

The Scribbly Gum

Summer 2015



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*Community partnerships
caring for our natural
environment*



ACT
Government



A word from the Director

In September 2015, I was delighted to participate in the ParkCare Forum, *Community Voices in Reserve Management*. I believe the commitment and dedication shown by ParkCare volunteers over many years now, continues to be one of the highlights of conservation in the ACT and I want to start by thanking each and every one of you on behalf of the ACT Government.

The ParkCare Forum demonstrated the value of local knowledge, expertise and experience in understanding our grassy woodland ecosystems and highlighted some key learnings and lessons for future management. It created a space for robust discussion and consideration of various perspectives and highlighted a number of issues relating to the management of competing values of Canberra Nature Park (CNP). The opportunity exists to continue these discussions — hopefully followed up with action on the ground wherever possible, into 2016 and beyond. I am always keen to further explore models of community engagement across the reserve system where our shared goal to strengthen our natural environment might be better served.

During the 2014 - 15 financial year, a total of 46 ParkCare and Urban Landcare groups assisted Parks and Territory Services in the management of ACT parks and reserves. This year we welcome new ParkCare groups to Urambi Hills and Mount Pleasant nature reserves. We also welcome the formation of the Majura Pines Trails Alliance group to assist with maintaining the new mountain bike trail network at Majura Pines.

Volunteers across these programs contributed a total of 18,105 hours. Of these, 16,315 hours (90%) were ParkCare activities undertaken in forests and reserves and 1,295 hours (7%) were Urban Landcare activities undertaken in urban parks and open space. Parks and Conservation Service (PCS)

volunteers participating in events such as Weed Swap, the Floriade Bush Friendly Garden and student volunteers working with District staff accounted for 3% of the total hours.

Across the ParkCare, Urban Landcare and PCS volunteer program, the majority of volunteer time was spent on:

- weed control (42%)
- rehabilitation such as planting and erosion control (22%)
- administration of group activities and websites (9%)
- environmental events, including guided walks and talks (8%)
- flora and fauna surveys (7%)
- other activities such as litter picking or unreported works (6%)
- PCS and group meetings (4%) and
- trail maintenance (2%).

Throughout the ACT, there are positive steps being taken by staff and volunteers to recognise Indigenous knowledge in land management programs. I am very supportive of the *Indigenous Fire Management Framework* that has been developed within the Parks and Conservation Service and take interest in other emerging programs that support traditional Aboriginal custodians in maintaining and enhancing connections to Country.

In my view, the ParkCare program has proven itself to be one of the very best models of an effective partnership between the land manager and the community. PCS will continue to invest time and resources into this program and has recently appointed Craig Wainwright as a permanent ParkCare Support Officer. As Craig has demonstrated in the work achieved with volunteers in the last year, the opportunities for developing partnerships in the conservation field are numerous and limited

only by our imagination. 'Friends of' groups, school groups, the Green Army, corporate groups and catchment groups all contribute to the ongoing management and care of our parks and reserves.

My sincere thanks to all volunteers for their dedicated hours of great work and for the knowledge they contributed to park management in 2015.



Daniel Iglesias
Director
Parks and
Conservation Service



News from the ParkCare Coordinator

The individuals that make up this community of volunteers working with ACT Parks and Conservation Service (PCS) are diverse in character and diverse in their interests, yet a clear message resonates with all. The message is that conservation requires action. This comes through in the quarterly meetings held with ParkCare and Landcare convenors, in weekly correspondence and in this very newsletter.

If there is a weed to be removed it will be pulled, if there is a trail that is eroding it will be reported or repaired, and if there is an opportunity to improve and enhance a patch of woodland or grassland, a grant application will be sought. The individual actions each and every ParkCare and Landcare volunteer takes makes a difference and it is the ParkCare Coordinator's role to remind you all that your actions are valued.

It is also the role of the ParkCare Coordinator to ensure that the actions that you take are undertaken safely and within the guidelines of ACT Government policy. The challenge

in this particular situation is how to do this without scaring volunteers away. PCS is aware that the majority of volunteers want to be out on the ground taking action, enjoying the outdoors and getting their hands dirty, not doing endless reporting.

This year Territory and Municipal Services (TAMS) introduced the *TAMS Volunteer Management Framework* to ensure consistent management of volunteer activities across TAMS-managed lands. This includes volunteers in ParkCare and Urban Landcare, Friends of the Arboretum, Domestic Animal Services and Libraries. Without doubt the ParkCare program is the largest and longest standing of any of these volunteer programs.

As many of you will be aware volunteer management has changed substantially over this time. The most significant change is that volunteers working in ACT parks and reserves more than five times a year will now be required to register as a TAMS volunteer. If a volunteer works less than five times a year they are classified as a casual volunteer and will still be insured as long as they complete the activity sign-on sheet and participated in an activity briefing.

TAMS volunteer registrations will commence in January 2016 and a number of information sessions will be held to assist volunteers understand the *Volunteer Management Framework* over the course of the New Year.

Other changes have included the creation and successful community uptake of Canberra Nature Map — a repository for ParkCare groups, volunteers and members of the public to report sightings of rare and endangered plant species and any of the many treasures found in Canberra parks and reserves. Founder of the web-based repository, Aaron Clausen, presented Canberra Nature Map to the ParkCare network in April 2015. The session was well attended by a diversity of volunteers as

was the session about the PCS prescribed burn program. For more information about Canberra Nature Map go to <http://canberranaturemap.org>

For more information about PCS prescribed burns go to www.tams.act.gov.au

Two Chemcert training courses were also run in 2015 and continue to attract keen weed busters. Learning how to use weed mapping Apps has also been of interest to a number of volunteers this year, and training in the use of the most suitable weed mapping App is likely to be a key priority for 2016.

Rachel Tokley from City Services contributed to the coordination of the volunteer program this year while Jasmine took a tree change to work in the Environmental Offset team. Rachel's work has helped to roll out the *TAMS Volunteer Management Framework* to new Urban Landcare groups and has provided a stronger link between City Services and PCS in the management and support of volunteer activities.

Phil Selmes also joined the team this year to coordinate the Floriade Bush Friendly Garden (BFG). Working with volunteer Vanessa Hagon from Naturally Landscapes and Rosemary Blemings from the Australian Native Plant Society (ANPS), an inspiring and educational garden was created. A big innovation this year included partnerships with five generous sponsors who supplied edging, plants, a recycled base material for the walkways, very large rocks and tanks and also garden design by Vanessa Hagon.

The garden featured the usual environmental weeds including *Cotoneaster* sp., privet and firethorn while the good alternatives side of the garden had some beautiful magnolias, a rhododendron and a camelia as well as natives including new to the nursery scene prostrate leptospermum, a few species of adenanthos, various coloured varieties of brachyscombe daisies and very popular prostrate grevillea.

A significant feature included an extremely well engineered wall with a rainwater tank that fed a raised garden bed that demonstrated a perched water table. Other features included a bridge, large rocks and a central sandy beach which proved popular with children and weary parents.

The great garden with extra signage and more things to see allowed the volunteers to really spend some time with visitors and talk about plants, how to care for them, where to get them from, why and what not to plant and how different invasive plants spread – all of which was readily snapped up by the visitors. Many staff from PCS and City Services were on hand to inform visitors.



Bush Friendly Garden at Floriade this year. VH

The popular Weed Swap went extremely well with great coordination from Rosemary Blemings and Jan Simpson with almost all plants given away over the two days at both the green waste recycling sites. Australian Native Plants Society growers produced a wonderful array of species that were snapped up. However, many of the grasses were left in favour of the 'pretty' flowering plants, indicating that the average gardener really doesn't appreciate how to design a real native-themed garden using native grasses. The rain held off, the sun brought the people in and the volunteers had the chance to talk about removing invasive garden plants in favour of non-invasive natives, which is what the weekend is all about after all.



Phil Selmes explains the types of plants available that can take the place of invasive weeds, Weed Swap stall, Cork Hill Bros. PCS

Although the BFG is now complete for 2015, Phil will continue contributing to the team as Volunteer Coordinator until the position is permanently filled. For many of you Phil is a familiar face to the program, having previously held this position.

Finally, congratulations goes out to all volunteers and groups that were nominated for the Volunteering ACT Awards and the ACT Landcare Awards this year. While the awards recognise a select few, there are many that contributed. The quiet achievers behind the scenes, the busy weed busters behind the mattock and the small children who attend to their blue devil patch on a weekly basis — never doubt that your individual actions can make a difference.

At the ACT Landcare awards, it was great to see the ParkCare program and Craig Wainwright recognised for their efforts and also Wendy Rainbird and the Mount Taylor ParkCare Group.

Also congratulations to Kristy Gould and the ACT Woodlands Restoration Program for winning the Government Partnerships with Landcare Award category. It has been a fabulous landscape-scale project that has received support from community groups across the ACT and one that many staff have been involved in implementing.

Jasmine Foxlee, Rachel Tokley and Philip Selmes

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ParkCare Support Officer

Fulfilling the role of ParkCare Support Officer continues to be an inspiring experience as I celebrate another year spent in the most rewarding position in the Parks and Conservation Service.

Observing the difference volunteers are making to our city's natural values; evaluating the significance of your contributions; working with you to achieve common goals; and celebrating your achievements keeps me motivated and committed to my work. It is a privilege being exposed to the diverse knowledge and experiences within our volunteer community. Your reflections, insights, perspectives and stories are well worth sharing and indeed worth listening to.

As we continue our journey restoring and enhancing the natural values of our beautiful city, know that your work is noticed, valued and appreciated. I welcome your suggestions, input and initiatives and will continue to seek opportunities to resolve the many land management challenges we face. Thank you for all the big and small things you achieved this year.

Other helping hands

The ParkCare program continued to strengthen relationships with other community groups this year. Correctional Services, ADFA cadets, Marist College, and Radford College made significant contributions in ParkCare reserves. Their young hands achieved the more arduous tasks that appear on ParkCare groups' wish lists. A few of their outstanding achievements include removing derelict fences, closing unsustainable trails,

controlling large woody weeds and delivering copious amounts of mulch and light woody debris to ParkCare project sites. I consider them my secret weapon whose muscle and enthusiasm contribute greatly to our successful volunteer works program.

The Green Army need a special mention this year, as the success of this program deserves celebration. Through the ACT Catchment Groups many ParkCare groups have hosted this wonderful team of young people; and what a great experience it has been. Led by competent and affable leaders, the Green Army have brought enthusiasm and joy to their work while proving a valuable on-ground land management force in our region. I enjoyed the many occasions spent with these fine young people and encourage you all to include the Green Army in your works programs

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Mount Ainslie Weeders

A year of art and weeds

Mount Ainslie Weeders did something different this year. Thanks to the generosity of John Pratt, printmaker and weeder, we organised an exhibition and sale of his work at the Australian National Botanic Gardens and gratefully accepted the profits. We were thrilled with the opening, which was well attended by a diverse group of arty, greeny and other types, who enjoyed the hot soup we provided on a chilly Sunday morning while they viewed the exhibition. The next challenge will be to decide how to spend the money to benefit Mount Ainslie. Next year's Scribbly Gum entry will tell the story...

Our monthly work parties are still mainly based around the old Ainslie tip. Most of

the trees and shrubs we began planting in 2008 are growing well with many flowering and seeding. Encouraging ground cover and small understorey plants is our current focus. Each year, we notice more birds using the area.

