

The Scribbly Gum

Summer 2017



Contents

A word from the Director	2
Volunteer Support Team	3-6
ParkCare Visitor Assist/VIP	7
Mount Ainslie Weeders	8
Friends of Aranda Bushland	9
Friends of Black Mountain	10
Friends of Mount Painter	11
Friends of Mulligans Flat	12
Friends of the Pinnacle	13
North Belconnen Landcare Group	14
Cooleman Ridge ParkCare	15
Farrer Ridge ParkCare Group	16
Isaacs Ridge Mount Mugga Mugga ParkCare Group	17
Jarramlee Park Landcare	18
Friends of Jerrabomberra Wetlands	19
Oakey Hill ParkCare Group	20
Red Hill Regenerators	21
Mount Taylor ParkCare Group	22
Friends of Tidbinbilla	23
Friends of Glenburn	24
Gudgenby Bush Regenerators	25
ParkCarers of Southern Murrumbidgee	26
Kosciuszko Huts Association	27
Friends of Weston Community Orchard	28
Friends of Fetherston Gardens	29
The High Risk Invasive Plants Team	30

Community partnerships caring for our natural environment



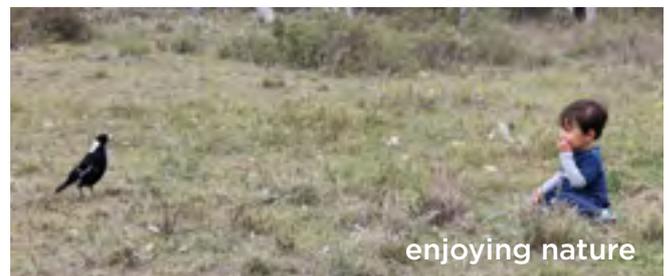
new visitor facilities



celebrating heritage



socialising



enjoying nature



the hard yards



ACT
Government



A word from the Director

Did you know that the ACT has the highest per capita rate of volunteering in Australia with 36.8% of our community actively participating in volunteer projects (the national average is 19%). The contribution of volunteers to ACT Parks and Conservation Service (PCS) is such an inspiration to me personally.

Over the last financial year, an impressive 22,512 hours (in financial terms this equates to over \$758,880) were recorded by volunteers working on our parks and reserves. This does not go unnoticed by our staff and our community.

More importantly than the dollar value from my perspective, is the relationships our parks staff are able to share with you the volunteers. The opportunities for learning and sharing ideas, some of them insightful, some of them aspirational, has translated to real gains in the real world.

Our strength as a community of land managers should always be to look for interventions that result in positives for our local environment. More and more we are also embracing what many of you have known for years—the social fabric that can be built by caring for the environment and how that translates to healthier individuals and healthier communities.

Attending the launch of the Glenburn Heritage Trail and main signage in May.

This edition of *Scribbly Gum* highlights the diversity amongst the work of ParkCare and Landcare. You've been involved in everything from weed eradication, rabbit mapping, ecological surveys, weed swaps, caring for wildlife and interpreting our environment to visitors from all over the world.

One of the exciting achievements this year has been the creation of the ParkCare Hub and the opportunities this provides for volunteers to become involved in working directly with PCS staff. Our staff are excited about investigating new ways to include volunteers in their work. This integration of volunteers into the work of PCS aligns strongly with our organisational philosophy and values. The ability for staff to work in our local environment with our local community is an opportunity for both staff and volunteers to learn from each other and work together to achieve common goals.

On behalf of all the staff at PCS, I wish you all a happy, healthy and safe new year and we all look forward to supporting your efforts and backing your ideas in 2018.



Daniel Iglesias
Director
Parks and
Conservation Service



Volunteer Support Team

The Volunteer Support Team within the ACT Government is growing and now consists of Philip Selmes (ParkCare Ranger), Alison McLeod (Community Programs Coordinator), Jen Hewitson (Volunteer Coordinator–Nature Based Experiences) and Rachel Tokley (Urban Volunteer Group Coordinator).

This year we've worked closely with volunteer coordinators from around Australia so that we can move towards best practice volunteer management. Through this process one thing quickly became obvious—the passion, commitment and level of engagement of volunteers involved in ParkCare is truly unique to our region. This passion is what has sustained ParkCare over so many years. It sets us apart as an essential component in the management of our local environment.

Our Volunteer Support Team set out at the beginning of this year with a few primary goals:

- create a clear pathway for people to get involved in all aspects of ParkCare
- support and encourage a diverse volunteer community
- provide safe and rewarding opportunities for volunteering.

From these goals we have made significant progress over the past year.

With the creation of the ParkCare Hub we have been able to utilise cloud-based software to provide a clear pathway for existing and potential volunteers to register as volunteers and access information about a range of volunteering and training opportunities.

We have also introduced four streams of ParkCare so that the community understands how ParkCare works, and also to broaden the volunteering opportunities offered within PCS. The four streams are:

- ParkCare Patch
- Ranger Assist
- Wildlife Assist
- Visitor Assist.

The creation of these streams provides an even greater diversity for new and existing volunteers. In addition to the established and highly successful ParkCare and 'Friends of' groups that conduct vital and recurring land management roles, this structure also provides opportunities for volunteers to participate in episodic and ongoing volunteering on a range of other projects.

PCS staff now have a clear way of inviting the community to become involved with ranger initiated volunteering activities. This allows the community to learn about what's happening 'behind the scenes' and to add value to these projects while developing stronger relationships between individual volunteers and staff.

There are now multiple shifts a week for volunteers to help with the management of threatened wildlife at Tidbinbilla including preparing feeds, cleaning traps and cages and helping with daily tasks. Volunteers are an integral and valued part of this team.

This year we have also welcomed the VisitorAssist stream into ParkCare with the inclusion of the passionate and knowledgeable 'VIP' volunteers from Conservation Volunteers Australia. These volunteers have significant knowledge of and enthusiasm for the natural environment which they share with visitors (and staff) each and every week. We are delighted and excited to have them join our ParkCare team.

This diversification is going even further as we explore the worlds of digital volunteering and voluntourism!

We've also engaged community volunteers including the Transitional Release crew (from the Alexander Maconachie Centre), schools and corporate groups.

We have been working behind the scenes to fulfil our duty of care in regards to the safety of volunteers, staff and members of the public who are involved in volunteer projects. This often seems overly bureaucratic and can be frustrating to those who have been volunteering for decades without incident, but it is important for all of us to look after each other. At the end of the day, we do everything we can to ensure that everyone goes home safely. To say that we value the contribution of volunteers is an understatement; it goes far beyond that. It's not simply the volunteering itself that we value, it's the individual volunteers who constantly impress us with the level of dedication and passion they bring to each and every task. This includes everything from eradicating weeds on parks and reserves to providing feedback on policies and documents that ensure ParkCare thrives long into the future.

It's been a huge year and we want to thank all of you for working with us. On behalf of all of us, we wish you all a safe and merry Christmas.

Alison McLeod
Community Programs Coordinator
E: alison.mcleod@act.gov.au

ParkCare Support Officer

I can't believe it's only been a year since the last *Scribbly Gum* as there has been so much happening. Stepping into Craig Wainwright's shoes was always going to be a challenge for me, but while he left a very busy space, it was a comfortable one, filled with volunteers, Catchment Groups, Friends of Grasslands, Australian Native Plant Society, Kosciuszko Huts Association, Greening Australia, Conservation Council, ACT Landcare, Frogwatch and Waterwatch. Then there is the Parks and Conservation Service staff, working together with you to achieve like-minded objectives.

Having worked in this space for quite a while, I can honestly say the rapport between PCS staff and volunteers achieving on-ground outcomes is wonderful to see. I love seeing the empathy and respect from both sides. It's like we have a partnership or something going on.

I remember volunteering myself some ago. The pleasures of volunteering are increasingly brought home to me as I meet more and more volunteers in the field, doing their thing—the Friends of Mt Taylor on their annual wildflower walk, where the sheer joy of discovering new blossoms is obvious (who can find it first, but who can name it?) or Oakey Hill ParkCare watering the plantings and fixing the tree guards. Every weekend someone is working on a reserve or urban open space somewhere,

National Tree Day 2017



contributing whatever time they can. Whether that is one hour a month or 40 hours a week, the contribution is just as great because you've chosen to do it, over any other activity. It has to mean something to you to keep coming back. While we're all motivated by many different things—a love of nature, escaping the kids, the patch is over your back fence, or you want to contribute to the big picture, we all work together, bringing a vast array of skills and successfully creating what ParkCare and Landcare are today.

