

## From the President's Tent

As the 2015 Larapinta Trail trekking season draws to a close, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the many people involved with the Friends of the Larapinta Trail - our members, supporters and committee. This year the Friends have achieved so much and put building blocks in place to continue to grow into the future.

2015 was a very successful year for the FOLT as we continued to grow our membership base, developed a new brand identity and added value to the trail via our working bees and walking programs. Looking forward, the FOLT are committed to strengthening our ties with NT Parks and Wildlife as we work towards our Memorandum of Understanding, along with continuing to help with the maintenance and promotion of this world class wilderness walking trail.

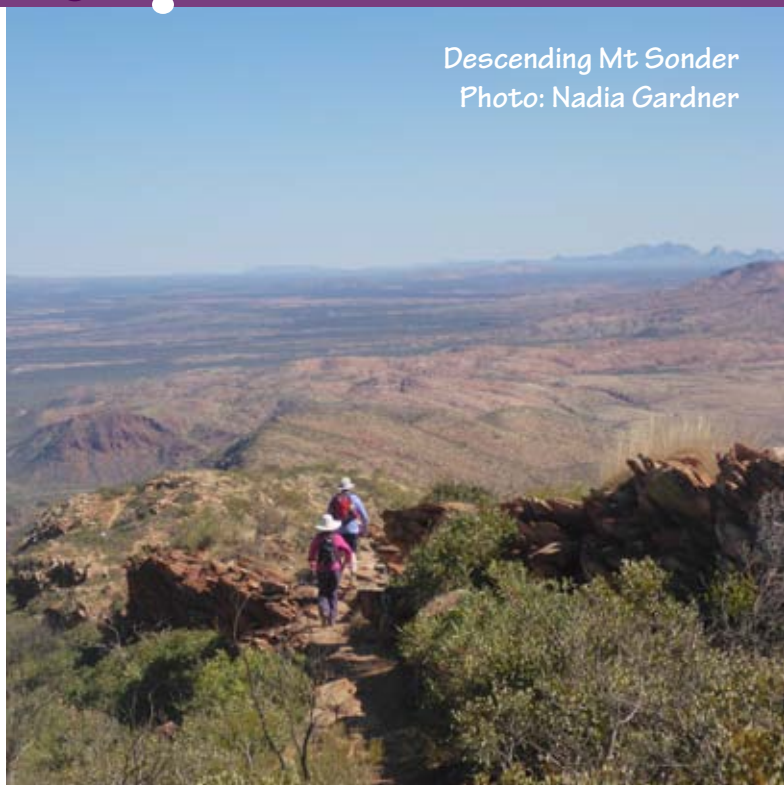
I would like to personally thank all of the hard working committee members who have devoted so much of their time and energy to the FOLT this year. It was only through their hard work and considerable skills that we were able to achieve so much.

**Richard Mayne, President FOLT**



The Stuart Rotary Club have also contributed many volunteer hrs during 2015

*Descending Mt Sonder*  
Photo: Nadia Gardner



## Upcoming Events:

- Sun 13th Sept:** Arrente Walk  
An 8km return walk between the Ochre Pits and Inarlanga Pass. Meet at 9am - Ochre Pits Carpark.
- Fri 25th Sept:** Annual General Meeting and end of year get together.  
Alice Springs Telegraph Station, meet at 6pm including nibbles and drinks.
- Sun 27th Sept:** Todd Mall Markets.
- Sun 25th Oct:** Todd Mall Markets.

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



# MT SONDER WALK 2015!

Sunday 9th August 2015 saw a group of about 16 people congregate at Redbank Gorge to climb Mt Sonder. Headed up by Kylie Cowan we all set off in earnest just after 9am. Whilst the bulk of the group made good time up the steep start, for 74 year old Alice Springs local, Joy La Franchi, the going was a little slower. Kilometre after kilometre, with quiet determination, she edged further and further up the steep often rocky 7.9km (each way) Mountain path. A small group of us stayed with Joy for the morning, until it got the better of her, about 1300 meters from the top. She urged us all to 'go for it' and leave her to wait for our return. We did so, leaving her with another climber who was also waiting for others to come back down.