Just below the old tip is the 'Great Vinca Patch' which we have been clearing for over two years, first laboriously by hand around each of the trees and then by spraying. We used a mixture of glyphosate and Pulse which has proved effective except in areas where the blue periwinkle *Vinca major* was really deep. Those really dense areas required a second treatment.



Spraying the final section of the 'Great Vinca Patch', Mount Ainslie. MC



Planting in the cleared 'Great Vinca Patch'. MC

This winter we planted in the patch and are keeping a close eye on any blue periwinkle regrowth. In due course, this area should become a peaceful and shady haven.

Our small weekly group works in different areas of the reserve depending on what needs to be done.

Work on Cootamundra wattle continues throughout the reserve. We have greatly appreciated the help of Conservation Volunteers Australia and Green Army workers during the year. Several of our volunteers also work independently in their preferred sections.

At the beginning of the year, we assisted residents living near the Mount Pleasant Nature Reserve in Campbell to form a subgroup of the Mount Ainslie Weeders. They have energetically tackled Cootamundra wattle and other woody weeds and have now been promoted to an independent ParkCare group.

Community activities have included Clean Up Australia Day, several Ainslie School events and birdwatching with Campbell High School students.

The introduction of the *Canberra Nature Map* this year has allowed us to really appreciate the wonderful array of flora on our mountain. One of our volunteers has become a skilled identifier and regularly contributes to the *Canberra Nature Map*.

The increase in kangaroo and rabbit numbers continues to concern and frustrate our attempts to get native grasses growing. Placing woody debris as well as tree guards around new plantings gives seedlings a chance to grow to a less palatable and less browsable size.

The year has shown a slight increase in regular members attending our work parties, which is encouraging.



It's not all hard work. MC

Our core group continues to work tirelessly and cheerfully throughout the seasons.

We all enjoy the camaraderie and the satisfaction of nurturing and improving our nature reserve, albeit little by little. Thanks to them all and to the PCS staff who offer so much advice and support.

Jeanette Ruxton

Convenor

Mt Ainslie Weeders

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Friends of the Aranda Bushland

Measuring our vegetation

The Friends of the Aranda Bushland have been in existence for over 20 years and have carried out continual weeding, planting and erosion control. But how can we follow the changes that our actions have had on biodiversity and the landscape? We have witnessed numerous monitoring plots being set up and then abandoned by various agencies and we wanted to set up a system which could be sustained. So how do we monitor vegetation change through a volunteer organisation? There are two main challenges — to measure in the context of personnel and skills and how to maintain continuity and consistency over the decades.

Ten years ago, during the convenorship of Mary Falconer, and with guidance from Sarah Sharp, we set up a simple but substantial monitoring program on the grassland of the Snow Gums Heritage Area, where we were spending most time and energy.

We inherited an established weed population and seedbank of St Johns wort and Patersons curse in the area when sheep and cattle grazing was removed, and the area was gazetted as a heritage site, in February 2000. To measure the effectiveness of our weeding program we

decided to use Sarah Sharp's step-point monitoring technique. We wanted a method that would survive over an extended period of time and can be run by all our volunteers, with varying levels of expertise.

The process involved setting out six linear transects of approximately 150 metres long, on areas of grassland with different weed populations, dominant grasses and vegetation quality. The vegetation was recorded by noting the plant or ground cover under a point indicated by a tent peg tucked in the laces of the right foot when walking the transect. Because we were

interested in weeds, and have a continual weed suppression program, we reported St Johns wort, Patersons curse, mustard and phalaris as well as other grasses, broad-leaf plants, leaf litter and bare ground. All transects were recorded in spring and autumn for ten years to the present date. Each transect had about 120-150 individual point observations. Data from each transect was recorded separately as a percentage of the total vegetation.

We found that what appeared to be a high density of weeds was in fact numerically quite a small percentage of the ground cover! We also found that numbers in spring and autumn differed substantially from one another and were dependent upon rainfall. As we also have a daily rainfall record for Aranda over this period, we are able to relate prior rainfall to vegetation cover. The drought impact is clearly seen, with unvegetated ground highest in the drought of 2006-2009, and 'other broad leaf' highest in the wet years of 2010-2012. The predominant species in the 'other broad leaf' category were clovers, reoccupying the bare ground. We also observed that spraying which killed Patersons curse resulted in initial repopulation by clovers.

The climate over the decade shows predominant summer rain, with less in autumn and winter. This pattern is likely to increase with climate change, with more summer storms.

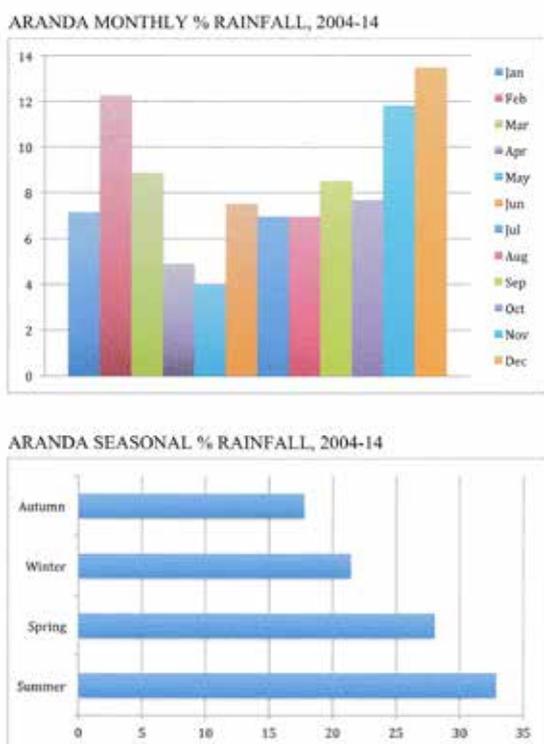
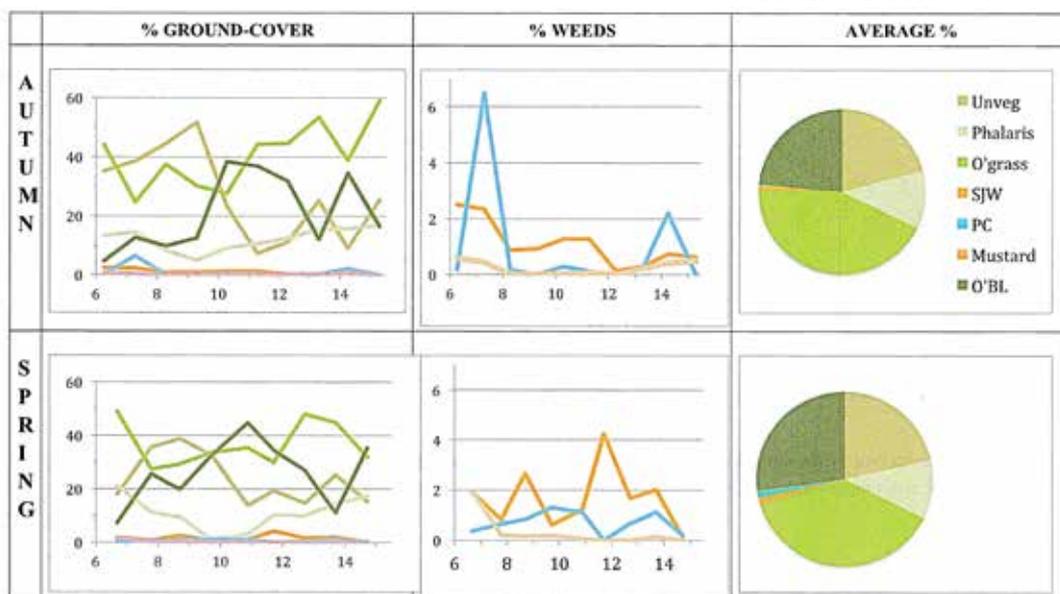


Figure 2 Aranda Rainfall



The spring occurrence of St Johns wort over the decade shows long-lasting seed germination, despite annual spraying reflected in the autumn count.

We conclude that this approach demonstrates vegetation changes which help our understanding of the grassland, the effects of rainfall and weeding.

Ian Falconer

Convenor

Friends of Aranda Bushland

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Friends of Black Mountain (FoBM)

This year our ParkCare activities included weeding work parties, displays, brochures, guided walks, and vegetation monitoring (Vegwatch). These activities contribute to FoBM's aims for conservation and promotion of Black Mountain's biodiversity.

Our weeding work parties are on the first Saturday of each month, with a focus on weeding the perimeter of Black Mountain.

More than 30 members of FoBM and Friends of the Australian National Botanic Gardens (ANBG) volunteered 385 hours overall and removed more than 4500 woody weeds in the last 12 months in Black Mountain Nature Reserve, as well as near shared fences in ANBG. Several of our members have invaluable knowledge of weeds and local native plants. Dr Rosemary Purdie provided important advice and guidance for the weeding program and wrote reports.

Molonglo Catchment Group received an Environment Grant for work on Black Mountain, Mount Majura and Mount Ainslie. For Black Mountain it included erosion management and weeding that was not possible for volunteers to do. Several of our members helped with vegetation survey training and practical sessions.



Evaluating a new metal railing on Forest Loop Walk. JG

FoBM was awarded a heritage grant in collaboration with the Molonglo Catchment Group for the exhibition of '*Black Mountain Nature Reserve: a special place*'. Displayed in Telstra Tower, the exhibition received very positive feedback. It highlighted Black Mountain Nature Reserve's high natural and cultural values including its unique geology and soils and its floral diversity — more than 650 species of plants (and a high proportion are rare plants). We were grateful for the specialist advice we received from several people, particularly Morgyn Phillips, Dr Rosemary Purdie and Con Boekel.

FoBM is hugely thankful to PCS, Field Naturalists Association Canberra, and individuals who contributed to the Black Mountain Nature Reserve brochure. It is very popular at the Visitor Information Centre on Northbourne Avenue and the ANBG. FoBM is continuing to develop brochures which assist visitors to learn more about the reserve's conservation values and its natural beauty.

FoBM was one of the ParkCare groups at the display in Jamison Plaza, coordinated by Jean Geue, where visitors enjoyed the display and the quizzes, picked up free leaflets and bought publications.

More than 200 people came on our ever-popular walks and talks to learn more about conservation of our flora and fauna during the last year.

These included three heritage walks and talks in April on the themes of:

- 'the changing landscape since ancient times' conducted with Dr Karen Williams, Dr Fiona Dyer, Wally and Tyrone Bell who spoke from a Ngunnawal perspective, and the Molonglo Catchment Group
- 'Cypress, cherry and gum trees' by Michael Doherty and
- 'Pryor's Notable Snow Gums' by Jean Geue.



Seeing 'Pryor's Notable Snow Gums'. JG

We received very positive feedback on these walks. We also found that such walks and talks were the first time that more than half of the participants had been to a Heritage Festival event.

The Eucalyptus Walk and the Wattle Walk, led by Michael Doherty highlighted their botanic characteristics, and how these trees and shrubs coped with drought and fire. On the popular Ant Walk, participants learnt about ants (and their preferred plants), including species that live only in trees.

The 44th annual Spring Wildflower Ramble continued the tradition established by Dr Nancy Burbidge and George Chippendale. A warm thank you to the leaders — Dr Rosemary Purdie, Dr Michael Mulvaney, Dave Albrecht and Jean Geue — who took more than 100 participants in four separate groups in four different directions. Participants said

they were amazed by the intricate beauty of the wildflowers they had seen in the reserve.

