
❖ WALKING SA News ❖

Volume 15 Issue 4

Summer 2007/08



Newsletter of the
**Walking Federation of
South Australia Inc**
14a Stuart Road,
Dulwich

All correspondence to
**Post Office Box 6067
Linden Park SA 5065**

Phone (08) 8361 2491

Webpage:
www.walkingsa.org.au
Email:
office@walkingsa.org.au

*Uniting all
people actively
concerned with
bushwalking.*

Walking SA is supported through the Office for Recreation & Sport and the Government of South Australia



Sue Barker

*Terrapinna Waterhole - North Flinders Ranges
The area around the waterhole is managed as a sanctuary by
Moolawatana Station.*

Featured in this edition of Walking SA News :-

- ❖ Words from the President
- ❖ ARPA Bushwalkers - Heysen Trail maintenance
- ❖ Adelaide Happy Wanderers - 25th Anniversary
- ❖ Report from the Walking Access Committee
- ❖ Towards a Standard Walk Grading System

be active. Find 30

**Opening of the Walking Season 2008
Sunday 6 April 2008
Celebrating parks and trails in the Stirling area**

President's words

The national peak body for bushwalking is Bushwalking Australia or BWA — a good title everywhere except in WA where it causes some confusion.

In November a meeting of BWA was held in Sydney and Bill Gehling and I represented you there. BWA is new, and is still coming to terms with its function. Clearly there is a need for an organisation to represent bushwalkers and lobby for them at the national level. However there is still some discussion along the “what’s in it for us?” line. This is exactly the same sort of attitude that prevailed in my professional society when it formed its national body 40 years ago. Well it costs each of you 50 cents per year and we will do our best to see that you get your money’s worth.

The meeting was surprisingly constructive and we decided to attempt to formulate policy and guidelines which would be useful to all state bodies. My task was to produce a simple and appropriate approach to risk management for all clubs to use. I’ve written the first draft and have circulated it to our interstate colleagues for comment. Bill has a few tasks, one of which is to determine how we can best work towards national policies.

The attitude of the representatives was best summed up as “utilising the combined wisdom of the state bodies”.

Another discussion centred around the idea of a standard method of describing walks. We already have methods of describing and classifying trails. There would be considerable advantages to standard walk descriptions in this peripatetic world despite problems associated with subjectivity.

All present had concerns with access and it was enlightening to hear each others’ problems. For example, the majority of WA walks are in the water catchment areas, where officially they are not supposed to go. This creates an interesting situation if there is an incident and someone needs to be rescued.

Chris Bushell
December 2007



Consolidating walking opportunities

- ◇ The effectiveness of this generation of walkers in securing access to attractive destinations will have a real impact on the opportunities available in the future.
- ◇ Simply, if more access had been identified and secured twenty years ago it would make things simpler today. Obviously, effort today, can achieve objectives that might be unattainable in twenty years time.
- ◇ All contributions to our trail system are welcome from monitoring use to promotion of new destinations.
- ◇ Perhaps you would like to share your perspectives or understand ours.
- ◇ No better way than to join us on some trail maintenance in 2008
- ◇ **Flinders Ranges** 28 March to 7 April
09 May to 19 May
20 June to 30 June
- ◇ **Barossa and Burnside**
By arrangement when the daily maximum does not exceed 25 degrees C!
- ◇ If you have an interest please make contact, phone 08 8362 1595
email, suerob2@bigpond.com
- ◇ Check out our web page,
www.walkingtrailssupportgroup.org.au

Note: The website also features information on various walks including the Terrapinna Tors Walk which is an introduction to Terrapinna Granite Country and features the waterhole shown on the front cover.

Member Group
Adelaide Happy Wanderers
25years of walking.

In 1982 four keen walkers, Keith Herbig, Bart van der Wel, David Trebilcock and Colin Litchfield began regular monthly bushwalks for Adelaide's gay community. They named the club - Adelaide Happy Wanderers (AHW).

The Adelaide Happy Wanderers walking club has provided a healthy outdoor activity, with opportunities for social interaction. It has operated continuously "rain or shine" for 25 years. Close friendships and long lasting relationships have been formed through walking with the AHW. It is one of the longest operating gay social groups in Adelaide.

