

Ginninderra Catchment Group Newsletter



Autumn 2012

Goodbye to Blackberries!!

How to Get Involved!

- Join your local landCare group. There are ten groups within the Ginninderra Catchment who are always looking for new members.
- Get involved in frogwatch—the annual census is 21–27 October.
- Adopt a water-watch site. There are many areas within the catchment that need monitoring

In March this year GCG was successful in gaining a grant from the Commonwealth Caring for our Country program, through the ACT NRM Council's WONS Program to spray blackberries and rehabilitate areas with native seed and tube stock in the Ginninderra Catchment. Spraying has now finished and we will be replanting in Spring.

The areas treated include Mt Rogers, Mt Painter and areas of public open space. If you know of any patches please contact the Catchment Coordinator on 6278 3309.



Large patch of blackberries in Belconnen

Students working in the Catchment

Several teams of students, Green skills, Green Corps and Conservation Volunteers Australia teams have been working hard improving a reserve in Macgregor. Many truckloads of woody weeds have been removed from the reserve, and recently 20 Year 9 students from St Francis Xavier College and members of Macgregor Landcare Group planted grasses and shrubs to replace habitat.



Replanted reserve



Year 9 St Francis Xavier Students

Why participate ?

Find out all about our local frogs

Learn how to identify different frog species

Take action to protect these fascinating creatures



See the Frogwatch website for full details on all seminars at:
www.ginninderralandcare.org.au



Leap into Frogwatch this Spring!

Frogwatch is a community based frog monitoring program. To participate, simply come along to one of our free Frogwatch training events, where you will learn all about our amphibian friends. You will receive your free Frogwatch Kit that includes all you need to know to participate in the ACT and Region National Water Week Frogwatch Census in October 2012.

Training Events

Refresher seminars

Perfect for anyone interested in frogs and looking for some practice with identifying the different species individually and within a chorus. Two Frog Call Identification Evenings will be held, one in Queanbeyan, and one at the Australian National Botanic Gardens. Both events will include a short presentation and lots of time



listening to frog call recordings and practicing frog identification skills!

Introduction Seminars

Introduction seminars

These are essential for the first time Frogwatcher and will cover all you need to know to participate in the 2012 Frogwatch Census, including identifying frog species, using Frogwatch Field Data

Sheets, undertaking habitat assessments and performing your first frog monitoring activity. Seminars will include a short walk outside to practice frog identification skills. Please bring sturdy shoes, a torch, and wet weather gear if

necessary. Seminars run from 18:00 – 20:30 hrs.

Please note: all introductory seminars will cover the same information - you only need to attend on one evening. Maximum numbers per seminar: 40.

Help out Frogwatch!!

Frogwatch is delighted to have the support of an international AFS volunteer this year. Anders Hansen (26) from Denmark is going to join our team for 3 months beginning in September.

Would you like to host an international volunteer helping the Ginninderra Catchment Group??

The GCG team is trying to assist the AFS Intercultural Program in finding a host family for Anders.

Anyone interested in hosting for the full three months or for part of the time can contact Maree Kerr on :

maree.kerr@afs.org or visit www.afs.org.au for more details.

Harrison School Pond: Health Check (written by a guy called Damon)

In early May this year around 150 year 5/6 students from Harrison Primary School undertook water quality monitoring at their local pond.

Using scientific methodology to assess the health of the Pond students looked at a variety of measures to determine water quality and potential habitat value of their local pond. One important lesson learned was that the more people that get the same answer the happier we are with quality of data.

As Waterwatchers we were all pleased with some results and concerned about others. Whilst the Temperature, EC, pH and Nitrates were all in our 'OK-Good' range the turbidity was a little high meaning

that the water was very dirty. We also observed two exotic fish species (Carp and Gambusia).

"Last week our class went down to Harrison Pond for Environmental Science. When we were down there we meet a guy called Damon. Firstly we took the temperature and it was in between 15 -17. Next we did a thing called pH, which means potential Hydrogen. After that we looked at the turbidity and the nitrates"(Olivia, Year 5).

"The first thing we did was take the temperature of some water from the local pond.

Then we tested the pH. The next interesting thing we did was test the EC (Electrical Conductivity) that tested the amount of salt that was in the water" (Chris, Year 6)

"We also dipped in this paper to see if it turns pink. I enjoyed the testing of the water and learnt stuff that I've never known before" (Bianca, Year 6).



From a habitat point of view the view an island, more significant mid-storey (shrubs) and more emergent vegetation (reeds) could help provide habitat for water birds, water rats (a great native mammal) and bugs. A planned follow-up excursion in spring to search for aquatic macroinvertebrates (water bugs) will look more closely at habitat value.