FoBM has been involved not only in vegetation surveys, but also in the gang-gang breeding survey conducted by Canberra Ornithologists Group. We were delighted to observe gang-gang cockatoos feeding young in nests on Black Mountain.



Learning new things about wildflowers. JG

This year FoBM coordinated responses by members to some important policy issues affecting the reserve. For example, FoBM was one of the ParkCare groups that provided feedback to the vision statement for recreation, particularly in relation to the priority needed for conservation of flora and fauna in Black Mountain and other reserves.

Thank you to everyone in FoBM, Molonglo Catchment Group, Parks and Conservation Service, Heritage Unit, Field Naturalists Association of Canberra, ANBG and Friends of ANBG, Australian Native Plants Society, and other organisations for the part they played in making this an enjoyable year for FoBM.

Linda Beveridge

Convenor

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Friends of Bruce Ridge (FoBR)

On 31 October 2015, four years after forming Friends of Bruce Ridge (FoBR), Minister Shane Rattenbury officially opened the Bruce Ridge trails network.

The official opening saw a great turnout of over 40 people, with representatives from local park users, FoBR members, Canberra Off Road Cyclists and PCS staff.

Minister Rattenbury presented FoBR with several sets of heavy duty trail tools to continue the good work maintaining the trail network into the future.

In 2015, the friends finalised several features including a revamped descent trail to bypass an ecologically significant bird habitat. The descent trail is the only one way trail in the network and had been identified in early planning as a type of trail which had been illegally built several times after closures. With this in mind FoBR and PCS had investigated several options assessing each against environmental impact, sustainability, existing trails and the need to combat illegal trail building.

PCS completed the installation of the trail signage at intersections and larger maps at key points around the reserve. The trail head signs are popular with visitors allowing easy planning of running and riding loops. They also have information about the flora and fauna on Bruce Ridge to inform visitors of the ecological values of the nature reserve.

The FoBR team received a large amount of help from the Correctional Services Program as well as students and staff from Marist College and Radford College. This additional manpower assisted greatly in completing the incredibly labour intensive trail closures.

An interactive map has been developed by PCS for the new trails of Bruce Ridge. It can be accessed from the TAMS website. Altogether 2015 has been a very busy year for the FoBR crew.



Over 40 people attended the launch of the Bruce Ridge trails network on Saturday 31 October. PCS



Minister Rattenbury, FoBR and PCS staff at the launch of the Bruce Ridge trails network. PCS

Geoff Hyde

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Friends of Mount Painter (FOMP)

This year Friends of Mount Painter (FOMP) have invested more time in weeding than in recent years. Building on the efforts of former years, we are now seeing very noticeable signs of reduced infestations of many weed species in the areas we target. This is well illustrated by the results obtained from the 'Traffic Light' Framework for Weed Management and Reporting that John Busby developed in 2011. With fewer weeds in our target areas of the Wildflower Triangle and on the slope behind the houses, we have time to work more intensively on the summit

and the ridge line leading up to it (along the Summit Path). We hope to reduce the number of seeds entering the seed bank, washing downhill, ultimately driving the weeds downslope and off the hill!

Three outside groups have helped FOMP with work on the reserve: Friends of Aranda Bushland joined us in August to map rabbit burrows and blackberries on the hill; volunteers from Telstra weeded along the Summit Path in September; and in October, the Green Army installed mesh guards around young shrubs planted last year. We were also delighted that, with support from a local resident, Scott Jackson, we received a \$250 donation from his employer, Ray White, on the basis of the number of 'likes' recorded by our newly established Facebook page.



Handing over the cheque: Sarah Hnatiuk (FOMP) and Scott Jackson (Ray White). RH

Several events have brought the reserve to the attention of a wider range of people than usual. The first was one of Ginninderra Catchment Group's walks with Ngunnawal custodians, Tyrone and Wally Bell. Braving a very windy day, they led a group to see the canoe scar tree on the reserve. Tyrone and Wally also explained some of the traditional plant uses of species found on Mount Painter and the cultural meanings attached to the landscape features we could see from the summit.



A rugged-up audience listen to Wally and Tyrone Bell (central standing figures) with Ginninderra Catchment Group's Kat Vincent with microphone and Karissa Preuss. SH

FOMP organised two further walks, the first with Craig Wainwright, who spoke to us about European settlement of the district. Craig presented a collection of fascinating maps, aerial photographs and excerpts from historical accounts.

As at June 2015												
Last Updated	Jun-15											
Weed*Zone ¹	ST	MP1	MP2	MP3	MP4	MP5	MP6	MP7	WT1	WT2	WT3	ORR ²
African Lovegrass								(P)				(P)
Blackberry					(P)	(P)	(P)					(P)
Black-berry Nightshade								(P)				
Chilean Needlegrass												(P)
Fleabane												
Goudbout												
Hairy Mustard			(P)	(P)								(P)
Horehound			(P)	(P)	(P)		(P)					
Nodding Thistle			(P)	(P)								
Patersons Curse			(P)	(P)	(P)	(P)	(P)	(P)				(P)
Prickly Lettuce												
Saffron Thistle			(P)									
Serrated Tussock					(P)							
Scotch Spear Thistle				(P)	(P)							
St Johns Wort					(P)							
Verbascum								(P)				
Woody Weeds												(P)

Table Legend (P) = patchy
 Eradicated or insignificant
 Could be eradicated or reduced to insignificant in 1-3 years
 Large numbers but could be significantly reduced
 Severe infestation
 Status to be determined

As at June 2012												
Last Updated	03/12	03/12	03/11	?	06/12	06/12	06/12	03/12				
Weed Zone ¹	MP1	MP2	MP3	MP4	MP5	MP6	MP7	WT1	WT2	WT3	ORR ²	
African Lovegrass							(P)					
Black-berry Nightshade			(P)				(P)					
Chilean Needlegrass												(P)
Fleabane												
Hedge Mustard			(P)	(P)			(P)					
Horehound			(P)									
Nodding Thistle			(P)	(P)								
Patersons Curse			(P)	(P)								(P)
Prickly Lettuce			(P)									
Saffron Thistle			(P)									
Scotch Spear Thistle			(P)	(P)								
St Johns Wort												
Verbascum			(P)									(P)
Woody Weeds												(P)

LEGEND (P) = patchy
 Eradicated or insignificant
 Could be eradicated or reduced to insignificant in 1-3 years
 Could be significantly reduced
 Severe infestation
 Status to be determined

FOMP Weed Reports for 2012 (left) and 2015 (right). Infestations for each weed of interest in different areas of the reserve are rated from insignificant, denoted by green, through yellow and orange to severe, shown as red. While severe infestations were still present in 2015, the general decline in weediness from 2012 is shown by the higher proportion of green cells in the former. J. Bu

During spring, Richard Allen and Debbie Saunders led a bird walk, during which 24 species were noted.

This year also saw FOMP members presenting information about the reserve at several meetings. Sarah Hnatiuk spoke to the Friends of the National Arboretum Canberra about rehabilitating Mount Painter, and at the ParkCare Forum on lessons learnt from recent efforts to revegetate the reserve. Those learnings include how to plant and care for seedlings to maximise survival, and observations on natural regeneration from these plantings. John Busby's description of his 'Traffic Light' Framework for Weed Management and Reporting at the ParkCare Forum evoked much interest. At the Conservation Council Environment Exchange on Biodiversity Monitoring and Research in the ACT, he spoke about his and Cath's monitoring of orchids following a prescribed burn in the Wildflower Triangle. In addition, he and Cath have provided a total of six briefings on the orchid project at the pre-season fire-training sessions for Parks and Conservation Service staff.

Jasmine Foxlee, Craig Wainwright, Anthony Hart plus other staff at the Mitchell Depot have given us much help and encouragement over the year, as has Ginninderra Catchment Group. Thanks to you all.

FOMP Weed Reports for 2012 and 2015

Infestations for each weed of interest in different areas of the reserve are rated from insignificant, denoted by green, through yellow and orange to severe, shown as red. While severe infestations were still present in 2015, the general decline in weed abundance from 2012 is shown by the higher proportion of green cells in the former.

Sarah Hnatiuk

Convenor

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Friends of Mulligans Flat

It was another busy year out at Mulligans Flat. The Friends hold quarterly work parties to tackle larger jobs with the Rangers. Friends can also adopt a patch of the reserve if they have more time, and weed (mainly thistles and briar rose) and identify rabbit burrows.

Our autumn work party was held on Clean Up Australia Day the first Sunday in March. As well as cleaning up litter blown against the fence, we removed lounge room furniture dumped at the northern end of Forde. The Parks and Conservation Service (PCS) truck as usual was 'packed to the brim'.

At our winter work party in June, we constructed an elevated gravel path across a boggy patch at the end of the Grassy Woodland Trail just near the woolshed. Many hands made light work as we shovelled gravel and packed down the base and top layer into place. The path has cured nicely and held up well in recent downpours.

In spring we tackled Patersons curse rosettes under the heritage peppercorn tree and went rabbit hunting in agistment paddocks 1 and 2, just outside of the Sanctuary.

This area is the extension to the reserve known as the Throsby Neck.



Constructing the wet crossing at our winter work party. KE



We were joined by 30 fit young Midshipman and officer cadets from ADFA. The cadets learned about the conservation research underway at the Sanctuary on the walk out to the paddocks and then tore into the stinging nettles, tracked rabbits and helped remove a dilapidated paddock fence.



ADFA cadets at our spring work party. KE

Friends of Mulligans have been active in pest and wildlife monitoring projects in the Sanctuary including helping to feed the next tranche of 10 bush stone-curlews housed in a special aviary to acclimatise ahead of their release into the Sanctuary this spring. Friends participated in the Climate Change Frogwatch project, the Frogwatch Census and the new turtle patrol designed to assist turtles migrate between the large dam in the Sanctuary and water bodies in north Gungahlin.

We held our annual Science in the Sanctuary forum at Gungahlin Library in July this year to keep the community up to date with the research occurring at Mulligans Flat. The forum continues to attract interest with over 65 people attending. Will Batson talked about his PhD research on translocation of the bettongs; Dr Nicky Munro presented the results of her postdoctoral research examining the role of bettong diggings on soil health and also provided an update about the population and health of the bettongs. Bruno Ferronato from the University of Canberra presented his research about the impact of the fence on

reptile movements and Mulligans Ecologist Kate Garrock reported on the first bush stone-curlew release in spring 2014.

Friends assisted the Trust staff with the popular fortnightly twilight walks in the Sanctuary. We held guided bird walks in autumn and spring and a spring wildflower walk. Warm thanks to our volunteer guides, John Brannan, Bill Graham and Chris Davey on birds and Michael Doherty on plants.

Our young Bettong Buddies enjoyed a kids clay workshop with Mulligans WABA artist-in-residence Stephen Harrison in the July school holidays. The kids (and some of the big kids) moulded bettong and birds nests and other creations out of clay.



Kids bettong creation. KE

We held a free nightwalk for families in the last week of winter and are holding our Snap-Film-Draw kids art competition again this spring. Art works will be on display in the woolshed in November. The Bettong Buddies website is the Trust's web platform for information about events and interpretative programs at Mulligans. Go to: bettongs.org

This year we farewell ranger Grant 'Woody' Woodbridge who has moved to work at

Googong. Grant has been pivotal to the Friends Group setting up our work parties, managing volunteer induction and equipment. A big thanks also to the ranger team Mark, Whitty and John for supporting our work in the Sanctuary this year and to our growing band of volunteers for all their hard work.