The Adelaide Happy Wanderers has participated in a range of outdoor activities ranging from day walks in the Adelaide Hills, to weekend trips in the Flinders Ranges and The Grampians. Walkers have also joined with similar interstate walking clubs for combined activities.

In 1992 Adelaide Happy Wanderers celebrated 10 years with a walk and overnight stay at the Mt Lofty YHA Hostel and in 2002, the 20 years celebration was at the Mylor YHA hostel. The group will celebrate the 25th anniversary with a combined Reunion - Xmas party.

The success of AHW has been attributed to the many willing volunteers who have researched and reliably led the monthly walks.

ATTENTION
WALK LEADERS

Forestry SA Rangers have asked that clubs provide prior notification of all planned walks in forest areas, giving the approximate number of participants and details of the proposed walk route. This would apply to all walks throughout the year.

Contacts: Mt Crawford Forest
Phone (08) 8524 6004
Kuitpo Forest
Phone (08) 8391 8800

Emergency Beacons Come of Age

Up until a short time ago, EPIRBs (electronic position indicating radio beacons) were analogue in nature, 'anonymous' when operating, and generally able to only provide rescue authorities with a position accuracy of around 20 km. As would be expected, finding a person or group in trouble on the land over such distances could be difficult.



Quite recent technology upgrades have brought us into the digital era with position accuracies around 5 km. Digital units transmit a coded signal which can (if registered) identify the device owner and enable rescue-authority contact with other persons pre-nominated by the owner. Such devices have been prohibitively expensive for the average outdoor enthusiast.

However, as recently as June 2007, Australian electronics company GME received approval to release a newly developed beacon incorporating cutting edge digital technology plus GPS (global positioning system) technology, achieving an 'official' position accuracy of around 120 metres although GME tests suggest that the typical accuracy is < 45 metres.

The price? Down from thousands to around \$600 for a PLB (personal locator beacon) which weighs around 250 grams and is designed for land use by bushwalkers, 4wd buffs etc. Surely a vital item of equipment for those travelling in isolated locales without other means of communication.

Further reading on beacons and search & rescue arrangements may be found at http://www.amsa.gov.au/Search_and_Rescue/#0gen

Walking SA's Committee 2007/2008

Chris Bushell (President)
Bill Gehling (Vice President)
Liz O'Shea (Hon. Secretary)
Chris Moad
Myra Betschild
Merilyn Browne
Ron Jackson
Joan Moody

Walking Access Committee

Arthur Ward
Thelma Anderson
Mary Denton
John Eaton
Fran Lucas

Walking Access Committee

At a recent meeting with Onkaparinga Council in October, various issues relating to the availability of walking areas were discussed, including the following.

Woodcutters Road. This location remains in dispute following Council's decision to close and retain the road for conservation purposes, permitting passive pedestrian access and excluding vehicular access, including horses and bikes. Following a Council meeting on 17 July, 2007 Walking SA was advised of a resolution "that Horse SA (representing horse-riding groups who have expressed a strong desire to see this section of road reserve developed for their use) be given the opportunity to provide a proposal to Council outlining how a multi-use trail could be constructed and maintained along this section of road reserve". The resolution further proposed that the closure of a portion of Woodcutters Road "not be pursued at this time to allow the submission of a proposal by Horse SA for a multi-use trail along this section of the road reserve", given specified criteria relating to environmental sustainability, and that this proposal be presented to a future meeting of Council, prior to July, 2008. A position to either close or open the road can then be determined. Woodcutters Road therefore remains accessible for continuity of walking between Ackland Hill Road and Pole Road, provided walkers can accurately identify the correct alignment of Woodcutters Road.

Lafferty Road. An environmental Management Plan for Lafferty Road at Clarendon has been developed in regard to the establishment of a multi-use recreational trail to connect Lafferty Road to Marshall Road following the re-location of the boundary of Lafferty Road adjacent to private property. It is expected that the requirements set down by the Native Vegetation Council will be in place by April, 2008 and access will then be available in this scenic area.

