



ParkCare Annual Planning Info Session 2025-2026

Date: Tuesday 5 August 2025
Time: 10am – 2pm
Location: Online via Microsoft Teams

Attending

Barbara Read (Friends of Mt Majura), Anna Cowan (Hall ParkCare), Annette Martin (Mt Ainslie Weeders), David Garrett (ParkCarers of the Southern Murrumbidgee), Glenn Schwinghamer (Urambi Hills ParkCare Group), Gordon McAllister (Friends of Black Mountain), Jane Kemble (Friends of Wanniasa Hills), John Brannan (Friends of the Pinnacle), Julia Raine (Gossan Hill ParkCare), Kathy Eyles (Mt Taylor ParkCare), Linda Beveridge (Friends of Black Mountain), Margaret Ning (Friends of Budjan Galindji), Margy Burn (Friends of Mt Majura), Mike Sim (Isaacs Ridge Mt Mugga Mugga ParkCare), Mike Watson (Friends of Dryandra), Paul Sheils (Cooleman Ridge ParkCare), Rosemary Hollow (National Parks Association), Sarah Hnatiuk (Friends of Mt Painter), Sue Ross (Red Hill Regenerators), Tony Ashton (Friends of Mt Painter), Vera Kurz (Friends of Tuggeranong Hill), Warren Bond (Friends of the Pinnacle)

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Minutes

ParkCare Overview (Lauren McQueen)

- 2024-2025 in review:
 - Over 35,000 volunteer hours recorded in ParkCare in 2024-25 (up from 29,000 the year before), a reflection of improvement engagement as well as improve record keeping
 - Continue to encourage Convenors to send a photo of each work party's sign-on sheet after each event
 - Launch of power tool trial program, now in the review stage



- Introduction of new ParkCare branding, including revised uniforms (shirts & jumpers)
- Revised Weed Manual released & success of the Manual in the ACT National Trust Heritage Awards
- Launch of monthly online info sessions for new volunteers
- Environmental Volunteering Steering Committee & working to improve program consistencies
- Great events throughout the year – Urambi Plantings, launch of Pinnacle signage, etc
- 2025-2026:
 - Officially the City and Environment Directorate
 - 2026 Annual Planning:
 - Will use the same template as previous year.
 - This year we want to see plans agreed on by the conclusion of our meeting with the Rangers. Any prep you can do prior to the meeting is encouraged.
 - Looking in the future to move to online annual plan that includes mapping. NRM is leading this to provide consistency between ParkCare and Urban Parks volunteering.
 - Catchment Group attendance at Annual Planning is encouraged, but we will wait for your direction on if you would like them to attend your individual meeting.
 - Field Maps – stricter on mapping into the future.
 - Reminder to no longer use Fireball, and return any chem to ParkCare. Starane is being acquired.
 - Power Tool Review & implementation. Currently qualified volunteers can continue to use tools
 - Reminder to please send photos of sign-on sheet on a regular basis to Marty/Tenzin (not a 6 or 12 month backlog)
 - Training calendar has been released, with some items still to come (including still looking into practical application of chemical training)
 - PCS is undertaking a review of how we work with Mountain Bike Trail Building groups

Questions:

Q: Who is the new Head of the CED?

A: The Director General is David Pepper



Q: Any chance we can have at least one weekend session annually for Chemcert for our working volunteers?

A: This can often be limited by our contractor availability. We do get quite a call for weekend training, but then either receive a low sign-up rates, or have a significant level of non-attendance comparative to weekday training. We seek to facilitate where possible, but if our trainers are getting low attendance, there is less incentive for them to try and facilitate training not within their core hours.

Invasive Plants Control Program Update (Harley Baker)

Includes slides

- Established weeds are the most challenging. Invasive grasses are our worst weeds, and present the most damaging effects to ecological communities, simply because of how they reproduce. They do take more of our time/resources, and can be demoralising, but looking at it from a perspective of how we can continue to protect (rather than eradication).
- Transformer species are capable of moving into our best quality areas. Don't be disheartened, take the wins. Getting things in smaller areas (inc things like new ALG incursions), working to local eradication is most effective. Understanding what is coming into the reserve and acting quickly if something not seen before.
- Mapping: We have the best weed data in the country, and ParkCarer contributions are invaluable. Our datasets are being used by CSIRO in program development, that will allow us to take data in and use projection tools – including – hindcasting & forecasting. Unsure on timeframe for this work, as still in infancy stage.
- Field Maps: Training is available, sessions in September and October. The more data the better.
- Paul Downey List link now publicly available again. Should be fixed. Three risk assessment lists.
- Seasonal Treatment Control Calendar is still the status quo. As a general rule still the best timing.
- Integrated Control: working to improve how parks engage with biocontrol's. We know integrated approaches is the best option. Worked with CSIRO on biocontrol's and have done our own (i.e. prickly pear).
- Herbicide applications: we've got some good conditions. Have been doing manual removal of Spanish Heath with the right conditions to reduce herbicide use.
- Having brush cutter use is very helpful – important tool in integrated control.



