

# The Scribbly Gum

Spring 2014



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*Celebrating 25 years of ParkCare*

*Community partnerships  
caring for our natural  
environment*



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## News from the ParkCare Coordinator

This newsletter is an opportunity for ParkCare and Urban Landcare groups to share their stories, knowledge and love of our special places. It is also a report of the many great activities that community volunteers undertake to care for and promote ACT parks and reserves.

### Celebrating 25 years of ParkCare and Landcare in the ACT

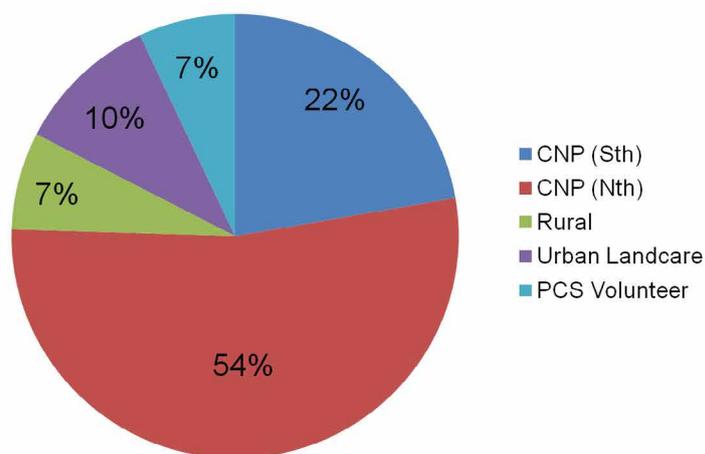
This year we celebrate the 25th anniversary of ParkCare and Landcare in the ACT. The ParkCare and Urban Landcare program has its roots in the community. Not unlike the National Landcare movement, ParkCare and Landcare in the ACT is an expression of collective environmental care and a genuine on-ground community response to see improved conservation outcomes in our region.

The ParkCare program grew from a pilot bush regeneration program in 1989 with one group and 13 volunteers working in Canberra Nature Park, to 13 groups and 400 volunteers by 1992. Today there are more than 35 groups and more than 500 volunteers working in parks and reserves across urban and rural ACT.

The early years saw volunteers working hand in hand with the ACT Parks and Conservation Service (PCS) rangers and conservation organisations such as Greening Australia. This proved to be a mutually beneficial relationship in many ways. Through this involvement in land management many volunteers have developed a passion for the nature reserves and local parklands with all their beauty and challenges. As individuals and as an influential environmental movement, ParkCare and Landcare volunteers have been instrumental in assisting conservation organisations and those within Government to gain legislative protection for many of the areas that now form part of Canberra Nature Park.

This sense of custodianship of local places is the strength of ParkCare and Landcare in the ACT. At its core, ParkCare and Landcare is a social movement that has endured changes in territory government administration and successive federal governments with shifting priorities and funding regimes. We continue to learn as a community of volunteers, land managers and scientists about how to best manage these important ecosystems.

The annual reporting of volunteer activity for the 2013-14 financial year demonstrates the continued commitment and dedication volunteers have to managing ACT parks and reserves. Activities reported for ParkCare and Urban Landcare groups for the financial period 2013-14 total 18,373 hours. Broken up into regions, the majority of activities take place in the north and south of Canberra Nature Park, where most groups exist and where reserves back onto residential areas.



The proportion of volunteer hours spent per PACS management area.

Forty-five percent of reported activities undertaken by volunteers involved weed control, and 16% of reported activities included rehabilitation works such as planting and erosion control. A proportion of time reported (11%) involved administration such as the maintenance of group websites, group newsletters and preparation involved for organising group activities. Many groups also organised walks and talks in reserves, and participated in

environmental events promoting the values of ACT parks and reserves (9.5%). Other reported activities included fauna and flora surveys (6.5%), involvement in meetings with PCS staff and group members (4%), seed collection, litter clean ups, track maintenance and training.

Training for this year included the usual Chemcert for safe herbicide use and First Aid. Early spring also saw the successful addition of some practical weed control training by PCS staff, Craig Wainwright and Luke McElhinney. A series of information sessions about PCS programs and Conservation, Planning and Research programs were also held throughout the year. With assistance from the Regional Landcare Initiative and the ACT Environment and Planning Directorate we were also able to fund a number of volunteers to attend the Environment Institute of Australia and New Zealand, Environmental Impacts of Kangaroos Forum in April and the National Landcare Conference in Melbourne. In November some volunteers also attended a grass identification course organised by Senior Weeds Officer, Steve Taylor.

Perhaps the highlight of events for the year was the forum *Reflect, Explore and Inspire—Celebrating 25 years of ParkCare and Landcare in the ACT*. This event aimed to bring volunteers, community organisations and government together to celebrate and reflect on the achievements of ParkCare and Landcare volunteers in the ACT. It



*Reflect, Explore and Inspire* forum. MF

was also an opportunity to explore some of the challenges that we are faced with in land management, and look ahead and be inspired to continue landcare activities into the future. The event included some very stimulating and engaging speakers as well as a workshop session to promote collective thinking and stimulate new ideas and perspectives for the future. Attendees worked on a vision for the future that was intended to inspire programs for the future. Initially these were contributed individually, and then discussed in groups and finally participants ‘voted’ on which priorities they felt strongly about. While all are important for the future, the priorities from this exercise were:

1	Incorporate Aboriginal perspectives
2	Promoting community involvement and education
3	Alignment of environmental management goals, plans, strategies and works
4	Actively promote ecological connectivity across urban, fringe and reserve zones
5	Climate Change
6	Enhanced networking
7	Junior and youth programs - ‘plant the seed early’

More detailed outcomes from the forum are currently being written up to be shared with participants and ParkCare and Landcare volunteers in early 2015.

This document is to provide the basis for a strategy for the ParkCare and Urban



*Reflect, Explore and Inspire* forum. MF

Landcare program to guide us into the future. A big thank you to all volunteers that assisted to make the forum a successful event.

Thank you also to the founders of the ParkCare program who had the foresight 25 years ago to create such a great community of environmental advocates and carers.

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## **ParkCare Support Officer**

My first year as the ParkCare Support Officer has been a rewarding and enriching experience with never a dull moment. While my start date was delayed due to a busy fire season, I began the year assessing the scale and frequency of ParkCare groups' activities. This process determined where my support was most needed. It revealed Canberra Nature Park required immediate support, as seven ParkCare groups were attached to each ranger team, compared to one group attached to each rural team. Subsequent site visits and planning meetings followed that produced 278 requested tasks. The challenges were ahead of me and my year took flight. I am pleased to report 174 requested tasks have now been fulfilled.

Throughout the year I have got to know many of you, discussed your concerns and worked with you. The responsibility of supporting volunteers is a privileged position. You are all hard working and committed people sharing a common vision to restore and maintain our landscape's natural values. It has not been difficult maintaining my motivation when I observe your efforts and the positive results they produce. I have especially enjoyed listening to your histories and stories of the past condition of landscapes and the remarkable

transformations you have brought about. Together we are providing a special place for future Canberrans and we could not have got here without the extraordinary effort of those who sprayed, grubbed and planted before us. I remain mindful of how much our present day success is built upon past achievements. We should all be doing what we can to promote our common vision and encourage others to follow in our footsteps.

I am looking forward to my second year in this position and expanding my reach within our community of volunteers. Thank you for your dedicated work, sharing and patience.

## **New helping hands**

As with many ParkCare and Landcare groups, PCS receive numerous requests from businesses and organisations to participate in volunteer activities. While we cannot accommodate them all, this year I was able to develop programs for Marist College, Radford College and Correctional Services. The three groups have assisted in delivering works requested by urban ParkCare groups. Their accomplishments have been exceptional, for instance: in one afternoon, students closed 1.3 kilometres of unsustainable trails through trilling, depositing leaf litter and covering trails with light woody debris.

The Correctional Services program needs a special mention. They have proved to be a powerhouse of energy and enthusiasm. As the coordinator of their program I have thoroughly enjoyed their company as we tackle labour intensive tasks each week. Their respect and enjoyment of the natural settings is obvious as we map rabbit warrens, cut and remove woody weeds, close unsustainable trails, provide plant protection and control erosion. As with all collaborations, all parties need to benefit from their efforts through engaging in meaningful work. The feedback I have received suggests Correctional Services and student crews get as much from

the programs as we receive from their assistance. This year, I simply could not have achieved as much on-ground work without them.



Craig Wainwright and Waltraud Pix plant a tree together at Friends of Mount Majura planting day in May, 2014. AT

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## Mount Ainslie Weeders

### A 25 year weed job

As an area of bushland close to a developing city, Mount Ainslie was seen by early residents as a logical place to dump rubbish and garden waste, and a final resting place for the old family car. There was an official tip, but often people simply walked into the bush and off loaded there. By the 1980s, the western slopes were heavily infested with woody weeds, many of them two or three metres in height, with large patches of blackberry and blue periwinkle *Vinca major*. An Ainslie resident, McComas Taylor, used to walk daily on the mountain and in 1989 he began to pull weeds as he walked. "Sometimes all I could see was Lincoln green," he said. "But I wanted to see the olive green." He would take loppers and a bush saw, facing the

good bushland as he worked and ignoring the damaged areas. Passersby told him he was crazy. Undeterred, he was soon joined by others, including two people, Dennis Taylor and Sandy Leckie, who are still actively involved on a weekly basis. These three and several others, including Chris McElhinney, and John Pratt who was coordinator for 20 years, formed a group in the early 1990s, calling themselves the 'Mount Ainslie Weeders.'

The amazing achievement of those early Weeders in removing vast numbers of woody weeds is an inspiration to our current members. Apart from the many Cootamundra wattles, the woody weed problem these days is relatively simple to deal with.

