys and hone their chain-sawing and climbing skills!

We appreciate that it is hard physical work and their efforts are making a huge contribution to our effort to recover from and take best advantage of the disastrous 2013 fire.

Sue Campbell



Slashing and clearing



Slashing and clearing



Testing one of the new creek crossings



Clearing the Sixth Creek catchment



The Sixth Creek catchment



The Green Army clearing the catchment

Mid Torrens Catchment Group

Mid Torrens Catchment Group: Green Army tackles gorse in bushland at Fox Creek Road.

Terry Reardon and Joan Gibbs were happy to provide a fallback project for the Green Army, in the second week of their work for the Mid Torrens Catchment Group. Because of extreme heat, the fencing project on another property had been cancelled, and on short notice we agreed to host the Green Army team, to remove gorse regrowth threatening the good understorey in our native blue gum bushland.

We are very happy about the gorse control during that week and are most grateful for that extra help. We have an ongoing gorse-removal program to protect valuable Stringybark remnants, for which we had previously engaged other bush care professionals. The GA team tackled the rather steep hillside with vigour, using their excellent gorse removal training provided by the Landcare support group. Thank you, team.

Here is some good news about the **Tree-Hollow Protection project** done by the previous GA team: on 30th of March, Terry presented the tree-hollow poster at the Australasian Bat Conference in Tasmania and won first prize!

The poster featured the 100 ancient trees that the Green Army had recorded and cleared of leaf litter, to protect the hollows in a bushfire event or a controlled burn. The poster stimulated extensive interest and discussion, both nationally and internationally. The Green Army is now recognised internationally, as initiating the first trials of the Tree-Hollow Protection project for the Mid Torrens Catchment Group. Well done, Landcare and Green Army.

Terry Reardon and Joan Gibbs, Mid Torren Catchment Group, Cudlee Creek.



The Green Army undertaking the gorse removal



Hollow-Tree Protection Project Survey

Upper Torrens Land Management Program & Upper River Torrens Landcare Group

Central Hills Green Army Team 2 in the Upper Torrens Catchment

A hot dry summer has provided a challenging environment for the team as they deal with extreme fire risk conditions and some thirsty work. Over the last couple of months Philip and the other participants have assisted the Upper Torrens Land Management Project (UTLMP) and the Upper River Torrens Landcare Group (URLG) to reach their environmental objectives and achieve reporting milestones.

Quite a few days were spent out at the Barossa Bush Gardens where the Grassy Groundcover Restoration Project (GGRP) have a large seed production area that requires regular maintenance and plant additions. Activities undertaken include weeding, planting tube stock, Blue Devil harvesting, Brush wire grass harvesting, removal of senesced Senecio species and the replacement of soil in some of the foam boxes.

An ecologically valuable property in our catchment known as Roskhill was the site for the Green Army team to be taught the tried and tested Gorse bush care techniques by a professional operator Paul Cooke. After a variety of demonstrations and explanations the team were let loose on the Gorse to contribute to the long and arduous task of effective woody weed control.

There were two sites that the team had to clean up branches and timber for the future direct seeding events that are scheduled to take place this autumn. One of the sites also had hundreds of Red Gums that needed to be removed before seeding could begin this year. Another couple of happy landholders to add to the list were Jo and Dorothy Evans of Gumeracha, they were burnt out in the fire and required a big clean-up of burnt trees and fallen timber, Philip and the gang turned what looked like a big job into a one day activity.

To their delight the enthusiastic group spent a morning with Jim Donnelly who instructed them on how to build three erosion control structures in the Angas Creek. The structures are designed to reduce creek bank erosion that is caused by a flowing body of water and greatly enhanced by varying degrees of vegetation degradation.

Thank you Philip and troops, we appreciate your dedication to the job at hand.

Thanks again Team!

**Andrew Fairney,
Grassy Groundcover Restoration Project Officer**

Erosion control





Weeding at the Barossa Bush Gardens nursery



Weeding at the Barossa Bush Gardens nursery



Grass seed collection



Grass seed collection



Propagation work at the Mt Pleasant Natural Resources Centre nursery

Green Army at Kersbrook Stone Reserve & Lobethal Bushland Park.

Kersbrook Stone Reserve is located within the Mount Lofty Ranges and is under Adelaide Hills Council management. The Reserve consists of 5 + hectares of remnant vegetation, located on the corner of Watts Gully Rd and Little Para Rd between Williamstown and Kersbrook in the Northern Mount Lofty Ranges.