Sturt River Linear Park. A Sturt River (Coromandel Valley) Linear Park Draft Concept Plan has been released by Onkaparinga Council inviting public comment until 30 November, 2007.

Kelly Road. A reminder has been sent to Onkaparinga Council regarding the installation of a stile from Kelly Road to enable walkers to access an internal track on adjoining property leading to Lovick Road. Completion of this project will provide continuity of walking access between Wilfred Taylor Reserve at Wheatsheaf Road, Morphett Vale and Clarendon.

Drivers Road. Consultation was recently held with Adelaide Hills Council relating to general maintenance required in order to improve access and signage for walkers using this area from Piccadilly Road to link various undeveloped road reserves leading to the Heysen Trail and the Mount Lofty Botanic Garden. The route was identified and marked by volunteers from Walking S.A., with co-operation and assistance from neighbouring landowners, but on-going maintenance is required.

Udys Road. Adelaide Hills Council is also co-operating with Walking SA to provide a potential extension or variation of the Drivers Road walk by access to an undeveloped road reserve leading to Atkinson Road at Piccadilly. Further possibilities will then be available to link to the Heysen Trail. Negotiations are continuing.

Legislation. Our pleas to public servants to recommend to our legislators suggested minor amendments for the protection of undeveloped road reserves to ensure safe walking access throughout the scenic countryside of this State continue to fall on deaf ears. Following failed attempts and appeals to various Ministers and a Petition to Parliament, support was sought from Nick Xenophon. That at least resulted in an interested enquiry from a member of his staff, possibly a volunteer, but with plans for the evolution of Mr. Xenophon's politics to a higher level, no further action is expected. In the meantime we must depend on the "Government Gazette" and the small number of local government authorities who do not accept applications from landowners to purchase adjoining public land, viz. undeveloped public road reserves.

Thelma Anderson

Mount Lofty Walking Trails

Not all walkers would be familiar, or even aware, of the existence of a valuable network of walking trails throughout the northern and central areas of the Mount Lofty Ranges, located in similar style to the Heysen Trail – along undeveloped road reserves, through forests and parks and, wherever possible, away from vehicular traffic lanes. They pass through some of the most scenic areas of the Ranges and prior to the advent of the Heysen Trail fulfilled the needs of those searching for a recreational walking experience.

The National Fitness Council of South Australia developed the walking trails between Gawler and Mylor during the late sixties and early seventies, planning to publish a series of booklets – A, B, C, and D. Only the first two books, A – between Gawler and Chain of Ponds and B – between Chain of Ponds and Mylor, were actually published in 1971 and 1975. Book C was prepared but was not published. Yellow metal triangular markers delineated the various routes of the network of trails throughout the Ranges and many are still in place today.

In 1974 the activities of the National Fitness Council of South Australia were absorbed within Government by a newly created Ministerial portfolio entitled Department of Tourism, Recreation and Sport. Initially, the main focus of this department became a continuation of the activities of the National Fitness Council, namely the marking and maintenance of the network trails. Under Government responsibility, the name of the walking network was changed to Mount Lofty Walking Trails and continued to be patronised enthusiastically by walkers aided by specially prepared maps that replaced the “network” books. With the rapid progress of the Heysen Trail in the late eighties and its eventual completion in 1992, efforts to complete the marking and mapping of the Mount Lofty Walking Trails were resumed but with changed responsibilities within related Government Departments, the Mount Lofty Walking Trails system, despite its recreational asset value to the State, has now been totally neglected and virtually discarded by Government.

This has not in any way detracted from the value and importance to walkers seeking expansion of their recreational experiences as publications of both the network books and the Mount Lofty Walking Trails maps remain in limited circulation and the trails



system itself retains an important asset value to relevant government agencies.

A minimal investment by government to restore and maintain the trails is critical, with particular attention being given to creek crossing infrastructure. Recreational authorities both interstate and overseas now recognise the wisdom and safety of negotiating access across streams that experience periodic flooding by means of specially constructed and installed stepping stones, replacing high risk flimsy foot bridges that are often destroyed by debris floating at high speed on the surface during extreme weather conditions.

