

From the President's Tent...

The Friends of the Larapinta Trail would like to welcome you to season 2016!

We have a wonderful array of events, walks and working bees scheduled for the Larapinta Trail this year. Please visit our website www.friendsofthelarapintatrail.org.au for our calendar of events.

Some of the highlights include an information night at Lone Dingo on the 21st April to help you get started with planning a walk on the trail.

Committee member Sue Chambers is walking every section of the Larapinta this season and she would love for you to join her. Email info@friendsofthelarapintatrail.org.au for more details.

Our first working bee is scheduled for this Sunday 10th April. Morning tea is being provided by our fantastic sponsors at Central Fruit and Veg, it would be great to see you there.

You will find us at the Todd Mall markets on the last Sunday of every month, so please drop by and say hello.

Thank you to all of our corporate sponsors old and new whose generous support allows us to continue promoting and maintaining this amazing, world class walking trail.

And a very special thank you to all of our hard working committee members who have done so much to help make all of this happen.

I look forward to seeing you on the trail soon.

All the best,

Richard Mayne, President FOLT



Section 4 - photo by Phil Cowan

Upcoming Events:

- Sun 10th April:** Working Bee. Meet at the Simpsons Gap picnic area at 9am - 12pm.
- 16th & 17th April:** Section 2 - overnight walk. Simpsons Gap to Jay Creek.
- Sun 17th April:** Heritage Week Markets at the Alice Springs Telegraph Station. 9am til 1pm.
- Thurs 21st April:** Product Information Night. 5.30pm at Lone Dingo.
- Sun 24th April:** Todd Mall Markets. 9am - 1pm.
- Sat 7th May:** Section 3 - Jay Creek to Standley Chasm.
- Sun 8th May:** Angkale Junction Walk. Section 3 from Standley Chasm. 8am - 12pm

More information and a copy of our full events calendar is available on the website.



Leader Training Session

13th March with Holger from Trek Larapinta

With more walks and events on offer, comes more responsibility... the committee is working hard to ensure that members are safe and well prepared at Friends events. This year we had our first ever leader training session, led by experienced wilderness guide and operations manager of Trek Larapinta, Holger Strie.

Holger took us through different scenarios and logistics in relation to group management and leading a walk. This included people with different walking speeds, communicating breaks and stops, leading from the front and back and emergency procedures. We also talked about the effect of hunger, blisters and not knowing how to use your gear! The importance of pre-planning and making sure your group is well informed and prepared was the biggest take home message.

Making sure that people are capable of completing the walk before they set foot on the Trail is important, so that we don't have anyone at risk, minimise the likelihood of turning back and make sure the walk is enjoyable for all involved. A big thank you to Holger for sharing his valuable expertise!

2015 VOLUNTEERS OF THE YEAR!

A big congratulations to Andrea and Valerian Celofiga who were our 2015 Volunteers of the Year!

Andrea and Valerian are both so dedicated and have attended almost every short walk, working bee and meeting! They are hard working, enthusiastic and very fun to be around. It is so great to have people onboard that are committed and always willing to lend a hand. You may have even heard Andrea on ABC radio talking about what it is like to be a Friend of the Larapinta Trail...

(what you may not know is that she did that interview from her mobile phone half way up Mt Gillen!)

This year the couple are on a mission to complete the entire Trail and Section 1 marked their very first overnight hike. We are also incredibly grateful to Andrea and Valerian for initiating a \$160 donation from Whittles to recharge our Satellite Phone. AND they both look smashing in their brand new Friends T-shirts awarded at our 2015 AGM.



GET YOUR FOLT T-SHIRT NOW!!



\$25

Available in Mens (Olive or Royal Blue) - sizes S, M, L & XL and Womens (Royal Blue or Red) - sizes 10, 12, 14 or 16).

Larapinta Trail Map Package \$38

Available through Friends of the Larapinta Trail - all profits go back into promoting and maintaining the Trail.



Find us on
Facebook

'Like' our page for reminders about upcoming events and other info related to the Larapinta Trail.

2016 RAFFLE!

We are holding another raffle this year with some BRILLANT prizes donated by our incredibly generous sponsors:

1st PRIZE: \$250 (single) or \$500 (couple) for any Life's an Adventure Tour!

2nd PRIZE: \$150 Lone Dingo voucher!

3rd PRIZE: \$100 Milner Meat voucher!

4th PRIZE: \$50 Tempo voucher from Lasseters.

You can buy tickets at our upcoming market stalls and events.

If you'd like to help raise money for the Friends, let us know and we'll get you a book of raffle tickets to sell at work or to friends and family!

TICKETS ARE 1 for \$2 or 3 for \$5

and will be drawn in June at our general meeting (all welcome).

Volunteers Needed!

Friends of the Larapinta Trail is run purely by volunteers and relies on the theory that many hands make light work! Can you help?