This site contains two major plant communities. The southern section is *Eucalyptus goniocalyx* (Long leafed box) woodland with shrub understorey and the northern section is a rare *Eucalyptus camaldulensis* and *Eucalyptus leucoxylon* ssp. *leucoxylon* (red and blue gum) grassy woodland with a lily, sedge and orchid understorey. The reserve also hosts *Hakea* shrublands. A recent biodiversity assessment noted the vegetation as being in good condition, with several listed species (state and regional significance) which indicate (high) plant species richness. The site has notable avifauna, in particular the Yellow-tailed Black- Cockatoo which feeds on *Hakea carinata*.

Several other bird species were sighted during recent site surveys, also noted was marsupial habitat for the Yellow-footed Antechinus *Antechinus flavipes*. This bush land is a native vegetation "island" with intact understorey between the Mt Gawler Native Forest Reserve and Warren Conservation Park. It is an important habitat link for any future wildlife corridors.

Over the years the Kersbrook Landcare Group Inc have been assisting in management of the site with volunteer efforts including weed control, rubbish collecting and general maintenance contributing extensive volunteer hours. It is now a Bush For Life site, at which bushcarers undertake minimal disturbance Bushcare in partnership with the Council and Natural Resources, Adelaide Mount Lofty Ranges.

Phytophthora root rot, a form of 'dieback', is a disease that affects many native plants and is caused by a soil fungus called *Phytophthora cinnamomi*. The fungus is spread by contact with the spores which are found in the soil. In February, the Green Army assisted Council staff to install a Phytophthora Station at the site to reduce the risk of dieback at the site.

The Green Army also spent a day working alongside Council staff with some follow up treatment of a Gorse thicket at the lower dam at Lobethal Bushland Park.

Renae Eden
Biodiversity Officer
Adelaide Hills Council



Constructing a *Phytophthora cinnamomi* clearing station bridge

Participant Insights.

	<p>Aidan :</p> <p>Green Army has been a great experience, seeing all the amazing properties.</p>
	<p>Brandon :</p> <p>The Green Army project has been quite a good learning and experience curve for myself, I've gotten to adapt to a change in work since the last project because this one is quite different to my last, working in hills and extreme conditions at times, but overall it's been eventful.</p> <p>I've learned new skills and become better at my job, times have been challenging sure but nothing that we haven't completed as a team, one of the main things that helps us is having a good supervisor once Philip took over as boss.</p> <p>I enjoyed this job a whole lot more than the start we get pushed a whole lot more which does wonders for the team, and the work mates that have been chosen.</p> <p>I couldn't have asked for a better team, Manpower have done a great job in what they have done so far and the future looks good for this organisation.</p> <p>I'm happy with what I have gotten out of this job and hopefully this leads on to further work in the near future and I'm glad Manpower gave me the opportunity to work for their organisation, it's helped me quite a lot</p>
	<p>Ethan :</p> <p>I enjoy The work. I learned about fencing. Water erosion and creek bank preservation. Friendly group of people to work with. Really enjoyable work and a great learning experience.</p>
	<p>Hollie :</p> <p>My experience with the Green Army has been very rewarding, I have learnt a variety of new skills ranging from fencing to weed control. I have enjoyed working at the various locations throughout the hills. It will be a sad day when the project finishes.</p>
	<p>James :</p> <p>I still stand by my word saying this project is a great opportunity for young adults to get experience, training, an allowance and network with landowners and communities. With our project drawing near to its close, I have gained more experience in Landcare, prevention of erosion, fencing, chainsawing, and clearing of landscape debris, just to name a few. It is a shame the project is only 6 months.</p>

	<p>Jake :</p> <p>My experience with the Green Army has been amazing and influential. And the experience I have gained is vast and wide.</p>
	<p>Karl :</p> <p>My time in the Green Army has provided me with good skills and allowing me to gain experience. It's been good to get to work outdoors and contribute to the conservation of the surrounding Adelaide hills natural habitats.</p>
	<p>Matthew :</p> <p>Green Army has been a great experience, seeing all the amazing properties. Have great team members had many life time memories. But the best part is learning all the things I didn't know before and the experience for future work.</p>
	<p>Nathan :</p> <p>I've learnt so much for my 6 month program with the Green Army, I've learnt a massive amount of stuff that I can take into future jobs hopefully in the same field, great bunch of team members to work with which makes the whole experience.</p>

Team Motto : "Keep off the grass"

(Many meanings, and all are valid !)