Our group has been steadily growing and we now have a highly dedicated and cohesive core group, with a few others who are warmly welcomed whenever they can manage to attend. The old Ainslie tip has been our major focus for the past few years and as the weeds have diminished and our plantings in 2000 and 2008 slowly grown in their hostile clay and rubbish environment we have been able to extend weeding and planting in the immediate areas surrounding the tip itself. This includes a massive infestation of blue periwinkle which we fondly refer to as 'The Great Vinca Patch'. Over the past 18 months, with assistance from Conservation Volunteers of Australia, a group from Marist College and a 'Great



This area on Mount Ainslie was once the old Ainslie tip. MC



Spraying blue periwinkle *Vinca major* on Mount Ainslie. MC

Vinca Bash' in 2013, we have painstakingly hand cleared areas under and around the existing eucalypts. This spring we began spraying with a mixture of Roundup and Pulse, and are now watching the area browning off with great delight. A small group which meets once a week is kept busy dealing with the inevitable regrowth.

The thousands of Cootamundra wattles all over the mountain have now become a major focus for us. While the wattles were in bloom we scoured the slopes with our Garmin GPSs, collecting data to create a map showing their density across the region. This information will assist in identifying areas we can deal with ourselves, and areas beyond our capabilities. We are using the technique of frilling, which involves using hatchets to make a number of deep chops around the base of each trunk into the flesh and immediately spraying with glyphosate. The dead trees remain standing for some time so we are not creating piles of debris for rabbits to burrow under. Two



Canberra spider orchid *Arachnorchis actensis*. MC

blocks have been cleared, with another close to completion, and rangers Craig and Luke have made huge inroads on two others. An ACT Government grant will pay for contractors to chainsaw some of the worst areas and cart the felled trees/

mulch on to the old tip site to build caches and mulch new seedlings. This will be a very long term project.

Huge thanks to our wonderful ranger Luke McElhinney for his great support and wealth of knowledge, and to Jasmine and Craig, who truly make good things happen! Congratulations to the wonderful weeders themselves. Together we are maintaining the tradition established by those early weeders and making a difference on our patch.

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## Friends of the Aranda Bushland

Our big news this year was the transfer of 32 hectares of South Aranda woodland from rural lease to Canberra Nature Park. This area was part of Glenloch Station resumed for Molonglo Stage 3 housing. It lies west of Caswell Drive, and is mainly open woodland with old yellow box and Blakely's red gum trees, eucalypt regrowth and a swampy area of tea-tree, as well as heathland and a dry ridge of red stringybark. The creek from Black Mountain runs below the ridge.

This area is a major asset with only moderate weed populations, and some old gully erosion. It is home to many birds, the endangered small purple pea and grassland flora as well as woodland. As part of our agreement with the former lessee, we have been removing woody weeds and blackberries for a decade. We will be developing a walk through the woodlands in association with Canberra Nature Park to show off the area. We now have a wedge-tailed eagle's nest, as well as the nesting Australian hobby, in our area.

The fire fuel reduction operations for Aranda Bushland burned a large area of the southernmost part of the eucalypt forest last autumn, and intend to burn parts of the northern part close to the suburb next autumn. These hazard reduction burns are part of the fire safety planning for the ACT. Post burn, the bush looks desolate until the more fire resistant species begin to regenerate the area including lots of weeds, creating a change in the composition of the vegetation. The Friends are working with the Parks and Conservation Service and staff from Conservation, Planning and Research to identify areas of ecological sensitivity that may require protection from fire. We also plan to set out some pre-fire and post-fire monitoring points in the reserve.

Our regular vegetation monitoring program has now run for a decade in the snow gums, and has been supplemented by 'Vegwatch' a detailed protocol for plant monitoring. From our present data it is clear that climate is the key factor controlling vegetation composition, with marked changes between droughts and wet years. Exotic plant species and introduced grasses increase in wet years. Our erosion control proceeds steadily, with increased stabilisation of the gullies.

Kangaroos are probably the most problematic part of our ecology. Our group counts show relatively little change in numbers over ten years, with a recent increase due to a better winter season with less mortality. Because of the population density of about five kangaroos per hectare over the better grazing, kangaroo grass *Themeda triandra* scarcely has a chance of seeding, and is decreasing in the grassland. Our circular one metre exclusion areas showed that kangaroo grass rapidly recovered once grazing was prevented, and seeded freely.

We are now working with Canberra Nature Park staff to construct three rectangular enclosures of one metre wide and ten metres long, so that a band of seed will form and kangaroo grass can repopulate

the grassland. The concept is to move the enclosures at three year intervals to progressively replenish the kangaroo grass seedbank and hence the pasture

The long-term answer to excessive kangaroo populations is unclear. If they are simply fenced out, the Themeda pasture will thrive and may require management by fire (preferably) or slashing. Stable low population densities of kangaroos are ideal. The ACT Government Kangaroo Management program has not yet encompassed Aranda Bushland. The population is simply controlled by winter starvation and a small mortality due to road kill. Development of an anti-fertility vaccine would seem the most attractive option for the future.



Rangers Anthony, Luke and Tyson constructing the first enclosure. IF



Ian, Anthony and Tyson with the finished enclosure. IF

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## Friends of Black Mountain

In February 2014, Friends of Black Mountain (FoBM) became the 20th ParkCare Group supported by the ACT Parks and Conservation Service (PCS). Thanks to those who supported FoBM activities prior to us becoming an official ParkCare group.

This year our ParkCare activities included weeding working parties, bird surveys, brochures, displays, guided walks, and Vegwatch monitoring. The aim of these activities is to contribute to conservation and promotion of Black Mountain's biodiversity.



Male gang-gang cockatoo. LD

Our weeding work parties occurred on the first Saturday of each month. During the year, more than 30 members of FoBM and Friends of the Australian National Botanic Gardens (ANBG) were wonderful weeders on repeated occasions.

Several of our members have invaluable knowledge of weeds and the native plants. Dr Rosemary Purdie provides important advice and guidance for the weeding program and has written a report about the work done in the ANBG. The report is available at: [www.anbg.gov.au/gardens/research/library/reports/2014/Purdie-ANBG-weeds-2014.html](http://www.anbg.gov.au/gardens/research/library/reports/2014/Purdie-ANBG-weeds-2014.html). Now we are focussing on weeding close to the Black Mountain Nature Reserve fences adjacent to major roads.

FoBM was pleased that Molonglo Catchment Group (MCG) received a 2014 Environment Grant for work on Black Mountain, Mount Majura and Mount Ainslie. For Black

Mountain the bid included resources for weeding that is beyond the capability of volunteers, erosion management and replacement of parts of the Summit Walk.

A Canberra Institute of Technology student is being mentored by FoBM members for a bird survey in Black Mountain Nature Reserve, as a project for her studies. This is in addition to FoBM participation in the Gang-gang Special Survey, a very special bird for PCS and Canberra Ornithologists Group.

FoBM was recently awarded a Heritage Grant in collaboration with the MCG for the creation of an exhibition in the Telstra Tower. The exhibition will highlight Black Mountain's natural heritage and Ngunnawal use of plants. Ms Morgyn Phillips, who has had many years of experience with exhibitions, is kindly coordinating this project.

Our ever popular guided walks this year included the Summit Walk and a Heritage Walk in April on the theme of the changing landscape. The 43rd annual Spring Wildflower Walk continued the tradition established by Nancy Burbidge and George Chippendale. This popular walk attracted 92 people this year. The Orchid Walks were also fully booked. Our last guided walk this year, Walking in the Trees of Black Mountain, was described by one of the participants "as a very enjoyable tree tutorial."

FoBM is developing brochures about Black Mountain which will highlight the beauty of walks as a recreational activity with low impact on the reserve.

Several of our valuable Vegwatchers enjoyed the Black Mountain plant identification workshop as part of the preparation for ACT Vegwatch monitoring this year. One of the FoBM sites was in a hazard reduction burn in March this year, so now we have data before and after the fire.

The year has also included coordinated responses by members to some important policy issues affecting the reserve.



Starting out on a guided walk. LB

FoBM was one of the many ParkCare groups that responded to the ACT Draft Trails Strategy, because of concern about conservation as a priority in nature reserves. The submissions led to a revision of the strategy.

It is important to enhance wildlife corridors in the city. FoBM made representation about such corridors from Black Mountain to Kama/Molonglo, and the Molonglo Catchment for Lake Burley Griffin.

Thank you to everyone in FoBM, Molonglo Catchment Group, Parks and Conservation Service, Australian National Botanic Gardens and Friends of ANBG, Field Naturalists Association Canberra and other organisations for the part they played in this enjoyable year for FoBM. Enquiries about any of the activities are welcome.



Measuring out a Vegwatch site. LB

Linda Beveridge

Convenor

Friends of Black Mountain

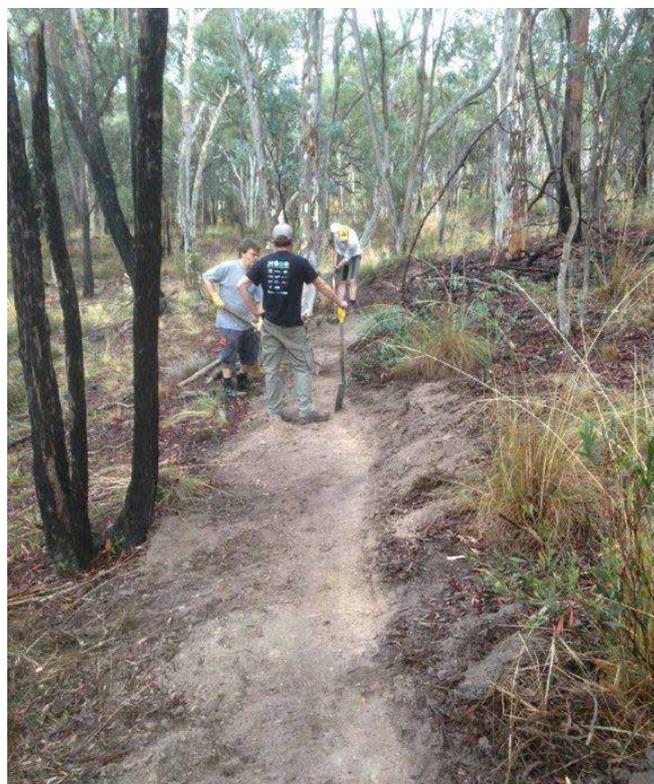
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## Friends of Bruce Ridge

After a slow start, 2014 has been a busy year for Friends of Bruce Ridge (FoBR). We have now completed the major trail works to complete the network of single tracks.