We'd love some assistance with leading or co-leading walks, fundraising, social media, sourcing donation boxes, merchandise development, helping at the market stalls, walker transfers and helping with morning tea / lunches at events.

Would you like to support FOLT by placing an ad in our newsletter?

1/4 page for \$75 or 1/2 page for \$150

PART 2. (VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR PART 1 IN THE SEPT. 2015 NEWSLETTER)

EARLY DAYS OF THE LARAPINTA TRAIL

By Alan Ginns, former Planner with the Conservation Commission NT

The first part of Stage 1, from the Telegraph Station to the Charles River Bridge, was actually flagged in detail on the ground by Louis Beens and my brother Andrew Ginns when he was in Alice on university work experience with the CCNT. So interestingly there was one of the longest serving CCNT staffers and a member of the Executive (Louis was head of the Resources Planning Unit, overseeing all park planning and development across the NT) and one of the newest, and temporary, employees working together to give birth to the first few hundred metres of the Trail!

With a little bit of the route built, initially by the team from the ASTS I remember, the Larapinta Trail was then "officially opened" – several times! One of the earliest was by Marshall Perron who cut the ribbon on Stage 1 in the hills just north of ASTS even before the Trail had been built across to the Stuart Highway. My brother dressed as a bushwalker and Sue Cawood from the CCNT office also in backpacking gear, then boldly strode off up the track for the assembled media and got around a corner about 100 metres away, where the track then finished, and sat behind a rock until the media and VIPs had left.

Our early Lara Trail efforts focused on the Alice Springs end, working logically westwards. This made for ready access from the office, while we were still finding our feet (so to speak) in the Trail routing, design and construction business. The thinking was also that these sections, being close to town, were likely to receive higher levels of walker use (even if these were large numbers of day walkers, rather than overnight backpackers) – and healthy usage numbers were always going to be useful when making the case for extra, or continued, funding.

The involvement of the Alice Springs Prison work crews was key to the Lara Trail's relatively rapid construction, and proved very cost effective. Under the supervision of some Wardens with sound construction skills and an eye for detail (especially in stonework), and enthusiasm for the project, the

work crews generally did a fantastic job. Parts of Simpsons Gap National Park were actually gazetted as prisons, so the prisoners could legally camp there overnight while working on the Trail. As well as being an invaluable labour source, the prison work crews were also a good media "hook" to help get coverage and establish or raise the Lara Trail's profile. Stories of the Trail and its unusual construction method appeared in the national and international media – including coverage by Time Magazine, and a story headed "Inmate Aborigines Build Australia Hiking Trail" which was picked up by numerous high profile newspapers in the USA.

Work on the early stages of the Trail was literally on a "just in time" basis. I recall pegging the location of "track works" on parts of the flagged route by torchlight or moonlight, to keep ahead of the prison works crews who would be there the next day. Parts of Stage 2 and 3 were being routed on-ground by myself and my brother working only a day ahead of Peter King (the CCNT's "gun" Interpretation Officer) and locals Bob and Kaye Kessing, who were following our freshly marked route to put the brochures and track notes together. At one point we were dropped ahead by helicopter, just east of Standley Chasm, and camped with them that night when they up to caught us. We had steaks and Zambucca while they, being about 5 days backpacking out of Alice, were down to mung beans and rice – I can't remember if they shared!? The Trail Brochures had a long production lead time, so it was necessary to sometimes get work on these happening even before construction of a section had started.

Under the guidance of Peter King, Bob Kessing (pictures, layouts and production) and Denis O'Byrne (words) prepared several of the early guide brochures for the Trail. Bob was particularly creative, and on the cover of one of the early brochures he was drawing from a photo of Peter King taken en-route, but changed him into a woman for gender balance reasons. However if you looked closely the legs were a dead giveaway !



HERITAGE FESTIVAL MARKET / OPEN DAY AT THE TELEGRAPH STATION - 17th APRIL from 9am - 1pm
TODD MALL MARKETS - 24th APRIL from 9am - 1pm

Visit us to find out more about upcoming events, get a copy of the newsletter, find out more about the Larapinta Trail and becoming a Friend. Don't forget to support the Friends by buying a raffle ticket or t-shirt!

Simpsons Gap Working Bee

WHEN: Sunday 10th April
WHERE: Simpsons Gap Campsite
TIME: 9am - 12pm

This working bee will focus on weed eradication at the Simpsons Gap campsite, brushcutting and pruning on the Trail and giving the sand tent pads a spruce up.

Bring a hat, sunscreen, sturdy shoes and wear old clothes.

Central Fruit and Veg are kindly donating some fresh produce for morning tea.

Email info@friendsofthelarapintatrail.org.au to RSVP or phone Phil on 0408 488 149.

Product Information Night

WHEN: Thursday 21st April
WHERE: Lone Dingo in the Todd Mall
TIME: 5.30pm - 7pm

Our dedicated sponsors at Lone Dingo are hosting a great, start of season event to bring you up-to-date with the latest gear.