- Biosecurity Act 2023 & Biosecurity Declaration 2025 is now active in the ACT. The Act should not have an affect on ParkCare/volunteers at large, just being aware that it is happening, or if you are aware of breaches (propagation/selling), we can now investigate/act on
- Citizen Science: Monitored every day for new weeds (CNMpr), iNaturalist AI functionality on national level. All platforms

Questions:

Q: A contractor was arranged to do the weeding and follow-up on the steep areas close to ParkWay for FoBM (Friends of Black Mountain). Would you schedule the follow-up for this area on Black Mountain, please?

A: No I can't. I am not sure what this follow up work is for or who was organising it. Black Mountain is a north side reserve so the team at Mitchell depot may have more information.

Q: I use Field Maps for some priority weeds and for mapping control. I use Canberra Nature Map for other plants and know information is provided to ACT biosecurity. However the funding has dropped so mapping is not visible for ParkCare groups. I have started using iNaturalist as well, and see you are monitoring some of this. What do you want us to use for landscape, local and new weeds?

A: Use your preferred platform. They are all picked up by Atlas of Living Aus. If you are reporting a priority species (i.e. Alligator Weed), an alert will come through regardless of the platform

Q: Is biocontrol recorded on Field Maps so we don't spray/treat where insects are being used?

A: Not a lot of use of biocontrol at this stage. Is a category in Field Maps so if there was one there, the release should be mapped. Doing due diligence before starting works and checking the area first.

Q: What weed does cochineal weevil target?

A: Cochineal insects are sap sucking insects that are host specific to cacti. As they feed on the sap of the cacti, when present in sufficient numbers can significantly weaken and even kill the plants.

Q: Which weeds will your team come and treat as a matter of priority?

A: Main focus is on New and Emerging Weeds. Unique/or not seen a lot of, will get on top of also



Invasive Animals Program Update (Sally McIntosh, Katelyn McGregor)

- Kangaroo Management Program (KMP)
 - Team is responsible for implementation (not monitoring/counting which sits with Office of Nature Conservation [ONC])
 - 2025 program now concluded.
 - Informed by monitoring of vegetation & kangaroo counts. Fauna ecologists take the data away to do analysis on target #. As an operational team, then determine what is realistic to deliver.
 - Conservation cull advice available online every year. This year, it is dry, with reduced vegetation, which means higher targets.
 - 16 reserves targeted between 10 July-31 July 2025.
 - Results available here: [Kangaroo Management Program data - ACT Government](#)
- Thermal Assist Control Program:
 - Hosted in May 2025 – 21 days of operation & 79 hours of aerial ops, covering 110,000 hectares
 - Targets feral deer, pigs and goats
 - Focuses on peri-urban, conservation areas and water catchments. Including Bullen, Gigerline, Rob Roy and more – seeking to keep deer out of urban footprint of Canberra
 - Total of 848 animals in 2025 (see slide with results)
- On Ground Pig Programs:
 - Namadgi: ground-based trapping and baiting, treating 26,000ha. Has been highly effective in managing populations right down to lower densities.
 - Rural Landholder Pig Control: Coordinated program from 2024. Work with landholders in areas adjacent to Namadgi/MRC/etc and assist them – supporting conservation (us) and production (them) outcomes.
 - Urban Pig Control – 31 trapped in urban environment - Isaacs (11), Callum Brae (19), Coombs (1). We don't have established populations in urban, but good connectivity/corridors.
- Rabbit Control:
 - Targeted 14 reserves in past 12 months, including 12 urban sites in collaboration with TCCS.
 - Fumigated 6,219 burrows, removed estimated 2,225 through ground shooting.
 - Have also undertaken ripping activities.