Friends of Bruce Ridge working on the trails. GH

This included a major realignment of the out loop with the creation of 'Just-in-time' which travels around the upper edge of the Alivio caravan park, underneath the power lines and rejoins near the trail head. The trail is named as a tribute to former FoBR member Justin Lenehan who passed away whilst racing in the Australian Mountainbike Championships. The FoBR team has created a sustainable descent trail from the top water reservoir. It had been recognised that some form of descent trail is needed



The new Outer Loop trail. GH

at Bruce Ridge to prevent unauthorised trail building. The new trail moves from the original alignment through a sensitive bird habitat, and fire road crossings, linking existing trails and creating a sustainable, fun and flowing trail. Further developments will include technical features (A and B lines) to meet the needs of these trail users.

We have seen a significant increase in trail runners in the past year. It would appear the current trend of moving from pounding the pavement to a cross-country run has brought many more people in the nature park. We are getting great feedback on the trail network from all users.

The FoBR team has had some great help from Craig Wainwright from the Parks and Conservation Service organising hordes of additional volunteers in closing the unsustainable trails. His teams have closed approximately 5 kilometres of trail network, significantly rationalising the trails.

Into the near future we are placing signage and maps around the nature park and on the trails. This will be the last part of the project to formalise the trail network after

the past three years of great work from the FoBR team.

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## Friends of Mount Painter

### Celebrating 25 years of work on the reserve

Our group has been working on Mount Painter for 25 years. In October we celebrated with a morning tea on the hill at which we were joined by Shane Rattenbury, Minister for Territory and Municipal Services, one of our local MLAs, Chris Bourke, and Daniel Iglesias, Director of ACT Parks and Conservation Service (PCS). We also welcomed members of the local community, ParkCarers from neighbouring groups, rangers, and representatives of groups that support our work, such as Greening Australia and Ginninderra Catchment Group. In addition, some of those involved in the early years of our group were present,

including Philip Bell and Valerie Taylor, our group's first two convenors who led us for our first 14 years. This event provided an opportunity to reflect on the achievements made over the years and to display photographs from our archives.

During his visit to the reserve, Minister Rattenbury launched three new interpretive



Valerie Taylor, FoMP's second convenor, and David Hogg who produced the vegetation plan for the reserve in 2000. ID



Philip Bell, FOMP's first convenor and Barbara Daly who, with Philip, was one of the original founders of the group. ID

signs which have been installed along the summit path. The signs, which were funded with a grant from Spicers, are the result of collaboration between members of Friends of Mount Painter, Lois Padgham from PCS, local photographer, Charles Tambiah and others who helped make sure the text was accurate. The signs help visitors identify what they can see from the hill and raise awareness of the reserve and surrounding landscape.



The launch of the new signs by Minister Shane Rattenbury, with the Brindabella Range in the background. DS

### Cooperating with others

Three outside groups worked with us this year. In March, Telstra volunteers planted grass tubestock along the summit path in locations where exotic grasses dominate,

and transported mesh guards to plants needing protection. They also worked on soil erosion, as did members of the Sunday Assembly. Conservation Volunteers provided 16 volunteers who tidied up straying tree guards and provided additional protection for some of the more vulnerable shrubs and small trees. Help of this kind means tasks that we might otherwise fail to address are completed, and we are grateful for it.

We provided assistance to PCS in a couple of kangaroo sweep counts, one before the cull and one after. We also helped Michael Mulvaney from the Conservation, Planning and Research Unit with his plant survey of the reserve. We found ten rare plant species on the reserve, two of them not recorded here before, and several occurring in larger numbers or over a wider area than in 2002-03. Michael also assessed the condition of the reserve's vegetation, finding that, in the last ten years, around ten per cent had substantially improved. He suggested this change is largely due to Friends of Mount Painter's hard work.

### Planting and monitoring

On the south-western slopes we replaced shrubs that had died, putting in broad-leaved hopbush and native blackthorn to diversify the flora in an area where these species were not present. We also planted kangaroo grass tubestock, grown by Greening Australia from seed we collected on the reserve. These tubestock are the first plantings in the Wildflower Triangle where we are hoping to gradually replace Phalaris. The Wildflower Triangle was also the site of a patchy hazard reduction burn which the Fire Management Unit carried out in April. We are tracking the impact of this burn on the flora of both the grassland and the wooded area, as well as continuing to monitor tree, shrub and understorey plantings made since 2005.

We have also started the process of locating sites shown in photos of the reserve taken



Hazard reduction burn in the Wildflower Triangle. In the foreground is kangaroo grass. We hope it will replace the introduced Phalaris. CB

15 to 20 years ago, and re-photographing the same sites. The changes from then to now are sometimes dramatic, and demonstrate how much has been achieved in rehabilitating the reserve over that time.

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## Friends of Mulligans Flat

We have had a busy year out at Mulligans Flat. The Friends hold quarterly work parties to tackle bigger jobs with the Parks and Conservation Service (PCS) rangers. Friends can also adopt a patch of the reserve if they have more time, and weed (mainly thistles and briar rose) and identify rabbit burrows.

Our autumn work party attracted many locals for Clean Up Australia Day and the PCS truck was full to the brim. Mulligans has an extensive boundary to suburban Forde and while construction rubbish has eased, plenty of litter gets blown against the fence. Our winter work party involved erosion control in a gully in the northern part of the reserve. We moved a huge pile of rocks into place using a chain gang and found some tiny frogs in the rock pile.



Winter work party. KE

In spring we tackled briar rose, Paterson's curse rosettes and serrated tussock in agistment paddocks 1 and 2, just outside of the Mulligans Flat Sanctuary, south of Quoll Gate. This area is part of an extension to the reserve system known as the Throsby Neck, an offset identified in the Gungahlin Strategic Environmental Assessment. The intention is to remove the weeds over time and allow the native grassland to regenerate.

Friends have also been active in wildlife monitoring projects including a chilly winter assignment assisting the ANU researchers with bettong trapping and health checks. A dedicated band of volunteers also helped to feed 11 bush stone-curlews housed in a special aviary to acclimatise ahead of release into the Sanctuary in spring.



Curlews in the aviary. MS

To keep the community up to date with all the exciting science projects underway, we held our Science in the Sanctuary forum at Gungahlin Library in June. Now an annual event, the forum attracted over 60 people. PhD scholar, Will Batson, talked about how well the bettongs have adjusted to life in the Sanctuary, and Dr Nicky Munro spoke about her postdoctoral research examining the

role of the bettongs and their diggings on soil health.

Friends also assisted the Sanctuary ecologist with interpretative walks in National Science Week including a series of popular night walks. Participants saw bettongs, sugar gliders, possums and plenty of swamp wallabies and kangaroos. We held bird walks in autumn and spring, and a spring wildflower walk. Warm thanks must go to our volunteer guides, John Brannan and Bill Graham for their bird walk and Michael Doherty for his plant walk.



Night walk in Mulligans Flat Sanctuary, KE

Our Bettong Buddies kids club is almost a year old. The club grew from the Snap-Film-Draw kids art competition last spring and the club name was selected from names put forward by the kids and voted on at last year's ParkCare Christmas party at Mulligans Flat. We published four newsletters focused on the seasons.



Buddies Hike and Bike around Mulligans Flat. KE

It is available online: [www.mulligansflat.org.au/get-involved](http://www.mulligansflat.org.au/get-involved). We also held our pilot 'Hike and Bike' buddies bike ride around Mulligans in April, a great initiative to get kids outdoors and active in a safe setting.

Bettong Buddies is moving to an online and interactive platform as part of the exciting new education and interpretative programs being developed for Mulligans Flat. The Friends will continue to support these activities. More information can be found at: [bettongs.org](http://bettongs.org)

Public interest in Mulligans Flat continues to grow and a big thanks to rangers Woody, Whitty and John for supporting our work in the Sanctuary this year. We wish all our fellow ACT ParkCare and Landcare groups a happy 25th birthday and wish to acknowledge the work of the many volunteers and rangers in our park system that have paved the way for this wonderful program.

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## **Friends of the Pinnacle**

Every year seems to me to be a remarkable one for the Friends of the Pinnacle (Fotpin), but this year really does seem to have been rather special.

It began with our stall at the Hawker Primary School fete on the first weekend of April. This year's stall included a dedicated display aimed at highlighting the menace posed by African lovegrass, along with a couple of quizzes targeted at the youngsters (and their parents).

Our autumn and spring programs of guided walks this year included a couple of ground-breaking and extremely popular walks.

On 27 April, we welcomed Wally and Tyrone Bell of the Ngunawal people, who led a walk highlighting the Aboriginal perspective on the reserve. This was by far the best attended Fotpin walk ever held at the Pinnacle, and I have no doubt that everyone who came went away with a far greater awareness of the significance of the local area to Aboriginal people and of the role they have played in shaping the landscape. We're especially grateful to the Ginninderra Catchment Group, who extended their program of Aboriginal heritage walks, conducted under a grant from the ACT Government, to include the Pinnacle Nature Reserve.

This has been followed up by another walk in early November led by Wally and Tyrone, this time generously donating their time at no charge. As I write, I've already received numerous emails, text messages and phone calls from people expressing their interest, so it's shaping up to be another very popular event. This time we'll be following up the walk with a barbecue for the returning walkers.

The final guided walk in autumn was led by ParkCare Support Officer Craig Wainwright. Craig spent many hours gathering and collating information on the post-settlement history of the reserve, which he then put together into a hugely informative handout for the dozen or so people who came along on a cold and blustery (but fine!) morning. Incorporating accounts from local landowners and maps pulled out of the PCS archives, Craig's walk was a fascinating overview of the history of European settlement in the Belconnen Hills area and a perfect complement to Wally and Tyrone's walk the week before.