Kathy Eyles

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Friends of the Pinnacle (fotpin)

Pinnacle achievements over time

The Pinnacle and its friends have had another busy year with weeding, planting, walks and more. The Friends of the Pinnacle has been reviewing the considerable achievements at the Pinnacle Nature Reserve over time and we would like to share those achievements with you.

Plantings

Planting began in the 1980s with community participation and the Commonwealth Development Employment Program (CDEP) and took off in the early 1990s with the involvement of the Pinnacle Environment Group (PEG), which consisted of mostly local people concerned about the environment and their community.

Their extensive tree planting laid the groundwork for changing the Pinnacle Nature Reserve from degraded pastureland to the recovering grassy box woodland we enjoy today. The two photos show before and after views from the top of the Pinnacle over Hawker to the west. It is astonishing to see how much the trees have grown over the last 25 or so years. Just think what the Pinnacle will look like in another 20 years with the continuing plantings of trees, grasses, and particularly understorey plants.



(Top) before 1991 and (bottom) the same area after 2013.

Weeding

Weeding has been a continuing and extensive activity at the Pinnacle over the years. Methods include hand weeding in the *Eucalyptus macrorhyncha* forest, slashing, spraying, grubbing (though less so now, as it disturbs the soil) and cutting and dabbing woody weeds. The burden of weeding is slowly lessening and we can now extend our weeding footprint, to the adjacent Bottom Pinnacle and Kama Paddock, while maintaining our weeding targets. This is becoming increasingly interesting as a part of that area will be reserved as a biodiversity offset area, and fotpin expects to have a key role in its rehabilitation.

The two photographs on page 16 show what can be done with consistent weeding over a few years. It is a shame the replacement, self-seeded grass is oat-grass, but it is better than verbasum, however attractive the verbasum flowers might be.

If you would like to learn more about fotpin's 'before and after' stories, please



(Top) Near Fiveways before 2007 and (bottom) the same area after 2013.

look at our website, www.fotpin.org.au and follow the links to our June newsletter for the details of Warren Bond's walk (May 17) where he reviewed 'The State of the Pinnacle' in more detail. You could also follow the direct link to it: www.fotpin.org.au/newsletters/newsletter_7.html#n07a4

Fotpin has continued to:

- guide walks at the Pinnacle in autumn and spring on a range of topics including bird behaviour, the Indigenous and pastoral history of the reserve and more
- plant understorey plants, other shrubs and grasses
- count the Pinnacle's kangaroo population annually
- carry out a planned program of weeding
- clean up the Pinnacle, both on a regular basis and on Clean Up Australia Day
- provide outreach through school fetes and shopping centre displays

- map the reserve's rabbit population to assist in warren treatments by PCS and
- survey the reserve's bird population.

John Brannan

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North Belconnen Landcare Group

North Belconnen Landcare Band



Landcare Band and singers promoting the cause. SW



Landcare stall behind the band, with plant display of weeds for quiz and native plants for prizes as well as promotional pamphlets and information. SW

The Landcare stall was a worthwhile activity and provided good promotional opportunities for Landcare. The keen baking Landcarers made slices, cookies and muffins and all sold for \$5 per lot making a total of \$95 for our Landcare Group. We also sold some of the glossy brochures of the native plants for identification purposes and the glossy brochures of the frogs and lizards as well as some lovely books '*Neighbours in Trouble*' – *endangered plants and animals*

in the ACT (by Fraser and McJannett with lovely illustrations by H Fitzgerald). This book is highly recommended reading for the young and the young at heart and has well explained information on the subject matter suggested by the title. Free information brochures and Landcare promotion information were also available.

We had a weeds display and weeds quiz based on the display, with clues to the answers provided in the display. The people who did the quiz successfully, got a native plant or a small plate of cookies in the shape of plants and animals. The blue devils proved the most popular and the next most popular were the lomandras though some dianellas and *Chrysocephalum apiculatum* were also requested as prizes. We gave the lomandras to people who said they were not good at gardening. The blue devils were reserved for people who showed a keen interest in native plants and we only gave a small number away to people who were going to provide suitable homes for these our favourite plants. Some of our own children in the group did the weeds quiz and selected the blue devils as their prize.

All the remaining plants not used as prizes for the quiz can now be planted into our Landcare patch to increase the biodiversity of our Landcare site.

For more information on our group visit our Face Book page which can be found in 'Open Groups' on Face Book. This page is kept up to date with information about our meeting times and activities.

Ken Hodgkinson and Lenore Hodgkinson
Convenors

North Belconnen Landcare Group

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Coolleman Ridge ParkCare Group

The Coolleman Ridge ParkCare Group has continued to weed along the spine of Coolleman Ridge consistent with the rotation program that we have undertaken in the last few years. This has been the basis for the regular Sunday work parties. The group has also maintained work parties each week on Wednesday and Friday on Mount Arawang and Kathner Street entrance respectively.



Euphorbia oblongata (depauperata), a persistent weed that grows near the summit of Coolleman Ridge. PCS

Other individual efforts have ensured that Coolleman Ridge has been the subject of a diverse range of weeding and informal monitoring designed to maintain its native plants and animals. These include the removal of pine wildings and attempts to monitor the erosion of the cut-off drain and tracks. Following representations to Ministers, Roads ACT has apparently agreed to examine the state of the drain.

The number of informal tracks on Coolleman Ridge continues to be a matter of concern. Similarly, the condition of the inner dam is also a concern.

We have attempted to interest the ACT Government in the fate of the pink-tailed worm lizard and following that, a survey is to be undertaken on Coolleman Ridge and on Urambi Hills.

We continue to maintain contact with the Southern ACT Catchment Group and

Parks and Conservation Service (PCS) staff. We recently met with PCS staff for the annual planning meeting.

The Cooleman Ridge ParkCare Group maintains a website with a range of information including the tree survey data and the report on the recovery of the site burnt in 2010.

We have begun work on revising the Nature Trail brochure and we have revived contact with the local primary school.



Friends of Cooleman Ridge walking the Cooleman Ridge Nature Trail with the aim of revising the brochure. AF



Peach Heath *Lissanthe strigosa* subsp. *subulata* on Cooleman Ridge. PCS

The ACT Government has a new amended Act, the *Nature Conservation Act 2014*. It is our hope that the Government will implement the principles contained in that Act and the committee will, as it has done since the inception of the ParkCare Group, continue to strive for better environmental outcomes for Cooleman Ridge. Lastly, we must acknowledge the work of Government

agency staff in acting on the weeding problems that beset the nature reserve.

Alan Ford

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Farrer Ridge ParkCare Group



Spring wildflower walk Farrer Ridge. WR

On 27 September, a delightful, warm, spring day, Farrer Ridge ParkCare group led a large group of people on another spring wildflower walk on Farrer Ridge Nature Reserve. This time we used the *Ngunnawal Plant Use Guide*, to help interpret the many traditional uses of plants by Ngunnawal people.



Flowers of the false sarsparilla were traditionally used by the Ngunnawal people as a traditional medicine. WR

Some participants knew that the native cherry that fruits in summer has tasty fruit, yet did not know that the slim trunks were used for clubs and digging sticks. We learnt about some of the medicinal uses, like the colourful *Hardenbergia* flowers were eaten to treat liver and kidney complaints.

Also, that cassinias were 'significant to the Ngunnawal people as they burned it and used the smoke to cleanse areas or spirits during ceremony.' We were delighted that just as Wendy was talking about where we had seen an eagle's nest, a wedge-tailed eagle soared above us. We also looked at the nesting hollows in old trees, and shared a photo of a baby laughing kookaburra seen the previous day.



Baby kookaburra, Farrer Ridge. WR

In October 2014, ParkCarers participated in the successful 25 year anniversary *Reflect, Explore, Inspire Forum*, where one of the outcomes was to incorporate Aboriginal perspectives in to caring for Country. The field trip to the Umbagog axe-grinding grooves site, and later Southern ACT Catchment (SACTCG) walks and talks led by Wally and Tyrone Bell to the Theodore sites were responding to that perspective.

Another development through the Southern ACT Catchment Group, was the workshop run by Cam Wilson, followed by on-site work on low-cost erosion control. Fortunately, a large group of ParkCarers applied the erosion control measures, which demonstrated different applicable measures.

Some months later, after good rain, we saw how effectively these leaky weirs, and other methods were improving the gully while reducing further erosion.

In November and December, Farrer Ridge ParkCarers removed some woody weeds from another gully area. Woody weeds were once prevalent across all of Farrer Ridge Nature Reserve and are now confined to just a few sites.

We have spent more time mattocking and dabbing stem stumps of verbascum, or just weed-wanding their leaves. Again although once infested areas are clear for now, there are bad infestations on Farrer Hill, where we have worked during December, and in 2015, February through to July. The Green Army helped with treating more of the verbascum. They also did some thatching and other erosion control work, supervised by Cam Wilson, in the erosion gully in the south-eastern area of the reserve.

In July, Wendy gave a presentation at the ParkCare Forum about Collaborative Learning under the theme of 'Biodiversity and Conservation' and 'People and Partnerships' with the key message that learning across the many partnerships can enhance the knowledge, skills and relationships to Country and could foster more effective partnerships. For example, long-term ParkCarers have lots of local knowledge, so that researchers could benefit from approaching ParkCarers before starting on-field research. At the same time ParkCarers would learn from the research. With more of this collaborative learning, Rangers and ParkCare volunteers can learn more about the ecosystems and their interactions — the dynamics of biodiversity — and therefore increase effectiveness of conservation efforts, while encouraging people and their partnerships in their work.

Wendy has also given presentations at Farrer Primary School.

Communication with the community is important, as people can be alerted to reporting sightings of rabbits or any increases in the pest birds like Indian mynah birds.

Wendy Rainbird

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Isaacs Ridge Mount Mugga Mugga ParkCare Group

Our group remains small so it is good to have some new people to make up for those who think travel is a better option — probably most of the group have been overseas for a while this year. Numbers at our monthly work activities have fluctuated but we have had several Sunday mornings of removing woody weeds and enjoying the native plants.



Juniper wattle *Acacia ulicifolia* in Mugga Mugga Nature Reserve encountered on a monthly activity. MS

The practical side of an erosion control workshop sponsored by the Southern ACT Catchment Group was held in Mugga Mugga Nature Reserve. An erosion control structure made from pine and Cootamundra wattle was installed to stop gully head erosion of the intermittent creek running down the valley. Later in the year the Green Army carried out some more erosion control nearby. This should stop the gully enlarging to reach the Centenary Trail.

In May, ACT Scouts held a Great Weed-Out and planting on a cleared slope at the south end of Isaacs Ridge. The first day saw the removal of woody weeds and planting of shrubs and trees. Unfortunately the second day was very cold so there was fewer people to do planting. Luckily Greening Australia finished the planting a few days later.



Erosion control structure in Mugga Mugga Nature Reserve. MS

Planting of several hundred shrubs and grasses has been carried out in Mugga Mugga Nature Reserve as part of the Woodland Restoration Project. Though the area has a good number of trees along the western edge, there is a lack of smaller understorey plants so the planting is intended to restore the balance. The drooping she-oak *Allocasuarina verticillata* planted on the ridge four years ago have mainly recovered from the depredation by kangaroos and many are over two metres tall. So far they have not flowered but some older self-sown ones further south flower each year.