- Looking ahead: 2 year funding for conservation & urban areas, meeting with district managers & city services to review/assess current sites and identify opportunities. Establishing where priority for the 2-year period.
- Rabbit Mapping: volunteer layer now available. Team has worked to pull the layers apart and streamline, as was getting congested. Allows contractors/staff to toggle layers etc. Always open to feedback/suggestions.
- Carcass utilisation: We work with CSIRO who attend rabbit shoots and use carcass for research, and also Canberra Zoo who take carcass for food source.
- Budget Bids:
 - Secured funding for thermal assist/rabbit control for 2 years
 - Ongoing funding for ground-based pig control & some rabbit control
 - Continue to put up business cases for additional funding

Questions:

*Q: Who should groups contact if they feel there are excessive kangaroos in their Patch?
Reserve Ranger, or Access Canberra*

A: Please contact your Reserve Ranger, or through Access Canberra.

Q: The Pinnacle NR was recommended for culling before the 2024 cull (in the eastern-grey-kangaroo-conservation-management-advice-2024) - still no cull 2 culls later and the reserve and roos are really suffering. How are these decisions really made?

A: Cull advice might provide a number, but the operational working group takes into consideration things like how effective it is to manage a site (whether it is shootable, security requirements, past investment or if there is another site that is close to target density), so the data still sits against the operational framework it sits within.

Q: What about control of rabbits within suburban areas? We have rabbits in our neighbourhood park and surrounding house blocks in Lyneham and see them regularly in other parts of the city

A: These can be reported via Access Canberra, and also mapped in Field Maps.

Q: Thanks for the new rabbit burrow Field maps layer. Can we use that in off-reserve areas, will it be utilised for rabbit controls?

A: Yes, would be useful to see where populations are moving into adjacent areas.

Q: When will Mt Ainslie reserve be done. we are beginning to look like a golf course

A: Rabbit control at Mount Ainslie Reserve is an ongoing and adaptive process. While annual control efforts – including fumigation and ground-assisted-shooting are consistently carried



out, recent wet seasons have created ideal conditions for rabbit populations to thrive. This has led to a noticeable increase in rabbit activity and, unfortunately, a more visible impact on the landscape.

Mount Ainslie is a large and ecologically complex site and rabbit control requires a sustained and strategic approach. The goal is to reduce populations to manageable levels which requires ongoing control over many years. Even with intensive annual efforts, rabbits can quickly rebound, especially after favourable breeding conditions. This year's program is due to commence in the coming months.

Q: Should we report rabbits so you can get adequate continuing funding?

A: All data is useful in understanding the breadth of rabbit control required and advocating for the required funding.

Fire Management Unit Update (Bethany Dunne)

- Beth provided context that she is short-term working in the Fire Planning team, but sits as a Fire Ecologist in Office of Nature Conservation. Has worked with PCS for 10 years, and is also a member of a ParkCare group.
- Process for fire planning:
 - At a strategic level, ESA have the Strategic Bushfire Management Plan (SBMP), which covers the whole of the ACT, is legislated, and covers fire planning and emergency response. A high level document.
 - PCS is the land manager of over 80% of the land in the ACT. It is within our interest to develop our fire planning for our conservation estate, so we can have input into best outcomes for both ecology and fire management. This is the role of the Regional Fire Management Plan (RFMP). A 10 year plan, with a 5 year review.
 - We are currently at the 5 year review mark of the [current RFMP](#).
 - The RFMP then informs the Bushfire Operations Plan (BOP), an annual works plan of fuel management activities.
 - The RFMP was previously spatial, but now documented with objectives that incorporate in monitoring and evaluation metrics. Currently in draft.
 - It looks at residual risk, diversity of vegetation/growth stages across the landscape, maintaining key strategic assets and planning for climate adaptation.
 - Residual risk: the risk to life and property which remains after you do treatment. Risk will never be zero, and current figure is 47%. We use



modelling and on ground fuel assessments to inform residual risk and how we plan treatments. Moving away from saying we will treat 'x' amount of hectares, to instead managing risk in areas that pose most significant risk to life/property. A residual risk rating is now the preferred target to number of hectares treated in the ACT, Vic and NSW.