This is a great chance to ask questions, learn more about the Trail and to hear valuable safety advice from NT Parks and Wildlife Rangers.

A perfect event for people new to hiking.

Email info@friendsofthelarapintatrail.org.au to RSVP or phone Kylie on 0418 477 450.



Trail Tip #7

It's the start of the walking season and a good checklist can be your best friend! Make a list (we can send you one to get started!) and add to it as you need. Lists for meals and associated ingredients are also worthwhile to make your pre-trip workload a little easier.



*The descent from Mt Sonder,
Photo by Nadia Gardner*

SPONSOR IN THE SPOTLIGHT:



This year we have Mark and his team on board from Life's an Adventure. They have very generously donated \$250 for a single or \$500 for a couple towards any of their Australia wide tours as a prize in our raffle. Definitely a prize worth winning!

Life's an Adventure provide quality ecotours in Tasmania, Sydney, the Blue Mountains and of course, the Larapinta Trail in Central Australia. As their name suggests they specialise in adventure activities such as hiking, mountain biking, abseiling and canyoning as well as 4WD tours in NSW.

If you want to find out more visit their website:

www.lifesanadventure.com.au or give them a call on (02) 9975 4553.

PROGRESSIVE WHOLE TRAIL WALK 2016!

This year our amazing Vice President Sue has committed to walking the entire Trail between April and September!

You can find the dates in a calendar on our website (in addition to our short walks and working bee calendar).

Numbers are limited so get in quick to reserve your space! Availability is completely dependent on how many vehicles we have to do transfers. If you can't do the walks, but are interested in a nice drive or overnight camp at some spectacular locations, we'd love your help with transferring walkers to the start and finish spots!

To join the walks you need to call Sue on 0418 129 080 and attend an Information Session on the Thursday before the walk. Sue will be asking potential walkers questions to make sure they are fit and prepared enough for an overnight hike on some difficult terrain. This is simply to make sure everyone has a safe and enjoyable experience on the Larapinta Trail.



Parks and Wildlife Commission NT update

Hi everyone and welcome to another year on the Trail.

The park is looking great after the summer rain and the rangers have been hard at work starting to clear the Trail ahead of the walking season. They will continue to be out and about over the next few weeks busily brushcutting, replacing worn Trail markers, checking water tanks, and pruning each section.

We have also been busy in other areas, with 2 new campsite shelters currently under construction. The first is at 4/5 junction, just to the north of Birthday Waterhole. This is part of our continuing efforts to provide separate campsites for Larapinta Trail walkers, away from vehicle based camping. The campsite will have a shelter with sleeping platforms and shelving, 2 rainwater tanks and a hybrid toilet. The water tank at Birthday Waterhole has now been removed so walkers need to go to the new campsite to refill their bottles.

The other new campsite is at Hugh Gorge, just to the west of the location of the small shelter and water tank. Again, the same level of facilities are provided and we hope that this will go a long way



Trail Shelter at Finke River (Section 10)

in reducing toileting waste issues at both these locations.

Finally, many of our staff have been busy working on the 4th edition of the Larapinta Trail map package. We have quite a number of changes to update, including the new campsites and some of the recent realignments. The package will be available soon so keep an eye out for that. I hope you all have a great year on the Trail, and that you also stay safe as well.

*Phil Cowan,
Senior District Ranger - West*

LARAPINTA EXTREME WALK - Fundraiser for NPY Women's Council

In 1980 Aboriginal women of the Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (NPY) lands formed the NPY Women's Council giving a voice to Anangu and Yarnangu women and their families from 26 desert communities throughout 350,000 sq km of WA, SA and the NT. At its core, NPY Women's Council is all about family and community, addressing issues such as substance abuse, domestic violence, child protection, policing, and the needs and aspirations of young people.

A volunteer team of walkers and support crew from across Australia will come together in May to tackle the length of the Larapinta Trail from Mt Sonder to Alice Springs in order to raise \$50,000 to fund the continuation of Law and Culture meetings.

Law and Culture Meetings are considered one of the most empowering, unifying and important aspects of these women's lives and provide an opportunity to:

- exchange of traditional knowledge;
- celebrate women's law through dance and ceremonial cycles;
- promote the valued status of senior Aboriginal women from the regions' communities;
- strengthen the connection of younger women to their heritage and cultural practices; and
- reunite families and friends from across the wide reaching NPY communities, sharing in rituals of celebration, reconciliation and grief that they are not able to share through the year due to the vast distances normally separating them.





SECTION 1 - 23.8km 2nd & 3rd April - Alice Springs Telegraph Station to Simpsons Gap



A BIG thank you to our sponsors!

including our new Corporate Sponsors 'Park Trek' and 'Glen Helen Homestead Lodge'



ORMISTON GORGE
KIOSK & CAMPGROUND