Drooping she-oak *Allocasuarina verticillata* on Isaacs Ridge. MS

Teams from Conservation Volunteers have helped with woody weed control and more recently removed barbed wire from much of the internal fencing in Isaacs Ridge Nature Reserve. The fencing is a remnant of old grazing days and the barbed wire was hazardous to kangaroos (and ParkCare volunteers).

The Canberra Centenary Trail passes through Isaacs Ridge and Mount Mugga Mugga and is getting quite a lot of use including by people doing short sections. A section of the trail across the creek in Mount Mugga Mugga became very boggy after rain as the water did not follow the low flow line but spread across the higher ground. People began widening the track to avoid the mud. A new section of boardwalk has been installed to protect the area and keep walkers' feet dry.

Canberra Nature Map is a website for recording rare plants and other plants in Canberra Nature Reserves. Over 500 plant sightings from Isaacs Ridge and Mount Mugga Mugga have now been recorded. Not many are rare plants and there are a lot of weeds, but they are a record of the local area.



Short-beaked echidna *Tachyglossus aculeatus* in Isaacs Ridge Nature Reserve. MS

The ACT Government has consulted on upgrading mountain bike tracks in Isaacs Pines and it is hoped that work will go ahead, as it should reduce the amount of illegal bike riding in the reserve.

A small addition has been made to Isaacs Ridge Nature Reserve with 38 hectares along Mugga Lane being added as an offset to the expansion of the Resource

Management Centre. There are many weeds including an horrendous outbreak of *Euphorbia oblongata* but there are good patches and some rare plants. The area is also home to some of our unusual creatures.

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Jarramlee Park Landcare, Dunlop

Jarramlee Park Landcare, in a section of Dunlop behind Macgregor and backing onto Ginninderra Creek, has increased the number of members in the last year to a healthy eleven. We have a Junior Landcarer aged 10, who is very enthusiastic.



A young Jarramlee Park Landcarer hard at work. PF

We recently started a sixth planting site, on both sides of the outflow channel from Fassifern Pond to Gooromon Ponds Creek by the Jarramlee Homestead Road. The planting was mainly casuarinas, some leptospermums and a few callistemons. There is scope at this site for further plantings next autumn. Hopefully we will manage to get these new plants through what is forecast to be a very hot summer.

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Friends of Jerrabomberra Wetlands

It has been a very busy year at the Jerrabomberra Wetlands, culminating in September with a party to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the wetlands being declared a nature reserve.

Those who have been involved with activities in the Jerrabomberra Wetlands over the years will have noticed the continual improvements to the area, making it more accessible to the public and raising the profile of this unique resource to the community and education groups.

During the past year, Parks and Conservation Service (PCS) staff, volunteers from the Friends of Jerrabomberra Wetlands and the Green Army have undertaken various activities, including building and refurbishing bird hides, new plantings, clearing large willows and alders and removing noxious plants. The Canberra Ornithologists Group has undertaken bird surveys, and volunteer groups such as Frogwatch have counted frogs, platypus and other native species.

On World Wetlands Day in February, over 500 people visited the Jerrabomberra Wetlands, with interest shown in the displays of local wildlife, local conservation groups and the area's Indigenous heritage. Ranger tours were very popular. It was a great opportunity for the public to learn more about the history and ecology of the wetlands, as well as recruiting new volunteers!



Willow reapers at Jerrabomberra Wetlands. DK

After many months of hard work, the Kellys Swamp boardwalk was officially opened, on World Wetlands Day. The boardwalk completes the Kellys Swamp loop and passes through reeds and rushes, past newly planted shallow pools and replanted mounds and grasslands. New signage makes it easier for visitors to navigate the area and better understand the ecology.

As well as being a natural attraction in the heart of Australia's capital city, the wetlands has a fascinating history. The area was used as a training ground for trench warfare during World War I. A series of trenches, buried for many years, were partially excavated and studied earlier this year by a team of archaeologists from the ANU.

The real attraction of Jerrabomberra is the natural environment which is home to a wide variety of animal and plant species, many of which are not found elsewhere in the ACT. The wetlands is a haven for waterbirds, frogs, bats, water rats, turtles and platypuses, Unfortunately there are also feral pests such as foxes, rabbits and carp.



Carp trap in the billabong, Jerrabomberra Wetlands. DK

Each year, the wetlands attracts numerous species of migratory birds and is a magnet for birdwatchers and photographers who make use of the bird hides located around Kellys Swamp and the creek banks. Other visitors include cyclists, walkers and school groups who visit the wetlands to learn first hand about the interaction between human development and the natural environment.

Maintaining this resource requires a dedicated team of PCS rangers led by Michael Maconachie, and volunteers from the Friends of Jerrabomberra Wetlands. The Friends group meets twice a month to undertake a range of tasks from planting and watering, clearing noxious plants such as blackberries and boxthorn, to more specialised activities such as carp trapping, flora and fauna surveys and turtle conservation. The Friends come from all walks of life and share a common interest and enthusiasm in the preservation of the area. More recently they have been joined by a team from the Green Army, who have tackled some of the bigger clearing tasks.



Friends of Jerrabomberra Wetlands working party near the new boardwalk. DK

The wetlands will continue to face challenges from encroaching urban development and natural pests but it is encouraging that more people are becoming aware of its important role in Canberra's environment. Volunteering with the Friends of Jerrabomberra Wetlands is a great way to make new friends and make a contribution to the preservation of this unique area.

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Oakey Hill ParkCare Group

Oakey Hill ParkCare is just winding up its 11th year. And what a decade — from the devastation and shock of the 2003 bushfires and through the drought years our resilient band has toiled uncomplainingly to rehabilitate our reserve.

Whilst in previous years our volunteers have relentlessly pursued the sometimes tedious but necessary task of weed control to the virtual exclusion of other forms of conservation work, this year we have been able to branch out into other rewarding tasks.

On a chilly winter morning in June, Cam Wilson of Earth Integral schooled Oakey Hill volunteers in the art of erosion control. The event resulted from an invitation by the Coordinator of the Southern ACT Catchment Group, Martine Franco, to nominate sites on Oakey Hill that might benefit from an erosion control workshop. This workshop was made possible through funding from the ACT Regional Landcare Facilitator and was one of a series of workshops hosted by local ParkCare groups.



Erosion control workshop, Oakey Hill. JB



Erosion control workshop, Oakey Hill. JB

We focused our efforts on an active stream channel on the western slopes overlooking Weston Creek.

Cam led us through a number of techniques aimed at managing flow and sediment deposition. It was a great morning and a roll-up of ten volunteers threw themselves into the various tasks with gusto. We progressed from erosion control to mass planting. Earlier this year Kristy Gould of the ACT Woodlands Restoration Project approached the Oakey Hill ParkCare Group to gauge our interest in doing a major planting in the open areas overlooking Mount Taylor to the south. After ten years of hacking Cootamundra wattles, we seized the opportunity with both hands!

Kristy organised contractors to prepare the site and on 18 October a crew of ten Oakey Hill ParkCare volunteers planted about 400 mixed trees and shrubs supplied by Greening Australia. We were aided in our task by Parks and Conservation Service (PCS) rangers Ellyse, Luke and Craig.

Volunteers put in extra time and effort to get the seedlings into the ground, install the tree guards and water each and every plant to give it a start in its new life on the hill. We were joined by scores of magpies who waited patiently for us to break for morning tea and lunch (and hopefully drop something tasty).

The Oakey Hill ParkCare Group has been very fortunate throughout its decade plus



Plantings on Oakey Hill. JB

history to have the support of a succession of dedicated PCS rangers. It is this enduring partnership between our volunteer community and PCS that makes possible the important practical conservation work undertaken in Canberra's reserves.

Craig Wainwright deserves special mention in this regard. Not only is he an ever reliable 'go-to' guy for anything our group might need, he has been a one-man tornado of activity, spraying blackberry and blue periwinkle, organising spraying contractors and marshalling work crews to clear swathes of Cootamundra wattle around the northern and western boundary of the reserve. So hats off to Craig and to the many dedicated ParkCare volunteers who make the whole thing so worthwhile.

John Butcher

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Fetherston Gardens Friends (FGF)

The past 12 months has seen the continuation of the Friends goals – to restore, regenerate and renew the Fetherston Gardens (FGF) for the local and wider community to enjoy. We have completed five years to date and we operate on supporting our volunteers first, and park and garden management second.



Fetherston Gardens volunteers. LP

Our volunteers are the mainstay of our efforts in garden restoration. We have between eight and 26 volunteers at each working bee and all have been involved in diverse activities and tasks appropriate to their abilities and interests. Many of our volunteers have cared for specific areas in the garden on a continued and committed basis. Stephen Utick our camellia expert is researching, labelling and maintaining our precious camellia plantings of Tony Fetherston's. It was a joy to have Janet Lawrence, daughter of Tony Fetherston in the garden.

Without our people there is no garden, for we have many volunteers participating and maintaining the arboretum and garden areas. This also includes the entrance, car park plantings, walkways and paths. Many are often seen at the gardens out of working bee days, clearing walkways throughout the gardens, collecting rubbish, sweeping and leaf blowing the entrance, for the public to be welcomed.

Our volunteers have made significant changes in Fetherston Gardens these last 12 months – specific areas of the garden have now been attended to. Floriade bulbs from 2015 have been dug, saved and replanted and some have been dug up by marauding cockatoos. Most woody weeds have been removed and any new ivy, blackberry or honeysuckle leaf is removed with vengeance. The 'secret' garden area had become Tarzan friendly with many exotic weedy vines and more ivy for us to tackle. Excess bamboo has fed the pandas at the zoo instead of landfill.



Clearing bamboo. LP

Our relationship with ParkCare and PCS is highly valued and together with our volunteers, much has been achieved. Our TAMS crew have also moved the boundary FGF/Islamic school fence off our path to allow for vehicle access through the garden.

During May, CIT Arboriculture students and staff carried out some tree pruning and maintenance in the woodland gardens for their assessment and studies. It was a pleasure to have students back in the gardens.

Last spring some of the FGF volunteers worked alongside the Islamic School community to begin a school garden group. With the support of the Islamic School principal, we started by clearing up the school's entrance area of any weedy plants (yes ivy here too) and replanted donated plants back into this area. As good gardening groups do, we shared and consumed delights of our cultures through food and drinks and developed friendships and skills.

The Defence Housing Australia (DHA) site works have been completed. DHA Marketing has been a valuable support for the FGF. We have welcomed DHA experience and knowledge, particularly in organising the Family Fun day in February and at the DHA land auction in May. At this event FGF were presented with a large cheque from DHA to support our ongoing projects in the garden. These fundraisers enabled us to work together as a community partnership, and also with and for our wider community. Thanks to Weston Creek Community Council for their ongoing support of Fetherston Gardens.

Our new venture, The Gallipoli Garden is near completion, after we received an ANZAC Centenary Grant from the Department of Veterans Affairs, DVA. The Gallipoli Garden was ready for Remembrance Day on 11 November. This is a collaborative effort with TAMS, DHA, FGF, and Foxies Landscapes. Our garden will be highlighting the plants that grew on the Gallipoli Peninsula. Terry Fox from Foxies was Tony Fetherston's apprentice.

Thank you ParkCare for the nomination for the ACT Volunteer of the Year Award.



Gallipoli Garden almost completed. LP

for our volunteers. We are keen to explore more options to support our volunteers and the gardens future within our community.

