



## FRIENDS OF MOUNT PAINTER NEWS

APRIL 2017

For more information about anything in this newsletter: contact Sarah Hnatiuk on 6251 2228 or 0424 263 565 or at [friends.of.mount.painter@gmail.com](mailto:friends.of.mount.painter@gmail.com)

### APRIL WORK PARTY

- Date:** Sunday, 23 April
- When:** 9am – 12 noon
- Location:** On the western slopes near the enclosure beside Glenloch Gully
- To reach the location:** Park on the city-bound side of William Hovell Drive at the end of the long metal guard rail, 800m from the intersection with Coulter Drive
- Tasks:** Cutting out woody weeds
- Wear:** Sturdy footwear and clothes to protect you from the sun, prickly weeds and grass seeds. All tools provided. No experience needed.
- Bring:** Please bring some drinking water, a mug and some food to share for morning tea. Other drinks will be provided.

### OTHER UPCOMING MOUNT PAINTER EVENTS

- Soon: a hazard reduction burn in the Wildflower Triangle, south of the bike path
- Wednesday, 10 May: we will be helping to count kangaroos on the reserve and in surrounding paddocks. If you would like to help, please contact Mel Snape, the ecologist who is organising it at [Melissa.Snape@act.gov.au](mailto:Melissa.Snape@act.gov.au)
- Sunday, 21 May, 9am – 12 noon: Friends of Mount Painter's monthly work party



Friends of Mt Painter weeders after February's work party on the slope behind the houses

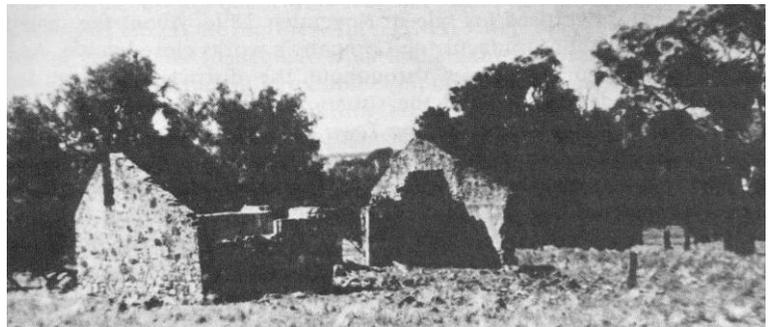
## THE BIRD WALK WITH NICKI TAWS

On 2 April, Nicki Taws led an immensely informative walk among the trees and shrubs on the east side of the hill and down the connecting corridor that runs through the horse paddocks. With Nicki's amazing capacity to identify every call she hears, she was able to locate and point out to us many small birds that we would have missed had we been on our own. We saw 28 species, of which it was especially good to see two Scarlet Robins and a Speckled Warbler, whose numbers are declining in the ACT and elsewhere.

We ended the walk in the horse paddocks where we inspected all that remains of one of the early settler's homes: a stone cottage where Donald McDonald and his family lived on land he leased on the east side of the hill. The only sign of the dwelling now are the footings and a half-buried scatter of rocks from the walls.



Bird watchers on the site of McDonald's cottage



McDonald's cottage from L. L. Gillespie, *Canberra 1820-1913*, AGPS Press, Canberra, 1991

## CIT STUDENTS RECORD THE OLD EUCALYPTS ON MOUNT PAINTER

At Friends of Mount Painter's request, CIT environmental science students are making an inventory of old trees on the hill. They are collecting information about the trees' locations, how big and healthy they are, and whether they have mistletoe growing on them and hollows where animals might find shelter.

Students measuring the canopy width and consulting their course coordinator, Hannah Selmes.



## PROTECTING THE SHEOAKS

One of Friends of Mount Painter's big jobs for this winter is replacing the small guards around the Sheoaks planted last July near the summit and on the west side of the hill. We need to provide the seedlings with larger guards as they are a favourite food for kangaroos. As the Sheoaks began to poke out of the top of the small guards at the start of last summer, they were chewed off. Since then, the Saffron Thistles have grown up round many of the plants and seem to have kept the kangaroos away. And we have capitalised on the deterrent power of thistles by placing cut ones into the top of the small guards, hoping that will keep inquisitive noses and mouths away until we can provide larger guards.

The Green Army are helping us to install the guards. In February a group worked on removing mesh guards from earlier plantings, that no longer need them, so we can use them for the Sheoaks. More groups will be with us in the coming months.



The Green Army crew after their day's work

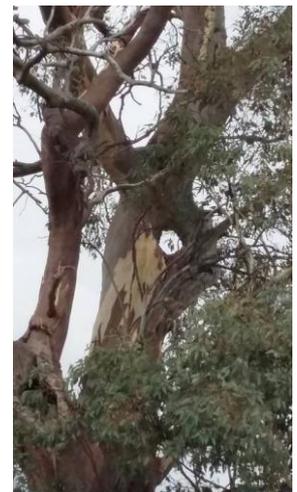


Mesh guards in Gavin's trailer en route to the Sheoaks

### ABORIGINAL MARKER TREE ON BINDUBI STREET



Greening Australia's Indigenous Officer, Adam Shipp, told me of the recent discovery of an Aboriginal marker in an old eucalypt on the east side of Bindubi Street. The circular structure can be seen high in the tree, having been formed by the binding of two branches together so that they eventually grew together to form a circle. What it marked no one knows at present.