- We are also responsible for fires that leave the ACT and impact life, property and the environment in NSW.
- The RFMP informs the schedule of proposed burns, but also other activities including slashing, grazing, roading, veg management, chem works and more.
- Fire ecology:
 - Promoting ecosystem resilience, looking at the age classes of different types of vegetation – the lowland grassy ecosystems can tolerate more frequent fire than the upland and alpine regions that are still in juvenile stages with a lower tolerance to fire.
 - Conducting between 10 and 20 ecological burns each year on PCS estate. One project this year is introducing cultural burning in box gum grassy woodlands undertaken by Traditional Custodians, including vegetation surveys.
 - ONC is looking at climate adaption also and how we can help our key values into the future. For example, alpine ash, which currently lacks established mature trees due to ongoing impacts of wildfire.
- You may see our fire management crews out in our parks doing physical removal in asset protection zones, including spraying, physical removal or road works.
- We also have a rotation of prescribed burns across the reserves and this is informed by tolerable fire intervals. All prescribed burns go through the fire ecologists and other ecologists at ONC for input, plus the district managers and other relevant stakeholders.
- ParkCare groups are also contacted when a burn is being planned for their reserve. Any mapping volunteers do, including of rare or other species, plantings etc. is always very helpful in fire planning activities.

Questions:

Q: Does your modelling take climate change into account?

A: Yes

Q: These objectives would surely apply for all ACT land, regardless of custodianship?



A: All the other custodians are required to have (i.e. Stromlo Fire Park) have their own BOP and managed by ESA. Managing their veg risks through that. Private land also managed through ESA through Farm Fire Wise project.

Q: Are we likely to get more cultural and ecological burns?

A: Yes, ecological burning happens a fair bit already. Cultural burning is being expanded. We have a Working Group with Tos, there are so many potential positives for landscape health. As the landscape ages, in the lowlands the time has arrived that our grassy woodlands are needing a return of fire.

Q: Is the 2025-26 BOP available yet?

A: Once it is available, the BOP can be accessed here: [Bushfire management plans - Open Government Information](#)

Q: Slashing of Isaacs Ridge Asset Protection Zone was done early this year. It would be a good opportunity for follow-up weed control while seedlings are visible and accessible. If PCS can't do this, could volunteers help?

A: Volunteer work on follow-up weed control is usually welcomed on PCS land, but depends on the species of weed, the location and method of follow up. Please get in touch with the Reserve Ranger to see if this location is suitable for volunteer follow up.

Q: In previous years we have introduced mulch around existing plantings for weed suppression, but we are concerned that we are just adding to the fire load in this environment. What are your thoughts on the use of mulch around plantings. Are we better off just removing vegetation directly around plantings and trying to maintain that?

Large-scale thick mulching may contribute to fire intensity but really it is fine fuels mixed with air which propagate fire easily (shrubs, grasses, loose leaves etc). Work with the local ParkCare co-ordinator who will liaise with the fire ecology team if a burn is planned in an area. If you have plantings, as we can usually just exclude them.

Q: Are there specific fire mitigation measures that we can implement, particularly adjacent residential development?

A: On PCS managed land, PCS must maintain each zone according to the fuel standards set by ESA. A regular mowing, grazing, physical removal and burning program helps to meet the standards required. In terms of ParkCare contribution, you could liaise with the local ParkCare co-ordinator to check things like planting locations / species, and removal of cut weed species like Hawthorns from asset protection zones.

Q: There is concern at the priority given to ecological sustainability. How is that factored in?



A: ESA sets up zoning (shown on ACTMAPI on bushfire map & bushfire prone areas/zoning) – Inner Asset/Outer Asset protection zones. All have standards that have to be met, and this is legislated. PCS is responsible for maintaining these zones. [Ecological guidelines](#) for bushfire fuel management available on the web covers all activities – slashing/grazing/burning/etc, and there are sections under suites of species on timing, grass heights, etc. There is a lot of work that goes into the planning/timing of activities.

Q: Do you guys conduct post-burn follow-up monitoring of vegetation recovery?

Fire ecology team has minimal follow-up capacity. We undertake Sub-alpine woodland monitoring project – 5 years of intense field work. Have also done a 10-year study on Black Mountain and the impacts of prescribed burning and individual species responses to combinations of returned fire. Research projects exist.

Go back to review the prescribed burns once completed in terms of – canopy scorch, severity, and whether the burns met the guidelines provided.

Q: How is the size of the burn decided. we have had "accidents", "unforeseen leap". Could the size of burns be reduced for better realistic control?