It has now become a matter of priority in the interests of both the walking community and the tourism industry of South Australia for all walkers to seek support directly from our respective local Member of Parliament and in addition write to the Hon. Gail Gago, M.L.C., Minister for Environment and Conservation, 91-97 Grenfell Street, Adelaide, urging action for the reinstatement of these trails. Compared with the construction of the Heysen Trail, the task is a simple one and would attract volunteers from within the walking community, through Walking SA, to participate in the restoration of the Mount Lofty Walking Trails System and thus enhance walking opportunities in South Australia. Numbers are critical, but effective!

*Thelma Anderson,
Walking Access Committee*

Towards a Standard Walk Grading System

This article is based on a presentation given at the recent BWA meeting in Sydney by John Marshall from Queensland. John looked at a number of systems of walk classifications used by various clubs and suggested that use of a set of standard descriptors might make the nature of any walk widely understood. There is already considerable investment in methods of track and trail classification. This idea is separate and applies to individual organised walks. There is no suggestion that such a system be made compulsory. In a world where we travel often and far there are clear advantages when considering the programmes of clubs other than our own.

1. Distance descriptor

S	Short - Under 10 km per day.
M	Medium - 10 - 15 km per day.
L	Long - 15 - 20 km per day.
X	eXtra long - Over 20 km per day.

One might argue that the actual distance in kms would be a better descriptor, but here we are considering the possibility of multiple day walks. We would probably need a VS classification as well.

2. Terrain Grading descriptor

1	Path with smooth surface and low gradient.
2	Well-formed path or graded track with some minor obstacles.
3	Graded track, with obstacles such as rock or root intrusions, fallen debris, or creek crossings.
4	Rough, unformed track or open terrain, with obstacles such as rock or root intrusions, fallen debris, or creek crossings.
5	Rough or rocky terrain that may require use of hands, and/or creek rock hopping that requires small to moderate steps. Fallen debris possible.
6	Steep, rough or rocky terrain requiring use of hands, and/or creek rock hopping requiring moderate to large steps or jumps. Fallen debris possible.
7	Climb or descend steep rock, using hand or foot holds. May be some exposure. Good upper body strength required.
8	Climb or descend near vertical rock with exposure, using widely spaced or small hand or foot holds. Climbing skills may be required. Good upper body strength required.
9	Sustained climbing or descent of vertical or near vertical rock with exposure, using widely spaced or small hand or foot holds. Advanced climbing skills may be required. Good upper body strength required.

3. Fitness and endurance grading descriptor

A	Basic - Generally suitable for new bushwalkers. Up to four hours of walking and possibly minor hills. Slower pace with frequent breaks.
B	Easy - About five hours of walking and up to 300m of elevation gain/loss per day.
C	Moderate - About six hours of walking and up to 600m of elevation gain/loss per day. Agility required.
D	High - High fitness, endurance and agility required. Up to eight hours of walking and about 1000m of elevation gain/loss per day.
E	Challenging - Very high fitness, endurance and agility required. Up to or more than twelve hours of walking and greater than 1000m of elevation gain/loss per day.

This might be split into two descriptors, one for the expected duration and a second for the altitude aspects. We also need a VB classification.

Cont from P7

4. Activity descriptor

ABS	ABSeil.
BC	Base Camp.
DW	Day Walk.
TW	Through Walk (two day walk with overnight stop).
ETW	Easy Through Walk (two day walk with overnight stop).
NW	Night Walk.
CYC	CYClE.
FMR	Federation Mountain Rescue.
KYK	KaYaK.
ROG	ROGaine.
SOC	SOCial Activity.
S&T	Safety & Training.
F	Activity organised under Family Group condition.

This caters for activities that most of our clubs don't have. However to be comprehensive you would need to include them. You may need even more. Alternatively you may need to use these descriptors in combination!

Examples I guess the use of the descriptors is fairly obvious:

S1ADW	A day walk of less than 10kms on easy terrain. Sounds like a stroll in the linear park.
L5CDW	Sections of the Great North Walk were like that.
X9EABS	Sorry, I'm busy that day.

