



Friends
of Black Hill
& Morialta

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Ghost Tree Gully Project Site

2019 Project Report

This year, saw and injection of NRM volunteer support officer funds to treat olives in less accessible areas. Contractors were employed to treat the olives.

A successful grant application enabled equipment to be purchased for 2 volunteers to be trained and kitted out with equipment for basal bark treatment of woody weeds. A further \$2250 in funding was used for further woody weed control from the same grant. This resulted in a substantial increase in the area of active olive and other woody weed management. Additional funds from the same grant were used to control erica in this project site.

A small area of Ornathogalum exists in the the Ghost Tree Gully site. Contractors have been employed to treat this weed with a strong herbicide (Ornathoglaum is resistant to most herbicides), and volunteers have followed up to remove any flower heads to prevent further spread of the weed.



Contrator treatment of olives in less accessible area



Contact treatment of Ornithogalum.

2018 Project Report

Ghost Tree Gully in Black Hill winds between Ambers Gully and the summit ascending some 200 metres so it provides a diversity of vegetation. In the upper reaches we get wattle, hakea, banksia and xanthorrhoea in the understorey while down near the suburbs in the old cattle grazing area we have open woodland with eucalypts, native pine and wattles. And everywhere is the intrusion of olive, pine, blackberry, boneseed and the like. In walking the gully over decades I've noticed particularly the advance of olives up the gully. In the upper reaches they are quite young and mostly below 2 metres against fully grown mature trees and thousands of young ones lower down. The problem with olives of course is their manners; they refuse to stay on our pizzas to move aside the hakea, banksia and eucalypts without a thought to diversity. And they do this happily. That is they are happy till they are rooted out. Together with John (Fels), Phil, Gerry, and my neighbours I've been removing the olives in a systematic way working down from the Yurrebilla track towards the Summit Link this winter. The area bounded by the upper reaches of the fire track up to the Yurrebilla track and west to the landslide of 2006 has the best of the remnant vegetation in the gully, but even there yielded some 400 mostly very recent invaders. We made some five passes over the area, each time coming up with fewer and smaller of olives.

We finished that area in August and have since moved down the gully in 20 by 60 metre swathes. It's always great to chat with walkers who are passing by. It's really great to introduce them to the work we are doing. Many feel the urgency of the work and comment on the scale of the need, both in the gully and elsewhere in the park. A challenge indeed! The work paradigm we follow is at first sight casual. We have no long-term set dates for the work, just long-term determination. I try to make it to two sessions a week. By sessions I mean a couple of hours and we only work when the soil is moist. We, all living locally, enter the park walking or, since ranger Dave Heard gave us a key, occasionally in a vehicle. That helps so much getting the equipment in and out.

The great thing is that the equipment, belonging to the Friends, is kept at home and so is always available. We believe our paradigm, if followed by others will go some distance to meeting the scale of the weed invasion in our bushland. So far this winter, we've removed almost three thousand olives along with a smaller number of other weeds. It's great exercise and a joy to be out in the greenery whether on a sunny day or not. We are always happy for an extra hand.



High quality habitat at the top of the gully.



Map of project area 2018.



Olives being worked on.



Flowering olive

If you would like to join Des and his merry Olive team, please contact the Secretary with your contact details for on-forwarding.

Des

2011 Project Report

Phil has served actively on the committee, and been an account signatory, as well as taking on the role of Project Coordinator for the Ghost Tree Gully project site.

Phil has provided many hours of voluntary work in the project site, keeping the Artichoke thistles under control, clearing the track, and waging war on the olives. He has also been heavily involved in neighbourhood watch, and his home has been a local safe house.

Phil is making himself a new home in the Barossa Valley after living in the area for about 20 years.

We wish Phil all the best in his new home, and hope his new community value him as much as we have.



Ghost Tree Gully,
November 2011 working on the boneseed.

October saw the discovery of an outbreak of Boneseed in the Ghost Tree Gully Project site, and the remarkable mobilisation of Friends to work through and hand pull all of the plants, and bag and remove the seed. A wonderful example of action of the group with short notice to address a specific task. Special thanks to Ann, Dennis and Reg!

