

# Walks, clean-ups & water

## The Ginninderra Catch-Up newsletter



Hattons Corner in Yass River (left); volunteer Kate Wilson and a long-necked turtle in Yass River (right).  
"Thank you to everyone for your sampling efforts during 2019 and for helping our project."  
*Bruno Ferronato (who also took the photos).*

## Upcoming activities with GCG

### **Sunday 3 March: CLEAN-UP AUSTRALIA DAY**

**MacDermott Place, Lake Ginninderra**, 10 – 12. Look for the GCG flag. Bring gloves and pool nets or rubbish pickers if you have them.

**Yerrabi Pond, Gungahlin**, 10 – 12: Meet near the carpark off Wunderlich street Gungahlin. Look for the GCG flag; bring gloves, pool nets or rubbish pickers if you have them.

### **Saturday 14 March 10 am: WETLANDS WALK AT LAKE GINNINDERRA**

GCG staff/executive will lead a walk and talk around the lake, explaining how wetlands work and how the community can be involved in caring for them. Meet at the carpark at John Knight Memorial Park, the end of Townsend place Belconnen.

Please be prepared in case the walk is over uneven ground, and please be sun-wise.

Interested in volunteering? *GCG would like to establish a care group at Lake Ginninderra.* Activities may include weed control, frog and waterbug surveys, planting, general maintenance. If, you are interested, please contact us.

**Saturday 21 March 10 am: WETLANDS WALK AT CROKE PLACE, EVATT**

Meet at the carpark at Croke Place, off William Webb Drive, Evatt/Mackellar. GCG staff/executive will lead a walk looking at the newly built wetland, and the Natural Temperate Grassland restoration experiments. Please be prepared in case the walk is over uneven ground, and please be sun-wise.

*These events are advertised on GCG's new Facebook page. check it out!*

## *From the Convenor and Executive Officer*

It was good to see some of you at the very successful event on pollinators on 22 February (photo below), with a range of speakers including Costa Georgiadis from Gardening Australia. Further detail is at <https://m.facebook.com/actforbees/>.

I encourage you all to consider joining one of the several 'clean-ups' this weekend in our area: at Lake Ginninderra, or Yerrabi Pond, or Crace or Jarramlee Park, for instance. Litter is not good for the ecological health of a river or of the catchment (roadside, park, etc.) that feeds water into the river, so all our clean-ups will be helping the creek and the Murrumbidgee River downstream of the creek. I also recommend the two walks GCG is holding in March to talk about our new wetlands and our grassland project. See you there!

*Santo Lolicato, Convenor*



## **NEWS FROM THE OFFICE**

Hi All, it's been very busy for staff in the recent months. As you are aware, Karissa has taken up duties as the CEO of LandcareACT and I am helping with the transition to the new Executive Officer. I am working 1.5 days per week and can be contacted on: [landcare@ginninderralandcare.org.au](mailto:landcare@ginninderralandcare.org.au) and phones: **office** 0262783309 or **mobile**: 0427779684.

In the last month we have held both an Executive Committee and General Members Committee meetings. At these meetings we have addressed a range of issues from Annual budget reviews, staff transitional arrangements, communications planning, events calendars, status of GCG grants and projects and community group needs. It's been a busy time for both Waterwatch and Frogwatch programs particularly as we lead into Autumn events and reporting activities such as the CHIP and funding reporting. Our very full program of events and project activities has been elevated by the opportunities arising from our recent and welcome rains.

We held a productive Bush on the Boundary meeting on the 5/2/20 which looked at opportunities around the proposed Riverside park development and sustainable methodologies for on-site dust suppression and related environmentally sensitive access to water sources. Next meeting on the 4/3/20 will address topics including Ecological Monitoring and an update on the proposed 2<sup>nd</sup> Ginninderry development neighbourhood of Macnamara.

