



## GINNINDERRA CATCHMENT GROUP NEWS MARCH 2017

As detailed in this newsletter, the GCG community has lots of activities happening on ground and in planning. We are also enhancing our governance with a focus on finance system and policies and continuing to lift our communications with the development and implementation of a draft communication plan. Meetings with key stakeholders, including local MLAs and ACT Directorates, continue. **Our next GCG General Meeting will be held on Monday 10th April (one week later than usual schedule).** I hope to see our members there.

Sandy Lolicato

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### UPCOMING DATES

(\* means working bee)

- 19 March: Friends of Mt Painter\*
- 20–24 March: Frogwatch & Waterwatch at Questacon
- 21 March: Fire Ants emergency forum
- 24 March: Kangaroo plan submissions due
- 25 March: Charny Carny
- 26 March: Mt Rogers Landcare\*
- 27 March: northern national park forum

1 April: Umbagog Landcare\*

1&2 April: Help @ Weed Swap, Parkwood

2 April: Bird walk at Mt Painter

2 April: Friends of Aranda Bushland\*

3 April: Mt Rogers Landcare\*

8&9 April: Froggy help @ Strathnairn

10 April: Comments due on Ginninderry DA

10 April: GCG General Meeting

18 April: RSVP by noon for Black Mountain project launch

20 April: Black Mountain project launch

23 April: Friends of Mt Painter\*

30 April: Applications for FOG grants due

Wednesdays & Saturdays: North Belconnen & Junior Landcare\*

Thursdays: Friends of the Pinnacle\*

## General news from the GCG office

### *Strategic Planning update*

GCG/SACTCG Strategic planning is progressing. A project inception meeting with NGH Consulting and ACT Directorate staff will be held in late March to prepare for the process. A key objective of this process is to develop a plan that has strong ownership and agreement from our members and to examine future revenue sources for GCG. There will be a members' workshop in the coming months to discuss the plan. The GCG Executive has begun preparation for the process and identification of key priorities for GCG moving forward. Please contact Karissa or members of the GCG Executive if you would like to discuss.

### *Damon's farewell BBQ*

Thanks to everyone who came to John Knight Park on Lake Ginninderra on Sunday 5 March to thank Damon Cusack for his years of work for GCG, and to wish him well on his next adventures. Landcarers aged 3 to '73' represented most of GCG's groups and intermingled and exchanged news over time. GCG caterers put on a simple but delicious BBQ meal with pavlova as a fruit-topped indulgence. Members wanted it mentioned that the bowls, 'glasses' and cutlery were REUSABLE. The main message of the lunch was to raise our glasses to Damon and thank him for so much input into our landcaring and Waterwatch over 8 years. For example, there he is in the photo with the woody weeds cleared at Flynn in 2011.



### *Aboriginal Green Army team has begun*

The Aboriginal Green Army team began training this week. They are due to start on-ground work on 23 March. The team consists of 9 participants aged 17–24, most of whom are Aboriginal people. Karissa Preuss (GCG Coordinator), Wally Bell (Ngunawal Custodian) and Martine Franco (SACTCG Coordinator) provided the team with information about the project this week. The project will have a focus on restoring the cultural sites in the region as well as improving areas of national ecological significance. A local Aboriginal elder will provide cultural mentoring for the participants and the team will work closely with the Mulanggang Aboriginal Landcare Group. For more information about the Aboriginal Green Army team see [here](http://www.ginninderralandcare.org.au/node/1030) (<http://www.ginninderralandcare.org.au/node/1030>).