Many people missed out on the autumn walk, so it was not too surprising when around 25 people turned up for Craig's repeat performance (this time at the Weetangera end of the reserve) this spring. Between the two walks, Craig had continued to dig into the region's history and had even more



Craig Wainwright with remains left by early settlers. JB

fascinating tales to tell of Canberra's early development, including some fairly wild tales about the rangers in the early days.

Another first this autumn was the initial briar rose replacement program planting in the Bottom Pinnacle. Designed to improve connectivity and re-establish small bird habitat in areas where we've removed briar roses and other woody weeds, the planting put around 250 shrubs and groundcover plants into the ground along both sides of one of the key gullies in the Bottom Pinnacle. It also gave us a chance to recycle some of the plant guards and stakes that we used for a planting back in 2011.



Tree guards and stakes being reused for the briar rose replacement program. JB

Other events included the annual kangaroo count, conducted on a rainy day on 1 June and constituting "a great demonstration of community and ACT Government staff working together in land management".



Stalwarts gather in the rain for the annual kangaroo count. JB

In the meantime, the indefatigable Fotpin weeding teams have also put in an amazing 1,215 hours of weed control, including the busiest May ever. Figures collated by Warren show that we are making clear headway against many of the worst weed infestations, including briar rose, Verbascum and spear thistle. However, we still face many challenges on this front, particularly with African lovegrass, St John's wort and saffron thistle, and much of the effort this autumn was devoted to early intervention with saffron thistle to try to keep growth in spring to manageable levels. Anyone who remembers the way the reserve looked at the end of the drought in 2009 can immediately see how much progress we've made since then. Like housework, there's no end to weed control, but the numbers and the current state of the reserve show that we're definitely making an enormous difference.

Once again, our thanks go to the ACT Parks and Conservation Service staff for their prompt and enthusiastic support of our efforts despite being consistently overwhelmed by their own day-to-day workload.

**John Brannan**

**Convenor**

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## North Belconnen Landcare Group

### Junior Landcare and the effectiveness of autumn burning at North Belconnen

Our junior group meets weekly. Members find out about activities posted on Facebook in the "Open Groups" section. It has really worked well. Some members of our Facebook group are unable to attend activities but enjoy reading about the group. A few members are not Facebook users so they are in contact via texting and emails.

Communication has progressed greatly since the group started in 1995. Then, numerous phone calls were made each time an activity was planned. Also the group has shifted from being an adult only group to one focussed on children as young as two years old. They attend with their parents and some other adults who are all eager to learn about weeds and seeds and caring for our environment.

Most of our Landcare activities involve weeding, watering, planting and mulching.

*LANDCARE is the name of our team.*

*We try to keep our country green.*

*We gather the seeds, pull out the weeds;*

*Plant native grasses, shrubs and trees.*

Finding a new blue devil plant or recruitment of native plants provides encouragement and evidence that our efforts are making a difference to the land in our care. The removal of African lovegrass, Chilean needlegrass, St John's wort and other weeds encourage native plants to grow in space where environmental weeds were thriving.



View from the bridge. AH



Wattle matrush *Lomandra filiformis* -it certainly looked like wattle flowers that had fallen on the lomandra plant. AH

A recent highlight for the group was having a Landcare stall and display at the Melba Uniting Church Fete. Though it meant a lot of work, we found it worthwhile. A display of 25 different weeds was set up, most of which were potted by us. All were labelled with an indication of the severity of the problems they cause. Three red crosses were used for those considered noxious or on the Weeds of National Significance list. Extra facts were recorded on the labels. We had a 12 question weeds quiz and the answers were found on the labels. A free native plant was offered as a prize for successfully completing the weeds quiz. About 40 people answered the weeds quiz. Some needed a few extra clues to get the questions answered but all said it was interesting and informative. They kept their quiz sheet with the answers and we wrote the botanical name and common name of their prize on their answer sheet so they knew which plant they had been given. We also sold Landcare cookies and beautiful photo cards made by one of our members. At several times during the morning our Landcare song was sung.

Another smaller group has continued with the long-term study of comparative effects of mowing and burning regimes on the plant diversity of a remnant patch of Natural Temperate Grassland below the Ginninderra Dam. The autumn fires have significantly increased the native plant species, including blue devils, plume grass and bulbine lilies. The spring fires also stimulated recruitment

of native species but to a lesser extent. Mowing did not significantly change the number of native species. Articles about this research have been published in *Friends of Grasslands Newsletter*. Talks have also been given to the Ginninderra Catchment Group, Friends of Grasslands, Field Naturalists and the ACT Historic Places group. Research sites in other locations in the Ginninderra Catchment are now being established to confirm this finding and to begin operational burns at a few locations in the catchment. More volunteers are required to assist with this study so if you would like to volunteer, contact Karissa Preuss, Ginninderra Catchment Coordinator on 6278 3309 or [landcare@ginninderralandcare.org.au](mailto:landcare@ginninderralandcare.org.au).



Members of the North Belconnen Landcare Group during activity session near Ginninderra Creek. Left to right Matt Hallinan with daughters Iris and Elodie in barrow, Izaak Krantzcke, Kath Krantzcke, Jake Krantzcke, Chris McGee, Lenore Hodgkinson, Eddy Polhuis, Mark Polhuis. AH

**Ken Hodgkinson and Lenore Hodgkinson**  
Convenors

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**Coolleman Ridge ParkCare Group**

The Coolleman Ridge ParkCare Group has continued to weed along the spine of the Coolleman Ridge consistent with the rotation program that we have undertaken in the last few years. This has been the basis for the regular once-a-month Sunday work parties. The group has also held work



The track to Cooleman Trig. AF

parties each week on Wednesday and Friday on Mount Arawang and off Kathner Street respectively.

Other individual efforts have ensured that Cooleman Ridge has been the subject of a diverse range of weeding and informal monitoring designed to maintain its native plants and animals. These include the removal of pine wildings and monitoring other aspects of governmental operations such as the erosion of the cut-off drain and tracks.

We continue to maintain contact with the Southern ACT Catchment Group and one of their officers visited Cooleman Ridge recently. We held a very successful 'ParkCare and Share' afternoon in conjunction with the Catchment group and they have contributed grass seed for use at the Kathner Street precinct.

The Cooleman Ridge ParkCare group maintains a website and the tree survey results will be listed on it. Our newsletter



The big eucalypt on Cooleman Ridge. AF

is the most important communications tool for the group and I would like to thank the team for maintaining the high quality of the newsletter during the year.



An interview in the field for the film being made for Territory and Municipal Services. PR

Some of our activities were filmed in August for a Territory and Municipal Services ParkCare film which can be viewed on:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tKgEOV3ZhW4&feature=youtu.be>

I would like also to thank committee members for their support following the departure of my predecessor.

Last year the ACT Government released the Nature Conservation Strategy. It is our hope that the Government will implement the principles contained in that document. The committee will, as it has done since the inception of the Cooleman Ridge ParkCare Group, continue to strive for better environmental outcomes for Cooleman Ridge Nature Reserve.

Committee members met with senior staff of PCS in January to discuss management issues including weeds, the area around the old dam, the future of the pink-tailed worm lizard, the Centenary Trail and other tracks on Cooleman Ridge. In this context, I must acknowledge the work of PCS staff in acting on the weeding problems that beset the reserve.

**Alan Ford**

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## Farrer Ridge ParkCare Group

The spring wildflower walks in 2013 and 2014 were well attended by members of the community. It is always great to see young children enjoying a guided walk in such beautiful places, as well as learning about dynamic ecosystems and the interconnectedness of living things. A Year 4 group of Farrer Primary School students attended an excursion to Farrer Ridge. This was followed up with a presentation at the school, which included life cycles, including the life cycle of echidnas.



Year 4 Farrer Primary students on excursion. WR

In November 2013, ParkCarers participated in the 'Rare and Special Plants Survey', which was useful to add to earlier work that members had done to identify and record the location of such plants. Farrer Ridge ParkCarer Group also assisted in the kangaroo survey counting 516-523 over the two sweeps.

In February, 2014, I gave a presentation about ParkCare work on Farrer Ridge to members of the Farrer Neighbourhood Watch.

Discussions with the Southern ACT Catchment Group Coordinator, Martine Franco about erosion control plans to restore an erosion gully in the reserve have been fruitful. A number of plants that grow in the location (including Lomandras and Xerochrysums) were obtained from Greening Australia. In May 2014, 70 plants were planted along the gully.



Erosion gully in Farrer Ridge Nature Reserve. WR

The group later met on-site with ranger Kristy Gould and others to discuss strategies to prevent further erosion. Kristy also advised on rehabilitation works planned as part of the Woodland Restoration project for Farrer Ridge Nature Reserve.

In June 2014, ParkCare Support Officer, Craig Wainwright and a class of Marist students assisted with a frog habitat improvement project organised through ACT Frogwatch. This involved placing Cootamundra wattle branches around the dam perimeter and plantings around and in the dams to improve frog habitat. There were 250 plants per pond, including aquatic (submerged, floating, emergent), fringe dwellers, grasses, shrubs, and a few planted further away.

In June 2014, the Southern ACT Catchment Group 'ParkCare and Share' activity was run on a very cold Canberra day. This included a group of nine people studying the flora recovery after a low-level, hazard reduction burn that had occurred in autumn. We based the site on a biodiversity study area that Jennie Widdowson and I had done in previous years, so we had plant lists for the site. As the plants mature in the warmer weather, it will be interesting to observe the regrowth. We did notice weeds there that had not been there previously.

We were very pleased on our return to an area on Farrer Hill on the eastern brow (where we had worked many times to remove *Verbascum*), to see very few small



Work party at Farrer Ridge Nature Reserve. WR



Austral indigo *Indigofera australis* in flower, Farrer Ridge Nature Reserve. WR

Verbascum plants remaining in what was a heavily infested site. The removal of seed-heads, plus poisoning the rosettes with a weed-wand has worked.