I see my role as one small part in this 'jigsaw' that creates the Natural Resource Management sphere. I am the 'facilitator' of many of your ideas, your representative voice in PCS, your 'union rep' as I talk with ParkCarers, rangers, district managers, directors and even the Chief Minister. It's challenging but very rewarding.

The Transitional Release Centre team are a great boon for us as they help me with on ground works I could never achieve by myself, so thank you to them. We have assembled and installed all the Commemorative 25th year ParkCare benches, pulled down fences, installed sight-wire, cut woody weeds, transported and placed woody debris for erosion control and prepared for some major projects including the Optus Corporate Planting Day with IRMMM and the planting day with Molonglo River Park. I've taken school groups to Mt Painter and Wanniasa Hills, had work experience students with me for the day, been part of the big Greening

Australia planting at Cooleman Ridge, visited schools as part of World Ranger Day, played a big part in Weed Swap and the last Bush Friendly Garden at Floriade last year. I've put an electric chainsaw into every depot—they seem to be going ok so far with great support from staff. We've had good Chemcert training with Andy Cassim and the First Aid training with CIT and practical weeds training day.

Lastly, we have come a long way in the world of fire management. Our communications with the Fire Management Unit are incorporated in burn planning, and the concept of 'conservation' in burns is better received. The very successful National Parks Association Fire Symposium was well attended and received by the entire community, including government agencies. Great discussions were had and networks created, as exemplified during the field day in Aranda. The autumn prescribed burn in Aranda Bushland last year included the PCS Values Officer working with local orchid experts to achieve fuel reduction whilst protecting the orchid population. The work never stops, and we'll decide how to best achieve it all during the planning meetings. I look forward to continuing this great relationship PCS has with the community for many years to come. The ParkCare Ranger is a very rewarding and privileged position and I appreciate the opportunity to meet so many wonderful volunteers.

Phil Selmes

ParkCare Support Officer

Email: phil.selmes@act.gov.au



(left to right) weed swap, erosion training, Optus planting.

Urban Volunteer Group Coordinator

I was delighted to be appointed as the Transport Canberra and City Services (TCCS) Urban Volunteer Group Co-ordinator, a new position established in 2016. It's been a great pleasure to work with our committed team of volunteers whose diverse interests and skills have ensured an exciting and interesting range of activities over the past year.

Scribbly Gum is a wonderful platform for urban open space volunteers undertaking land management based activities across the ACT to share their news, stories, challenges and achievements with the wider community, ParkCare groups and government staff.

There are currently 30 urban Landcare and urban open space volunteer groups involved in the maintenance and care of TCCS urban open spaces such as district parks, heritage gardens, local neighbourhood parks, local shopping centres, natural play spaces, urban grasslands, riparian areas and many more. Volunteers undertake a range of activities including native grassland monitoring, woody weed removal, litter picking, horticultural amenity pruning and gardening, graffiti removal along fence lines and, more importantly, caring for and creating a presence in our local parks and places.

A number of the urban volunteers are supported by the ACT catchment groups while other groups are self-driven with support directly from TCCS.

I'd like to thank all the volunteers and especially the volunteer group convenors who gather people together, ensure that volunteer activities are undertaken safely, are meaningful, enjoyable and create a sense of place and connection between people in the urban landscape.

I would also like to acknowledge and thank the work of the catchment groups

supporting the urban Landcare groups to foster community participation and deliver important environmental and cultural conservation works across TCCS urban open space areas. I look forward to working closely with the catchment groups in the coming year.

2017 has been a busy year with existing groups progressing some great projects and the establishment of four new volunteer groups. I welcome the Friends of Legacy Park in Campbell who have started their activities. This group is a classic example of ParkCare and urban volunteer groups working together. Members from the Mount Ainslie Weeders ParkCare group gave a helping hand in the initial phases of the group's establishment, provided expertise in techniques to care for native urban bushland and also provided first-hand experience about the administrative processes associated with volunteering on public land. The small urban site is looking wonderful, the woody weeds are fast disappearing and members of the local area are getting involved. Thank you.

I would also like to thank Nicholas Bakker for holding the fort and establishing the Urban Volunteer Coordinator position while I was on extended leave.

I'm looking forward to the coming year, supporting the urban volunteer groups and promoting the importance and value of volunteering in the urban environment and continuing to improve government relationships with the community.

Rachel Tokley

Urban Volunteer Group Coordinator

E: rachel.tokley@act.gov.au

Volunteer Interpreter Program/ Parkcare Visitor Assist

2017 has been an interesting year for our volunteers. This program, as created by Conservation Volunteers Australia in 2008, has volunteers at Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve every weekend and public holidays and every day during school holidays. Their main areas are the Visitor Information Centre, the Sanctuary and the Eucalypt Forest.

A volunteer within the Visitor Information Centre provides visitors with a reserve brochure and map and helps to explain the features of the reserve. They also manage the Touch Table and encourage visitors, both young and not-so-young, to learn about the various exhibits. The volunteer also highlights the live exhibits in the gallery with particular emphasis on the corroboree frog story.

Volunteers in the Sanctuary interact with visitors to answer general questions and to talk about the many interesting sightings that are possible. The range of items changes as the seasons change and nature provides a kaleidoscope of fauna and flora. In the Eucalypt Forest, the main attractions are the koalas and joeys but potoroos are a great talking point as they are so entertaining and inquisitive.

Throughout the school holidays, volunteers run activities including waterbugs, geo-journey, koala and corroboree frog talks, cubby house building and the obstacle course.

Other key areas in which volunteers are engaged include helping the wildlife team with food preparation for various animals, plus daily wildlife assist tasks. Ad hoc ranger-assist tasks also occur. The Tidbinbilla Open Day in April saw our volunteers helping across a range of activities and events.

Each weekend, a volunteer is based at the Namadgi Visitor Information Centre to help with visitor enquiries about walks, camping and general information.

Around mid-year, volunteers were feeling a little apprehensive as the program contract tender was advertised with an unknown outcome. Nevertheless, they continued to operate their normal program. The tender outcome in ParkCare's favour meant that, as from 4 September, our program oversight changed from Conservation Volunteers Australia to ACT Parks and Conservation Service.

Our volunteers have been quite philosophical about the change and have done their best to make the transition go smoothly. This has been helped by the ParkCare approach to minimise disruption. We also welcome extra opportunities to participate in other ParkCare activities, so are optimistic that the situation is looking very positive for 2018.

Author - Ken Thomsen

Volunteer

Mount Ainslie Weeders

Learning and working on Mt Ainslie

The Mt Ainslie Weeders were thrilled to learn, late in 2016, that we had our own family of rare Rosenberg monitors (*Varanus rosenbergi*) on Mt Ainslie. We see dragons, skinks, blue tongues and shinglebacks from time to time, but this was an unexpected find, thanks to the careful work of local citizen scientist Matthew Higgins. From their termite mound nesting site, a breeding pair that was christened Rex and Rosie produced 14 tiny hatchlings.

Our awareness was further enriched by two Indigenous walks held in 2017. The first, on Mt Majura, was led by Ngunnawal man Tyronne Bell from Dharwa Tours (Thunderstone). The second was Ngunnawal Women's Cultural Awareness training, organised by the Molonglo Catchment Group and led by Ngunnawal custodian Karen Bell. As we wandered across the mountain we learned to walk with awareness and sensibility, discovering artefacts, learning about scar trees and their various purposes and about ant hills and their use as burial sites for significant people, finding an old, gnarled scribbly gum where water would have been stored and, finally, discovering a tree which would have been used for 'sorry business'. It was a wonderful and very humbling experience to ponder on the wealth of history on our mountain.

After a busy schedule of planting in 2016, the Mt Ainslie Weeders decided to focus more intensively on weed removal in 2017. We systematically removed many Cootamundra wattles and other woody weeds and are focussed on the usual spring suspects, including Paterson's curse, horehound, St John's wort, assorted thistles, hemlock and Indian hedge mustard.

Regrowth in a huge area of Vinca we call the 'Great Vinca Patch' has been minimal but the instant replacement of Vinca by other

weeds has been frustrating. Many of the seedlings we planted in the patch and other areas have been destroyed by kangaroos or rabbits even though we surrounded the tree guards with piles of plant debris from cut Cootamundra wattles.

Other activities have included a really interesting wildflower walk led by Mt Ainslie Weeder, Silke Smaglinski, and a birdwalk with McComas Taylor in November.