2010 Project Report

Unfortunately, despite the best intentions, there has only been limited work carried out in Ghost Tree Gully last year. That does not mean that there was not heaps to do - invasive weeds continue to be a significant problem, particularly Olives, Bridal Creeper and African Daisy.

Artichokes remain relatively under control, except for inaccessible slopes. I probably won't get to do a sweep of them this growing season, so if anyone comes across artichokes, then please let me know, so I have get on to them.

Apart from weed control, I have also undertaken some track maintenance, clearing fallen trees from walking tracks following recent stormy weather.

Phil - Project Coordinator

2009 Project Report

Weed control remains the focus of activity in the Ghost Tree Gully project area.

Spraying continues on artichoke which is relatively easily controlled with Glyphosate. The main challenge is accessibility on some of the steep slopes. The Friends now have their own tree popper thanks to an equipment grant and I have been putting it to good use on Olives on the western slopes of the Sugar Loaves. It is a marvellous tool. Some follow-up work is required to drill and fill those olives which were too large to pull. Olives are very wide spread throughout the project area and will consume any amount of time that is available.



Ghost Tree Gully,
Fallen tree cleared from the path

This year I have also targeted some isolated outbreaks of St Johns Wort and Boneseed, both of which I'm very keen to make sure do not get established in the project area. Follow-up will be required in future years at these sites to control new germinations. Given what I have found I'm sure there will be more that I haven't seen so if you come across any please let me know.

While Bridal Creeper germination has been very strong again this year it is now pleasing to report that evidence of the effect of the introduced rust can now be seen in many patches of the Bridal Creeper. I look forward to seeing it spread throughout the project area.

Weeds targeted this year have included - Olive, Artichoke, Bridal Creeper, Cotton Bush, Watsonia, Scabious, Briar, African Daisy, St Johns Wort and Boneseed.

Some time was also spent on walking track maintenance.

I think Phil was being somewhat modest when he reported walking track maintenance. He manually cleared (over a 2 day period) a large tree which had fallen across a walking track after a controlled burn. See the photo above! - Editor.

John - Editor

2008 Project Report

Activity again this year has been focused on weed control. In addition to the work carried out by individuals we have been fortunate to have the assistance of a Friends work bee arranged by John and the Collaborative Schools Landcare activities coordinated by Graham. Thanks John and Graham for the assistance given with weed control in Ghost Tree Gully. Bridal Creeper has again been very active this year and is widely spread throughout the project area.



Ghost Tree Gully, October 2001

Unfortunately there is still little sign of impact from the introduced rust. Olive remains the main target species with many hours spent on hand pulling, cut and swab, drill and fill and use of a borrowed tree popper. I'm quite impressed with what can be achieved with a tree popper and look forward to the Friends obtaining our own. This year I have expanded the area of artichoke control high up on the north western slopes of the sugar loaves and most accessible plants have been sprayed. If you do notice any artichokes within the project area please let me know as I'm keen to keep them under control.

Weeds targeted this year have included - Olive, Artichoke, Bridal Creeper, Pine, Cotton Bush, Watsonia, Scabious, Briar, Brachychiton and African Daisy.

Only one of the native pines planted last year has managed to survive the very dry summer.

Thanks to all who have done work in the project area this year.

Phil - Project Coordinator

2007 Project Report

This season has been exceptional for weed growth though out the project area.

Of particular concern is the density of Bridal Creeper infestation. Small plants have shown up everywhere. The Bridal Creeper Rust which has been introduced into the area over recent years has survived last years dry conditions and continues to show signs of impact in the immediate

areas of introduction but I feel will be years before widespread impact is seen.

My dream of eliminating Artichoke from the area is now lost as there are now plants growing on inaccessible steep slopes. This year has shown an increase in the number of Artichoke plants but all those found in accessible terrain have been sprayed so it is just a matter of treating new plants each year.

The creek line which was heavily scoured out during the land slide and flash flood in November 2005 is showing heavy infestation of weed species and work is continuing on weed removal in the gully. African Daisy is particularly heavy in this gully as well as throughout the project area this year.