Conclusion

To me, this sounds like a project worth developing. Being forewarned is forearmed as they say. There are safety and risk management aspects in favour of such an idea. Certainly there are problems of accuracy and subjectivity. Other issues, such a whether a walk has been surveyed need to be considered. I look forward to your feedback. I suggest that we investigate this together at the next General meeting in February.



'Just Walk It' is a free community based walking program. It provides participants with the opportunity to engage in regular physical activity while developing social contacts within their community.

'Just Walk It' has incentive awards that acknowledge involvement at a range of milestones and offers walk organisers free CPR training and free Personal Accident insurance.

For more information call 1300 36 2787

Heysen Trail Maintenance by ARPA Bushwalkers

Bushwalkers are indebted to many individuals and groups that develop and maintain our walking trails. The Australian Retired Persons' Association (ARPA) Bushwalkers are one such group. Many people from this group have walked and enjoyed the entire marked Heysen Trail from Cape Jervis to Parachilna Gorge. Near the completion of one such expedition, our group lunched at a ruin by the trail along Wild Dog Creek Road near Murraytown. It was there that a decision was made to maintain a section of the Trail in return for appreciation of those who had developed the Trail. Later the decision was made to request the section between Hughes Gap and Melrose. This was available, was reasonably accessible for ageing bodies but would enable us to go away as a group and enjoy the camaraderie of our fellow walkers.

Our first maintenance camp was held in 2000 and has been held annually since. Much of our work has involved clearing the under and overhead growth so that walkers can swing around unimpeded with a backpack. Most of our section requires little clearing but the areas within Wirrabara Forest require work on an annual basis. Then there is the installation and replacement of markers to help people find their way. The red colour of the Heysen Trail logo fades readily when facing the northern sun. There is also the occasional repair of stiles.

Later, the section was extended south to Georgetown and to the summit of Mt Remarkable. The work has also included two re-routes. The first was to replace the existing 'ball bearing' track up Mt Remarkable along the newly graded track which followed the contours to the summit.

The other re-route was west from Murraytown along undeveloped road reserves with a view of Mt Remarkable in the distance, thus avoiding all the previous monotonous road walking. We have learnt that maintenance involves much more than track work. It also involves establishing and maintaining relationships with Forestry and National Park Rangers as well as landowners adjoining our route.

The camp in September of this year was our most energetic so far. A decision had been made to mark the Trail to the new Australian standards thus having a consistent and more visible form of marking. Much of the existing Trail had a multitude of different signs, many of which were faded, damaged and attributed management to previous departments of government. The old round brown posts with their indented painted red arrows are considered outdated and were to be replaced by new rectangular or square posts. Admittedly many were broken or rotted and placed so deep into the ground that grass obscured the arrows. We have about 160 kms of trail to maintain, so there was a lot of work in remarking the Trail. Our 2007 team of labourers completed 54 days of work on two trips north. The amount of work undertaken can be gauged by the fact that the team removed and replaced where necessary a total of 116 posts, 120 old markers and 83 of the old red triangles. It was hard work. Although there were existing holes for the replacement of posts, these posts still had to be carried to the site, some of which was inaccessible to 4WD. We were grateful to SA Water for allowing access along the ridge from Beetaloo to the Bluff without which there would have been much energy expended carrying posts along this stretch of track. We still have a similar amount of work remaining for next year.

This year we stayed at the Laura Caravan Park, where we were treated well by the Resident Caretaker Robyn. We had our evening happy hour where we planned for the following day. Then it was a group evening meal enjoying the efforts of one of our gourmet cooks or maybe the excellent meal provided by the hotel across the road.

We maintain that we do this work in appreciation of the efforts of those who have developed and maintained the Trail so far and also for our fellow walkers to continue to enjoy the Trail. Additionally we do it for our own satisfaction. Part of this satisfaction is gained from working and living with our fellow workers from ARPA

Mary Cameron



ARPA Bushwalkers - Heysen Trail Volunteers.

B Chris Bushell, George Adams

*L-R Tom Davidson, Ian Pool, Thelma Anderson,
Mary Cameron, Ron Batten, Eileen & Lou Bordas*