



## FRIENDS OF MOUNT PAINTER NEWS

APRIL 2013

### APRIL'S WORK PARTY

#### EROSION CONTROL

**When:** 9am – 12.30pm, Sunday, 21 April

**Where:** Stromlo Gully.

**To get there:** Park on the city-bound side of William Hovell Drive, 800m from the intersection with Coulter Drive where the metal guard rail ends. Follow the red markers on to the reserve and turn left along the track between the two fences and through a metal gate. Stromlo Gully is the first gully you come to.

**The task:** **Placing logs in and near the gully.** This is designed to deter the kangaroos from crossing where the gully banks are steep, and from camping beneath the large yellow box where they disturb the ground and contribute to soil erosion.

**Wear:** Hat, long pants, long-sleeved shirt, and sturdy footwear.

**Bring:** Drinking water, a mug and some food to share for morning tea. Friends of Mount Painter will provide tea, coffee and juice. All equipment will be provided.

**May's work party will be held on Sunday, 19 May from 9am to 12.30pm in the Wildflower Triangle.** We will be cutting woody weeds and checking on the understory plants we planted a year ago. Please meet at the reserve entrance on Bindubi Street near the horse and bicycle underpass.

### KANGAROOS, WOMBATS AND RABBITS



#### Wombats.

We have found two new wombat burrows on the reserve, one not far from the Booth Crescent entrance to the reserve and the other on the opposite side of the reserve. Both had fresh scats in the burrow entrances when we visited in the last couple of weeks. And about a month ago, he or she started to dig once again under the fence of one of the houses backing on to the reserve. We are told that landholders complain of the many wombat along the Molonglo River so maybe they are spreading to Mt Painter from there. The disturbances associated with the Molonglo development may be encouraging them to find other, more comfortable surroundings.

### Rabbits.

Contractors are expected to work on the reserve next week, revisiting the burrows that we mapped and they fumigated last winter. They will be looking to see if any of the burrows have been re-opened and will fumigate once again those they find in use.



### Rabbits and kangaroos.

Rabbit numbers on Mount Painter are now much lower than they were three years ago, and kangaroo numbers have fallen somewhat. These changes, together with two seasons of good rains, have made an enormous difference to the health of the reserve's vegetation. Other nature reserves have been less fortunate, including Mount Majura, where Friends of Mount Majura (FOMM) have been studying the impact of rabbits, kangaroos and the season on the reserve's vegetation.

Dean Graetz from FOMM writes:

*In Mt Majura Nature Reserve we see the seasons come and go. Of concern to the Friends of Mt Majura is that the kangaroos and rabbits do not. They stay with us, especially the kangaroos, which, when they have reduced the herbage layer in the Reserve to lawn-like, venture out to graze on adjacent ovals and gardens. In 2009, The ACT Government funded our project to demonstrate to the public the relative influence of kangaroos, rabbits, and season on a small grassland area. We contrast the influence of these three factors with fencing, sieving out none, all, or just rabbits, and recording the changes with simple repeat photography. We now have three years of results and we are confident that you will find them of interest. Explanatory background, and a video of the three years of change are available here: <http://majura.org/explaining-change/>. In addition, we offer a photographic essay of the unrelenting damage these two herbivores inflict on the Friend's restoration efforts here: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/61627737@N03/sets/72157632823459049/>.*

Compare some of FOMM's images with these from Mount Painter which were taken in April 2009.



Cassinia bush with stems broken at 80cm by kangaroos and trimmed below by rabbits that are also digging up the roots



Well-grazed slope above Horse Paddock Gully

## SUMMIT PATH GRASSES

A year ago we planted 108 native grass seedlings along the Summit Path and watered them over summer. They have flourished and produced seeds which we hope will increase the population of these grasses in the area in the future. They are wallaby grasses (*Rytidosperma spp*), Corkscrew Grass (*Austrostipa scabra*) and Weeping Grass (*Microlaena stipoides*). This week we removed the green tree guards from them, and 82 of the 101 grass plants that we found were still alive – an excellent result.

**MANY THANKS TO THE PERSON/PEOPLE WHO HAVE BEEN WATERING THE PLANTS NEAR THE SUMMIT GATE. THEY ARE LOOKING REALLY GOOD.**

## CANBERRA AND REGION HERITAGE FESTIVAL 14- 28 APRIL 2013

For all the events during the 2013 Heritage Week, see [http://www.environment.act.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0015/263202/2013\\_heritage\\_festival\\_events.pdf](http://www.environment.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0015/263202/2013_heritage_festival_events.pdf). They include walks at The Pinnacle, Aranda Bushland, Gossan Hill (by the Geological Society), Mulligans Flat, and Gungahlin Hill among many others, as well as cultural activities.

## A LABOUR OF LOVE: CELEBRATING LANDCARE IN THE ACT

Last year Friends of Mount Painter contributed a piece to a publication about Landcare activities in the ACT which was being assembled by the Southern ACT Catchment Group. As part of the Heritage Festival, this publication, *A Labour of Love: Celebrating Landcare in the ACT* is being launched by Simon Corbell at 11am on Friday, 19 April at Tuggeranong Homestead, Richardson. From 10am to 2pm, there will be tree planting, activities, food, information stalls and much more.

*A Labour of Love* celebrates the thousands of hours volunteers contribute to conserving the natural heritage of the ACT's Nature Parks and Reserves and natural areas. It contains histories, place descriptions, and projects from 42 ParkCare and Landcare Groups and includes profiles of some of the wonderful people who "do their bit for the environment". Filled with beautiful visual images of Canberra hallmark hills, mountains and ridges and the passionate people that care for them, *A Labour of Love* celebrates the beauty of living things in the ACT region. It can be purchased for \$25 from the Southern ACT Catchment Group email: [info@sactcg.org.au](mailto:info@sactcg.org.au) or phone 6296 6400; or at Nature Park Visitor Centres.

**For more information about anything in this newsletter, contact Sarah Hnatiuk on 0424 263 565 or at [sarahhnatiuk@yahoo.com.au](mailto:sarahhnatiuk@yahoo.com.au).**



View of Mount Painter from the Arboretum car park