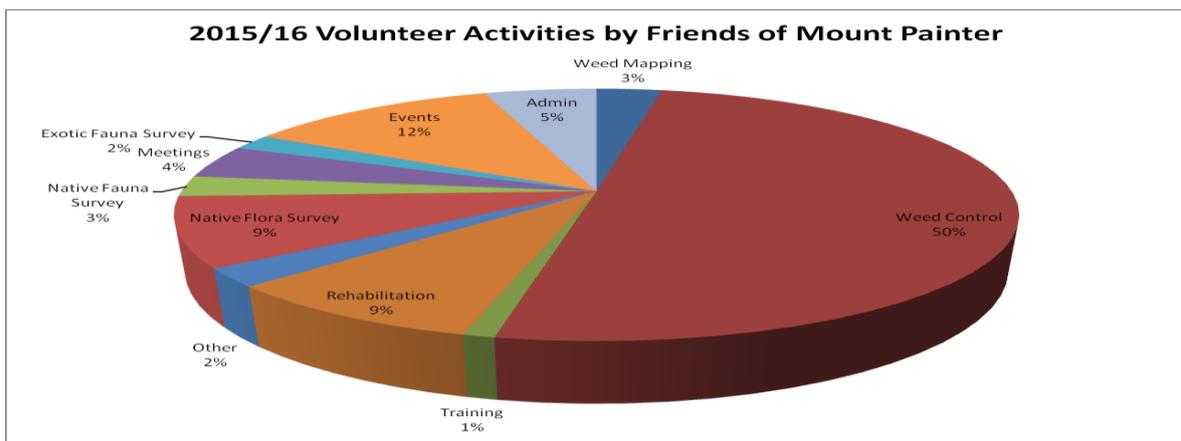
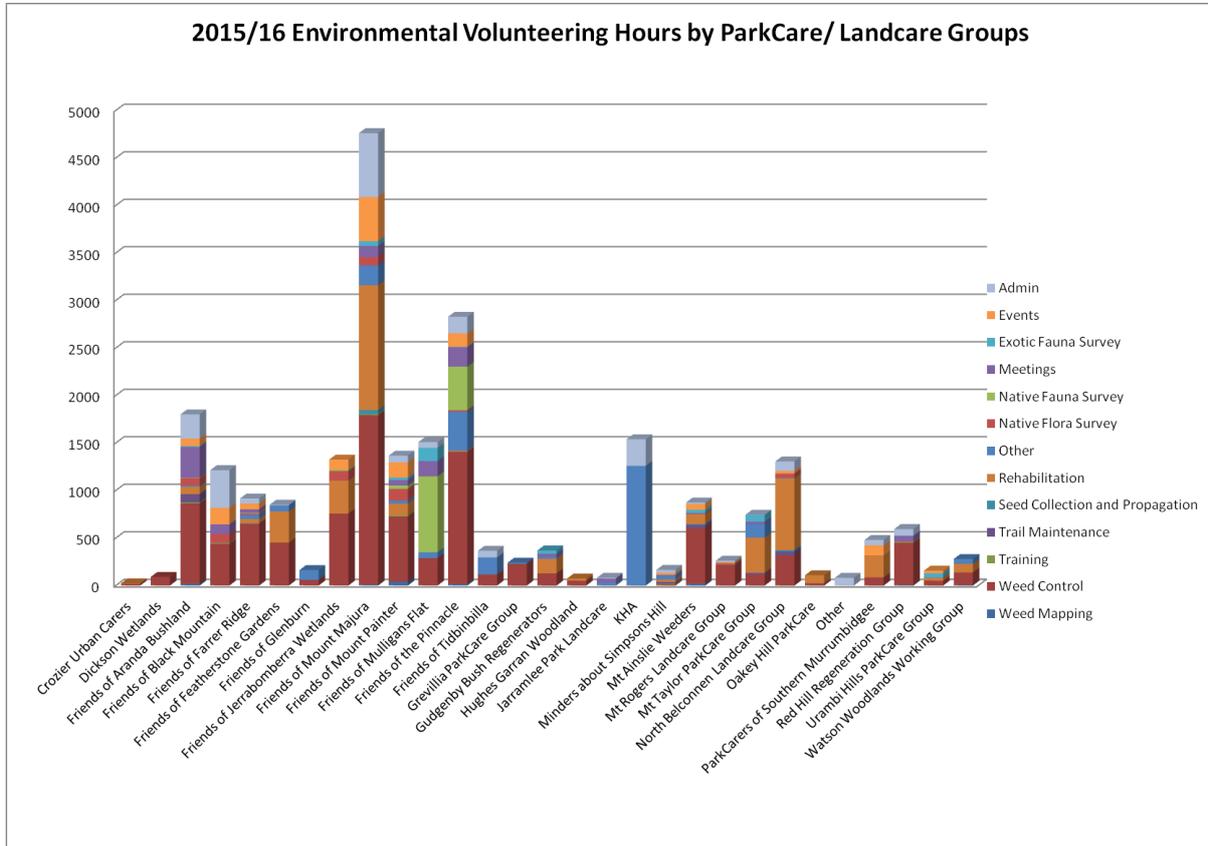
According to the Ngunnawal elder, Wally Bell, there is a similar structure on a tree in Mulanggarri Grasslands Nature Reserve. In that case there is a scar tree nearby, and it appears as though those two markers might have been used to advertise the location of the ochre grounds of Gubur Dhaura that adjoin the Grasslands.

There is more information about the Aboriginal heritage of the Ginninderra Catchment in this short video put together by the Ginninderra Catchment Group:

<https://vimeo.com/126995882>.

## VOLUNTEERING ON ACT RESERVES IN 2015-16 TOTALLED 24,588 HOURS

The records kept by ACT Parkcarers and Landcarers of their work in the 2015 – 2016 year show that they contributed a massive total of 24,588 hours. As the bar chart below shows, Friends of Mount Painter was one of the stronger contributors; we put in 1,367 hours. In the pie chart we see how we distributed our time between the different tasks. Not surprisingly, weeding was the most frequent activity!



Compiled by Sarah Hnatiuk