And of course the ever hardy Olive is still as prolific as ever and even some observation of new growth coming from stumps that have been supposedly been dead for ten years or more. Never any shortage of Olive to attack but we continue on our mission to reduce their numbers. Other weed species targeted during the year include Briar, Watsonia and Aleppo Pine.

Several Native Pine seedlings that were raised from seed were planted this year.

Phil - Project Coordinator

2006 Project Report

Last year I reported on the weed control being undertaken in the control burn area north of Addison Avenue. These weed control activities continued into this summer. The native vegetation regeneration growth survival rate was very high, so it is near impossible to walk through some of that area now.

Also last year, I mentioned we were looking forward with eager anticipation to the effects of the released rust on the Bridal Creeper, and I am pleased to report that it's effects are noticeable and hopefully the rust is now established to a level that it will keep existing infestations of Bridal Creeper in check.

Man hours spent on general weed control has been less than in recent years due to the availability of time - not a shortage of weeds, however John has kept up his regular weed extermination excursions in the project area. Thanks John.

The project area was subject to a rather freak event of nature when overnight on the 7th - 8th November 2005, following significant heavy rainfall, a landslide occurred at the head of the Ghost Tree Gully, which scoured out the entire length of the gully, effectively removing anything in its path, including the weed infestations that we have over the years been so diligently attempting to control! It was awesome to see the impact this event had on the area. Thanks to Mark Barritt, a comprehensive report of this event can be found by following [the link to his website](#)

(<http://www.blackhillpark.com/landslide>). It is well worth the look. While initially I thought it may be years before anything would grow in the scoured out gully, it is amazing to see how quickly weed infestations have returned - so no shortage of work for willing volunteers.

Phil, Project Coordinator

2005 Project Report

Over the past year the main focus has been on weed control in the control burn area on the western side of the park north of the Addison Avenue entrance. Following the burn the area became heavily infested with a variety of weeds and many hours were spent pulling weeds in this area with focus on preventing the spread of weeds into the areas of high conservation significance to the south east. I would like to thank John, Lola, and Colin for assisting with the weed control in this area. It is pleasing to know that parks have since done a study of the area and have committed to undertake weed control activities in this area. However on the bright side the amount of native vegetation regeneration is phenomenal and even given the dry summer the majority has survived and this will be a very interesting area to observe in the coming years.

For the first time this year we have released bridal creeper rust in selected patches and look forward with anticipation to its effect in future years. Thanks John for organising this.

The growing season this year has been especially favourable for African Daisy and it is disappointing to see it so wide spread throughout the project area, even in areas which have been heavily controlled in past years but no doubt the seed source will be around for many to come. Given the wide spread of African Daisy this year it will be impossible to control but I guess any effort does reduce the seed source.

Thankfully Artichoke remains relatively under control with only isolated plants occurring throughout the project area. If anyone notices plants in the project area please let me know so I can get on top of them.

Control efforts also continue on other unwanted pest plants such as Olive, Fennel, Briar, Box Thorn, Bone Seed, Pine and an assortment of other species that do not belong in our park.

Phil, Project Coordinator

2004 Project Report

Control of Olive and African Daisy has been the main the focus this year with some control efforts also on Bridal Creeper, Artichoke, Fennel, Briar, Box Thorn, Bone Seed and an assortment of other species that do not belong in our park. The Olive population is enormous but thousands of seedlings has been removed this year that we hope will have some impact on the future Olive problem.

At this stage we would seem to be losing the fight against Bridal Creeper and look forward to other methods of control such as rust or leaf hopper becoming available.

I would especially like to thank Mark for the tremendous effort he has put in again this year spending countless hours grubbing Olive and African Daisy and also keeping a keen eye out for some of the less populous weeds in the park. Your efforts are really appreciated Mark. I would also like to thank John for his ongoing work in the battle of controlling weeds in the Ghost Tree Gully Project Area.

Phil, Project Coordinator

2003 Project Report

Once again this past year the focus has been on weed control. Main weeds targeted this year has been bridal creeper, artichoke, african daisy, fennel, and of course olives. It is pleasing to see that the fennel area that was worked on two years ago is still relatively free of fennel. While isolated artichokes continue to be found it would appear that this pest plant is relatively under control within the project area, however some plants are out of reach on the very steep slopes so I expect we will never be without artichokes.