Lesley Pattinson

Working bee Convenor

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Red Hill Regenerators

Finding out about your place

Recently I gave a talk to the Historical Society on the interplay of Red Hill's natural and human history. I won't recount that history here, but I encourage you to do similar research on your own patch. The internet is an amazing source and you can find 1832 and 1837 maps (by Robert Hoddle and Robert Dixon) of our area showing property boundaries and owners. The National Library Trove site allows searches of all issues of the *Canberra Times* (which goes back to the 1920s) and most of the *Queanbeyan Age* (back to 1860). Trove also has an amazing collection of digitised maps and photos. Access Trove and search on the name of your patch with words like 'fire, sheep, tree clearing' or 'dump' and it is amazing what you will find out.



Robert Hoddle's 1832 map with current Red Hill Nature Reserve boundaries superimposed.

I was always puzzled as to why early graziers cleared the top of Red Hill ridge, where soils are thin and stony, but left wooded the lower slopes on deep rich soils. I found one possible explanation in a 15 December 1876 newspaper article by Leopold Frans De Salis, of Cuppacumbalong, near Tharwa. De Salis called for the clearing of antiquated gum trees, as useful as fossil dinosaurs, so that water falling on hill tops is not wasted by transpiration but can flow down to feed artificial ponds and lakes on the valley floor. He saw Lake George, which had helped locals through severe drought as the exemplar. De Salis's views were syndicated in newspapers across NSW and much debated. In reply to concerns from renowned geologist Rev W. B. Clarke, that too much tree clearing could lead to aridity, De Salis scoffed that '*.. as if mere man could bring about such changes ..*'.

I was intrigued to find that both Red Hill and Stirling Ridge, that now support the largest and third largest ACT populations of the grazing-sensitive button wrinklewort daisy, were part of the same property for nearly a hundred years. Also both populations escaped being divided up into solidier settlement blocks. In the ACT, such blocks had an average size of 1000 ha and after 1920, covered much of the now Central Canberra, West Majura and Woden areas.

My appreciation and management of what I previously thought was a scraped out gravel pit, was changed when I found out that it was a source for white ochre for Aboriginal peoples moving from the south to meetings on Black Mountain Peninsula. The white clay on an otherwise red hill was used in the 1930s to provide '*a better and brighter brick as it was considered by architects and town planners that the red brick ... did not harmonise with the city surrounds*' (Canberra Times 26 Feb 1936).

I smirked when coming across Gary Humphries 1992 Legislative Assembly quote

'they think that by getting rid of old Charlie (and his cows) they will be doing a good thing for the environment - but they're wrong.'

I was thrilled to locate three red flowering plants, callistemon, Darling River pea and rosemary grevillea still growing on the hill after being planted nearly 100 years earlier as part of Burley Griffin's desire to restore the cleared hilltop with red flowering plants.



Historic planting by Charles Weston of callistemons Red Hill. PR



Historic 1920 planting by Charles Weston of Darling River pea, Red Hill. MM

He also called for the cessation of grazing to allow natural regeneration. He was partially listened to as only the southern end of Red Hill was placed within a soldier settlement lease. This varied grazing history probably explains why the northern half is in much better condition with greater plant diversity than the south.

What I learned increased my understanding and appreciation of Red Hill, and will influence future management and care.

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Sue Ross

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Mount Taylor ParkCare Group

The winter / spring time had some severe frosts, strange rain events and over 600 kangaroos closely cropping the grass cover on Mount Taylor. In addition to these things changing the physical appearance of Mount Taylor, the growing number of walkers and runners have increased the need to maintain the main access routes up the mountain, improve public education about compliance issues such as dogs on leads and monitor car parking areas at the main entry points to the reserve. Shift parking outside the main gates above Mannheim and Colquhoun streets off Sulwood Drive is now a fact of life every day, especially on weekends.

Program

Our program highlights have included a very successful heritage walk with Ngunnawal custodians Tyrone and Wally Bell. The Green Army has given us



Work party to protect a rare species from kangaroos traversing the area. KE

invaluable assistance with weed removal and David Tongway assisted with erosion control in erosion gullies. Other work included monitoring of the small purple pea *Swainsona recta*; regular meets and reporting burnt out cars and cut fences to our rangers. Much appreciation to Craig Wainwright and his team from Marist College dealing with woody weed removal in sensitive reptile areas, and also Craig's management of woody weed infestations in the agistment area.

An insight for our Green Army was showing them the results of 26 years of ParkCare work on Mount Taylor and increasing beetle control of St Johns wort *Hypericum perforatum*, using the beetle *Chrysolina* sp.

Research

Our research on controlling the flowering/seeding potential of St Johns wort by beetles and physical removal of seeding heads (mowing or hand lopping removal) before drying has proven to be very successful, as flowering stems that are cut back, do not flower again that season. This reduces the seed bank and reduces the abundance of plants after a few years. Many mown areas in Canberra, NSW and Bright, Victoria, have reduced and even eliminated the plants with regular mowing. A good example is the 2003 fire memorial at Stromlo, where consistent mowing has resulted in no St. Johns wort plants nearby.

Anniversary celebrations

Our 26 years was celebrated with our two youngest, oldest and long term members who have grown up with parents working on Mount Taylor, and have returned to link the next ages.

Challenges

Over the years, we have observed changes in vegetation on Mount Taylor, possibly due to climate change. These include early season flowering of some species, quick seed setting of others, drying of early grasses and earlier nesting of birds.

Mount Pleasant ParkCare Group

The new kid on the ParkCare block

We grew out of Mount Ainslie Weeders and our area is the western side of Northcott Drive, the park area from Northcott to Holmes Crescent and Vasey Crescent in Campbell. The long-term plan also includes operations east of Northcott to Mount Pleasant.

Our initial target was woody weeds: big, easy to identify and a blot on the landscape. The first dozen working parties (the third Sunday of every month, meet at the end of the lane between 56 and 58 Vasey Crescent) concentrated on Cootamundra wattle, pyracantha, briar rose, cotoneaster, bamboo, flame tree and other exotics.

We took out an estimated 1800 Cootamundra wattles in our strip, about two kilometres by 400 metres wide, but not without controversy. One indignant Campbell resident wrote to the Canberra Times:

Someone has been felling and ringbarking these beautiful shrubs. We live a mere two hours drive from Cootamundra, for which this wattle is named, yet the local plant police have declared the species 'arbor non grata', an unwelcome invader! How ridiculous! ... Take a deep breath, retreat to your own native garden and practise your plant purity perversion in private!

The response was swift. David Coutts of Flynn defended us stoutly, describing *Acacia baileyana* as an environmental weed which invaded intact open woodlands, displacing other wattles and tending to hybridise. We learned from this exchange.

After the Cootamundras?

For us the big problems are the highly visible blue periwinkle, St Johns wort and Indian mustard. For ParkCare staff it is grasses such as Chilean needle grass, African lovegrass and serrated tussock, all largely invisible to our untutored eye. However, ParkCare Support Officer, Craig



Lil and Maureen planting a tree at the 26th birthday of the Mount Taylor ParkCare Group. KE



Matt and Ruby, Mount Taylor birthday celebrations. KE

The management of the kangaroo population continues to be a challenge, spreading across the local suburbs and across Mount Taylor creating numerous new paths. However, our regular meets are a joy to all as we can work and enjoy the new vistas of flowering plants, fewer weeds and amazing growth of the tree vegetation.

Anne l'Ons

Convenor

Mount Taylor ParkCare Group

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Margaret Clough from Mt Ainslie Weeders assisting the Mount Pleasant ParkCare Group. TG



Silke Smaglinski mixing sprays. TG

Wainwright came out to show us these weeds, and identified outstanding patches of native grasses. He suggested we work outwards from the best areas, aiming to protect and expand patches of grasses and

wildflowers, for example, from large clumps of white paper daisies. He also advised us to leave stands of tall pyracantha as bird habitat, at least until the new native plantings grow. Our questions to him were about prioritising activities, the plants we should hit first, and what to spray and when.

Margaret Clough and Jeanette Ruxton of Mount Ainslie Weeders were enormously helpful in our start-up phase, demonstrating spraying and frilling techniques and identifying weeds. We are grateful to Silke Smaglinski who mixed chemicals for spraying while we waited to graduate from Chemcert training.

Our progress is thanks to local residents Peggy and Digby, Mark, Max and Margaret and Patty, with guest appearances from Neil, Liam, Kieran, David, Phil and Jeff. We' have letterbox dropped local streets and posted notices at the shops, and in time we will build up the group. The Green Army joined us for a day with lots of enthusiasm and another substantial dent in the woody weeds.

There's more to do than we anticipated and it's going to be a long haul. Our next stage is drawing up a medium term plan, prioritising target weeds, reconciling what Parks and Conservation Service (PCS) recommends with the problems we'd like to tackle, and building up our numbers. There are also rabbit warrens to mark and metal waste to pick up. Oh, and convincing some of the sceptical natives of the value of our work.

Toss Gascoigne

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Urambi Hills Group

The Urambi Hills Group has reconvened and is now well into its second year. The group meets monthly for a rotating program of informative and leisurely walks, woody weed working parties and caring for native vegetation planted in mid 2014. The aims of the group are to learn about the local ecosystems, work towards rehabilitating the Urambi Hills Nature Reserve and meet our neighbours. There has been an impressive response from the local community so far, with a wonderful mix of new and long-term residents to the area. New group members have had the privilege of learning from more experienced members.

The group has had a total of four walks this year, all of which have attracted a large number of participants. A February ramble around Urambi Hills was followed by an educational walk in April, when group members braved the changeable elements to learn about the local species and how to identify eucalypts. This helped to provide some context as to where Urambi Hills fits into the broader endangered yellow box — Blakelys red gum grassy woodland ecosystem.



Urambi Hills Group walk, early 2015. TS

One particular highlight this year was a walk arranged in conjunction with the Southern ACT Catchment Group (SACTCG) and Thunderstone Aboriginal Corporation. Wally and Tyrone Bell led the group on an interpretive walk over Urambi Hills, sharing Ngunnawal culture, language, creation stories, as well as traditional uses for local flora. A highlight was seeing a scar tree.



Urambi Hills Group erosion control work party in June 2015. TS

This year in conjunction with the SACTCG, a session on erosion control was arranged with Cam Wilson, an expert on the subject. Cam and PCS rangers worked with the group on building structures, such as fascines, to mitigate erosion in the creek near the gully where much of the group's work has been focussed. The hard work has already shown benefits, and the structures have survived heavy rainfall.

Like all ParkCare groups, Urambi Hills Group has also worked on eradicating and reducing the prevalence of weeds. Our main focus is on woody weeds on the western hillside and adjacent gully, with the usual suspects of Briar Rose, Pyracantha and hawthorn suffering the group's wrath! As with all groups, this will be an ongoing issue, but it is satisfying to see the positive impact of our work. Alongside weed management, the group has also continued to care for plantings that were started in the gully in 2014, with a satisfying survival rate.

The resurgent Urambi Hills Group has continued the good work that previous iterations of the group did, and is under no illusions as to the long road ahead as we work towards slowly contributing to the nature reserve's rehabilitation. The group has an exciting future, and would like to thank everyone who has participated in walks and work parties. We would also like to thank both PCS and SACTCG for their guidance and cooperation. Last but not least, a huge thank you to Urambi Hills Group convenor Louise Curham, who is the driving force behind the group's resurgence.