We have had a very productive year with a strong core of volunteers and some other great helpers who come when circumstances allow. Many thanks to our very efficient coordinator, Jeanette Ruxton, to Phil, Alison and the various rangers who have, as usual, provided valuable assistance and encouragement.

Author Margaret Clough

Jeanette Ruxton

Convenor - Mt Ainslie Weeders

E: mtainslieweeder@gmail.com



Scribbly gum showing water collection area. Identification puzzles on the plant walk on Mt Ainslie. Photos: Margaret Clough

Friends of Aranda Bushland

Our group takes responsibility for the forested slope to the south of the suburb, the grassy woodland below that and the frost hollow at the bottom with its remnant snow gums.

Weeding

The year began with a weeding frenzy tackling St John's wort in the grassland and resulting in a great reduction of this hated weed. We have also done much weeding in the adjoining area, formerly farmland, that is now held by PCS as a future offset.

Erosion control

We continue to work on controlling erosion in the deep gully that cuts through the Snowgums Reserve. In addition, we regularly maintain the rollovers on the tracks in the steep forested part of our reserve. We are replanting a bare patch left by the removal of a stand of radiata pines using seed from the native pines nearby.

Fence removal

This year we have completely removed two fences from our reserve (one with the help of the Green Army) and reduced another one to no more than a marker line.

Monitoring

We participate in the Vegwatch program every November, and we also conduct step-point monitoring twice a year in the Snowgums Reserve. We map and report

rabbit warrens and remove invading garden plants from the bushland.

Several FOAB members are also involved in Michael Mulvaney's twice-yearly orchid survey.

This year's kangaroo count in the Aranda Bushland was alarming. In two previous counts the number was less than 200, but this year it was over 400.

In autumn a prescribed burn was conducted in the Aranda Bushland and the fire staff did their best to accommodate our concerns.

Community events

Our annual orchid walk in October was popular, although the orchids were scarce this year after the dry winter.

We organised the annual ParkCare display at Jamison Plaza in September and we are also involved in the local primary school's G-Force program in which the children are escorted through the bushland with commentary from us.

In this year's joint work party with Friends of Mt Painter, we planted yellow burr-daises on the slopes of Mt Painter.

Finally, we are really enjoying the new 25th anniversary of ParkCare seat. It is particularly appreciated by a 92-year-old original inhabitant of Aranda who walks up there every day.

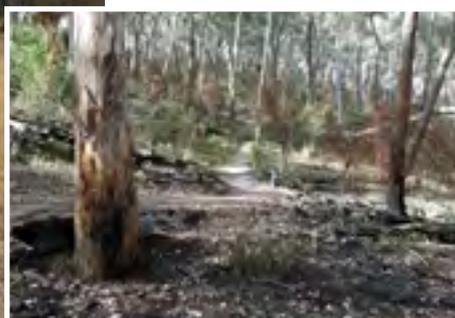
Jenny Andrews

Convenor - Friends of the Aranda Bushland

E: bean.andrews@gmail.com



Regrowth after the autumn burn in Aranda Bushland. Photo: Keith Pantlin
Green army removing a fence in the Snowgums Reserve. Photo: Jenny Andrews.



Friends of Black Mountain (FoBM)

The past 50 years informing the next 50 ...

Black Mountain Nature Reserve is nearly 50 years old. Come to the symposium on 24-25 August 2018 and 50th Anniversary celebrations in 2020.

A major project for 2017 was a Heritage Grant for interpretative signs along the Woodland Track, launched by Mick Gentleman, Minister for Environment and Heritage, during the 2017 Heritage Festival.

People loved the woodland and views from the ParkCare 25th Anniversary seat on the Woodland Walk.

The 46th annual Spring Wildflower Ramble continued the tradition of Dr Nancy Burbidge and George Chippendale. Our warm thanks to the sponsor organisations and the guides for 70 ramblers. Fewer plants were in flower than last year, perhaps due to the dry and cold weather in winter and early spring.

The Summit Track is a cooperative project between the ACT Government and the Australian National Botanic Gardens (ANBG) that was officially opened in July 2000. Summit walks, led by guides from FoBM and ANBG, were popular in winter and at the Australasian Botanic Gardens Volunteer Guides conference in October 2017.

More than 200 people came on our walks and talks this year, including the Woodland Walk and the butterfly walks led by Suzi Bond, co-author of a field guide to butterflies in ACT and region. We appreciated publicity on radio, in PCS's *Explore* program of guided activities, by the Conservation Council and in newspapers.

This year 30 wonderful weeders gave 465 voluntary hours to remove more than 6,460 woody weeds. What a difference they make—a large cluster of



Leptospermum is now flowering where woody weeds were cut and dabbed in 2015! Thank you to PCS rangers for using chainsaws on large woody weeds.

Frogwatch found fewer frogs croaking in shallower dams and ponds this year.

Dollar birds, sacred kingfishers, several young golden whistlers, plus many other birds were busy at their nests and hollows at BirdBlitz time. Vegetation surveys were done in November.

Thank you to everyone in FoBM, MCG, Green Army, PCS, FNAC, ANBG and Friends of ANBG, ANPS, NPA, ACT Heritage Unit and other organisations for making this a very enjoyable year for FoBM.

We thank the Woodland Walk project team, along with our valuable botanical advisers, and guides on walks this year—Dr Rosemary Purdie, Isobel Crawford, Michael Doherty, Jocelyn Fitzhardinge, Jean Geue, Cecilia Melano, Andy Russell and Brigitta Wimmer.

Linda Beveridge

Convenor - Friends of Black Mountain

E: friendsofblackmountain@gmail.com

W: www.molonglocatchment.com.au/friends_of_black_mountain.htm



Rosemary talking about plants on the Woodland Walk. Photo: Linda Beveridge. Mick Gentleman, Minister for Environment and Heritage, launched the interpretive signs for Black Mountain Woodland Walk during the 2017 Heritage Festival. Photo: Linda Roberts

Friends of Mount Painter (FOMP)

The big job this year was providing improved protection for 387 one-year-old drooping sheoaks that were planted with short tree guards (the only ones available at the time of planting). We knew from bitter experience that sheoaks are grazed as soon as they poke out of their guards, so we stuffed saffron thistles (they have their uses) into the top of the short guards to deter the grazers until we could replace the short guards with taller ones. Installing the bigger guards proved a significant task as the planting sites were not very accessible. A combination of our work parties, the Indigenous Green Army team and a university student who enjoys a good work out carrying guards and stakes up steep slopes, got the job done.

We made two small plantings this year—one was of eucalypts, including some broad-leaved peppermint seedlings grown by CSIRO from seed they collected from Mount Painter. The other was of yellow burr daisies, also grown from Mount Painter seed. Phil Selmes augured holes for us and we were joined for the planting by Friends of Aranda Bushland.

We continued our involvement with Macquarie Primary School, accompanying classes during their winter forays to explore the hill. We also worked with the school's P&C to run a 'picnic walk' for families. We climbed the hill, challenging everyone to find things, and then built cubbies with stakes and tarpaulins.

Macquarie Primary School students on Mount Painter
Photo: Sarah Hnatiuk



Students from CIT returned this year to learn GPS skills. At our request, they made an inventory of old trees on the part of the reserve that was grazed by stock until 1996. We also contributed information to University of Canberra students visiting the hill to observe the links between geological characteristics and vegetation.

Some other activities included:

- the annual bird walk, held in autumn for the first time, with 26 species seen, some of them rare
- the usual weeding activities, the fruits of which are becoming satisfyingly apparent to the long-time members
- monitoring the many plantings to determine survival rates and whether regeneration is occurring from them.

We thank PCS staff, especially Phil Selmes, Alison McLeod and Chris Lambert, for their help in various ways.

Sarah Hnatiuk

Convenor - Friends of Mount Painter

E: friends.of.mount.painter@gmail.com



James Dunne, Tenzing Johnson, Sarah Hnatiuk and the White family installing tall tree guards.
Photo: Phil Selmes



The Bruce Hall Environmental Group and Jenny Andrews planting yellow burr daisies
Photo: Marian Heard

Friends of Mulligans Flat

The Friends continued to hold quarterly work parties to tackle larger jobs with the PCS rangers. Our autumn work party was held on Clean-Up Australia Day on the first Sunday in March, cleaning up the litter blown against the reserve fence. This year it was gratifying to see that the PCS truck was nowhere near as full as it has been in past years. However, with the commencement of housing construction in the new suburb of Throsby we can expect a significant increase of rubbish against the new fence for the extension of the Sanctuary and into the Goorooyaroo Nature Reserve.