*Bernie Bugden  
Acting Executive Officer*

## *Waterwatch news*

### **CHIP REPORT 2019 – Catchment Health Indicator Program**

The waterwatch crew is busy this month writing our annual report (CHIP 2019). The launch will be on **Sunday 22 March at Jerrabomberra Wetlands** (World Wetlands Day), stay tuned. For previous reports, please check in here: <http://www.act.waterwatch.org.au/chip.html>

### **WATERWATCH VOLUNTEER NEEDED**

If you are interested in volunteering for Waterwatch, Bruno will need new volunteers for sampling in Belconnen and Gungahlin area. Training in March. Please contact Bruno at 62783309 or [waterwatch@ginninderralandcare.org.au](mailto:waterwatch@ginninderralandcare.org.au)

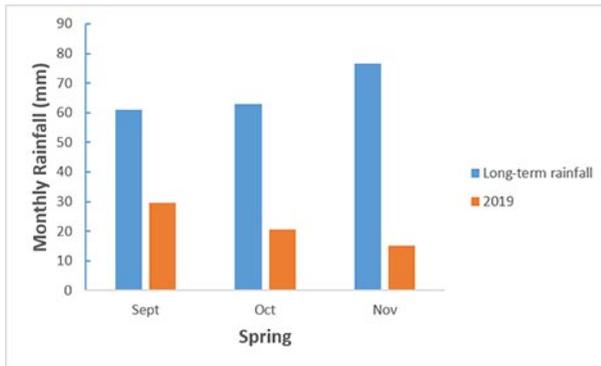
### **WATERWATCH EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES**

If you know any teacher or school that might be interested in Waterwatch educational activities, please contact Bruno at 62783309 or at [waterwatch@ginninderralandcare.org.au](mailto:waterwatch@ginninderralandcare.org.au). The photos below are from our educational activities during 2019, with preschoolers and high-school students.

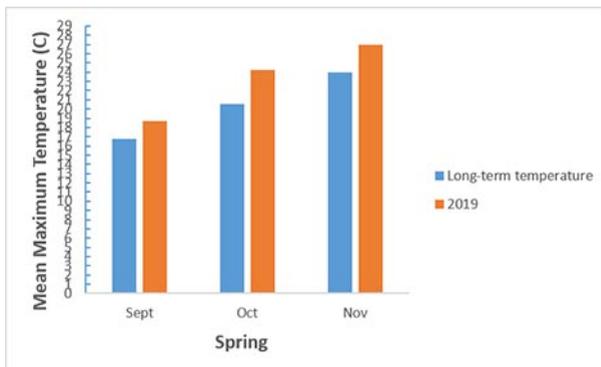


**CATCH-UP WATERWATCH NEWS FOR SPRING 2019 (Figs 1,2,3)**

**Fig. 1. Monthly rainfall in northern Canberra**



**Fig. 2. Mean maximum temperature in northern Canberra**



One of the different things we have been observing in some waterways this Spring was the high pH reading (8–8.5). This was possibly caused by the increase in algae presence or algal mat, which do photosynthesis (more oxygen concentration after that, with some of these sites having dissolved oxygen (DO) values 110–120%), but with more CO<sub>2</sub> (and carbonic acid) being consumed, this leads to an alkaline pH.

Parameter	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Degraded
pH	6.6 – 7.8	6.1 – 6.5, 7.9 – 8.0	5.7 – 6.0, 8.1 – 8.2	5.4 – 5.6, 8.3 – 8.6	< 5.4, > 8.6
EC (uS)	≤ 98	99 – 156	157 – 212	213 – 404	> 404
Turbidity (NTU)	≤ 10	11 – 16	17 – 36	37 – 90	> 90
DO (mg/L)	<i>(Not included in CHIP)</i>				
DO Sat. (%)	88 – 99	84 – 87, 100	81 – 83, 101 – 106	78 – 80, 107 – 115	< 78, > 115
Phosphorus (mg/L)	< 0.02	0.02 – 0.03	0.04 – 0.05	0.06 – 0.08	> 0.08
Nitrate (mg/L)	< 1.0	1.0 – 1.3	1.4 – 1.7	1.8 – 2.6	> 2.6

**Fig. 3. Threshold values for water quality in the ACT Waterwatch program**

### **LONG TERM DATA, CITIZEN SCIENCE AND ECOSYSTEM CHANGE**

Here are two papers on the importance of long term monitoring and how that can be used in local decision-making and how citizen science play an important role on the process. Volunteers in Waterwatch are contributing to something similar in the ACT.