We continue to weed in the reserve, including the removal of woody weeds from some eastern gullies, and some in woodland closer to houses. Birds are still going to bring in weed seeds, but generally, there are few woody weeds on Farrer Ridge now, so our work over the last 25 years has been effective.

As a result of the work of ParkCarers regularly working in the nature reserve and the natural regeneration, there are many areas on Farrer Ridge that are very beautiful. Many ParkCarers have become skilled and knowledgeable about local plant species, and have been ready to adopt new ideas, and use new technology.

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## Isaacs Ridge Mount Mugga Mugga ParkCare Group

Congratulations on 25 years of ParkCare. Some groups pre-date ParkCare while others are fairly new. Our group has been going about six years so we are one of the newcomers. However, the East O'Malley section of Mugga Mugga was cared for by Ted Fleming for years before our group started.

In the last year we have continued our work in removing woody weeds, which include briar rose, hawthorn, Pyracantha, nettle tree and Cotoneaster. With two reserves to look after we try to divide our time. We have been lucky to have had the assistance of Conservation Volunteers Australia who have cleared several hectares of briar rose from Isaacs Ridge and hectares of Cotoneaster and other woody weeds from Mugga Mugga.

We have a Vegwatch site on top of Isaacs Ridge although we have not done much work there recently so the plot has not changed much. The biodiversity changes recorded owe a lot to the high calibre of the people who came to help with monitoring.



A good year for creamy candles *Stackhousia monogyna* in Mugga Mugga Nature Reserve. MS

Our little group has also become involved with Frogwatch in neighbouring Callum Brae Nature Reserve. It is very interesting listening for the different species of frogs. We have monitored four dams each October and one dam monthly for the rest of the year (except in mid-winter). In addition we



Twining fringe lily *Thysanotus patersonii* in Mount Mugga Mugga Nature Reserve. MS

have carried out revegetation around several dams through a Frogwatch environment grant project administered by Ginninderra Catchment Group. Part of this involved several small truckloads of Acacia and pine prunings from Isaacs Ridge being placed around ponds. As well as providing habitat, the planting and covering should reduce erosion and improve the water quality.

At the end of last year, Parks and Conservation Service identified four priority areas for us to work in. Part of one had already received our attention and we had suggested help on another part – contractors came and did a lot of clearing so all we need to do is follow-up. Two areas that formed a diverse wildflower area are now substantially cleared of woody weeds apart from blackberry, and we have found some of the less common native plants. The last area requires a lot of work, with weeds ranging the alphabet from Agave to Yucca, and a small orchard of various fruit trees.



One our less common weeds *Yucca aloifolia* on Isaacs Ridge. MS

A few years ago thousands of drooping she-oak *Allocasuarina verticillata* seedlings were planted at the top of Isaacs Ridge as part of a program to provide a food source for glossy black cockatoos. Most of these trees are surviving despite some setbacks and some are over two metres tall. Unfortunately, a recent survey shows that our small plantings of other species have not been so successful, with grazing animals and lack of water being the main problems.

A year ago the Canberra Centenary Trail was opened. This had been a concern for many groups so it is good to see that at least the section through Isaacs Ridge and Mount Mugga Mugga has settled down without major problems. Walkers and cyclists value the opportunity to travel through our reserves, seeing the plants and animals.

At long last we have a ParkCare noticeboard for Isaacs Ridge so we can display what's happening. Signs have also been placed at some of the entrances to the reserves, showing that the area is part of Canberra Nature Park.

Looking back, we have made major inroads on woody weeds in much of our reserve and now need to work on replacing shrubs and understorey plants. This will be our challenge.

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## Friends of Jerrabomberra Wetlands



Planting around the new boardwalk at Jerrabomberra Wetlands. CM

### A year in the life of Jerrabomberra Wetlands

It has been an interesting time, said Deb Kellock when she reflected on her time as Coordinator of the Jerrabomberra Wetlands since February 2014.

On World Wetlands day in February 2014, the previous Coordinator, Kathryn Kelly was interviewed by ABC Radio. At that time, Kelly's Swamp at the heart of Jerrabomberra Wetlands was a cracked dry area which you could walk across. Now, it is as full of water as it is ever likely to be and numerous birds are currently living there. One enthusiastic twitcher (birdwatcher) recently observed 73 different bird species in one day. It is important to remember that periods of extreme dry and wetness are part of the normal cycle within a wetlands environment.

The Jerrabomberra Wetlands attracts a variety of groups from within the community. Scientists have been researching various elements of the

wetlands including the effects of fox predation on the eggs of the eastern Long-necked turtle. The Canberra Ornithological Group has undertaken bird surveys and Frogwatch has counted frogs. Mark Butz's research into the history of the Jerrabomberra Wetlands site has revealed the location of trenches built as part of the training conducted by Duntroon prior to the deployment of troops in World War I. Organised walks of Jerrabomberra Wetlands were conducted during Seniors' Week and there is ongoing engagement with local schools. A recent novel event was the speed tree planting / dating activity organised by Greening Australia when prospective couples were paired up for rotating 12 minute tree planting sessions - a successful operation with around 1,000 new trees planted and who knows how many new relationships kindled! Many of these events have included Friends of the Jerrabomberra Wetlands.

Our group also regularly meets twice monthly to undertake planting, watering, weeding, tree removal and any other activities that are important at the time (for example preparation work around the edges of the new wetlands boardwalk). It is great to see that there is a strong local connection with many of the Friends arriving by bike from nearby suburbs to attend the work parties.

Throughout all these activities, we have been privileged to be supported by the Parks and Conservation Service rangers (especially Michael Maconachie), who have provided ongoing practical support and regular interesting insights into the latest events at Jerrabomberra Wetlands in relation to wildlife, feral animals and vegetation.

Jerrabomberra Wetlands is undergoing change and facing many challenges. There are many layers in the management of Jerrabomberra Wetlands including from within ACT Government, Federal Government and the Jerrabomberra Wetlands Management Committee.

The proximity of the airport, the industrial suburb of Fyshwick, areas of increasingly high population density around Kingston and waters flowing into Canberra's Lake Burley Griffin present issues and constraints not generally experienced in more remote wetlands.

Overall, though, it is very satisfying to be able to see that there have been significant improvements in the Jerrabomberra Wetlands over the last year and that we have made a difference.

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## Oakey Hill ParkCare Group

### Progress on Oakey Hill

After a decade (actually 11 years now) of persistent weed control on Oakey Hill, there is a wonderful feeling of satisfaction among



John among Casuarinas on Oakey Hill Nature Reserve. JB

ParkCare volunteers at the progress made within this reserve of Canberra Nature Park.

Volunteers and regular park visitors can now actually see the changes as woody weeds retreat and the natural vegetation again becomes the dominant feature.

Along with eucalypt woodland, black cypress pine and drooping she-oaks are thriving.

While over many years there were a variety of woody weeds introduced to the park (including firethorn, Cotoneaster and briar rose), it has been Cootamundra wattle which has caused the most grief, with thick stands competing vigorously with



Helen and Sam working among Cootamundra wattle. JB



Daryl works on a Cootamundra wattle on Oakey Hill Nature Reserve. JB

and crowding out native species. So much of volunteers' time has been spent on eradication of Cootamundra wattle.

As the wattle was cleared from the central areas of the park, work teams progressed toward park edges and today they are concentrating their efforts in fringe areas to remove the last of the major stands of this introduced wattle.

While on regular walks through the reserve, we watch for re-growth of the wattle and other woody weeds. Work sessions will then tackle these on a needs basis.

Reaching this satisfying stage has also allowed some strategic thinking about Oakey Hill. There has been some very welcome discussion with ParkCare Support Officer, Craig Wainwright about possible directions. Current discussions are identifying potential future work including weed control, fire trails and walking tracks.

Discussions have also been held with Michael Mulvaney of Red Hill Regenerators about how best to identify native grasses and flowering plants to increase the ParkCare group's understanding of what can be done to nurture the reserve. Such a study would also help us understand which rare or endangered plants may need special attention.

Oakey Hill is popular with significant numbers of walkers, particularly in the early morning, the midday break and in the early evenings. To cater for this interest, Oakey Hill's walking tracks continue to be monitored so that erosion suffered over the years is minimised and where possible, repaired. An experiment to encourage walkers off eroded sections of track has had some success. Keeping in check the summer grass on areas adjacent to eroded tracks has led to many walkers taking the alternative path, and thus has given some respite to eroded paths. Further work will be done to continue this process.

The Oakey Hill ParkCare group meets monthly on the third Sunday from March to November. New members are most welcome. Our work sessions are between 9am and midday, with a home-baked morning tea provided. Feel free to join the fun!

**John Butcher**

**Convenor**

**Oakey Hill ParkCare Group**

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## Fetherston Gardens Friends

Fetherston Gardens has celebrated its first official birthday this year, very appropriate to coincide with the 25 years of ParkCare in the ACT. The Fetherston Garden Friends has been active now for over three years removing ivy and woody weeds such as blackberry and has an increasing number of volunteers who give their time and skills to the garden. We are an Urban Landcare group and our volunteers participate in monthly working bees and archival information and research. We are starting to collect some written and oral histories of the old Canberra Institute of Technology Weston Campus, the garden and arboretum areas. Fetherston Gardens comprise areas of large open and dense woodlands, shady retreat areas in the secret gardens, open lawns, native gardens, a herb garden, arboreta, ponds and waterways.



Morning tea working bee at Fetherston Gardens. LP



Top woodland garden Fetherston Gardens. LP

The Fetherston Garden areas are complex. The site was the 'Centre for Teaching and Learning' in the ACT and region for over 35 years, and Tony Fetherston the head teacher was pivotal to many designs. The design and planting has been carried out by staff and students over many decades and their legacy lives on. Now the Fetherston Garden Friends are restoring and renewing through replanting lost trees and shrubs.