Our monthly work parties, started in September 2016, have been a great success. This year we have removed some old collapsed stock fences that were presenting a hazard to wildlife as well as a trip hazard to Sanctuary staff and visitors. We removed about 300 metres of old fencing wire and mesh. But as ranger Dave reminded us all, the past land uses of Mulligans Flat are a part of the heritage and deserve a story. We left all the standing fence posts as they were, as a reminder of where we have come from and where we are going.

Under the guidance of the PCS rangers we have trialled a more efficient method of weed control. A group of about 8 to 10 Friends can cover an area of about 20 to 30 hectares flagging isolated and small clumps of weeds in about two hours.

Stock fence remnants. Photo: Shell Davidson



The ranger can then return to spray all the flagged weeds when conditions are suitable and can complete the spraying in a significantly faster time period than if trying to find and spray alone.

Echidnas were the flavour of the month when a BBC wildlife filming team spent nearly four weeks in late July/early August filming echidnas in Mulligans Flat. The Friends answered the call to search the 480 hectares for the elusive animal. Being winter there was not a great deal of echidna activity, but over the weeks, more and more echidnas were spotted. The Friends conducted about six sweeps of the Sanctuary over the first two weeks and assisted the Woodland and Wetland Trust ecologists to fit tracking devices to a couple of echidnas. On top of the sweeps, two to three Friends assisted the BBC crew each filming day. The great thing about this activity was that everybody involved learned a whole lot more about these elusive animals.

Mark Smith

Convenor -Friends of Mulligans Flat

markandkay@apex.net.au

Not too many flags. Photo: Kathy Eyles



Friends of the Pinnacle (fotpin)

Most of what we do in our reserves is weeding, but there are lots of other activities that are just as important.

Working with local schools

In September, following an inquiry by teacher Trish Vanegas, Friends of the Pinnacle (fotpin) Secretary Keith Thomas and I accompanied two groups of Belconnen High School students on 12 and 13 September on a short hike to the top of the Pinnacle. Both groups of students were delightful—very engaged and curious, polite and respectful.

Trish also asked whether we might have a small project the students could undertake as part of the celebration of Belconnen Day on Friday 20 October. The task of collecting together tree guards and stakes used in recent years for plantings in the reserve seemed a pretty good fit. On the day, the exercise went extremely well, with all the guards and stakes being collected and stacked in a trailer in a remarkably short time. It's amazing what can be achieved when teenagers are pointed in the right direction!

The fotpin stall at this year's Weetangera Primary School fete once again proved to be very successful, with many people stopping to look at our display, chat to the volunteers and help themselves to the PCS promotional giveaways. As a result, fifteen new people signed up to be on our mailing list.

Spring walks

On the spring bird walk on 24 September, a good-sized group of people were treated to a nice selection of local and migratory native animals. While the morning was a bit windy, there were sheltered spots where we saw some nice birds. The migrating grey fantails were conspicuous throughout, as were the various thornbill species. The highlights of the walk included finding a pair

of weebills (Australia's smallest bird) busy building their exquisite domed nest, not much bigger than a tennis ball and made mostly out of cobwebs, fine grass and feathers.

The wildflower walk to the Pinnacle offset on 15 October attracted 15 walkers, including some from the Field Naturalists Association. While the show of wildflowers was subdued compared with last year's amazing display, there was still plenty to see, with billy buttons and some of the other native daisies flowering, as well as a few early nancys and a nice show of creamy candles.

Grant for Aboriginal heritage walks

In 2014, we ran two Aboriginal heritage walks led by local Ngunawal men Wally and Tyrone Bell and funded by the Ginninderra Catchment Group. Those walks were extremely popular and many people have since asked when we are going to run more.

Earlier this year, with the support of the Ginninderra Catchment Group, we submitted an application for a grant under the ACT Government's Heritage Grants process, and I'm very pleased to say that our application was successful. This gives us the funding to run two more Aboriginal Heritage walks at the Pinnacle in 2018.

John Brannan

Convenor - Friends of the Pinnacle

E: fotpin@fotpin.org.au

A pause by the scribbly gums.

Snapping the creamy candles.



North Belconnen Landcare Group

Our group consists of Junior Landcare (Landcare for Littlies), led by Lenore Hodgkinson, which operates at Evatt, as well as a citizen science group led by Ken Hodgkinson, which has a catchment-wide base with 13 sites and a focus on best practice for managing native grasslands. We are very well supported by the hard working Ginninderra Catchment Group office staff without whose help we could not carry out our important work.

The social aspect of our Landcare Group is also of value, with people from culturally diverse backgrounds or who are new to Canberra finding new friendships and interest in caring for the environment. Our Facebook group is very useful in fostering interest in the environment as well as promoting our activities.

Our regular activity times are Wednesdays and Saturdays. School holiday times are flexible and can be done at any mutually convenient time by arrangement. We do planting, watering, weeding, mulching, staking and track maintenance. These are chemical free all age events where the littlest of landcarers can become involved and learn about conservation from an early age. We also have regular seniors, including a landcarer now aged 91, as well as toddlers, pre-schoolers, home schooled children, school aged children, their parents, Joey Scouts, scout groups and university students. The mix of ages has created a lovely community here at North Belconnen Landcare.

Alana Hallinan helps with our face book posts and promotes our working bees as “events”. Look for North Belconnen Landcare Group in Open Groups on Facebook for activities. The online “events” presence has re-kindled interest with some families as well as encouraging new enquiries. We could always use another few helping hands. We welcome casual attendees.

We plan to construct a bee hotel B&B to house our wild pollinators. Some of our members have contributed to the wild pollinator count over the past few years. This will provide a unique experience for our members, especially the children, to learn and support our native insects.

We now have a water cube thanks to a quick response by one of our landcare families to the offer on the Buy Nothing Group for North West Belconnen. We have some delightful rare and threatened grassland species as well as Dianellas, native daisies, lilies (bulbine and chocolate), Chrysocephalum, billy buttons, yam daisies, Goodenias and our favourite blue devils.

The group was happy to hear their leader, Lenore, was awarded the Australian Government Individual Landcarer Award for 2017 and will now be in the finals for this section at the national awards next year. This award and the \$500 prize money was indeed a pleasant surprise for Lenore.

The citizen science group is now collecting useful data with their follow-up visits and assessments of plants that were given autumn burning treatments earlier this year and then planted with yam daisies, billy buttons, blue devils, and others. Ken has been assisted by various university students and helpers with this task.

Ken and Lenore Hodgkinson
Convenors, North Belconnen Landcare Gp
E: hogkinson12@bigpond.com
F: [North Belconnen Landcare Group](#)

(left to right) Lenore receiving her Landcare Award. A Landcare little April Yan giving thirsty plants a drink. Photo: Ann Yan



Coolleman Ridge ParkCare Group

Our year has been busy with the task of removing exotic invasive plants. On Coolleman Ridge these include blackberry, briar roses, Cootamundra wattle, verbascum, euphorbia, African love grass, phalaris, tweedia and wild sage. The St Johns wort covers many areas, but we have yet to find a satisfactory method for our volunteers to effectively deal with this invasive species.

We have been assisted in our efforts with five days of Green Army teams, which has indeed made a huge difference to the areas they addressed.

We recently had a “bench-warming” occasion, when we invited the rangers and our members to celebrate the placement of a bench to mark the 25th Anniversary of ParkCare in the ACT. This smart bench has been sited beneath a beautiful red box tree, about half-way along the ridge, with stunning views west over the Murrumbidgee Valley and to the Brindabellas. Our ceremony was conducted early one Sunday morning, and we all enjoyed tea, coffee and snacks, whilst we watched the changing light of the rising sun. It was too early for champagne, and we didn't think we'd be popular if we smashed the bottle against the bench!

Another initiative this year has been the distribution of a hard copy of our monthly newsletter. At the beginning of the year we placed copies in plastic sleeves attached to gates along the length of the Ridge. By the end of the year the plastic sleeves had not survived the weather, and so we are in the process of making sturdy boxes to replace them. We hope to engage even more local interest and volunteers once they are installed along our main path.

Thanks to all who have contributed in any way to caring for our special patch this year.