African Daisy is wider spread than I had first thought but except on inaccessible slopes it is relatively easy to control by hand pulling. Olives on the other hand are a major challenge and we have only scratched the surface of this problem. Once again I would like to thank John for his contribution to weed control in Ghost Tree Gully.

While we are unlikely to ever get on top of weed control in the area, every weed removed is one less that will set seed, and it is pleasing see our efforts have had an effect over the years.

Phil, Project Coordinator

2001 Project Report

The never ending battle against Bridal Creeper continues and will be a challenge for many years to come. Many thanks to John Fleming for his tireless efforts against this very invasive weed.

This year olives were removed from the creek line in the main gully. It is amazing how tough the Olive is with some stumps that have been apparently dead for years have started sprouting new shoots. The Olive remains a significant pest plant in the Ghost Tree Gully area. During next year it is hoped to remove the Olives from the creek line in the gully to the south of Ghost Tree Gully.

During summer a large area of Fennel was cut in Ghost Tree Gully in an attempt to start some control on this weed.

It is pleasing to see the rewards of Artichoke control over the years with the number of plants being significantly reduced in the project area. With the excellent winter growing season this year there are quite a number of plants but still a fraction of those that were present when the project to control them started

While there are many pest plant species within our area, by concentrating on the removal of a few species, it is hoped to make an impact on the area. However, when isolated species are found they are removed immediately to avoid further spread as occurred with a patch of Bone Seed found this year.

While the task at hand my sometimes seem enormous, every pest plant destroyed is one less that will not be these to spread seed next year.

Phil - Project Coordinator

2000 Project Report

Work in the Ghost Tree Gully area of Black Hill Conservation Park will continue in a similar manner to last year. The area covered spans -from the slopes of the first sugar loaf, around to tetragona trail, as far as Addison Avenue. The primary activity is weed control, although there will be some collection of propagation material ie: seeds and cuttings for re-vegetation work both in the Ghost Tree Gully area, and for the Wildflower garden.

Anticipated revegetation area in Ghost Tree Gully is the area where Fennel is being worked on. There is currently a small area of *Hardenbergia violacea* in this region. It is proposed in 2001 to extend this to cover the area where Fennel is controlled. Target weed species include:

- Artichoke Thistle *Cynara cardunculus*
- Boneseed *Chrysanthemoides monilifera*
- Bridal Creeper *Asparagus asparagoides*
- Olive Seedlings *Olea europaea*
- Salsify *Tragopogon porrifolius*
- African Daisy *Senecio pterophorus*
- Fennel *Foeniculum vulgare*
- Scabiosa *Scabiosa atropurpurea*
- Red Valerian *Centranthus ruber*

as seasonally appropriate.

Primary control methods for Artichoke Thistle and Bridal Creeper will be Glyphosate spray, for Fennel, wiping with Glyphosate solution. Other weeds to be hand pulled. Focus will be on initially controlling the edges of infestations, moving to areas of greater infestation.

Phil - Project Co-ordinator.

1999 Project Report

The focus this year has been on Bridal Creeper and artichoke control. With Bridal Creeper being so wide spread " this hardy weed will be a challenge for years to come but the spray program is proving effective.

Fortunately we are seeing impact on artichoke with plant numbers considerably decreased this year. This has enabled the control area to be extended further to the north and higher up the western slopes of the Sugar Loaves.

Philip
Project Coordinator

1997 Project Report

This year the focus as been on Artichokes and Bridal Creeper with some pleasing results. In previous years I have been grubbing Artichokes, which while relatively effective, was very time consuming and rate of progress frustratingly slow. This year I have started spraying with Roundup and this is very effective and time efficient and I hope to have Artichoke under control in Ghost Tree Gully in the next couple of years. I am very pleased that John has joined the project and is concentrating his efforts on Bridal Creeper. I believe that with continued effort it will be possible to control Bridal Creeper too in this area of the Black Hill Conservation Park. Thanks John.

Phil - Project Coordinator.



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2019 project report added