It is a place of significance in Canberra as a unique public open garden with many plant species and design elements not found in other parks. The restoration has begun but it is not complete. There is still much to achieve—the whole garden needs to be relabelled and documented and we need volunteers to use their skills and knowledge of the gardens to bring this to life.

In July, Open Gardens Australia hosted Graham Williams in a pruning workshop. Participants and volunteers learned their new pruning skills on the pome espalier.

The gardens are a community asset—the public can visit and find areas for quiet contemplation, walking, family outings, picnics and games and to enjoy the botanical treasure of the vast plant collection.

We have cultivated friendships including neighbours—the Defence Housing project on Fetherston Ridge, the Islamic School, the Orana School—and the wider Weston Creek community. The gardens will always need to

be maintained and there would be no garden today without the support of our dedicated volunteers, Weston Creek Community Council our partner, TAMS who have supported our enthusiastic ideas and provided much needed irrigation works and ParkCare who have embraced our group with practical support, tools and encouragement.



Autumn in Fetherston Gardens. LP

The project is about the volunteers and the gifts they bring, including their time, to weed, mulch, plant and regenerate. It is about our community. It is a labour of love and a hope for a gardens' future survival. The goals of Fetherston Gardens Friends in Restoration, Regeneration and Renewal, will enable us to continue our focus on the project for years to come. Happy birthday ACT ParkCare.

We welcome you to our working bee days. Just turn up, no gardening experience is necessary. The last Sunday of the month (except December) from 10 am - 1 pm with a huge morning tea, and the 2nd Wednesday of the month group from 10 am - 12 noon.

*Gardening is an exercise in optimism. Sometimes, it is a triumph of hope over experience.* Marina Schinz

**Lesley Pattinson**

**Working bee Convenor**

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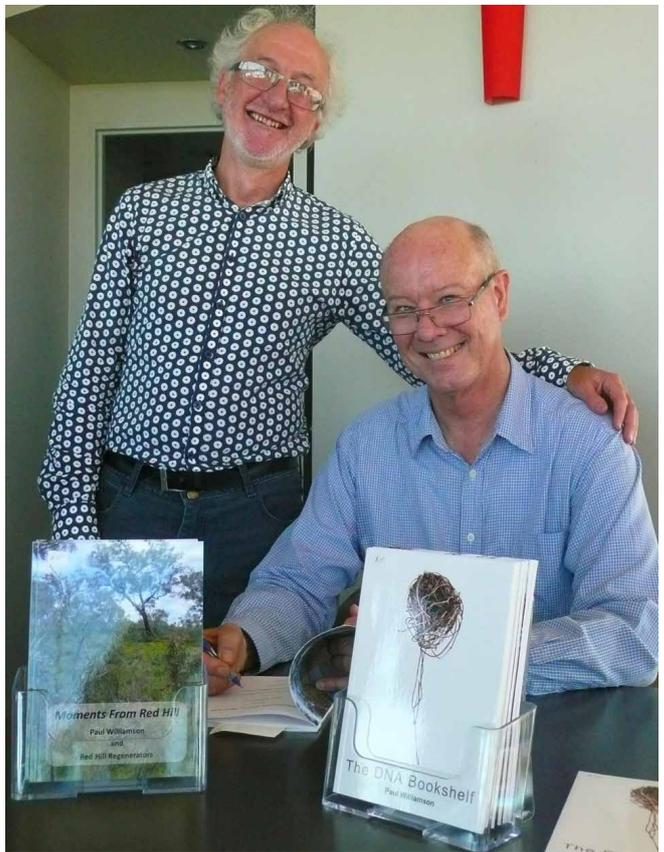
**Website: [www.wccc.com.au](http://www.wccc.com.au)**



## Red Hill Regenerators

Red Hill Regenerators (RHR) feel as though we're coming to a crossroad. While we still have large woody weeds to tackle in a number of areas, the reserve no longer has patches dominated by them as they were in the past and we are tending to tackle the remaining younger plants. As our focus has often been on clearing these dense infestations, we are now going to take inspiration from some other ParkCare groups such as Friends of the Pinnacle, to take stock and develop a prioritised plan.

This year, we continued removing Cootamundra Wattle on the northern slopes of Red Hill as well as woody weeds, thistles and Verbascum in different areas of the reserve. We also spent an energetic session removing woody weeds from the first few rows of the Callistemon plantings



Michael Mulvaney and Paul Williamson at the launch of their book 'Moments From Red Hill' December 2013. RK



Michael Mulvaney leads an educational walk on Red Hill after the December 2013 annual general meeting. RK



Alison Elvinat presents a session on weeds on Red Hill Nature Reserve as part of the October 2014 ParkCare Landcare Forum. RK

near Red Hill summit. This was challenging given the need to protect the Callistemons and the density of the plants. This grove of Callistemons (red for Red Hill) was planted by Charles Weston and is a heritage site. It looks so much better without the competing weeds.

We continue to gain new members who attend monthly activities. We are attracting a pleasing 10-15 people for our activities with an additional five or more at the weekday activities. Overall, we put in more than 400 hours in 13 different activities over 12 months.

We all celebrated 25 years of ParkCare and Landcare in the ACT at the recent forum. It really was a wonderful opportunity to reflect on the growth and development of this movement that works so effectively as a community/government partnership. Michael Mulvaney was a founder of Red Hill Regenerators, which was amongst the first ParkCare groups and he is still a major driving force for the whole movement as

well as this group. The forum included a field activity located on Red Hill on the topic of weeds and this has influenced our future planning. The forum was funded by the Parks and Conservation Service and the Environment and Planning Directorate. The event was so successful, it is hoped that such ACT-wide forums will be held every year or two in the future.

Michael Mulvaney led a walk around the summit of Red Hill at the AGM on 1 November 2013 and will lead a walk at the 2014 AGM on 7 December 2014 from Rusden Street, Garran. Our annual afternoon tea was held at the Red Hill Lookout café on 13 March 2014 where Craig Wainwright, ParkCare Support Officer, talked about his work. Craig has made a significant contribution to this reserve.

Work is almost finalised on the Centenary Trail including from the first lookout on the summit road. Down the stairs from the lookout, one comes to the Tardis, a new feature of the reserve, which has even been the site for a wedding recently. The Tardis was previously a smallish Telstra communication building that was transformed by funded graffiti artists. The Centenary Trail path at this point coincides with our signposted Red Hill Trail.

Our website has recently been upgraded using WordPress, which is a simpler web program. This means that other committee members will be able to make changes with less onerous training requirements. We currently have 122 members and friends on our group email list.

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**Sue Ross**

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## Mount Taylor ParkCare Group

Mount Taylor has had a very unusual year. Among our programs we have celebrated 25 years along with all of our Canberra ParkCare groups and 30 years with ACT Parks and Conservation Service. We are very appreciative of the events and work that celebrated our volunteers and our Parks and Conservation Service staff, especially the Reflect-Explore-Inspire ParkCare and Landcare events, and the celebratory event at Namadgi Visitor Centre.

### Flora and Fauna

Our kangaroo population is over 668, with many pouches full (count not included) when we completed the count in May. Over 150 eastern grey kangaroos were counted on the agistment paddock alone, to the dismay of 13 horses in one paddock. We still have problems with rabbits, especially on the summit and eastern side near the agistment. Bird population varies, with at least six raven pairs now nesting on Mount Taylor or environs. We suspect small birds such as finches and larger nesting birds such as kookaburras have been driven out or fledglings killed. Double-barred finches and wrens nest in Kambah suburbs now, using dense exotic hedges. Echidnas have not been seen recently, but diggings on various ant hills indicate that at least one animal is active. A reptile list is being compiled, along with many photographs of Mount Taylor's fungi. The warm damp autumn conditions produced hundreds of exotic and ordinary fungi. Some superb ant hills are evident, showing the health of the vegetation and the environment.

### Research

1. **Tree protection**—our group has enlarged the protection devices for all tree and shrub plantings, by encircling all the plastic guards with cut branches of dead wood, cut woody weeds or tree prunings. This method is minimal cost, reduces the damage from kangaroos



Planted sweet bursaria seedling protected from kangaroos by cut branches. AI

and humans and also increases the plant growth with some shade, especially in three groups of blue devil *Eryngium rostratum*.

2. **Reducing the St John's wort *Hypericum perforatum* on Mount Taylor**—many areas cannot be sprayed or mowed due to topography, so we are reducing seed crops from established infestations by removing full grown heads and stalks before the seeds become viable. Once removed, the plants appear to produce no further flower heads that year. Seed heads can be removed from January to May before the capsules have dried out, as the wet sugary mucus appears to assist seed viability with slow ripening of the seed. With Canberra's mowing program, no *Hypericum perforatum* plants remain alive on street pavements, around the Fire Memorial on Stromlo and in Bright, Victoria. We will continue the research for five more years.
3. **Erosion control**—Acacia and woody weed branches are being used to control sheet erosion areas and deter errant walkers. Using woody debris in areas of sheet erosion increases grass regrowth in the eroded surfaces and deters walkers from using eroded paths. Thanks to ranger Craig Wainwright who has chainsawed thousands of rogue Acacias into useful erosion control.

With many thousands of walkers using Mount Taylor every year, we are changing the way we maintain the tracks and roads and coping with tourism that comes from our own city. The 'bare mountain' of 70 years ago now needs a new type of conservation to preserve its fragile beauty.



Youngest members Ruby and Lilian with Anne l'Ons at 25 year celebrations.



Mount Taylor working party enjoying afternoon tea at 25 years celebration with Michael Mulvaney, one of ParkCare's original creators.

**Anne l'Ons**

**Convenor**

**Mount Taylor ParkCare Group**

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## Friends of Glenburn

The Friends of Glenburn (FROGS) is a small informal group of enthusiastic volunteers dedicated to help the ACT Parks and Conservation Service protect and conserve some early European structures in the Glenburn/Burbong historic precinct in the Kowen Forest, ACT. The precinct is located behind locked gates some three kilometres north of the Kings Highway just beyond the bridges over the Molonglo River and the Queanbeyan to Goulburn railway line.