Linda Spinaze

Convenor - Coolleman Ridge ParkCare

E: eremophila1@bigpond.com

W: www.coollemanridge.org.au

Coolleman Ridge ParkCare Group and rangers Phil and Richard with the new bench.

The group admire the newsletter box.

Eastern rosella seen recently on Coolleman Ridge.

Photos: Linda Spinaze



Farrer Ridge ParkCare group

On the spring wildflower walk in September, we noticed a marked decline in wildflowers both in the usually colourful woodlands on Farrer Ridge Nature Reserve, and in the open grasslands that are usually covered in forbs like early nancys, creamy candles and bulbine lilies. The long dry months during June, July and August have resulted in far fewer plants in flower.

In June, I participated in the Climate Change Adaptation for ACT Landcarers seminar. An academic team had compiled a program that can show where and what plants might be stressed as a result of predicted changes in climate for particular regions. In the ACT, all climate change models showed variable rain for autumn, usually less rain in winter and all showed less rain for spring. Maps of current distribution of species can be found at www.ala.org.au

One of the sessions at the Eco Focus Seminar in August reported on eucalypt decline in the ACT. During the winter months many people would have noticed the 'sick looking' *Eucalyptus blakelyi* around the ACT, suffering from lack of water and with lerp attacks. These trees can recover from the foliage loss. However, there is a general increase in dieback severity, mostly due to climate change.

Meanwhile, the Farrer Ridge ParkCare group continued to cut and dab woody weeds, and to cut and remove the *Verbascum* seed-heads, while treating any rosettes with chemicals. The many hours of effort on the Farrer Hill area has been effective on what was a sea of *Verbascum* in all directions. This has improved the outlook and surroundings of where the PCS seat has been located. From the seat there are wonderful views to the mountains.

Earlier in 2017, we had more work done by the Green Army in removing woody weeds and *Verbascum* seed-heads and rosettes.

In April, we had hoped for rain but the *Cullen tenex* seedlings that Jennie had so carefully nurtured, and that we planted and covered with *Acacia baileyana* branches, have failed. We think the kangaroos might have got in and eaten them down, as we had checked the plantings soon afterwards, and few remained. The long dry weather further damaged them.

We continue to report any rabbit warrens and any large infestations of blackberries at Farrer Ridge.

Wendy Rainbird

Convenor - Friends of Farrer Ridge

E: wprainbird@grapevine.com.au



Yellow box (*Eucalyptus melliodora*)

Robert planting *Cullen tenex*, Farrer Ridge

Isaacs Ridge Mount Mugga Mugga ParkCare Group

Our small group continues to battle invasive plants along Isaacs Ridge and Mount Mugga Mugga. Our main targets of course are *Verbascum thapsus* and *Rosa rubiginosa*. The weather has not been kind to us this year. Everything is very dry and the spring flowering has been a mere shadow of last year's display. Several old eucalypts have succumbed and fallen or died. Even some of the weeds have struggled. We have had a little bit of rain though, and one of our regular monthly activities was washed out.

At the launch of Tree Week, some trees were given to ParkCare convenors and our group obtained a lot of the leftovers. Some quick action was needed to get planting approvals and assistance. ParkCare ranger Phil and local ranger Liam enthusiastically leapt, in and with the help of the Transitional Release crew and an Optus corporate day, 78 eucalypts and 15 acacias were planted on the east side of Isaacs Ridge. Greening Australia then planted about 200 shrubs. This is a great start to revegetating the slope and providing connectivity and bird habitat. We have to be careful to avoid shading the rocky patches that are possible habitat for pink-tailed worm lizards.

Young volunteer ready to do some chopping on Isaacs Ridge.
Planting on east side of Isaacs Ridge, with resident kangaroos.
Scarlet robin on Isaacs Ridge. Photos: Michael Sim



The old Mugga quarry is being prepared for filling in and a high fence has been put around it for safety. Unfortunately, erecting the fence caused some damage and tree felling but this is being rectified. We tried seeding the steepest section with shrubs and grasses but the weather has been too dry.

In the middle of the year our ParkCare seat was installed on the slope up to the top of Isaacs Ridge. It is not right at the top where there is a trig point and a view of a communication tower. There is, instead, a good view to Mount Taylor and the ranges beyond and it backs on to *Allocasuarina verticillata* plantings.

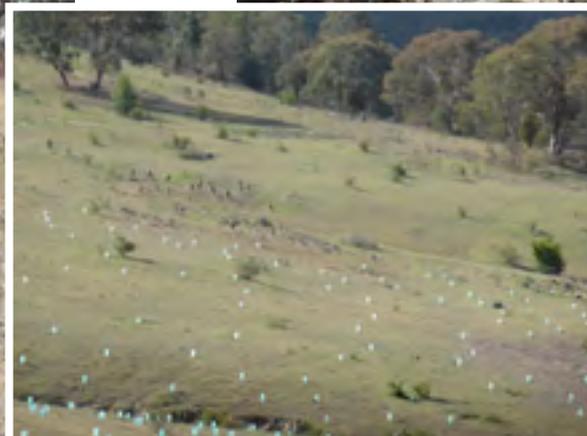
So far we have not seen any glossy black cockatoos around the *Allocasuarinas* but the yellow-tailed black cockatoos love the pine trees, which must provide them with lots of food.

A number of people using the reserves have commented on the amount of grass turning pink. Most of that has been due to PCS and contractors carrying out spraying of serrated tussock. Thanks for that.

Michael Sim

Convenor - Isaacs Ridge Mount Mugga Mugga ParkCare Group

E: mjsim@bigpond.net.au



Jarramlee Park Landcare, Dunlop

We have been especially busy since last July cleaning out the dead trees and bushes in the floodway which takes the run off from the main section of Dunlop to Jarramlee Pond. The native plantings were put in well over twenty years ago on both sides of this floodway, and now many are dead and dying and fallen over. We have removed about sixteen large piles of dead trees and bushes. We found hundreds of undelivered supermarket catalogues and brochures hidden under bushes, some from several years ago, as well as the usual rubbish.

Removing the dead shrubs has revealed many feral trees and bushes, plum trees, some unidentified deciduous trees, privet, cotoneaster, gleditsia, nandina, garden euphorbia, as well as the usual sticky weed (cleavers) flatweed and Patersons curse. Suckers from a stand of Chinese elm trees were taken down but not poisoned and have come up from the roots over a rather large area. We have started poisoning these with glyphosate but several more sessions will be needed. We will then look at the bushes and trees around Jarramlee Pond, where some need taking out, as well as hawthorns, so we still have a lot of work to do.

We are looking forward to a summer break with our last meeting on 4 December and a Christmas lunch later.

Clearing the dead trees and shrubs and eradication of the woody weeds beneath. Photos: Pamela Fawke

Pamela Fawke

Convenor – Jarramlee Park Landcare

E: fpkawke@aapt.net.au



Friends of Jerrabomberra Wetlands

The Jerrabomberra Wetlands is a great place to befriend for a number of reasons. First, being a wetland, it is home to a wide variety of flora and fauna, some of which change with the seasons. This makes it an attractive location for bird watchers, platypus spotters, turtle protectors, waterbug surveyors, frog listeners and other wildlife enthusiasts. The Friends have the opportunity to participate in all of these activities and learn to be better environmentalists.

Second, it is an emerging landscape; with its chequered history before being declared a nature reserve in 2000, there is much to do to develop its full wetlands potential. The Friends have the opportunity to contribute to and to be a part of its future through activities such as tree planting, weed removal, carp control, vegetation surveys and creating trial plots for coloniser species. There are also opportunities to contribute ideas for planning and future development at the wetlands.

Third and importantly, the Friends are supported by Deb (convenor) and Michael (ranger) whose knowledge of the environment and enthusiasm keep us coming back in sunshine and in rain. While we would all like quick fix solutions to environmental problems, Deb and Michael keep us focused on their long-term vision for the wetlands and the short-term steps needed to get there. The nearby café also

helps restore our composure when the challenges seem overwhelming.

The Friends were busy again at this year's World Wetlands Day celebration in February which, although hot, attracted a good crowd. Consolidation of the new ponds and further work on the Kellys Swamp Loop Walk, together with new signage and more displays of wildlife photography, have attracted more visitors to the wetlands. This year has also seen a significant expansion of wetland activities focusing on both children and adults (including guided walks, wildlife art classes, evening talks and school holiday programs), thanks to the work of Lori Gould, project officer with the Woodlands and Wetlands Trust. In the future, the Friends hope to participate more in these broader educational activities, which focus on promoting better understanding of the vital role played by wetlands.