The last kilometre was a killer as we had to make up for lost time, and were determined to make it. The views from the cairn at the top, are simply

spectacular and worth the effort. Joy did make another 400 meters up and then conceded that the last bit was going to be too much as she still had to get down. The trek down proved to be almost as difficult as the trek up for Joy, with cramps setting in. Thanks to the Lone Dingo Larapinta trail info night earlier this year, we were carrying Magnesium tablets and Gatorade powder which kept the cramps at bay and saw her safe return to the carpark. She didn't make it all the way to the top, but she put in an amazing effort that all we found inspiring.

For the moment Joy's joking that 'this old goat has climbed her last mountain' but I'm pretty sure we'll see her back out on the trail again soon. Many Thanks to Kylie for her patience and dedication to see all us climbers off the mountain safely.

*Written by Joy's daughter Andrea.*



# NEW FRIENDS OF THE LARAPINTA TRAIL T-SHIRTS ARE HERE!!



**\$25**

Our new T-shirts are now available! Sporting our new logo, all profits raised will go straight back into events, working bees and fundraising for the Trail.

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

You can buy one at our Todd Mall Market stall (only 2 left for the year!), Lone Dingo or the Ormiston Gorge Kiosk. It is also possible for us to post one to you if you don't live in Alice Springs (postage extra, details on our website).

Stay tuned for more merchandise in 2016!



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

# DONATE FOR DUNNY PAPER!

Last year at our market displays and events we gave people the opportunity to donate money to help supply toilet paper for Larapinta Trail walkers. Through 'donate for dunny paper' we were able to purchase \$300 of jumbo toilet paper rolls and this was handed over to Parks and Wildlife to distribute across the Trail last month.

We were then blown away to receive a call from Steve at Principal Products to say they would also donate over \$500 of extra toilet paper. Wow! Not only that but they have offered to support us in the future. So when you are taking a 'pit stop' on the Lara Trail, think of all the people who donated so that you can do the Trail with an extra bit of luxury!



*FOLT Committee Member Sue handing over the toilet paper to Ranger Mark. Photo by NT News*

You can see the full story on the NT News website [www.ntnews.com.au](http://www.ntnews.com.au)

We are so pleased to welcome our new and ongoing sponsor - Principal Products!

## Principal Products

Shed 11/ 66A SMITH STREET  
PO Box 476  
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Tel: 08 89521138 Fax: 08 89522726  
Email: [steve@principalproducts.com.au](mailto:steve@principalproducts.com.au)

# \$725 RAISED FOR THE FRIENDS!

Thank you to everyone who helped me to raise so much money for the Friends by participating in the Run Larapinta event at the end of August.

It was an amazing event and all of the participants were incredibly friendly and inspiring people. People were raving about the Trail and stopping to take photos, GroPro footage and take in the view at each and every vantage point.

For many of the participants it was their first trip to Central Australia and it was the Larapinta Trail that brought them here. After 4 days of running between 20 and 45km there were some sore bodies but happy people. Ultra-Trail Running is certainly not for everyone, but is another great way to experience it.

The event will return in 2016 for those wishing to give it a try! Rapid Ascent have put together a short video if you'd like to see some of the action for yourselves. [www.runlarapinta.com.au](http://www.runlarapinta.com.au)

*Written by Kylie Cowan*



a.



b.



c.



d.



e.



f.