From 'a guy called Damon' point of view the students showed a solid understanding of the importance of healthy wetlands and the potential threats to our urban habitat. Their eagerness to help keep our waterways in top condition is a trait that I hope remains with them and infects many more children and adults alike. Good work team and see you in spring for some bug catching!



Waterwatch Wrap Up

Already a Waterwatcher?

Submit your latest results online via the waterwatch page at:

www.ginninderralandcare.or.gau

After many months without a Facilitator Waterwatch ACT are happy to announce that Woo O'Reilly has accepted the role and we look forward to working with her to help promote Waterwatch and continue to help our fantastic volunteers care for our Catchment. More information about Woo will be in the upcoming Upper Murrumbidgee Waterwatch newsletter player profile!

High rainfall in late Summer and early Autumn have again highlighted one of the catchments most pressing water quality issues; high sediment loads washing off our development sites into the creek and accumulating in our lakes. This has been a high priority topic in discussion with regional managers and stakeholders.

Consistent rainfall has been a boon for the Lower Ginninderra Creek Riparian Restoration Project plantings

undertaken last spring and more recent autumn plantings. With all plants showing solid growth and survival rates. The LGCRR project is targeting woody weeds and erosion areas below the Lake wall and has resulted from monitoring undertaken by Waterwatch volunteers and the use of that monitoring information in identifying priority 'at risk' sections of the creek.

Sub Catchment Wrap Up

Gungahlin (Mulligans Flat to Barton HWY)

Over the past six months there has been a significant reduction in the amount of sediment entering the system from the very top of the Catchment resulting in much cleaner water in Yerrabi Pond. Gungahlin Pond has not been so lucky with heavy sediment loads pouring in from the Casey development.

Larger wetlands under construction below the Crace develop-

ment should help reduce the very high level of sediment washing off this area. Hopefully for future developments large sediment dams will be the first asset to go in, providing much greater protection for the Catchment below!



Upper Ginninderra Creek Crace, February 29

Lake Ginninderra (Barton HWY to Lake Wall)

Unfortunately this sub Catchment is also suffering from the high sediment inflow from Gungahlin. Giralang pond is showing the effects of well over ten years of consistent sedimentation. It appears that this inline wetland has reached capacity and is in desperate need of a 'clean out'. GCG and the Giralang Pond Landcare Group will be engaging with the ACT government to look at dredging and other methods to address sedimentation of the pond.

A worrying sign this autumn was a toxic outbreak of blue-green algae (BGA) in Lake Ginninderra. The Lake was closed to primary contact in April, and whilst we have had autumn out-

breaks in the past they have been non-toxic species of algae. GCG Waterwatch will be keeping a close eye on this issue so we do not drift into a regular pattern of BGA outbreaks like we have seen in Lake Burley Griffin and Lake Tuggeranong.

Regular Lake users will have noticed the missing walk bridge and construction site at the inlet of the south-eastern arm of the lake; these works are part of Stage two works of the Eastern Valley Way Inlet project. The bridge should be back in September and a new wetland to help clean water flowing into this section of the lake should

provide a quality functioning filter and be a significant improvement on the eyesore that has featured here for many years. The large supermarket chains should also benefit from the return of 100 or so shopping trolleys found in the lake!



Blue-Green Algae Lake Ginninderra

Parkwood (Lake Ginninderra Dam wall to Murrumbidgee R)

Good coverage of reeds and grasses through this section has again played an important role in protecting the banks during high flow events. Although we did (and still do) have some clean up associated with the dead reeds and other debris, in general this section is functioning pretty well.

Works will continue over the next year on the LGCCR Project (ACT) through this section with thousands of riparian plants being strategically planted to protect from severe erosion and provide diverse native habitat.

Works on the LGCRRP NSW are almost complete with the major stages of willow removal and stock fencing nearing completion. With some increases in costs associated with extra stock watering points and fencing Greening Australia who have been project managing the works have chipped in with additional funding to complete the spring planting later this year. The cross border LGCRR Projects are the first steps in the creation of a corridor connectivity pro-

ject to provide a better link between Ginninderra Falls and Mulligans Flat.



Lower Ginninderra Creek Latham, February 29

Contact Us!

Kippax Place, HOLT
PO Box 446
HOLT ACT 2615

Phone: 02 6278 3309
Fax: 02 6278 3926



The Ginninderra Catchment Group is an incorporated umbrella group of community volunteers working in the water catchment of the Ginninderra Creek.

The primary focus of the Group is advancing the health of the Ginninderra Catchment through effective engagement with government, agencies, business, schools and the catchment community. We have a strong commitment to community education and capacity building and seek to create diverse opportunities for people to become involved in catchment management, decision-making and on-ground action.

The Ginninderra Catchment group is funded by the Commonwealth Caring for our Country program, and the ACT Government contribution made that complements the Caring for our Country program:



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OUR
COUNTRY