#### **Coral reef monitoring:**

<https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0210007>

**Koala monitoring:** <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41598-019-46376-5>

## *Frogwatch news*



Hello, lovely frog-friendly people. I hope everyone is well after this summer of challenges!! Many of you were involved in fighting the fires and are still busy with cleaning up the mess afterwards – you are all amazing!!

Our local flora and fauna have been hit hard this summer, and frogs have been left "in the dry". When sweet rain did come in late January, some frog species took the chance (for many maybe the only chance this season) as far as reproduction goes. Especially the *Limnodynastes* group went mad; the Spotted Grass frogs in my mini garden pond managed to produce 12 egg masses in 2 nights (white blobs in my photo) and to keep the entire neighbourhood awake!!

Many volunteers have reported Spotted Grass frogs and Poppelbonks calling at local wetlands. Even some Spotted Burrowing frogs (*Neobatrachus sudelli*) have been reported on Canberra Nature Map!! Feel free to do frog surveys and submit your data/recordings to help capture these events.

There is so much you can do to **create a frog-friendly corner in your garden**- even without having a pond. Frogs only need water for reproduction and the rest of the year live in moist areas away from ponds, dams and creeks. You can make your garden an important stepping-stone for frogs on the move – between wetlands that might be suburbs away from each other. Simply avoid using chemicals in your garden; leave an area with longer grass or coarse debris – this will provide much needed frog refuge between now and the next breeding season; keep your cats in, especially at night; and make sure your fences have a few cracks and open spaces so that frogs can easily move between backyards when foraging and dispersing. Check out [frog-friendly-habitat brochure](#) or email me if you would like more information on how to create a frog-friendly habitat in your backyard, school or neighbourhood!

The Downer Community Group, led by Fiona Dickson, undertook a huge frog rescue last year, saving tadpoles from an imminent building development, and providing them with a new habitat just over the fence!! A party to celebrate the new space and the community's efforts will be held at the Downer shops on the **28th of March, from 10am**. There will be frog displays, workshops, a frog cake/treats competition and a frog pond opening ceremony. Check out the group's [Facebook posts](#) for more details.

Turtles are also on the move after the much-needed rain (we do need much more) as they are searching for new foraging areas and the perfect homes for the approaching winter- please keep your eyes out for these wonderful creatures. Score plenty of Brownie Points by helping them over busy roads and by logging sightings of them on the [Canberra Nature Map](#) or [the turtle sat](#).

The latest Frogwatch Project is kicking off right now and is a joint effort of Frogwatch and Waterwatch (through Bruno, Turtle Specialist). The project is funded through the *Communities Environment Program* and will investigate Turtle and Frog Habitat Relationships across town.

Frogwatch data from the 2019 October Census month is being crunched up and wrested into meaningful numbers. Maps are getting populated with lots of dots, thanks to the amazing efforts of so many active frog-watchers!! The final report will be published soon and officially launched as part of the 2019 [CHIP report](#) on **22 March at the World Wetlands Day event at the Jerrabomberra Wetlands**. More details later.

One last request – I need **photos of FW volunteers in action**. Please do send me your 'photographic evidence' via email or link. Photos can be taken at any time of the day/night. Photos will be used to spruce up otherwise dry reports!! Your help is much appreciated!

*Anke Maria Hoefler, Frogwatch Coordinator*

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# News from GCG member groups

## CRACE

Crace Landcare Group will be holding its annual **Clean Up Australia Day event on Sunday 1 March** from 9 am, at Crace Recreation Park, Narden Street Crace.

Meet near the children's playground. Rubbish bags, litter claws, gloves provided. Morning tea will be provided at 10 am.