- a) Dad waiting for the Malbunka/long course runners to pass through the Redbank Gorge water point on their way to Glen Helen after running up Mt Sonder.
- b) Starting the 22km run from Glen Helen
- c) Getting ready for the 11 km night run
- d) Crossing the finish line at Ormiston
- e) My Dad and I volunteering at Redbank
- f) A thank you to FOLT from Rapid Ascent

## KYLIE'S RESULTS (from Stages 1 & 3 Namatjira/Short Course)

Stage 1: 11km from town up and behind the Telegraph Station 1:03:46 (8th out of 16 female competitors)

Stage 3: 22km along Section 10, Ormiston Pound and the Ghost Gum walk 3:12:29 (16th out of 29 competitors / 6th out of 13 female competitors)

# EARLY DAYS OF THE LARAPINTA TRAIL

By Alan Ginns, former Planner with the Conservation Commission NT

The first two things to say about the genesis of the Larapinta Trail (affectionately the "Lara Trail") was that it was very much a team effort and it was great fun ! It's only later that you realise it really was a huge undertaking, and a once in a career opportunity!

The Lara Trail had its origins in the West MacDonnells Park Strategy, in 1988 or thereabouts. It was intended as a "flagship" project to grab the Strategy a bit of attention, and to strengthen the case for linking the entire ranges as a single national park.

Obviously the Arrarnta and other Aboriginal people had been walking the ranges for tens of thousands of years before this, and the ranges were always a popular "out bush" destination for Alice locals (some of whom even ventured beyond the swimming holes and shady camps). So the idea of the West Macs as a place for walking and exploration was certainly nothing new! Nor was a long distance walk an earth-shatteringly original idea – members of the Alice Springs Bushwalking Club ("CAMEL" from memory) had been doing multi-day walks between waterholes or peaks for years.

But on a lazy Alice afternoon I sat on the floor in the CCNT's old Gap Road offices and drew the concept, and possible route, of an extended walking track along the backbone of the ranges on the "original plans" of the West Macs Park. These were a set of 1:250,000 topographical map sheets that I had spread out on the carpet in the old CCNT office, and with Mike Butler (the CCNT's then head park planner, from Darwin) we planned out the West Macs Park with some felt pens working on our hands and knees over a few short hours. We labelled the plans the "West Macs Carpet Versions" (or something similar), and they might still be stashed away somewhere in the PWCNT.

From there the Lara Trail was written into the West Macs Strategy by Mike and myself. A linear mountain range with nicely spaced visitor nodes – by the time you had a half day or full day loop walk from each attraction it was a simple matter to run out a bit more track and join it all up into "a world class walking track" (as we ambitiously labelled it!). However there was some thought put into selecting the "route corridor"! Access and logistics were major considerations and I also deliberately avoided going through some very attractive areas, leaving them

out of the way or off the map for more adventurous walkers to find and enjoy. However, in reality, the route planning was largely driven by the location and spacing of attractions and possible access points, and the aim to create a track that comprised a series of individual segments offering walkers a choice of experiences and the ability to break the route into "bite size chunks".

Everyone, from the CCNT hierarchy to the NT Government, seemed to accept and endorse (and thankfully, fund) the West Macs Park idea, and the Lara Trail more particularly, with surprisingly few questions! So before we knew it the Trail was underway.

The original alternative name for the Lara Trail was the "Namatjira Track", which was my preference as it went through the scenery and places that Namatjira captured so well and made famous, and it also acknowledged the area's Aboriginal associations and importance. (Ironically, years later my sister pointed out that a print of one of Namatjira's paintings – near Brinkley Bluff I think – hung on our family's dining room wall as we grew up, so maybe some subliminal seeds were planted way back then !) However, the CCNT's marketing person convinced the bosses that Larapinta Trail was a more "saleable" name and had the logo drawn up. So the Lara Trail it became, and the name grew on us all pretty quickly anyway.

I did not have the luxury of taking a lot of time to plan the Trail's route in detail. The West Macs Strategy's "felt pen plans" gave the general route or direction for the Trail, and an indication of the intended standard or "class" for each section. This I progressively refined to what we called the "corridor level" by using aerial photos, topographic maps, local knowledge, a lot of helicopter "reconnaissance work", and (I have to say) a bit of guesswork. Within this corridor, usually a strip of country anything from 20 metres to 100 metres wide, we then located and fine-tuned the route on-ground ending up with a flagged or pegged alignment. Closer to actual construction, or often just after the initial clearing and levelling, the location of track "works" or track "treatments" – such as rock bars for water diversion, steps, step-and-runs, drainage crossings, and so on – were pegged or identified on-site. A lot of this was done on-site and on-the-run, the pressure was really on to just make the Trail happen.