A: Trying to contain burns on small areas that aren't bound by fire trail is risky, we keep it contained by fire trails/pathways etc. Also look at the size of the area- Namadgi burn is big, but related to the scale, its quite small. Versus burn of Black Mountain would be much smaller – look at percentage of area to provide refugia etc.

Q: Acreage for burns is not the criterion or measure that it was in the beginning of the Fire Management strategy and operations. Large may be "easier" but for conservation the ecological sustainability needs to have much higher priority.

Agree we are not meeting hectare targets anymore; however we still need to be able to undertake safe burns and achieve fuel management objectives while balancing with ecological objectives. Small area burns not bound by solid containment lines require constant supervision and become a risk for re-ignition. And we must also consider the impact of creating new smaller containment lines to mineral earth which is problematic for species like orchids and erosion.

Q: Good mulch is essential & Q: I think the question around mulch use is important also.

A: As per other mulch response.



Office of Nature Conservation Update (Renee Brawata)

- Office of Nature Conservation (ONC) made up of a team of scientists, science programs and policy work.
- Aquatic and Riparian priorities:
 - Cotter river environmental flows fish monitoring
 - Fish habitat restoration (monitoring/reporting)
 - Angler social research
 - Montaine crayfish genetic analysis – impacted after fires
 - Urban Lakes fish stocking
- Fauna:
 - Priority threatened species monitoring
 - Wrapping up programs as listed
 - H5 bird flu preparedness/response planning
 - Controlled native species plan for the Dingo & dingo monitoring in Namadgi National Park
 - Funding PhD research
 - Vert pest management data progression w/ PCS
 - Engaging community
- Grassland Earless Dragon (GED):
 - \$5 million injection of funding
 - Released a new action plan for 2025-2035
 - Expanding surveys – to understand range extent in new areas. Developing some new detection techniques.
 - Captive assurance colony in Melbourne (500 individuals to give best chance of recovery in the wild). Expanding the colony.
 - Releases/national recovery team/trialling outdoor breeding
- Macropods:
 - Eastern Grey Controlled native species management plan being drafted
 - Fertility control, including new site(s)
- Urban:
 - Data analytics to inform updates to the Nature Conservation Strategy/Nature Conservation Act
 - Defining our critical habitats in the ACT
- Restoration/Health Country Healing Community:
 - Finalising Ngunnawal engagement model
 - Funded for another 12 months



- Maintaining restoration sites, and adding a new site (guided by spatial planning tools)
 - Bush regen at 6 biodiversity hotspots, with traditional custodian involvement
 - Launching spatial tool for restoration as central resource for project management
- Vegetation:
 - Water, woodlands, grasslands & threatened communities
 - Completing final stage of Purple Pea translocations
 - Joint project with Australian National Botanic Gardens on saving the endangered Tuggeranong Lignum
- Adaptive Management Support:
 - Supporting teams in *using* data
 - Developed a new threatened species index
 - Currently doing a woodlands review – looking at conditions monitoring and state of the last 10 years
 - Effectiveness review of KMP in achieving target densities
- Climate Adaptation for Nature:
 - Undertaken to understand our capacity to respond to climate change
 - Identifying management adaptations

Questions

Q: Is the ACT Threatened Species Index publicly available?

A: Will be once ready. Still being worked on, unsure of timeframe at this stage.

Q: Steady decline in native species diversity since 2015. Any particular reasons for that?

A: There has been a general trend of increasing weed cover over the past 7-8 years. In addition, recent wetter years have resulted in higher herbage mass in some areas of lower-richness woodlands which has been shown to result in lower floristic richness in those areas. A combination of herbage mass and exotic cover are likely to be important factors in this trend, but it should be noted that analysis is ongoing to fully understand these trends.

Q: Are there any opportunities for community involvement in the Koala plan?

A: Good question. Currently monitoring undertaken, and fauna team are looking at having community involvement. It's on the cards, and will work with ParkCare if this goes ahead.

Q: Green corridors to link reserves and urban areas - what is the progress on that?



A: Urban team work on this. Still in its infancy. We know what we're trying to do/what we're putting into the mix of what could be a landscape plan. Our team currently mapping all the good stuff (same team that did blue/green network), and looking at the best corridors to keep/retain based on 15 priority values. Mapping to inform a protected area network. Due to be finished this financial year. Will link with Nature Conservation Strategy & changes to the Act.

Q: Any progress in reintroducing emus in Namadgi that Mim spoke about at Ecofocus last year?