The Jerrabomberra Wetlands continue to improve, despite setbacks of dry weather, feral pests, unwelcome plants and detritus washed up on the lake shore. Our tree planting is gradually transforming the landscape. The Friends now also have a dedicated park bench overlooking Kellys Swamp, on which they sometimes sit, rest their weary legs, and contemplate the wonders of nature.

Author: Peter Abbott

Deb Kellock - Convenor

E: friendsofjerrawetlands@gmail.com

W: www.jerrabomberrawetlands.org.au

Cutting reeds to clear a view from the bird hide and build a swan nesting island.
New enclosure built to protect our newly planted native grasses. Photos: Deb Kellock



Oakey Hill ParkCare Group

The Oakey Hill Parkcare Group has enjoyed a very productive season on “our hill”. From our first ParkCare event in February until our last in November, we racked up over 200 volunteer hours in the Oakey Hill Nature Reserve.

The group saw the return of a number of stalwarts and welcomed some new members to our ParkCare community. They tell me they only come for the morning tea, but I know better!

After 14 years as coordinator of the Oakey Hill ParkCare Group, I feel I can say with confidence that each of our volunteers, whether they attend regularly or intermittently, bring a high level of commitment to the challenge of practical conservation.

This year we undertook a mix of activities ranging from watering our extensive plantings on the south-facing slopes, to restoring rollovers on our tracks, to good old-fashioned weed control. I am constantly amazed at the positive impact a half dozen cheerful, committed volunteers can have.

Among the highlights for the year was the installation of our ParkCare bench at the summit of Oakey Hill, ably assisted by a crew of eager young fellows from the Alexander Maconochie Centre.

Another fabulous morning tea



Of course we couldn't do it at all without the close, collaborative relationship we enjoy with ACT Parks and Conservation Service rangers. The passion, patience and commitment of the rangers cannot be underestimated and should not be underappreciated. This is a collaboration to be treasured and nurtured!

John Butcher

Convenor, Oakey Hill ParkCare Group

Like us on Facebook

W: <https://www.facebook.com/OakeyHillParkcare/>



Inviting a helping hand from the locals.

Plants adopted by pre-schoolers from Lyons Early Learning Centre.



Thanks to Phil Selmes and transitional release crew.

Just how gorgeous are our reserves. Oakey Hill Nature Reserve!

Red Hill Regenerators

It was a somewhat different year for us on top of our routine activities. On a positive note, all our working bees were well attended and, in between the never-ending Cootamundra wattles, we continued removing soft and woody weeds by the hundreds.

With the help of Greening Australia and the PCS rangers we planted two areas with 200 new and replacement trees. We placed a lot of woody weed debris around the sites and this seems to have deterred nibbling and knocking by herbivores.

Our 25th anniversary of ParkCare bench was installed at a great site overlooking much of the reserve and South Canberra. Thanks to Phil Selmes and assistants.

In September we had a sighting of a (almost mythical) little eagle, (a vulnerable species), which spent a few weeks occupying a large eucalyptus and catching lots of rabbits.

On Friday 27 October, a ceremony was held to commemorate 100 years since Walter Burley Griffin, Marion Mahony Griffin and Charles Weston established a callistemon plantation to 'paint' Red Hill. Dr Annie Lane, Conservator for Flora and Fauna for the ACT, introduced Michael Mulvaney who gave a lively presentation about Red Hill and the work of our ParkCare group and Minister Mick Gentleman, who talked about the background to the planting.

(left to right) Celebration of 100 years since red Callistemons were planted near the summit of Red Hill. Minister Mick Gentleman, Michael Mulvaney, Kathleen Kingsland, Philip Selmes, Nick Daines and Scott Seymour. Wildflower walk led by Michael Mulvaney. Photos: Paul Ratcliffe

Minister Gentleman and Lady Kathleen Kingsland undertook a ceremonial watering of the Callistemons. Lady Kingsland, who turns 100 early in 2018 was invited to take part.

We were lucky to have two butterfly walks led by Dr Suzi Bond, an expert on ACT butterflies, and a 'fungi foray' to find the fungi hiding on Red Hill. Our annual wildflower and wildlife walk, led by Michael Mulvaney was, as always, informative and entertaining and included issues associated with an adjacent proposed large residential development.

We participated in a ranger organised kangaroo count that unfortunately had to be abandoned in its later stages because of the skittishness of the kangaroos. We expect to try again because we know numbers are a problem.

Unfortunately, the dark clouds of residential development on open space adjoining the reserve have appeared again—on the golf club lease and a site on Kent Street, Deakin. The Regenerators are active in demonstrating ecological values of the nationally significant yellow box-Blakely's red gum woodland with a view to protecting the integrity of the reserve. Thanks to all the rangers who provide great support.

Sue Ross

Convenor - Red Hill Regenerators

E: info@redhillregenerators.org.au



Mount Taylor ParkCare Group

Mt Taylor has had a varied year, with some very dry winter months, poor grass growth for the kangaroo population and a human explosion that has been counted recently as over 14,000 visits per week by walkers, runners, ride bikers and dog walkers on the tracks, mainly to the summit.

We greatly valued the Green Army team's hard work eliminating thousands of woody and soft weeds. We miss their cheerful presence. We also appreciated our Catchment Group in organising the Green Army projects. The Aboriginal Green Army group mentored by Wally Bell looked after the heritage values of the summit and significant old trees near the walking track.

Regular group meets controlled erosion on a mountain bike track and a large scar under the ActEW power line. Our *Swainsona* quadrat protection includes extra cut branches to reduce kangaroo tracks and dust bathing. We know that the *Swainsona recta* numbers are reduced but seeding is still occurring under the protected branches.

CSIRO entomology staff are monitoring the Calici virus spread in the rabbit population around Canberra, using a fly trap near a warren on Mt Taylor. The caught flies can indicate if the flies came from dead rabbits killed by the virus. So far the flies caught have not indicated anything, and the local rabbits nearby are alive and frisky.

Illegal mountain bike tracks that were created on Mt Taylor were removed for a short time by rangers before yet another track appeared.

Wally Bell with the Greening Australia team.
Photo Kathy Eyles.
Celebrating 28 years of Mt Taylor ParkCare and Anne l'On's birthday.



With improving rainfall the kangaroo population appears to be increasing, with many pocket joeys. We knew a few years ago we also had several wallaroos (including a very large one) and several red necked wallabies that have been seen lately. The big wallaroo was killed on Sulwood Drive.

We are trying to improve the parking near the Mannheim Street entrance—an extremely difficult area to navigate for cars, dog walkers, families and bikers. So far we have raised over 700 petition signatures to the ACT Government for better parking and safe access to the reserve.

We celebrated 28 years of the Mt Taylor ParkCare group in August and October, and a significant birthday for coordinator Anne, with champagne and cake. Before that we enjoyed a delightful wildflower walk in the Colquhoun Street entrance meadow with lots of blooms despite the dry weather.

Significant wildlife sightings this year include a resident wombat and many butterfly species spotted by Matthew Frawley and uploaded to Canberra Nature Map. This is a wonderful inventory for Mt Taylor and we are excited to have local butterfly expert Suzi Bond and Matthew leading our first butterfly walk in December. A big thank you PCS and our ParkCare ranger Phil Selmes and the TRC team for installing the 25th anniversary of ParkCare bench at the summit. It is getting plenty of use.

Anne l'Ons and Kathy Eyles

Convenors - Mount Taylor ParkCare Group

E: ajions@iimetro.com.au



Friends of Tidbinbilla

This year we continued quietly plodding along with our usual activities, mainly weeding, of course.

We have been working on *Verbascum* at Rock Valley and Turkey Hill (Dalsetta). At the latter we have been focussing on deheading plants to see how that may impact the population. In the past we have tried poison and chipping, and neither seems all that effective in the long run. By not disturbing the ground (hopefully increasing the soil fertility) and not adding new seed we will in time see if this technique has any impact.

Brush leaky weirs built a few years ago with the rangers are regularly checked and material added, as a learning work in progress.

Our annual weekend at Nil Desperandum was a great few days, weeding around the house and in the surrounding heritage sites, as well as having a generally relaxed time with some really good people. Unfortunately our weekend was cut abruptly short the next morning by a storm coming in, so breakfast was done and tents totally packed up in 20 rather hectic minutes before the road became dodgy.



Perons Tree Frog seen in the Tea Tree while doing Frogwatch. The view from Camel Back.



