



FRIENDS OF MOUNT PAINTER NEWS

February 2012

FEBRUARY'S WORK PARTY

WEEDING ON THE HILLSIDE ABOVE THE HOUSES

Meet: Just inside the reserve at the Booth Crescent entrance between houses nos 20 and 22

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

Bring: Water (for yourself), a mug and some food to share for morning tea.

The hillside where we will be working has more native vegetation than many other parts of the reserve. Keeping the weeds under control gives the natives more chance to flourish and spread.

For more information contact Sarah Hnatiuk on 0424 263 565 or at sarahhnatiuk@yahoo.com.au

MARCH'S WORK PARTY will be held in the Wildflower Triangle on Sunday, 11 March from 8.30am to 12 noon. Meet at the Bindubi Street entrance to the Wildflower Triangle where the bike path goes through the underpass.

We will be cutting out woody weeds, mostly small hawthorns, cleaning up the area before we plant understorey plants in May as part of the Parks and Conservation Service's Woodland Restoration Project.

John Busby has put many hours into weeding the Wildflower Triangle and reports that there are virtually no thistles, verbascum, prickly lettuce, Paterson's curse or St John's wort in the area at present. Earlier in the summer, contractors and Friends of Mt Painter volunteers sprayed St John's wort there, so the Triangle is now more weed-free than it has been for a long time.



Wildflower Triangle dam, home to four species of frogs

FUTURE MONTHLY WORK PARTIES ON MOUNT PAINTER NATURE RESERVE

Friends of Mount Painter's monthly work parties will be held on the second Sunday of each month during 2012, EXCEPT in April when we will meet on the Sunday after Easter. The program agreed at a recent meeting is as follows.

Summer and autumn

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| Sunday, 12 February, 8.30am – 12 noon | Weeding on the northern hill slope |
| Sunday, 11 March, 8.30am – 12 noon | Cutting out woody weeds in the Wildflower Triangle |
| Sunday, 15 April, 9am – 12.30pm | Planting along the Summit Trail |
| Sunday, 13 May (Mother's Day), 9.30am – 1pm | Planting understorey plants, Wildflower Triangle |

The dates for **June to September's** work parties are Sundays, 10 June, 8 July, 12 August and 9 September. The activities for these days will be selected from the tasks: installing mesh guards round young plants, erosion control in Horse Paddock Gully, cutting out woody weeds in the main part of the reserve, and a joint work party with Friends of Aranda Bushland on their patch.

NEWS FROM THE RESERVE

Kestrels nested in a hollow in one of the dead trees near the summit path last spring, and a large lizard was sighted recently – what species is it?



Photo by Craig Wainwright



In mid December, four species of **frogs** were calling from the dam in the Wildflower Triangle – a far cry from the days when the dam dried out during the drought. There were at least five Spotted grass frogs, three Smooth toadlets, four Plains froglets and one Peron's tree frog.

Small infestations of **African lovegrass**, which is a very invasive plant, have been found in past years on the edge of the reserve. This year it is growing much more extensively, especially where the grass is mown behind the houses on Mackellar, Moss and Skinner Streets. For the first time we have also found it some distance into the reserve. Its seeds are spread by the mowers, but they are also being tracked in by walkers. We are very concerned to prevent it becoming firmly established on the reserve and, with help from the rangers, are spraying it or digging it out.

Look out for it on nature strips near you. You might like to dig it out or spray it with Roundup.



You can find out more about the grass on the Southern ACT Catchment Group's web site at <http://sactcg.org.au/node/456>.

OTHER EVENTS

Public lecture on Aboriginal land management through history: the biggest estate on earth

Tuesday 7 February, lecture and live streaming from 6pm, refreshments from 5.60pm, at the Shine Dome, Gordon Street, Canberra. Entry and parking are free, but RSVPs to shannon.newham@science.org.au or 6201 9460 are essential. This is the Australian Academy of the Science's first lecture in the series, *Caring for the Australian Countryside: Lessons from the Past and Present*. It will be given by Adjunct Professor Bill Gammage, who will outline the logic of Aboriginal land management in 1788, show why Australia's plants and animals made long-term, precise and detailed management possible, and explain how land management rules were enforced.

A National Park for the Murrumbidgee-Ginninderra Gorges

The public are welcomed to the inaugural meeting of the Ginninderra Falls Association, whose aim is to establish a Murrumbidgee - Ginninderra Gorges National Park. The meeting will be held at Belconnen Public Library Committee Room, Chandler Street, Belconnen from 7:30–9:00pm on Tuesday, 14 February. Background to the creation of the Ginninderra Falls Association will be provided, a draft constitution adopted, a committee elected, and Chris Davey, President, Canberra Ornithologists Group, will talk on 'Birds of the Ginninderra Gorge and Murrumbidgee River Corridor'.

Further information from Dr. Chris Watson, ph. 02 6278 3079 and at ginninderra.org.au

Canberra's kangaroos

ABC1 will be screening a film shot in Canberra about our urban kangaroos, the problems associated with living with them, and research by local ecologists on their behaviour. 'Kangaroo Mob' will be shown on Tuesday 21 February at 8.30pm. More information is at <http://www.360degreefilms.com.au/assets/files/kangaroo-mob-presskit.pdf>.