A: At this stage, this component did not get funded. There are a lot of big steps to animal reintroduction and needs significant resources and funding to do that. Not at highest priority for us but has not been taken off the cards. Restoration component was funded, but not for emu progression.

Q: Can we get more info on conservation values of reserves and how restoration can be supported? We sometimes seem to be working in the dark, particularly in relation to funding.

A: Restoration Spatialised Tool will be useful, this will be publicly available shortly.

Q: There seems to be a lot of vegetation monitoring happening on reserves - judging from marked plots and occasional encounters with staff. Are they under ONA auspices? Is it possible to have information shared with Friends groups?

A: Yes we have an open data policy so we can provide info on the plots. Monitoring undertaken on reserves and offsets. Accessing Data – just request via the ONC team. Just need to sign a data agreement.

Q: Was there ever a final report for CUBS?

A: There is a final dashboard, and we are working to make it publicly available online, rather than a report. Dashboard is a living piece, play with it, etc.

Q: The Corridor mapping must be given effect in the Territory plan or won't be implemented - is this under discussion?

A: Agreed. The aim is for it to become part of the planning strategy that is currently under review. Hoping it will be protected under legislation and planning act.



District Update: National Parks and Catchments (Nadia Kuzman)

- General:
 - Aerial control project has been undertaken across both Namadgi and the Murrumbidgee River Corridor (MRC)
 - Weed control activities are being undertaken, and currently finalising the annual weeds program, with a focus on Weeds of National Significance (WoNS), with some funding for strategic/integrated control of St John's Wort (StJW) to trial different integrated methods
 - Operational plans have been developed are in approval stages, pending funding and resources
- MRC:
 - Looking at plans to upgrade facilities (Cotter, Pine Island, Uriarra), including water/sewerage access, and improving visitor infrastructure.
 - Restoration work on waterways, and the continuation of lower cotter catchment protection work
- Namadgi:
 - Progressing huts restoration projects, including interpretation works around lost structures to acknowledge their history without a rebuild.
 - Gibraltar Falls safety improvements and looking to re-open the area to the public
 - Looking to redevelop the Woods Reserve camping area
- Tidbinbilla:
 - Current [Tidbinbilla Plan of Management](#) is from 2012. Currently reviewing Plan of Management, and at the same time undertaking a master planning process of the reserve, which is attached to the long-term visions for Tidbinbilla. Includes developing a precinct plan for infrastructure upgrades. Opportunities for consultation/review will be advised when appropriate.
 - Undertaking small enhancements to recreation areas and visitor attractions, including high use areas. Improving facilities for safety but also creating more engaging experiences for visitors.
 - Track work being undertaken both in-house and by contractors, including repairing walking tracks and improving accessibility.
 - Rock Valley Heritage Site: enhancing accessibility (gates, paths, etc). Working with volunteers on creek rehabilitation, window installation and working on Tidbinbilla Pioneers Association Conversation Management Plan.
 - Creating updated educational materials, including refreshed suite of Ranger Guided Activities (RGAs), mainly for school groups.



- Major project at source of Tidbinbilla river, around sediment load.
- Working with ONC on Tea Tree (Kunzea) treatment and trials
- Tidbinbilla is a significant site for Ngannawal custodians. Conservation remains a top priority at these sites. Seeking to increase collaboration with Ngannawal custodians to help guide restoration/management practices, also in naming of some walking trails.
- Eco burns and habitat maintenance: plans for a few eco burns in Themeda grasslands to reduce the thatch and allow the Themeda to grow and spread (near Wandarawarri track). There are also planned eco and hazard reduction burns for the Sanctuary.
- Value of volunteer community at Tidbinbilla and the role that volunteers take in conservation efforts – through the Sanctuary, Rock Valley, RangerAssist, Friends of Tidbinbilla, VisitorAssist and WildlifeAssist.

Questions:

Q: What's the status of the Skyline Trail?

A: Currently being built, aim to open in October when Daylight Savings starts. Will be named the Sky Trail for now until it has a Ngannawal name. 20km, linking Fishing Gap along the ride/down the spurs to Camelback, through Johns Peak. Grade 5+ hike. Working with Canberra Bushwalking Club to initiation walkers in a safe way, and will do some early guided walks.

Q: Have you done a survey of the water plants in the Tidbinbilla River, eg macrophytes? May help rehab of silted areas?