The Friends treated a large patch of blackberry in the Sanctuary earlier in the year, while the Green Army, organised by the Southern ACT Catchment Group (SACTCG), spent two days helping us out with some other patches of blackberry scattered throughout the Sanctuary. Some poplar suckers were also treated by the Friends down near the playground.

The Aboriginal Green Army also spent time with Travis at Hanging Rock, again through the SACTCG.

In March, Simon and Travis were kind enough to drive us up to Camel Back. Members then walked up the last part to see a stunning view. The wildlife crew also generously gave us a talk and tour of the brush-tailed rock wallaby and corroboree frog breeding programs.

Of course Frog Watch and Water Watch continue.

A huge thanks to the great staff that have been at Tidbinbilla this year including Murray, Simon, Travis, Alinta, Kai, Tom and John.

I hope everyone in the ParkCare community has a well-deserved break over summer.

Fiona Spier

Convenor - Friends of Tidbinbilla

E: Fiona_spier@hotmail.com

Friends of Glenburn

The ACT Parks and Conservation Service, with the help of the Friends of Glenburn, achieved much in 2017. These are our most significant achievements.

Several work parties tidied up a number of historic sites and erected two 25th anniversary of ParkCare benches. One is located at the Charcoal Kilns site, the other at Atkinson trig.

The three heritage trails for walkers and cyclists were completed.

On 5 May, Minister Mick Gentleman unveiled a new large interpretative sign near the locked gate on Charcoal Kiln Road at the entry to the precinct. It includes a map of the heritage trails. This is the 14th interpretive sign in the precinct. The text of all the signs can be found under Friends of Glenburn on the National Parks Association of the ACT's website www.npaact

Also on 5 May a brochure on the Glenburn Precinct was released. Copies can be obtained from the PCS Stromlo Depot and from a box next to the new sign and the above website.

The Conservation Management Plan (CMP) for the Glenburn Precinct has been handed over to ACT Heritage for final approval. The CMP will provide a formal framework for all

Celebrations for the Glenburn Heritage Trail and the new sign.

future protection and conservation work in the Glenburn Precinct.

Tim the Yowie Man produced an interesting article on the precinct in *The Canberra Times* Panorama on 23 September. It led to a good turn out on a guided drive/walk on 9 October. A real bonus was that the huge pear tree at Colliers orchard was in full flower. It looked magnificent!

Col McAlister

Convenor - Friends of Glenburn

E:cvmac@grapevine.com.au



Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group

Weed control, planting and barbed wire fence removal are our thing but we also do water watch.

For the 2016/2017 year the major activity of the Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group (GBRG) was general weed control (over 60% of our more than 800 volunteer hours). We undertook significant weed control around Hospital Creek, Gudgenby Cottage and Peppermint Hill. Because of our persistence over the years we are seeing very satisfactory outcomes.

We have done limited planting for several years so were pleased to undertake plantings on two of our work parties—one above Frank and Jacks Hut and the other at Peppermint Hill. We thank Greening Australia for the support we received from them in seed raising and Clive for making the necessary arrangements.

We are always pleased to undertake barbed wire fence removal because it makes the environment safer for kangaroos and other native animals. The fences are also an ugly blot on the beautiful landscape. We have made barbed fence removal a priority in the last year. Of the 10 work parties we held in the 12 months to 30 October 2017, half dealt with barbed wire fence removal. We are pleased to notice the difference this is making to the landscape.

Under the GBRG banner, Martin, Michaela and Samantha continued to do Waterwatch

activities during 2016/2017. Bogong, Hospital and Little Dry creeks showed physical and chemical water quality results consistent with the seasons. Water flow was mostly good throughout. However, Bogong Creek (Centre) and Hospital Creek (Centre) both ceased to flow in January and February 2017 and Little Dry Creek ceased to flow in February 2017. Hospital Creek (South) again showed its mid-summer electrical conductivity spike.

Bugwatch testing was undertaken in both spring 2016 and autumn 2017. The spring results were 'excellent' for Bogong Creek and 'good' for Hospital Creek. The autumn results were 'good' for both sites. This lower score is attributed to the hot and dry summer.

Finally, we thank the Namadgi rangers and other PCS staff for their support during the year, in particular the two Bens and Mark. Without that support we simply could not do our volunteer activities.

Authors: Michael Goonrey and Martin Chalk

Michael Goonrey

Convenor - Gudgenby Bush Regeneration

E: mjgoonrey@grapevine.com.au



Loading the trailer. The wire collection at Gudgenby Homestead. Photos: Max Lawrence
Fence removal up the hill from Old Boboyan Road. Photo: Rupert Barnett



ParkCarers of Southern Murrumbidgee (POSM)

Landscape rehabilitation at Barneys Gully

One of the big success stories for POSM has been the series of leaky weirs constructed along Barneys Gully. These features have evolved over time as we experimented with different methods, thanks to continued support from rangers and the erosion control workshop organised by SACTCG with Cam Wilson. We aimed to create structures to keep water within the gully to provide water to the planted trees over longer periods, minimise erosion and reduce silt load into the Murrumbidgee River.

In February 2008, (top photo) the gully was dominated by African love grass, with actively eroding areas and nothing to stop the water rushing to the Murrumbidgee. Work began at the first site soon after, battering down the eroding face and planting *Acacia rubida*, *A. dealbata*, *Poa labillardierei* and *Lomandra longifolia*. The first leaky weir was constructed using logs wired to star pickets to hold them in place. From the beginning we observed water being held back behind the logs but the weir was too leaky.

By 2011 we had added more logs, star pickets, hay bales and lots of wire. We transplanted *Typha orientalis* and *Phragmites australis* from a large patch growing upstream, and spread their seed. By April 2014 (middle photo) we had added rocks and extended the width to ensure an even high flow stayed within the weir and did not cut around the sides. The plants and reeds were well established and thriving as more water was retained in the gully. Another experiment was to plant *Casuarina Cunninghamiana* tubestock directly into the rocks of the weir, with the roots not even touching soil! Surprisingly these established themselves quickly and were around the height of the star pickets within two years of planting.

Fast forward to June 2017 (bottom photo) and the landscape is vastly different to that of 2008. The Casuarinas grew well so we removed the star pickets—a very difficult task as silt from upstream had accumulated around the weir and they were firmly sucked into the mud. We believe the weirs are an effective method of landscape rehabilitation that have helped create a more functional ecosystem where water is retained in the system and native species are thriving. Thanks to all who supported POSM throughout the year.

Lauren Carter

Convenor – ParkCarers of Southern Murrumbidgee

E: lauren.carter@iinet.net.au



Kosciuszko Huts Association (KHA)

Since 1991, The Kosciuszko Huts Association (KHA) has been assisting the ACT Parks and Conservation Service (PCS) to maintain homesteads, huts, and associated structures within Namadgi National Park. Work spans simple building maintenance to full-scale reconstruction (i.e. rebuilds). Most work falls somewhere in the middle of these two extremes.

Since the last *Scribbly Gum*, KHA Namadgi workers have undertaken twelve work parties, eleven formal inspections, nine hut keeping activities, and two material recovery activities. KHA Namadgi workers have also participated in six training events.

The twelve work parties involved construction activities and were conducted at Orroral Homestead, ACT Forests Hut, Frank and Jacks Hut, Hospital Creek Hut, Lutons Crutching Shed and Demanding Hut. The longest work party was five and a half days and the shortest was one day. Most were two or three days. Activities included restumping, sub-surface drainage control and repairs to floors, windows, ceilings and roofs. Members camped on-site and supplied all their own tools and equipment.

Formal inspections involve checking the structural and aesthetic integrity of a hut from the foundations up. The result is a formal written report for ACT PCS.

These reports are the basis upon which the work parties are planned. The hut keeping activities are like housekeeping. They involve cleaning fireplaces and roof gutters, sweeping floors and general non-construction maintenance activities. Material recovery activities involve collecting period-sympathetic materials from private donors. Materials generally include corrugated galvanised iron and timber. Such recovery activities involve demolishing the structure for the owner in exchange for the materials.

The training events have included light machine tool operations, first aid, cultural heritage workshops and a new member's day. KHA also presented at the Australian Alps Cooperative Management Program Volunteer Coordinators Workshop that was attended by parks staff from ACT, NSW, Victoria, and the Australian Government.

KHA is very well supported by PCS at both the corporate level, through the Volunteer Program, and at the operational level by Namadgi staff with the procurement of materials and the provision of on-site toilets and water when required. Formal incorporation into the PCS Volunteer Program in 2016 has made a big difference to the ease with which works can be carried out.