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Friends of Tidbinbilla

We seem to have focussed a lot of attention this year on Nil Desperandum, a favourite haunt of many of the group.

In November 2014, the interpretive signs that we developed with funding through the heritage grants were installed. Since then we have spent three or four work parties there, tending to the heritage camellia plot and cleaning up the garden at the house. There were a few rabbits getting under the house last year but we seem to have blocked the entry points and with staff repairing the fence the site is looking pretty good.

One thing that had been bugging us and apparently the rangers, was the alignment of the path and steps to the camellia patch over Hurdle Creek. In May, with ranger Robert Smith, we fixed up the path, gravelled it and realigned the steps. It may not be the yellow brick road, but it is much easier to get a wheelbarrow of mulch in there.



The Camellia plot at Nil Desperandum, FS

We were very fortunate that day to run into two guys out for a walk to Nil Desperandum. One of them had lived at the house for a few years in the early 1990s, and the other was a retired forester from Pierces Creek, who was still walking in his 90s. It was very exciting for those of us who had done some research for the signs to be able to talk to him about his time in the house.

Another major work for the group was to reinvigorate the garden beds – the one to the left of the front door outside the Visitor Information Centre – with ranger Robert.



Gary Stephenson with the interpretive sign at Nil Desperandum. FS

Conservation Volunteers Australia did the one to the right and staff did the one looping around the back. It is all looking pretty good. There was some debate about Rob's choice of crushed bricks as the mulch but we think it lifts the area very well. After a year at Tidbinbilla, Rob has moved to Mitchell, and we wish him all the best.



Working on the garden bed and the Tidbinbilla Visitor Centre. FS

Weeding marches on as always and we have tackled verbasicum down the slope from Rock Valley as well as removing flower stalks before developing from larger plants at Turkey Hill.

We installed some leaky weirs at Rock Valley with ranger Bernie Brown, which is a work in progress and we will keep an eye on them to see how they fare.

Recently we revisited a site along the Tidbinbilla River past Webs picnic ground where we have been targeting some blackberry. Earlier in the year when the river was dry we took the opportunity to cut out some plants on the other side of the river and on a few little islands in the middle. While there in October we were surprised to stumble upon a birds nest a few metres up from the ground across the path, with three eggs in it. The bird, which we think was an eastern yellow robin, was none too happy with us and was busy flitting around the trees tweeting at us while occasionally dropping in to check on the eggs then flying off again. One of the

best things about being out in our patch is coming across moments like this.

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Friends of Glenburn

2015 has been a momentous year for the Glenburn/Burbong Historic Precinct.

Site improvements

There have been significant improvements to several sites including:

- the erection of a protective rabbit proof fence surrounding Coppins Homestead ruins
- the demolition of the internal dilapidated fence at Glenburn Homestead
- the covering of the Colverwell graves headstones and footstones with black plastic for several months to control lichens
- the erection of five new interpretative signs in the Precinct (bringing the total to 10) to help visitors gain a good appreciation of how the early settlers lived, worked, played and educated their children
- the commencement of work on the Glenburn/Burbong Heritage Trail which



Brian Slee and Matthew Higgins after erecting the new interpretative sign at Atkinson trig, August 2015. The sign explains the precinct's geographical and historical context. PCS

will provide walkers and cyclists with a 13 kilometre circular route that will connect nearly all of the historic sites and

- the installation of acrylic sheeting in the windows of Glenburn Homestead.

Ministerial revisit

Minister Shane Rattenbury visited several of the sites in the precinct on 20 March to see developments since his last visit in October 2012. He was particularly impressed with the improvements at Colliers Homestead ruins and orchard including the capping of the walls and the erection of a rabbit proof protective fence.



Minister Rattenbury thanking PCS staff and volunteers for their work while Chris Emery, Treasurer NPA, looks on. Glenburn Homestead, March 2015. ML

Provisional heritage listing

On 9 April the ACT Heritage Council provisionally listed the 'Kowen Cultural Precinct, Kowen' onto the ACT Heritage Register.

Support was given to the listing and comments were provided on the material

that was released including the recommendation that the precinct be called the 'Glenburn/Burbong Historic Precinct, Kowen Forest' – the name used by Parks and Conservation Service (PCS) and the Friends of Glenburn. Subsequently, Minister Gentleman recommended to the Council that the precinct be called 'Glenburn Precinct, Kowen'.



Minister Gentleman presenting the documents to Col McAlister for the heritage grant to the NPA, September 2015. HM

On 19 November, the Council placed the 'Glenburn Precinct, Kowen' on the ACT Heritage Register.

This should help to ensure that the early European structures that remain in the Precinct will be protected and conserved for future generations to enjoy.

Absorption into NPA

In June, The Friends of Glenburn was absorbed into the National Parks Association of the ACT (NPAACT). This will ensure the long-term provision of assistance to PCS to help it protect and conserve the important early European relics in the precinct.

As a result of these changed administrative arrangements, the NPAACT submitted a replacement application to that lodged by The Friends of Glenburn for a heritage grant to fund half the cost of a Conservation Management Plan (CMP) for the precinct. The other half will be funded by the PCS. The CMP will provide a blueprint for future

protection and conservation work in the Precinct. On 30 September, Minister Mick Gentleman announced that the NPA's application was successful.

Guided tours

Several drive/walks through the precinct were arranged during the year for groups including members of NPA and University of the Third Age. Approximately 100 people attended. These tours are very well received. Several attendees did not know of the precinct's existence and many were visiting it for the first time. I would be happy to organise further tours for interested organisations.

Finally, I would like to thank the small band of enthusiastic volunteers who give up their time to attend work parties in the precinct. I would also like to thank the Googong Foreshores staff for the very significant work that they carry out in the precinct and the great support that they give to volunteers. A big thank you to you all.

Col McAlister

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Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group

Branching out in the Gudgenby Valley

The Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group (GBRG) has expanded their work site to include a new area beyond the borders of the original former pine plantation. This new site includes the Peppermint Hill Project and the Indigenous Land Management Project. Both of these projects are located on Peppermint Hill behind the Gudgenby Homestead. The Group is using the lessons learned from their experience of regeneration within the Boboyan Pine Plantation.

The Peppermint Hill Project is in an area of high quality woodland, rocky knolls and grassland which has been severely degraded due to an infestation of rabbits and their warrens throughout the site. Control measures by Parks and Conservation Service (PCS) to limit rabbit activity have included baiting and the use of Calici virus as well as warren ripping to slow down re-infestation. The last measure has resulted in bare areas of disturbed ground.



Preparing for planting in Namadgi. MG

The project aims to compare relatively low cost effective methods for rehabilitating the bare areas affected by the ripping. The ACT Environment and Planning Directorate (EPD), in consultation with PCS, developed a rehabilitation and monitoring program split into two main projects. One project is being undertaken by rangers and the other by the GBRG.

In order to test which plant species are best suited for quick establishment of grasses, forbs and shrubs, the GBRG has set up three trial sites. Each site is divided into metre square plots into which various local grasses, shrubs and trees have been sown. Each plot is also divided into a fenced and unfenced area. Photo monitoring will track the progress of the plots and the results will be used to inform managers on how they approach the rehabilitation process after large scale rabbit warren destruction.

The Indigenous Land Management Project has been developed in conjunction with PCS, Indigenous rangers and others within Murumbung Yurung Murra, a group of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff working for the ACT Government in heritage, land and natural resource management. This project aims to demonstrate that traditional Indigenous land care practices can restore degraded rocky knolls to a healthy state with minimum resources. The group is using traditional Indigenous methods of caring for a site such as cleaning it up, getting rid of weeds, seeding or transplanting grasses and small shrubs and generally restoring the rocky knoll to a healthier state. It is hoped that a small burn in cool weather might be part of the rehabilitation plan, but this is dependent on the PCS fire management plans for the area.



Indigenous Land Management Project. MG

GBRG continues to perform weed control,



GBRG receiving a briefing before a working party. MG

repair of erosion gullies, restoration of natural vegetation and removal of barbed wire within the main regeneration site, so that their program includes a cycle of renewal and rehabilitation within the Gudgenby Valley. Our commitment to improving the landscape and assisting the rangers in their work remains our key challenge and we look forward to success in our new projects through hard work and commitment from our small group of members.

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ParkCarers of Southern Murrumbidge (POSM)

POSM has worked with the SACTCG a lot in the last year. We'd like to thank Martine and Fiona for their hard work and persistence in winning a grant under the 25th anniversary of the Landcare program for wetland re-establishment and habitat restoration around the Strangers Paddock dam. The grant paid for fencing of a large area to keep out cattle that occasionally graze the paddocks. Unfortunately the fence hasn't deterred the large populations of kangaroos in the area!

In the early stages of the project, some box-ironbark hybrids were felled by the MRC rangers and placed in the dam as habitat. These were probably planted in the 1980s by NDCD and make an ideal local material for our landscape restoration activities.

Like many ParkCarers, some of our group attended the two erosion control workshops organised by SACTCG and run by Cam Wilson of Earth Integral. We then held two half-day workshops in the Murrumbidgee

River Corridor where Cam came and taught us how to construct numerous structures made of local materials.

Our first session was held in Strangers Paddock, where we worked on three small eroding areas. (see summary at <http://sactcg.org.au/node/2159>). The first was an eroding face in the upper paddock. We gathered thistles and fleabane for mulch, placing them over the eroding top edge and adding a native grass seed mix. Brush and logs from the felled trees were placed on the top.



Erosion control workshop in June with Cam Wilson. The site of our third structure at the eroding edge of Strangers Paddock dam. LC

The second spot was a small active headcut, where we battered down the edges with mattocks, added the mulch and grass seed, and finished with branches and logs. The material was wired to low wooden stakes to hold it in place. Four months later it has collected a lot of hairy panic grass seed, the material has started to break down but the structure is still firmly in place and there is no active erosion despite lots of overland flow.

The third site was at the dam edge where the bank was actively eroding. Once again, we battered, mulched, seeded, and placed down brush and logs. We also built a v-shaped structure at the water's edge to hold the material behind it in place and to hopefully stop future erosion. This site hasn't fared as well as it is probably a water access point for kangaroos and is in the main drainage line. In September we did some more maintenance on the site and will

continue to monitor it over the coming years.

POSM has also done a number of planting sessions in Strangers Paddock throughout the year. We have planted *Eucalyptus melliodora*, *Calistemon sieberi*, *Leptospermum obovatum*, *Casuarina cunninghamiana*, *Cassinia quinquefaria*, *C. longifolia*, *Lomandra longifolia*, *Poa labillardieri*, *Acacia dealbata*, *A. rubida*, *A. buxifolia* and *A. melanoxylon* around the dam, in the paddock and in and around the surrounding tree lots.

At the second workshop we visited Barney's Gully to show Cam the leaky weirs we've constructed over the last six years. We then built three more which complement the existing weirs. These do a great job at holding back water after rain, which has enabled us to successfully establish many native shrubs and reeds. We have also planted at least 100 casuarinas along the length of the creek in the last few years, the majority of which are thriving. In addition, we have noticed a distinct reduction in the density of African lovegrass in the creek bed since the water regime has changed.

Other highlights of the year were our annual Clean-up Australia day session (March), in and around the Point Hut Crossing car park and picnic area. We collected about 14 bags of rubbish, much of which was able to be recycled.



