
Paiwalla Newsletter #8 - Flood edition

1 message

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Paiwalla Update

Issue #8 - April 2023

Flood Edition



Header photo: Roger Wickes

Welcome to our autumn newsletter. It is a little late as we have been busy with other things following the flood.

The river peaked around mid-January, with water entering the wetland over the levee banks. The shed had water up to about chest height, and the roads were all impassable. As the water receded in February the implications of the high water were many. Species have died as they were underwater, some of our recent plantings have washed away, the levee has some serious erosion, and there are now weeds popping up everywhere, and carp have returned to the wetland. Also a fridge has floated onto the landing.

A big cleanup is on the calendar for the next few months.



The levee bank got a bit damp. Photo: H. Bean



*It's not every day you can take a tinny into the shed without using a trailer.
Photo S. Scown*



Or a flotilla of canoes.

This newsletter has a more detailed summary of how our species survived the inundation.(living and dead).

We also have a retirement notice from Judith Dyer, our longest serving finance person/co-ordinator/editor/and any other job we foisted upon her. Judith has been involved in the wetland since its beginning and we are currently handing over her duties to three people. Yes, she's that good.

The wetland was closed to the public while we sorted out our insurance. Due to the flood there has been an embargo on certain post codes by the insurance companies. Paiwalla was in one of the affected postcodes.

The wetland is open again now. Please seek permission as previously through our website or a private message. The combination lock has changed, so you will need to get in touch if needing access.

Paiwalla is back to its peaceful state, the levee banks can be walked around again, (but take care where there has been some erosion). Keep an eye on our Facebook page for current photos of the wetland.

Steve Scown



A slightly imperfect photo of Paiwalla at peak flood level. The green water to the bottom left is Paiwalla, the blue water top right is the Mypolonga floodplains after the levee broke.

Grants

We are still applying for grants. At the last AGM the Murraylands and Riverland Landscape Board granted us \$10k to cover the replacement of our stolen equipment. This has allowed us to replace our equipment and we are indebted to the board for this.

We also received the equipment required to construct an electric fence to protect the turtle laying season. This was a grant of \$8k from Gallagher, a New Zealand-based electric fencing company, and they are keen to see how our project goes. The floods have delayed construction, and we will proceed when the water levels get back to normal. This does mean we have missed the turtle egg-laying season of 22/23.

We have also received a total of \$20k from two private donors to assist us in getting a plan done for the installation of a water inlet. The engineering design has to be presented as a “spade ready” project to the funding bodies. The cost of an inlet structure is in the hundreds of thousands of dollars and they need to be shown that our project is viable before they consider funding.

Again the progress on this has been held up by the high river.

It seems that I have only mentioned bad outcomes from the flood. However, I believe the high water is in fact good for the wetland. The volume of water that has passed through the wetland has also taken with it a large volume of salt that would have been held in the clay. It has also provided water to areas that were previously only rain fed. It has also been a good flush out of the pockets of still water in Paiwalla North and Sunnyside.

Steve Scown



It's definitely not all bad news. Animals have been making the most of the conditions. Left, baby willy wagtails, right, dragonflies mating.

Photos: H. Bean

Plants and the flood

As the flood retreats we are seeing the death of most plants inundated for a period of time, especially rhagodias, ruby salt bushes and myoporums, but also many of our plantings of acacia, dodonaea etc below the flood line. What seems to be surviving and possibly thriving are red gums, lignum and possibly some sedges and melaleuca that are species adapted to being on the flood plains. As the water retreats we expect a mass germination, the balance of weeds and natives, will depend on the mix of seed available and the conditions. Only time will tell, it will be interesting to watch!

Heather Bean



Some of the plants haven't done too well, but the ones adapted to floodplains should get a real boost. As will the weeds. Photos: H. Bean, Kaye Evers

Post Flood Weed Support

The Murraylands – Riverland Landscape Board is offering post-flood weed control support to landholders affected by the floods. They also have a list of particularly nasty weeds to watch out for. These are yellow water lily , sagittaria,

cacti , African boxthorn , boneseed and golden dodder. Check out their website for more information.

<https://www.landscape.sa.gov.au/mr/projects/pest-plants/weed-warriors-of-our-waterways/post-flood-weed-support>

Time to Bow Out

But Judith just wants to have one last word!

After 22 years involvement with the Paiwalla Wetland, the past 11 of those as Treasurer, I have resigned from the committee of the Wetland Habitats and I'm in the process of handing over all my responsibilities.

Ceris Crosby has taken over as Treasurer and I am very confident your finances are in good hands. I wish her all the best. She has taken very readily to our new financial programme and our accounting system and is now accepting full responsibility but I am here to help as needed.

The newsletter is already being produced with a new flair. Thankyou Fred.

The website is next so you may see some changes there in the near future.

I wish to thank the committee and others for the overwhelming appreciation shown to me for doing what has been a special involvement for me. Thank you for the gifts given. I have made many friends over the years and seen much change and growth - all for the better. Our weekly workers and management do a great and dedicated job.

I am very passionate about the wetland, a place where I have spent many happy and memorable hours and it will remain so, visiting my favourite place whenever the opportunity arises.

Many thanks to you all.

Judith Dyer



Judith's thank-you presents - first, a photo by Eric Bloem of avocets



and these gorgeous magpies, warbling cheerfully in their new home.



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