A: Unsure of any surveys focused on in-stream/in-pond vegetation. Would need to look into. Could be a good survey opportunity for volunteers. Will be a long term project across 5-10 years, but getting volleys help in planting etc into the future.

Q: What about the wasps in Tidbinbilla?

A: Do have a program, the Ranger working on this. Used to have a contractor come out and we then realised we could deliver in house. Rangers do a Queen baiting program, queen passes away, reduces the load of queens in the environment. Mid/end of summer we do the nest baiting – treating the nests. Finding the nests can be tricky. Picnic areas etc. This year was a lot of sightings, but not of nests.

- Spring Queen trapping program
 - Deploy traps when next generation queens leave their hibernation sites and are looking for new nest sites



- Each queen captured represents the potential of one less nest in the environment, 4000-5000 less wasps in the environment and 1000 less next generation queens being produced
- Over the past 3 years we have captured approx. 536 queens
- Summer baiting program
 - Deploy traps in high visitation areas or areas difficult to locate nests, when wasps are most active and feeding on protein
 - Protein-based bait such as chicken mince laced with fipronil insecticide or similar
 - Wasps take bait back to nest in time poisoning the entire nest
- Nest Treatment
 - When nests are located, treated individually with insecticide
 - Labour intensive however effective at destroying nests
 - Report through the eWasp app
 - I have treated nearly 60 nests over the past 3 years, mostly in the Sanctuary/Eucalypt Forest precinct

Q: Thanks for Sky Trail info. Can you also update on status of the Yankee Hat art site and trail at Namadgi?

A: Yankee Hat is due to re-open in September/October 2025.

Q: Details on Periwinkle Restoration Program at Tidbinbilla would be welcome.

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Back in 2017 blue periwinkle was first recorded (field maps) in the riparian zone next to the rock valley homestead. It was the dominate understory species, posing a risk of spreading treatment started in July 2017.

Date of Treatment	Treatment Method
June 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mapped by Steve Taylor (Manager Invasive Plants and Plant Pest, ACT PCS).
July 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Periwinkle was scrapped with a backhoe prior to spraying. Sprayed with Metsulfuron Methyl 600 herbicide (unsure if penetrant was added, no record) and Glyphosate 360 herbicide (riparian zone: within 5m).
July 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brush-cut in preparation for spraying in spring 2018. Unsure if follow-up spraying occurred in spring 2018 (not recorded in Field Maps).
2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Not treated due to staff turnover period in TNR Land Management team.</i>
November 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contractors (Two Stix) engaged to treat site but delayed until January 2021. This was also the start of the La Nina years, so this summer was wet and mild.
January 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Treated by Contractors (Two Stix) with Metsulfuron Methyl

October 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PCS TNR staff treated site with Triclopyr + Picloram with Devour penetrant
October 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PCS TNR staff treated with Triclopyr & Picloram (Woody) with Devour penetrant & Glyphosate 360 (within 5m waterway). A small test area was also brush-cut prior to spraying. No significant results were observed.
March 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eastern upslope extent of main infestation site was treated with mulch and cardboard, as there was a good result in periwinkle dieback from previous herbicide treatment.
November 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PCS TNR staff treat site with Triclopyr + Picloram (Woody) & Devour (Penetrant), and Glyphosate 360 (within 5m waterway) Photo-points established for photo monitoring of zones

After these treatments were implemented the LMT with volunteer help installed coir logs, jute matting and planted out on 1 of the worst effected and steepest sections. Since that was completed the results are very promising with lots of the grasses and other plants growing nicely with not too much roo/ rabbit damage.

Moving forward from here we'll hand pull any small plants that pop up. Plant out the section of hill that we recently installed coir logs and mulch. The remaining couple of sections where the periwinkle is still quite prominent, will be scrapped sprayed then have logs installed and be mulched out then hopefully be planted out next year.

District Update: Canberra Nature Park South (Lara Woollcombe)

- KMP program – Just completed and details have already been shared by Invasive Animals team earlier.
- Operations Planning has been underway – all the work has been submitted, and pending September budget approvals/allocations. We have nominated threat management programs, supporting ParkCare, supporting recreational infrastructure.
- Threat management:
 - In the last 12 months have been prioritising WoNS and follow-up works of previously treated sites.
 - Winter focus on Serrated Tussock and Chilean Needle Grass (53K)
 - In spring moving on to African Lovegrass and woody weeds (120K)
 - Summer focus on St Johns Worst (90K)
 - Autumn focus on blackberry (65K)
- This financial year we are proposing similar expenditure. We have started kicking off some contracts already, plus in housework.
- Recognise complimentary program with ParkCare volunteers. Emphasised the need for mapping on Field Maps to reduce duplication & meet legislation requirements on record keeping. Grateful and appreciative of ParkCare support in targeting weeds.