*Fleur Leary,  
Convenor, Crace Landcare Group*

## THE PINNACLE, WEETANGERA/HAWKER

The latest update with all the news from the Pinnacle is available for download now from our newsletters page ([www.fotpin.org.au/newsletters.html](http://www.fotpin.org.au/newsletters.html)). Just click where it says "Update #30" in green. If you have any issues with the download or with opening the document, drop me a line and I'll email you a copy direct ([fotpin@fotpin.org.au](mailto:fotpin@fotpin.org.au)). This update includes a summary of our annual planning meeting with PCS, news about this year's ACT Landcare Awards and information about our upcoming events, including our AGM and the Fotpin 10th birthday bash (yes, we're now 10 years old!).

*John Brannan,  
Convenor, Friends of The Pinnacle (FOTPIN)*

## SUTTON, NSW

### **AFRICAN LOVEGRASS: known knowns, unknown knowns and unknown unknowns**

Dr Lachlan Ingram is a Senior Lecturer in Sustainable Grassland Management at the University of Sydney. He gave the Sutton Landcare Presentation on 11 February. "African Lovegrass is a complex system of 7 species according to taxonomists," he started, "but we usually only identify two". They are a deep-rooted plant; roots can go to 4 m deep and grow to a metre wide laterally. They are drought-proof and very successful, which is why they were introduced in Australia to stabilise roadsides.

African Lovegrass (ALG) is a C4 grass, which means it is most active in spring and summer. Most native grasses are also C4 grasses, which means it is very difficult to spray for just ALG. As it needs little water or nutrients, it is well-adapted to Australian circumstances. It has been declared a weed because it outcompetes everything else: as soon as there is a bare spot, it will flourish. With its high seed content, it spreads rapidly and far, sticking to



tyres, mower blades and other means of transport.

ALG starts to grow about two weeks before native grasses, so it encroaches on space for native species before they start. It simply spreads better than native seed. It is not a good stockfeed as it has a low nutritional value, except briefly when young. Cattle will survive on it, but it will not grow much, nor get fattened.

It is unlikely that a biological control will be developed as ALG is closely related to about 18 native species.

How do you prevent the spread of ALG?

- Maintain ground cover, avoid overgrazing.
- Avoid disturbance of the soil; if you can't avoid disturbance, grow perennial crops in the disturbed areas.
- Maintain a healthy grass system.
- Don't burn – that gives ALG a head start.
- Be vigilant, learn to identify and eradicate, preferably before it seeds.

*"It looks like African Lovegrass is here to stay", Lachlan said, "but learn to identify it early and control it where you can."*

*Arnold Dekker  
President, Sutton Landcare Group*

### **MT PAINTER, COOK**

The last two monthly work parties have seen us woody weeding; for the most part we were taking out Sweet Briar, some of which had re-sprouted from plants previously cut and dabbed. With the recent rain, we are expecting a flourishing of herbaceous weeds. We are already tackling African Lovegrass which has got away to a flying start.

FOMP's next work party will be on **Sunday 15 March** from 8.30am to 11am, place and task to be decided closer to the time.

*Sarah Hnatiuk  
Convenor, Friends of Mt Painter, [friends.of.mount/painter@gmail.org](mailto:friends.of.mount/painter@gmail.org)*

### **JARRAMLEE PARK, DUNLOP**

On **Sunday 1st March** we are doing in informal Clean Up Day around Jarramlee Park. We have our next meeting on the 17th February, and will be discussing the Adopt-A-Park Action Plan. We are hoping that more rain comes, as the creek had stopped flowing and it needs another good flush out. Gardens have taken off, with everything regenerating, along with a lot of weeds!

*Pamela Fawke  
Convenor, Jarramlee Park Landcare*

## MT ROGERS, FRASER-SPENCE-MELBA

I walked through the Hazard Reduction Burn area of April 2018 recently, noting a diversity of regrowth green as a result of the rain we've had so far. No shortage of weeding later and an encouraging blush of native species filling up niches left by the burn and by the months of dryness. For the first time on Mt Rogers I heard and then saw two Grey Butcherbirds. At times their calls rang out across the gully as powerfully as their magpie cousins' carolling. One of the magpies I came across had a very white back; a reminder that the southern part of the ACT was once almost the borderline between the White-back Magpies and the Black-backed form that we're more familiar with here.

Wonderful efforts by a dozen or more Mt Rogers Carers in putting out containers of water for wildlife in a range of locations. That's genuine caring as it's quite tiring carrying even two litres of water any distance.