Colliers Homestead ruins, Friends of Glenburn working party Kowen Forest in June 2014. AT

### Setting the scene for the historic precinct

The Glenburn/Burbong area was first settled by Europeans in 1831 – very early in the life of the Canberra/Queanbeyan region. The first settlers were Luke and Mary Colverwell who were both convicts. The northern area was first called Dirty Swamp.

Over the years the area grew into a small vibrant community with many families working for absentee landlords or on small holdings (some as small as 40 acres) after the land reform Acts of the 1860s. The area was depopulated in the late 1890s and early 1900s because of poor soils, rabbit and hare infestations and unfavourable economic conditions. While much of what the early residents built has gone, many relics of early European settlement remain. There is evidence of:

- tragedy – the graves of two little Colverwell girls, aged 5 and 6, who drowned in or near Glen Burn Creek in 1837. The Colverwell graves are the oldest marked graves in the ACT;

- several modest homesteads (Colliers, Coppins, Glenburn and Curleys) and associated orchards, one with a very large pear and two large groves of quinces;
- sheer hard work – a ramshackle shearing shed, that was still in use until recently, that has its origins in the 1860s, the ruins of sheep yards and hay sheds, the ruins of an old plunge sheep dip and a field mower;
- the sites of rural entertainment – the remains of homesteads where a bachelors' ball was held in 1895 (Colliers) and where a large farewell was held in 1906 (Glenburn);
- the importance to the community of children's education – the site of a public school that operated from 1882 to 1906;
- war time and petrol shortage – the remains of several charcoal kilns that produced charcoal for burners to produce gas to run Commonwealth vehicles during World War II; and
- the arrogance of a very large landholder – George Campbell of Duntroon built a six room stone Homestead (Colliers) in 1879-80 on land he did not own.

### Protection and conservation activities in the precinct

Over the past seven years, the ACT Parks and Conservation Service and members of FROGS have undertaken significant protection and conservation work in the precinct. Information can be found on the website of the National Parks Association of the ACT (NPA) [www.npaact.com.au](http://www.npaact.com.au) under Friends of Glenburn.

In the past 12 months, the three most significant achievements have been:

- the erection of a rabbit-proof fence surrounding the ruins of Colliers Homestead and orchard. FROGS contributed \$3,300 towards the cost with the assistance of the National Parks Association of the ACT (NPA);

- the capping of the walls of the ruins of Colliers Homestead by the Parks Service with the assistance of members of FROGS. Three full days were required to do the work but the life of the ruins should be extended by at least 50 years; and
- the erection of five interpretative signs. This brings to nine the number of interpretative signs that have been erected in the precinct. All the texts for the signs have been prepared by PCS using extensive research material provided by members of FROGS. All the signs were erected by members of FROGS. The manufacture of four of the most recently erected signs was paid for by FROGS and the NPA.



Members of Friends of Glenburn capping the ruins of Colliers Homestead. at a working party at Kowen Forest in June 2014. AT



Installing the new replacement sign for the Colverwell Graves, 5 November 2014. CMc

However, there is still much to do. If anyone is interested to help, contact me on 6288 4171.

Members of FROGS are prepared to conduct guided tours of the precinct for organisations. Contact me to arrange a tour.

**Col McAlister**

**Convenor**

**Friends of Glenburn**

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## **Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group**

The original purpose of the group was to revegetate the old Boboyan Pine Plantation, after the pines had been felled, with local native tree species. This commenced in 1998 and the last area to be cleared was in 2004. Ten years have passed since this objective was achieved, so what is the group doing now?

Weeds are one of our biggest problems and we are only able to target briar rose, blackberries, St John's wort and a few others. This task keeps us very busy during the summer months. With spray packs and weed wands we are able to reduce small sections from the larger and more dominant weeds. But the regeneration area is very large and we are facing a very difficult task to make a huge impact. However, we are not discouraged but know that if we keep going back we will see a change over time.

During the colder months, we have been removing old barb wire fences from within the regeneration area boundary. The wire is rusty and the fences often broken. They are unsightly and also cause a problem for the local wildlife. Wire and fencing is rolled into large bundles and removed later by the rangers.

During the past year we have attempted to rehabilitate some erosion gullies. Acacia and grass seeds were planted out at the same time with a few successfully germinating. We have had some success in managing to

halt further erosion through tree plantings and water diversion techniques.

Mapping rabbit warrens has also been part of our work this past year as we assist the rangers in their work to control rabbits. Knowing where to target warrens using our GPS readings is a great help and since we also describe the size and number of entrances, it can help in deciding what type of control method is best. A rabbit management program has been in operation for several years and there has been a significant reduction of rabbits in some parts of the Gudgenby Valley.



Simon using his GPS to map rabbit warrens. ML

In early days there were many *Pinus radiata* wildings which were easily found and removed. These days they are more frequently found hidden in the understorey during our work parties. This year 14 pines, some quite large, have been felled much to our delight. Rangers removed the largest pines for us.

Martin Chalk continued his Waterwatch activities on behalf of the group. These involved bimonthly water physical/chemical observations and wildlife reports. Macro-invertebrate testing (Bug watch) was undertaken in both spring 2013 and in autumn 2014. An annual riparian assessment is undertaken in the non-swamp sites.

In the previous year we started a trial Indigenous Land Management Project.

This arose from an ACT Environment Grant that the National Parks Association of the ACT and ourselves had received. We continue to strengthen our learning which arose from a two day workshop we attended. It was facilitated by Friends of Grasslands (FOG) entitled “Indigenous Values in the Landscape” and presented by a respected Aboriginal Elder, Mr Rod Mason. Our goal is to reintroduce appropriate traditional land management practices in the longer term.

We are in the early stages of a new project at Peppermint Hill to trial various options to rehabilitate areas where rabbit warren ripping has occurred.



Hazel removing some wire netting. ML

On an average workparty we will have about 11 people in attendance. Everyone is dedicated to making restoration their primary aim so that others can enjoy the native bush and local birds and wildlife have a much improved habitat. The group continues to work closely with the park managers and rangers to make a difference in this small section of Namadgi National Park.

**Author: Hazel Rath**

**Michael Goonery**

**Convenor**

**Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group**

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## ParkCarers of Southern Murrumbidgee

The ParkCarers of Southern Murrumbidgee (POSM) have been working away quietly in the Murrumbidgee River Corridor for just over 20 years with the group formed in 1992. There have been a number of coordinators and many members and rangers have come and gone. But the group has survived and continues to contribute to the health of a small section of the Murrumbidgee River Corridor. Although we generally have between three to ten people at only 11 activities per year, we have managed to make quite a noticeable change over the years.

Within our area (Point Hut Crossing to Pine Island), only a few remnant trees of the original Ribbon Gum Tableland Woodland have survived land clearing, fire and floods. Over the years POSM has made a concerted effort to plant ribbon gums *Eucalyptus viminalis* along the river floodplain. At last count, there were over 50 of these plantings that have survived and are now noticeably taller than the dense Acacia understorey.



*Eucalyptus viminalis* trees. LC

We were lucky enough to get two very large piles of rocks delivered to Barneys Gully this year by our ever-resourceful rangers. During winter, we had two activities where we carted the rocks to our leaky weirs, which was a great winter warmer! In July, nine of us drove four wheelbarrows up and down tracks to shore up one of our weirs that had been undermined by high flows and a

curious wombat. The weir periodically fills with water which drains slowly downstream and we have noticed a distinct build-up of sediment behind it which seems to promote the growth of various rushes.



POSM wheelbarrows. LC

At POSM we take the view that we want to keep the really special areas in good condition. We remove weeds such as briar rose, hawthorn and serrated tussock, and also look to enlarge these patches by planting on the margins. In the 2003 bushfires, the black cypress pine *Callitris endlicheri* tableland woodland communities of the steep rocky slopes were severely impacted. In the two years after the fire, POSM transplanted a number of *Callitris* seedlings that are now thriving. This year we have also noticed many *Callitris* seedlings on the slopes, interspersed with low shrubs that dominate the rocky outcrops. In May we planted out more *Callitris* and some of the associated species to further enhance the work already being undertaken by nature herself!



*Callitris* trees along the Murrumbidgee River. LC



Barneys Dam. LC

We are fortunate to have a large dam with planted tree-lots upslope of Barneys Gully that already attracts ducks, kangaroos and other wildlife. However the area is actively eroding and would greatly benefit from the addition of plants in the edge zone, weed removal and placement of logs in the water to enhance its aquatic and terrestrial habitat values. We are hoping to get a grant next year through the efforts of Martine at the Southern ACT Catchment Group, to fence off the dam and provide an off-site watering trough for the cattle that occasionally graze the surrounding paddocks.

Check out the POSM website at [sactcg.org.au/members/POSM](http://sactcg.org.au/members/POSM) maintained by our web guru, Deb Kellock. You can also see some of the group photos via my Flickr page [www.flickr.com/photos/100327516@N05/](http://www.flickr.com/photos/100327516@N05/) in the POSM album.

We would like to thank our helpful, supportive and resourceful rangers, especially James Overall who has to put up with my last minute requests! A big thanks from me to my co-convenors Deb and Paul. Thanks to all the members of POSM, both past and present whose hard work has made a big difference to a very beautiful part of the Murrumbidgee River Corridor.

**Lauren Carter**

**Convenor**

**ParkCarers of Southern Murrumbidgee**

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## Uriarra ParkCare Group

A new Uriarra ParkCare group has been established and is seeking volunteers!

Regular or irregular volunteering, experienced or novice, local or blow-in, all are welcome.



A planting day near Uriarra Village with some local residents and Frogwatch coordinator Anke Maria. HB.

Join in planting, weeding, water and sphagnum bog monitoring, frog watching, and generally improving our beautiful surrounds in the Cotter catchment, around Uriarra Village, Uriarra Crossing and beyond.