# SERPENTINE GORGE WORKING BEE

## 23 AUGUST 2015



Sunday 23rd August, volunteers grouped at Serpentine Gorge to spruce up the Larapinta Trail campground and rejuvenate the safety barrier at the lookout. The main group worked around the camp shelter doing various much needed tasks, joined by the youngest volunteer just six weeks old. They cleaned up the raised benches and shelves, cleaned the gutters, installed gravel overflow pits at the two rainwater tanks, cleaned the toilet and fixed up some signage. Valerian and Andrea carted paint, linseed oil and supplies up to the lookout to rejuvenate the safety barrier.



A much needed cuppa was had afterwards accompanied by homemade cake, biscuits and very welcomed fresh fruit. All in all, a good morning's work by all.

The Serpentine camping area on the trail is quite dusty, especially as we have had no rain for many months, and discussions quickly broke out, surrounding the possibility of laying some fine gravel or other type of 'flooring' in the shelter, in the future, which would cut down the accumulation of dust and dirt on the raised facilities. It would also reduce muddiness when it does rain, and help keep the area cleaner.



A possible future project for volunteers, although it would require additional funding or perhaps a donation from one of the local landscaping suppliers. Help FOLT to spread the word and see if we can get something donated!

*Written by Andrea Celofiga*



Photos: Valerian Celofiga and Phil Cowan



# Parks and Wildlife Commission NT update

By Phil Cowan, Senior District Ranger - West

It's been another busy time on the Trail as we near the end of the walking season. The highlight was the Run Larapinta event, which showcased the best of Central Australia and the Larapinta Trail. From our perspective, the event was very well managed and was of minimal disruption to other park users. It was great to see the participants taking the time to stop and take photos as they slogged it out, and the Trail has received significant exposure through the Run Larapinta webpage and Facebook page.

The tour operators are now starting to finish up for the year if they haven't already, and from all reports the season has been a very busy and successful one. Thank you to all the operators and their guides – you are our 'eyes on the ground' during the season and your assistance with incident management, or feedback on the state of the Trail is invaluable. We look forward to working with you again in 2016.



Above: Track work on Section 12



## AGM & Get Together

**WHEN: Friday 25th September**

**WHERE: Telegraph Station**

**TIME: 6pm**

Come along and celebrate another successful year of the Friends of the Larapinta Trail.

We'll hold our Annual General Meeting, make some amendments to our constitution, reflect on 2015, have a chat about 2016 and catch up over drinks and nibbles.

The FOLT is an entirely volunteer driven community group and relies on your input, support, suggestions and passion for its continued success. This will be a great forum for hearing from members about what they enjoyed the most, what they'd like to see more of and how they can help.

There are ideas galore for the Friends and the only thing we are missing to see them through is you! If you have an idea or can help in any way, please get in touch!

Email [info@friendsofthelarapintatrail.org.au](mailto:info@friendsofthelarapintatrail.org.au) to RSVP or phone Kylie on 8954 8181.

*Our next Todd Mall Market display is on the 27th September  
... can you spare 2 hours to help us to promote the Trail and upcoming  
FOLT events? We would love to hear from you!*



# DONATIONS WELCOME!

For every \$10 donation we'll send you a 'FRIENDS OF THE LARAPINTA TRAIL' sticker

Direct Deposits can be made to:

Friends of the Larapinta Trail Inc - Bendigo Bank  
BSB: 633 000 Account: 144757366



## A BIG thank you to our sponsors!



# Principal Products



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KIOSK & CAMPGROUND



## Trail Tip #6

A roll of duct tape will prove its worth in time of a quick repair. Duct tap will fix a torn tent, a ripped backpack, hold a flapping boot sole at bay, extend a cracked water bottle's life and even help prevent blisters.