On 23 February, watched by two Galahs preparing next season's nest hollow, ten Mt Rogers Landcare volunteers made an erosion-mitigation start on the track South East from the summit. Jennifer had alerted us to the state of this well-used track down towards the almost Carey Place - Bainton Crescent, Melba section of the circulating gravel track. She has before and after photos to show the deterioration exacerbated

by drought, feet, wheels, paws and recent downpours. Phil G has maintained several run-offs on the track. He'd also prepared a Project Plan prior to a preview of the major cross-country tracks that four of us undertook on Tuesday 18th. The plan was a result of considerable research and many years' experience of maintaining the run-offs to prevent the damage rushing water causes to tracks and the main Mt Rogers path. Phil N brought some sketches after a conversation with the Makin' Trax team and explained remediation possibilities for the track he and Jennifer use frequently. Sarah brought her ecologist's and Friends of Grasslands perspectives and provided insights into the renowned Landscape Function Analysis work of Dr David Tongway and his erosion remediation experience in the local region. The day also benefited from the experiences and contributions of Angharad, Ivan, Ted and Neil.

Once we'd agreed on the principles of erosion mitigation that were relevant to this track we began the campaign. Everyone worked tirelessly cutting branches off invasive species and placing these on the soil and any worn grasses beside the eroded, almost gorge-like track.

Jennifer and Phil N will create signs to explain why we're beginning the repair of this track. We'll also produce a handout information sheet, with the aim that most members of the public will co-operate with the landcarers' aims, reduce use of this track and, hopefully, choose alternative routes for their aerobic exercise, mountain bike practice and regular uphill walking.

The love of Mt Rogers and determination to make an erosion-difference is reflected in the record turn-out today.... THANK YOU ALL for enthusiasm, sharing experiences, research and sheer muscle-power. Over 27 hours of volunteering were achieved on the day and many individual preparatory hours.

Next Working Bee: We'll do further work on this track on **Monday 2nd March**, meeting on the main path above the easement between Carey and Hammett Places. From our respective walks we know there are invasive species seedlings and saplings responding energetically to the rain events.

*Rosemary Blemings,  
Convenor, Mt Rogers Landcare Group*

## *Other happenings in this region*

### **SUNDAY 22 MARCH – CELEBRATE WETLANDS AT JERRABOMBERRA WETLANDS**

The Woodlands and Wetlands Trust, supported by ACT Parks and Conservation service, is proud to celebrate World Wetlands Day, and the values of wetlands, on the morning of **Sunday 22nd March** 2020 at Jerrabomberra Wetlands! The morning includes launch of the CHIP report (see Waterwatch news and Frogwatch news above).

Details of the morning's activities will be displayed at the Jerrabomberra Wetlands website next week, <https://jerrabomberrawetlands.org.au/events-and-activities/>.

Walks start from 8 am. There are six different topics and starting points: see the website. Please book at the website if you'd like to join a walk.

From 9.30 am, the activities move to the Wetlands office, for the CHIP report launch, and mingling with wetland carers.

Then during 11 – 1 pm there will be four short talks about wetlands.

These wetlands activities are free of charge. However, we welcome a gold coin donation for the refreshments offered mid-morning.

This celebration was originally planned for Sunday 2 February. Because of the weather at that time the activities have been moved to 22 March – which is also World Water Day.

Ginninderra Catchment Group connects, supports and leads local communities to improve the health of Ginninderra Creek and surrounding environments.

ACT and Region Frogwatch Program and the Ginninderra and Yass components of Upper Murrumbidgee Waterwatch operate from the GCG office. Email [landcare@ginninderralandcare.org.au](mailto:landcare@ginninderralandcare.org.au)

Website: <https://ginninderralandcare.org.au/>

Office: Kippax Health Centre, Holt. Phone: 02 6278 3309

## ***ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS***

Ginninderra Catchment Group, Frogwatch and Waterwatch (Ginninderra Ck & Yass R) are grateful for support from the  
ACT Government, Landcare ACT and  
ACT Upper Murrumbidgee Waterwatch



