

PAIWALLA NEWS

April 2016



Welcome to New Members

We have been actively canvassing for some time for additional members for Paiwalla. We have been fortunate to approve 4 new unit holders. They are Andrew & Sue Johnson, Vincent Loye & Margaret Bourne, Heather Bean & Paul Grant, and Eric & Leanne Bloem.

They are a diverse group of people ranging from a welder/ boiler maker to a research officer with CSIRO and a couple of retirees.

We welcome you all and look forward to working with you. Your individual skills will be put to good use and will be valued in the management of Paiwalla.

Drawing down the Water Level in the Big Pond

It has always been the intention in the management of the wetland to create a wetting and drying cycle to imitate the state of the river prior to building of the barrages. The Wetland was last dry in 2013.

The water level is now low and only about 10% of the surface remains covered with water. Just a few ducks and pelicans are still enjoying the muddy edges. It is our intention to completely dry the pond and this should be complete before June when we will commence re-wetting using our environmental land management allocation (ELMA) water.

We have to utilise this allocation before June 30th.

A view in the wetland when last dry in 2013



Water Levels and Quality at Paiwalla

Submitted by Kate Mason /Gareth Oerman

Water levels in Paiwalla Wetland are currently very low (approximately 0.03 metres Australian Height Datum) as part of a planned drying of the wetland. This drying event is an important part of the wetland's water cycle to kick-start productivity.

This event is anticipated to reduce the high abundance of the introduced mosquito fish (*Gambusia holbrooki*) and non-filamentous green algae. It also is expected to encourage submerged plants to grow upon re-filling by consolidating the wetland bed sediments. Although the intrusion from groundwater makes it difficult to predict the time in which the wetland will be completely dry, refilling will hopefully commence in winter 2016.

Fish monitoring is conducted twice a year to show changes in fish assemblages in response to changes in water levels and quality.

As the wetland continues to dry, the total biomass captured is still comparable to recent surveys as the catch is now more concentrated, however the species diversity declines as only the more tolerant species

The Excitement of Re-wetting

It is exciting to watch the water re-enter the wetland and see the dramatic changes with the return of birds, fauna and flora.

It wasn't only the feathered variety that returned when the gate was opened on 31st January, day one of re-wetting in 2008.

This photo is of a member, who shall remain nameless.



Wetland Restoration on the Lower Murray, South Australia

Paiwalla Wetland owned by Wetland Habitats Trust and managed by Paiwalla Pty Ltd
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Roger Wickes

Creepy, Crawly

An interesting shot from Roger W. of a legless lizard he found in a hole he was digging on the south levee bank. Probably from the Family Scincidae – the largest lizard family with over 1500 species, of which many are limbless or nearly-limbless species, including (but not confined to) the genera Lerista from Australia.

Thank you Roger for your picture/article . Editors

Friends of Paiwalla

If you have friends who wish to be part of Paiwalla they can become a "Friend of Paiwalla" and will be included in the newsletter mailing list. They are also welcome to be involved in open days and working bees.

Send their email address to agtrax@hoykey.net.au

Our AGM

Our AGM was held on 29th November 2015 and the Minutes, Chairman's report and the annual Financial Statement are on the website for members to view. Among the items discussed was the appointment of new directors for Paiwalla Pty Ltd, the holding company over Wetland Habitats (Paiwalla) Assoc. Inc. These new directors are Greg Cock, Roger Wickes and Peter Fisher, and they join Steve Scown and Steve Barlow.

Our Most Recent Committee Meeting

The committee met on 15th March for the first occasion in 2016. Among items discussed were further signage requirements for Paiwalla and installation of the Canoe Trail signs over Easter.

A re-print was approved for our brochure which has been upgraded and for printing of generic Paiwalla business cards which will be available to all members. It was agreed to seek a quote for earthworks on the southern levee which is in need of some repairs.

An Invitation to Help

We continue with our 'Jobs List' so that any friend/member who wishes to visit Paiwalla can do so with a job in mind that they can undertake. If you would like to volunteer some time please contact Steve on 8536 2083 or 0418 853 911

See our 'Electronic White Board' to choose a job that you can perform for us. A few of those listed last newsletter have been crossed off and a few more added.

Spray equipment, chemicals and mower fuel are provided. Canoes, waders and some tools are available in the shed. We now have a new spray unit on the old mower

Canoe Trail

We have started putting in the sign posts in Paiwalla North, and have the signs printed and ready to attach. Fairly difficult putting in fence posts in a meter of water but we are refining the technique.

Willows

The three patches of Willows along the river levee have been drilled and poisoned so they are browning off and they will possibly need another go when we see what we may have missed. The Willows at Paiwalla North have been trimmed and the fronds taken to Monarto Zoo for the giraffes.

Lignum

The lignum bushes along the tracks are in need of a good trim, and if anyone got a new hedge trimmer for Christmas and would like to try it out please come along on any Thursday and test it.

Electronic White Board JOBS LIST

- Trim (with electric chainsaw) the lignum from the car park to Paiwalla North
- Tip run to Mannum tip (we have the tip passes)
- Install the Gauge boards (one inside the wetland and one in the river) May be best to do when the big pond is drawn down (LIKE SOON!)
- Spray Boxthorn - Boxthorn needs to be done regularly to get those that are missed or re-shoot
- Erect new signs
- Three buckets of fill in the track by the top gate.
- Remove pallets near the middle gate on the river levy
- Generate a scale map of Paiwalla and Paiwalla North so we can use it to identify job locations.
- Pick up a trailer of fallen timber
- Generate a scale map of Paiwalla and Paiwalla North to use in identifying job locations.

From Your Editors

Help needed.

We need the help of all members. Contributions of articles and/or photos of interest for our newsletter are greatly appreciated and assist your editors.

Photo Opportunity

We would also like to build up a comprehensive file of photos of Paiwalla. We do have many from earlier time but not a lot of recent records. It is expected that this file would be available to illustrate the website and the newsletter and become an historic archive over the years. Scenery shots, activity shots, fauna and flora and in particular good bird shots as the webmaster would like to add photo ID to our online bird list.

Photos can be sent in high resolution to

paiwallawetland@gmail.com

If your photos are used acknowledgement will be given.