If you are interested in getting involved email: Josie on [josie@banens.net](mailto:josie@banens.net)

**Josie Banens**

**Convenor**

**Uriarra ParkCare Group**

**Email: [josie@banens.net](mailto:josie@banens.net)**



## Weed Swap and the Floriade Bush Friendly Garden

The Weed Swap initiative, together with the Bush Friendly Garden (BFG) at Floriade, are a collaboration between the Australian Native Plant Society Society, Canberra Region (ANPS) and the ACT Government. Both programs engage the public in community action in caring for their local bushland and re-connecting with nature.

In Canberra, Weed Swap is a popular biannual event. People are delighted to receive recognition for their labours and their contribution to restoring the naturalness of the bush capital's nature parks and reserves. The initiative arose as an adaptation of the Queanbeyan Council's 'Pull a Privet' idea nearly 15 years ago. Other jurisdictions have similar schemes, as well as supplying free non-invasive plants to those establishing gardens on new blocks.

Weed Swap works as a result of volunteers. A few members of the ANPS volunteer for about three hours, to give away Australian plants at two green-waste recycling sites in the ACT. People bring environmental weeds from their gardens and yards to be mulched and then composted at temperatures high enough to destroy seeds' viability. Weed donors removing privet, Cotoneaster, Pyracantha, broom, hawthorn, ivy, blue periwinkle and sleeper weeds from their properties are rewarded with free native plants suited to the space they've created and Canberra's extremes of climate.



Bringing in the weeds to Weed Swap. Photo: JC

Weed Swap volunteers offer weed-donors advice gleaned from the plants' detailed labels. Conversations based on their mutual gardening experiences often follow. There are at least two volunteers rostered simultaneously at each site allowing for sharing, camaraderie, the buzz of making a difference for communities and promoting native plants.

Each site has a volunteer manager who brings and arranges 500 plants ranging from ground covers, clumping plants, small to medium shrubs to small trees. ANPS member growers commit to growing and labelling a range of species in forestry tubes. The species must be hardy, non-invasive, floristic, wildlife-attracting, grow rapidly and require minimum water once established. Recipients receive printed plant care and planting instructions.

Weed Swap's growers are funded by the ACT Government from the Territory's weeds budget. A total of \$5,000 a year is allocated to the program, evidence that householders' rates are spent wisely for a biodiverse future. Weed Swap is valued highly by ACT Parks and Conservation Service (PCS) and hundreds of volunteers and carers working to combat weeds in reserves. We constantly receive unsolicited compliments from recipients, delighted that their young natives are doing well. Sometimes they're amazed at their success, having previously seen themselves as "kill-everything" gardeners. They come to realise that there is a native species for every garden situation and that Weed Swap plants survive well when times get tough.

The BFG at Floriade also welcomes volunteers as garden interpreters. In the BFG, the weed species are displayed and labelled alongside attractive ACT-suited alternative, non-invasive species. Visitors the garden are often surprised to realise they are growing invasive weeds in their garden and are willing to discuss alternatives.



Bush Friendly Garden at Floriade

Both the Bush Friendly Garden and Weed Swap promote Australian plants to newcomers-to-natives. For volunteers at these events, a welcoming smile and a sense of humour replace the no experience necessary homily. Here's hoping you'll join the Weed Swap team or the Floriade Bush Friendly Garden team in 2015.

### Rosemary Blemmings

**Australian Native Plant Society and long term coordinator of the Weed Swap program**



## National Landcare Conference roundup

The National Landcare Conference was held on the 17-19 September, 2014 in Melbourne. Sally McIntosh and I (Alison McLeod) were fortunate enough to attend the conference in our role as ACT Regional Landcare Facilitators (RLFs).

While in Melbourne we also attended a roundup of RLFs from around the country to discuss issues such as the National Landcare Program and to hear about interesting and innovative projects which other regions are doing. It's always wonderful to hear what other Landcare communities are doing and learning from their experiences. Some of these ideas include a focused equine Landcare program and women-specific events where women of environmental and

agricultural interests are brought together for networking events.

The National Landcare Conference consisted of two full days of presentations on a range of topics including 'Embracing our Future', 'Evolving Landcare', 'Environmental Education' and so much more.

There were talks on the use of social media, the evolving space of 'crowd funding' and the launch of the Pozible Landcare and Environment Collection (google it!). We think there's real potential for our local community of Landcarers and ParkCarers to make the most of this type of technology to fund projects which might otherwise slip through the cracks of conventional environmental funding. Some of the successful crowd funding projects which were launched at the conference include satellite tracking of bunyip birds in Griffith (secured \$57,423), and an education project regarding bees in Melbourne (\$6,032). You can crowd fund for anything at all. All you need is a realistic target, a vision and a bit of creativity. It would be great to see some ACT projects in the Pozible Landcare Environment collection in the future.

### National Landcare Awards

The National Landcare Awards were announced on the Thursday night and the ACT was well represented in each category. We would like to congratulate all the ACT finalists for making it to Melbourne, the quality of finalists from all over the country was extremely high.

This year's awards were particularly special because for the first time ever, a finalist from the ACT won a National Landcare Award. The Yurung Dhaura Aboriginal Land Management Team won the Indigenous Land Management Award in a very competitive field for their environmental restoration work in the Cotter catchment whilst recording and applying traditional ecological knowledge to natural resource management. Team members Adam Shipp,



Wally Bell and Adam Shipp accepting the Indigenous Land Management Award. Photo: Landcare Australia

Krystal Hurst, Greg Chatfield, Jake Lester, Wally Bell and David Thomas have since gone on to secure jobs with Greening Australia, the Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, City Services, Medicare Local and the Aboriginal Legal Service. Wally Bell and Adam Shipp spoke on the work of the team at the conference and also received the award on behalf of the team.

To sum it all up, the National Landcare Conference was a really informative, inspirational and thought provoking event. It gave us a renewed sense of focus and a vision for the future of Landcare in our region which we hope to pass on to our local Landcare/ ParkCare community at every opportunity.

**Alison McLeod and Sally McIntosh**  
**ACT Regional Landcare Facilitator Program**  
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 Email Sally: [sally.mcinnon@act.gov.au](mailto:sally.mcinnon@act.gov.au)



## ACT Public Service Awards for Excellence 2014

Congratulations to the TAMS staff who were recently recognised at the 2014 ACT Public Service Awards for Excellence. ACT Parks and Conservation's Craig Wainwright was a finalist in the Excellence category.

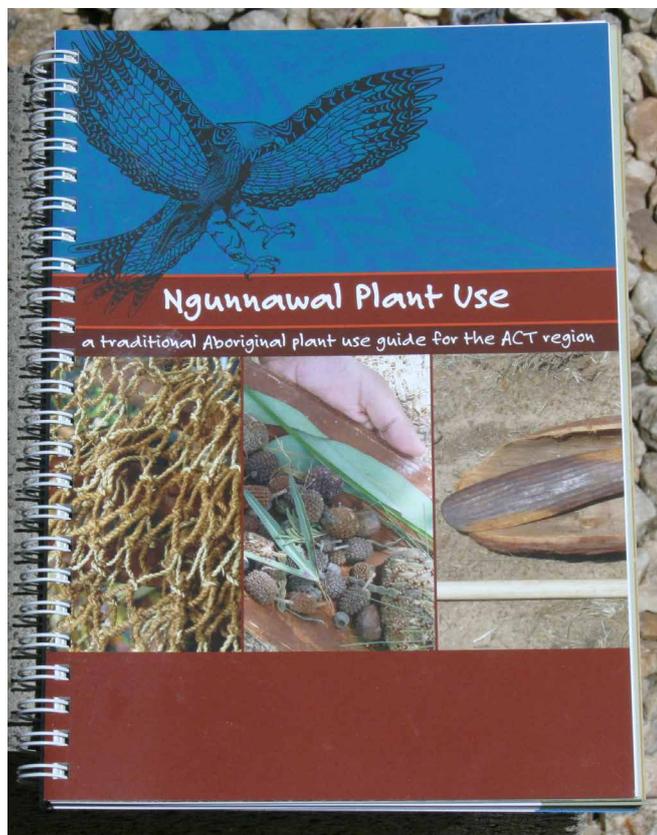
In the twelve months he has been in the ParkCare Support Officer position, Craig has improved government relationships with community, created efficiencies within the team and inspired peers to go beyond their expected duties to achieve results for conservation, community and the ACT Parks and Conservation Service. Craig's role is a challenging position working within the public interface of the agency and he performs this role with great integrity and respect for the community and his fellow staff. It is not unusual for Craig to go beyond his required duties to ensure ParkCare groups fully understand ACT Parks and Conservation Service policies and management approaches.



Ms Kathy Leigh, Head of Service and Craig Wainwright with his award.

## Ngunnawal Plant Use

*Ngunnawal Plant Use* is a new 96 page field guide that provides information on the native plants of the ACT region and their many Ngunnawal uses.



Proceeds from the sale of the book will support Aboriginal natural resource management in the ACT.

### Contact

Environment and Planning Directorate

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### Partners that made the book possible

The book was developed by the Environment and Planning Directorate (EPD) in partnership with the ACT Parks and Conservation Service, the United Ngunnawal Elders Council, the Ngunnawal community, Greening Australia, EPD Aboriginal trainees employed under the Caring for the Cotter Catchment project and Murrumbung Yurung Murra staff (a network of ACT Government Aboriginal staff working in natural resource management, heritage and parks). Funding for the book was provided by the Australian Government.



### Buying a copy

The book can be purchased for \$22 (GST inclusive) from the following:

- [form.act.gov.au/smartforms/nrm/ngunnawal-plant-use-book-purchase/](http://form.act.gov.au/smartforms/nrm/ngunnawal-plant-use-book-purchase/) Online
- Namadgi National Park Visitors Centre
- Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve Visitors Centre
- The Botanical Bookshop, Australian National Botanic Gardens, Canberra
- The Curatoreum, Village Centre, National Arboretum, Canberra
- Greening Australia, Kubura Place, Aranda, Canberra
- Canberra and Region Visitors Centre, Dickson, Canberra
- Canberra Connect: 13 22 81.

### Scribbly Gum photo credits

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