- Vertebrate Pest Programs:
 - Kangaroo management program, thermally assisted aerial control (Rob Roy)
 - General trend is pigs are decreasing, and fallow deer are increasing
 - Sambar deer numbers are steady
 - Have had good success in Callum Brae & Isaacs Ridge
 - Rabbit program has had a big focus on Red Hill
- Disaster Ready Funding is drawing to a close. This funding assisted in funding walking track upgrades on Cooleman, Urambi and Red Hill this past financial year. Other projects now winding down.
- BOP burns, veg removal and grazing activities:
 - Cooleman, Narrabundah and Urambi are grazed, this is coming up in a few months
 - Some burns proposed for Mt Taylor, McQuoids, Cooleman, to be confirmed once the final BOP is released
- Swainsona Relocation – Ecologist running a few sites across North & South. Districts are providing site prep, planning and weeding support, with another planting coming up in Spring.
- Business as usual:
 - Events & permits approvals (49 events last financial year), mostly for recreation events around running, walking, orienteering, equestrian activities and school excursions.
 - Works licenses for utilities works on the reserves, including for ICON, mobile phone tower works, ACTEW, etc. The Ranger in Charge and Area Manager spend significant time on these works.
- If you are out and about and notice some works happening, do reach out to the depot who can confirm if they have approvals.
- Thank you to groups for considering the NRM Environment Grants well in advance of the program this year.
- Signage: We have been developing a style guide and process for signage projects. This is almost at completion. Aims to provide consistency and accessibility for visitors, and will streamline and guide works moving forward.
- Compliance is an ongoing issue with peaks/troughs.
 - Firewood has been better this year.
 - Dumping of tyres is a big issue
 - If you witness an activity, please report it. Do not approach the individual(s).



District Update: Canberra Nature Park North (Shelley Swain)

Shelley

- Shelley has been backfilling Wade Young for 7 weeks, and will be moving to Athllon for 5 weeks.
- Operations Planning time of year. Have put up proposed works for funding and resourcing approval.
- Undertaking in house works and business as usual, including permit approvals, infrastructure upkeep (for example fence repairs)
- Grass and weed treatments and rabbit monitoring treatments continue
- Looking at implementing Landscape Management Plans, including in large woody debris, fence removal/replacement, plantings, etc.
- Looking to get more Landscape Improvement Implementation Plans done, as still 3-5 reserves outstanding. Hoping to do another 3 this financial year.
- Have undertaken fire weeding activities. In grasslands, have been out doing trials on how to best manage different types of tussock grasses. Doing this in conjunction with NRM funding, and are fencing off treatment areas, and follow-up burn treatments to see what works well (including timing of seeding)
- Have a project looking at changing soil acidity, seeing how we can manage weeds and get better regrowth by changing acidity levels.
- ONC have secured NRM funding for broad-scale weed management in northern reserves, particularly grasslands.
- Centenary Trail & Urban Wildlife activities are covered by CNP North.
- Centenary Trail repair works (i.e. wombat impact or washout), and ongoing maintenance works – to enhance appearance, to make more enjoyable, and sustainability to trail (stair rot, etc). Coming out with such great outcomes. Marty Bennet who works on this trail.
- Urban Wildlife has been inundated this season. The busiest year since 2018 with kangaroo strikes on the road. Linking it to low grass that is driving roos closer to roads/town. With change in daylight savings, hope to see reduction. Call out for euthanasia, and removing carcasses from high-traffic areas. One day last week in 24 hours there were 55 call outs.
- Thanks to ParkCare – from MRC to Mitchell and soon to role in Athllon, Shelley has seen the efforts, forethought of work, attentiveness to sites and long-term strategic visions of groups right across the ACT.
- Marty & Tenzin's support is wonderful.



Questions

Q: What are the re-seeding species following a phalaris burn?

A: Native C3 Seed mix will be put out over the ash bed at the desired rate of 40-50kg per hectare (8-10 grams per m²)

- *Austrostipa bigeniculata*
- *Bothriochloa macra*
- *Microlaena stipoides*