The POSM team for Clean-up Australia day in March, unfortunately with too many bags of rubbish! LC



Three leaky weirs constructed along Barneys gully using various materials, with associated plantings. The weirs help re-create the chain of ponds system and also provide habitat for reptiles and insects such as dragonflies and water spiders. LC

We also noticed a number of red-bellied black snakes on the day. SACTCG organised for the Green Army and CVA teams to work in our patch on a number of occasions this year. They have planted, weeded, removed corner posts of old fences and removed large tree guards.

Thanks again to everyone who contribute to make POSM a success: the MRC rangers, in particular James, Darren, Ali and Bernie; Martine and Fiona at SACTCG; all the POSM members, and Deb and Paul, who I couldn't do without!

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Minders at Simpsons Hill (MASH)

ANZAC Eve Ceremony held at the flagpole

At 11 am on 10 April 2015, classes from Gilmore and Chisholm schools as well as students from the Student Representative Council at Gowrie School, attended a ceremony on Simpsons Hill. They were led by Andrew Geering, principal of Gilmore School, in a simple but moving ceremony blessed by mild and dry weather.

With the flag at half mast, to the strains of piper Kerrie Flynn, and led by a catafalque party mounted by HMAS Harman, the children sang 'I am Australian' and listened to a recitation by Lucy Coles of the poem 'Let there be Peace on Earth.' After Pastor Priestly Obed had led them in the Lord's Prayer and they had been addressed by Jim Neave of the Tuggeranong RSL, they placed wreaths and commemorative flowers as well as thank you messages to the fallen.

Bailey Wyatt then read the ode and bugler Shane Mitchell played the last post before they all observed a minute of silence. The national anthem was then sung by all and the ceremony closed by the Principal of Chisholm School, Wendy Wurfel, quoting an essay by a student at Chisholm school on the principle of mateship as demonstrated by men serving in the First World War.

Official Guests included representatives of the schools' boards and Parks and Conservation Service. Also in attendance were ex-servicemen, parents, friends and members of the public.

Pat Boldra

Convenor

Minders at Simpsons Hill



NSW Weeds Conference, Cooma, October – take home messages

Tablelands-Monaro grazing going into drought

A long term trial near Cooma showed that with rotational grazing, lower than maximum stocking rates and a sacrifice paddock for drought feeding, you will have much lower weed control costs, because:

- perennial pasture is maintained
- ground cover disturbance is reduced and
- excess pasture is sold as hay or silage leading up to drought, allowing more

feed to be purchased throughout the drought, with the stock fed in the sacrifice paddock. It is important that once fully in drought, stock are not allowed in the rotation paddocks as trampling weakened perennial grass creates more bare areas.

Economic returns from biological control investment

Benefit cost ratio of weed biocontrol is 23:1 even including the failures. About 50% of controls are successful.

Two biocontrol projects seeking funding from governments that would be worth an ACT Government investment are fireweed flea beetle and ox-eye daisy beetle.

CSIRO and NSW Department of Primary Industry are currently researching possible biocontrols. However funding and resourcing are limited. Could 'crowd-source' funding be one way of making up a shortfall?

Googong Foreshores and the new NSW Biosecurity Act

The new *NSW Biosecurity Act 2015* applies to Googong Foreshores. The test for Googong and the control of St Johns wort, African lovegrass and serrated tussock there, is whether the 'general biosecurity duty' is being met. This is yet to be tested, so it will be interesting where NSW authorities 'set the bar' i.e. what level of control is regarded as 'reasonably practical'.

Ox-eye daisy and the Australian Alps

Ox-eye daisy *Leucanthemum vulgare* is a highly invasive weed that has spread rapidly in northern Kosciuszko National Park. It originates from Europe. The most rapid spread occurs in lower fertility soils. It creates its own low fertility niche by outcompeting snow grass species, leading to soil erosion and lower soil fertility. Once it achieves this it forms monocultures, leading to large localised loss of species diversity. It also is a threat to grazing

lands. In the USA it has severely degraded both conservation areas and grazing lands. Given the high risk, the ACT will need to react quickly and eradicate it as soon as it is detected. Pigs can contribute greatly to its spread. Some imported bird seed mixes have ox-eye daisy seed.



Ox-eye daisy invasive in Northern Kosciuszko National Park. Photo: KM, NSW NPWS

Orange hawkweed control success in Kosciuszko National Park

Orange hawkweed *Hieracium aurantiacum* is a very high risk weed originating from Europe. The well resourced and concerted follow-up control of orange hawkweed in northern Kosciuszko National Park is paying dividends. There has been a significant decline in density and containment is close to being achieved. Hawkweed detection dogs https://www.flickr.com/photos/act_parks/21556098953/ are being used to achieve eradication. Remotely piloted aircraft are being used to search for outliers as well. The detection dogs may be coming to Namadgi National Park in February to search for mouse-ear hawkweed.



Hillary Cherry, a NSW NPWS dog handler and weeds officer, with Sally and Connor, specially trained.

Fireweed lessons from the Shoalhaven

Control of new infestations can be achieved if control is early and often. Jenny Conolly, Invasive Species Officer (weeds and pests) for TAMS has had success with follow-up control work at the Crace suburb infestations in Canberra.

This supports the Shoalhaven observation that early intervention and rigorous follow-up can bring success. Major infestations in the Shoalhaven have caused a crash in land values because farmers cannot afford the costs of control. Avoiding this loss in farm production and land values is a cost savings that should be used to justify adequate control expenditure by public land managers, and as well as enforcement of control on private land.



Circles are the original infestations of fireweed from mid-2014 at Crace. Small polygons show recent density of Fireweed.



Successful control from rigorous follow-up

Post fire increasers – invasive weeds interrupt plant succession

Both orange hawkweed and ox-eye daisy are post fire increasers. They were sleeper weeds for decades, slowly adapting to local conditions. Then when wildfire temporarily created gaps, these species took hold in northern Kosciuszko National Park and outcompeted regenerating native plants. So adequately resourcing post fire weed control work is best practice land management.



Screenshot from Collector app in off-line mode

Snowy Hydro - a major investor in invasive weed control

Snowy Hydro spends \$580,000 on invasive weed control per year across 32,000 hectares of land under their control in Kosciuszko National Park. As a result of their expenditure they are achieving great results with very low densities of mature target weeds in their areas. This is one of the highest per hectare rates of invasive weeds control expenditure in Australia.

ACT Parks use of Collector app and ArcGIS online

The ACT Parks and Conservation Service (PCS) presentation on the successful use of the Collector app and ArcGIS On-line for weed mapping was well received at the conference. NSW NPWS and Snowy Hydro want to look

at the feasibility of using the same approach in their jurisdictions. Many thanks to Josh Thomson, Invasive Species Officer (IT), PCS and Jenny Conolly, Invasive Species Officer (weeds and pests), TAMS for demonstrating how the mapping system works.

Steve Taylor, Senior Invasive Species Officer (weeds)

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2015 ACT Landcare Awards

Members of the ACT Landcare community gathered together on 12 November 2015 at the Boathouse by the Lake for the 2015 ACT Landcare Awards.

The ACT Landcare Awards are an opportunity for us to recognise and celebrate the achievements of our local Landcare and ParkCare community. The awards are held biannually with the winners of each of the nationally recognised categories progressing through to the National Awards which will be held at the National Landcare Conference in 2016.

It was terrific to see everyone relax and enjoy an evening of fine dining while listening to the achievements and amazing accomplishments of our ACT Award winners.

The Australian Government Individual Landcarer Award went to Wendy Rainbird who has been involved in Landcare for 24 years now! She's also been the convenor of the Farrer Ridge ParkCare Group since the mid 1990s and has played a significant role in providing community education and sharing her extensive knowledge of local flora, fauna and ecology.

Mount Taylor ParkCare Group won the Fairfax Landcare Community Group Award for their outstanding efforts which include



Wendy Rainbird, winner of the Australian Government Individual Landcare Award. Photo: TN, T8 Photography

the removal of approximately 48,000 woody weeds from the reserve, growing and planting approximately 1500 native plants and shrubs and regular monitoring and protection of rare plants.

Congratulations also to the ACT ParkCare Program on a Highly Commended in the Australian Government Partnerships with Landcare Award and Craig Wainwright from ACT Parks and Conservation Service on a Highly Commended in the Australian Government Landcare Facilitator/Coordinator Award.

This year brought with it the first ever ACT Landcare People's Choice Award which was voted on by the ACT community. It was terrific to see such a high level of engagement from the community with over 300 votes collected! The winner of the ACT Landcare People's Choice Award is Canberra Nature Map which encourages and enables anyone to easily share images of plants and animals which can be identified by experts and added to the Atlas of Living Australia and the ACT Government database.

Many individuals are involved in the production of the ACT Landcare Awards and we would particularly like to thank those who took the time to nominate members of our local community, the many judges who were tasked with deciding on the winners, the speakers on the night,

Landcare Australia, the ACT Government, all our sponsors including the Australian Government, the Indigenous Land Corporation, Arborgreen, Fairfax Media, Manpower, Taylors Wines and of course the nominees who continue to inspire us all.



The 2015 ACT Landcare Award winners TN, T8 Photography

Alison McLeod
ACT Regional Landcare Facilitator
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Scribbly Gum photo credits

Alan Ford	AF
Colin McAlister	CMc
Deb Kellock	DK
Fiona Spier	FS
Howard Moffat	HM
Ian Falconer	IF
Jean Geue	JG
John Butcher	JB
J Busby	JBu
Kathy Eyles	KE
Keith McDougall	KM
Lauren Carter	LC
Lenore Hodgkinson	LH
Lesley Pattinson	LP
Margaret Clough	MC
Max Lawrence	ML
Michael Goonrey	MG
Michael Sim	MS
Pamela Fawke	PF
Paul Ratcliffe	PR
Roger Hnatiuk	RH
Sonoko Wakikaido	SW
Toss Gascoigne	TG
Trent Skene	TS
Tate Needham	TN
Wendy Rainbird	WR
Vanessa Hagon	VH
Parks and Conservation Service PCS	

2015 ACT Landcare Awards category and nomination	Award outcome
Australian Government Individual Landcarer Award	
Wendy Rainbird - Farrer Ridge ParkCare Group	Winner
Lenore Hodgkinson - North Belconnen Landcare Group	Highly Commended
Australian Government Partnerships with Landcare Award	
The ACT Woodland Restoration Program	Winner
ACT ParkCare Program, ACT Government	Highly Commended
Australian Government Innovation in Sustainable Farm Practices Award	
John Starr, Gold Creek Station	Winner
Bruce Gibbs, Cuppacumbalong	Highly Commended
Australian Government Landcare Facilitator/Coordinator Award	
Martin Lind, Waterwarch Coordinator - Southern ACT	Winner
Craig Wainwright, ACT Parks and Conservation Service	Highly Commended
Fairfax Landcare Community Group Award	
Mount Taylor ParkCare Group	Winner
Junior Landcare Team Award	
Wanniassa Hills Primary School	Winner
Indigenous Land Corporation Land Management Award	
Wally Bell, Coordinator, Malangang Aboriginal Landcare Group	Winner
Manpower Young Landcare Leader Award	
Ian Rayner, Project Manager, Greening Australia Capital Region	Winner
ACT Government Environment Community Support Award	
Fiona Spier, President, Friends of Tidbinbilla	Winner
ACT Government Citizen Science Award	
The ACT and Region Frogwatch Program, Ginninderra Catchment Group	Winner