Author: Simon Buckpitt

Convenor Kosciuszko Huts Association

E: simon.buckpitt@iinet.net.au



(left to right)
Anne-Marie Wilson whitewashing Orroral Valley Homestead, 25 March 2017.
Photo: Jean Hammond.
Sean and Julie Sunley performing a formal inspection of Hospital Creek Hut, 12 November 2016. Photo: John Allan

Friends of Weston Community Orchard

Formerly part of the Weston CIT Horticultural training orchard, the orchard contains a variety of fruit, nut and vine plantings that commenced in the 1980s. Apples, pears, plums, nectarines, apricots, almonds, hazelnuts, persimmons, feijoas, quinces, grapes, a mulberry tree and fig trees all survived despite no watering system or land care for 12 years between 2004 and 2016. Since 2016, members of the community including the Canberra Biodynamic Group and ACT for Bees have been restoring the orchard to a productive, diverse and rich habitat using Biodynamic preparations to enhance the vitality and ecology of the soil. Pesticides, herbicides and fungicides have not been used since 2003 as they are nonspecific and kill good organisms that support the health of the whole orchard.

This year we have focussed on physically clearing blackberries and other invasive plants from around the fruit trees and grape vines. In the winter, Jonathon Banks of Piallago Organic Apples was a welcome visitor providing guidance in pruning the dead wood and making the trees safe. Biodynamic tree paste was then painted on to provide nutrients, promote healing after pruning and discourage damaging insects. There has been plenty of mulching to protect the soil around the trees after the removal of blackberries and to help hold

the moisture over the hot dry summer. It is heartening to see the orchard looking so healthy with plenty of young fruit and good grass cover coming back after the blackberries were cleared. The insect hotel has been attracting all sorts of visitors including a range of native bees and predatory wasps and there are many species of birds living in the thickets.

We've heard that students including the kindergarten children from the local school have been regularly exploring and enjoying the orchard as well as the locals who are now walking through it.

Thank you to all the volunteers. You have participated in rehabilitating Weston Creek Orchard and particularly clearing the two to three metre high stands of blackberries. Special thanks also to ACT Government staff who have supported the orchard, including Philip Selmes, Alison McLeod, Rachel Togley, Nicholas Bakker and the lawn mowers who have been carefully mowing around the newly cleared fruit trees.

The working bees are held on the third Sunday of the month except during summer. Look up our Facebook page (Weston Community Orchard) for details of what's happening. We would love to have you join us.

Authors: Chris Boswell and Julie Armstrong

Convenor Chris Boswell

E: ochriso@iprimus.com.au

Facebook: [Weston Community Orchard](#)

(left to right) Volunteers working on clearing the tall stands of blackberry in the mid winter working bee. The beginning of November and the orchard is looking clear and healthy. Weston Community Orchard B&B with a few guests checked in. Photos: Julie Armstrong



Fetherston Gardens Friends

Spending time outdoors, connecting to other people while pottering in the garden or working on activities has proven to be beneficial for everyone at Fetherston Gardens. As we have enjoyed the experience of volunteering in 2017, we are looking at new opportunities to connect our community to Fetherston Gardens in 2018. Thank you to the ACT Government TCCS crews and Rachel Tokley for always connecting us together.

Janet and John Lawrence visited the gardens in April this year. Janet is Tony Fetherston's daughter and her family are delighted that the Fetherston Gardens Friends are restoring the gardens. It's always lovely to have them visit and we feel part of the Fetherston family.

Our first heritage open day in May saw many visitors to the garden for the first time. It was part of the ACT Heritage event calendar. We held guided tours of our arboretum and had an information/history stall where visitors could share their experiences of being on this site over 40 years. Thanks to Weston Creek Community Council (WCCC) for the new portable microphone we used. We also had a fabulous children's garden activity tent with scavenger hunts, crafts and plant related activities and a massive plant stall. We enjoyed it so much we are planning for the next heritage day event in April 2018.

The Friends have hosted and enjoyed lots of guided tours and visiting garden groups,

clubs, U3A and the Australian National Botanic Gardens Guiding Conference delegates.

Our herb garden has been receiving more attention this year and planting is underway. This area is weed heaven and we have been tackling weeds here for years. The garden was overrun with grasses. We also discovered the lovely red brick paths and sections underneath. The weeds are still an issue but regular weeding is seeing the other plants thrive.

Thank you to our wonderful volunteers—Fetherston Gardens is a testimony to their nurture and interest in the gardens. It's always a joy to potter and Fetherston Gardens is a serene place for people to come and meet up. You are welcome to join us any time.

We meet on the last Sunday and second Wednesday of every month (except December and January) from 10am-1pm. The entrance is located in Fetherston Place, off Heysen Street, Weston. Please check for updates and information from the WCCC or Fetherston Gardens Friends.

Lesley Pattinson

Convenor

fetherstongardens@gmail.com



(left to right) The herb garden August 2001 and again in August 2017. Janet (Fetherston) and John Lawrence.



The High Risk Invasive Plants Team

The ACT Weeds Advisory Group recently decided there was a need for a rapid response team to deal with the increasing reports of high risk new and emerging invasive plants.

It was decided to create a multi-agency team of technical experts to prioritise and implement responses—the High Risk Invasive Plants Team. Members of the team include: Dr Michael Mulvaney, (Senior Environmental Planner with EPSDD); Jenny Conolly (Invasive Species Officer, (TCCS); myself (Senior Invasive Plants Officer PCS) and Mal Copelin who is a pests and weeds expert with TCCS.

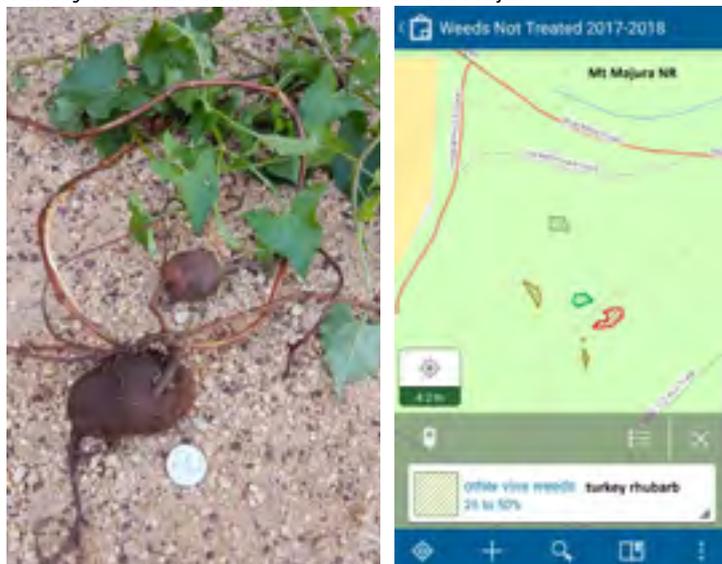
Two recent examples are given below of how the team responds to a report.

Turkey rhubarb at Mt Majura

Waltraud from Friends of Mt Majura discovered a suspicious vine on Mt Majura. She posted it on Canberra Nature Map <http://canberra.naturemapr.org/>

It was identified as the invasive vine *Acetosa sagittata* (turkey rhubarb), native to South Africa. An auto-alert email from Canberra Nature Map was sent to the High Risk Invasive Plants Team.

Turkey rhubarb and its location on Mt Majura



The location was mapped on the Collector app weeds not treated map. As this was a new incursion in the ACT, a specimen was taken to the Herbarium the following day for confirmation and their collection. Control commenced a day later and the area was mapped on Collector app treated weeds. A wider search for more plants was also undertaken.

Spanish heath at Mt Taylor

Kathy Eyles from Friends of Mt Taylor reported an infestation of a suspicious plant at Mt Taylor to Canberra Nature Map. It was identified as *Erica lusitanica* (Spanish heath). An auto alert email from Canberra Nature Map was sent to the High Risk Invasive Plants Team. The infestation was mapped on the Collector app weeds not treated map. The job was too big for the team, so Ranger Ellyse Sheridan and specialist weeds contractor J & J French undertook the control work and mapped it on Collector app treated weeds.

Well done to all involved in these two incidences. It shows the value of citizen science.

Steve Taylor,
Senior Invasive Plants Officer,
Biosecurity and Rural Services
E: steve.taylor@act.gov.au

Spanish heath and its location on Mt Taylor