### *Frogs on display at Questacon*

This year Frogwatch and Waterwatch will be part of the Murray-Darling Basin Authority (MDBA)'s four-day exhibit at Questacon, 20–24 March, to coincide with World Water Day. **Find us at the Q-lab** where you can see and experience: a catchment model, a groundwater model, salinity testing, water mister, MDBA Run the River game, waterbugs, *and – not to be missed...our Green and Golden Bell frogs!*

### *Development of a remote frog survey device*

Frogwatch has been working in partnership with wireless-communication experts from the University of Canberra to develop a remote (frog) survey device, based on mobile phone technology. OPTUS has

recently come on board as a project partner, which is great news. Prototypes of the device will get deployed at three ponds in West Belconnen over the next few weeks to trial and test them in the field. The performance and the resources needed for the new device will be compared to traditional remote survey methods, such as sound recorders and in-person-surveys. This will be done by a UC Honours student and the results will be published at the end of the project. The project is supported by the ACT Government through Conservation, Planning and Research section of Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate.

### ***Aboriginal Waterways field trip***

GCG worked with Darren Chong (ACT Government NRM Facilitator) in coordinating a field trip focused on Aboriginal Waterways at two sites in the Catchment: Umbagog and Gubur Dhaura. This field trip, held on 23 February, was part of the Murray-Darling Basin Aboriginal Waterways Assessment (AWA) program. Wally Bell (Ngunawal Custodian) and Karissa Preuss (GCG Coordinator) spoke about GCG, with a focus on Aboriginal land management and cultural heritage. Water quality monitoring was undertaken and Karissa explained the relevance of this to the Catchment Health Indicator Program (CHIP). Aboriginal participants implemented the Aboriginal Waterways tool, which aims to consistently measure and prioritise river and wetland health to allow Traditional Owners to more effectively participate in water planning and management in the Murray-Darling Basin.

Participants included: representatives from the Murray Lower Darling Rivers Indigenous Nations (MLDRIN); Traditional owners from the ACT Region; Aboriginal staff from within ACT Government; Annie Lane (Executive Director of Environment, in the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate); Matt Kendall (Executive Manager – Water Policy and Catchment Management); and Mary Mudford (Manager – Healthy Country Section of Parks and Conservation).



### ***'Ginninderry' presentation to GCG; DA open for comment; Canberra Times article***

At the GCG Special General Meeting on 27 February, Tony Adams, with David Maxwell, gave a presentation about the proposed development 'Ginninderry'. 'Ginninderry' is the name of a proposed new four suburb development spanning the western boundary of the ACT and NSW, previously known as Riverview. GCG has been engaging with the developers for over 5 years. At the meeting Tony particularly talked about the threatened species in the area and how Riverview team have made efforts to find out considerable information so as not to interfere with these species of flora and fauna. A report outlining the Aboriginal heritage of the area is due to be released soon.

The GCG Working Group on this issue still has a number of concerns, which include: cultural heritage, threatened species, reserve design and impact of development of the natural feeling of the area. GCG considers a more precautionary approach to planning is required, i.e. that the existing E3 Environmental Management land remains as managed for biodiversity conservation, rather than being rezoned to urban land.

The Development Application for the first stage of the Ginninderry development is now available for comment, until 10 April: [http://www.planning.act.gov.au/development\\_applications/pubnote](http://www.planning.act.gov.au/development_applications/pubnote)

Some of the issues associated with the development were covered in the *Canberra Times* article on 13 March, at <http://www.canberratimes.com.au/act-news/ginninderra-falls-and-the-tussle-between-housing-and-land-protection-20170309-guuf60.html>

To read Riverview's ecological reports, including the Preliminary Biodiversity Survey done by GCG, see the Ginninderry reports library: <https://ginninderry.com/planning-and-community/reports-library/>.

Riverview has also had a number of videos produced about the area and its heritage.

### ***Ginninderra Falls: a special place on film***

The GCG Working Group on the Ginninderry issue have produced a short video showing the ecological and cultural importance of the Ginninderra Falls. The Ginninderra Falls is the most significant area in the lower Ginninderra Catchment. You can see the video at <https://vimeo.com/207234386/>.

### ***Waterwatch Bug Blitz***

It's that time of year when Waterwatch runs 'Bug Blitz'. We shall be running some community days at which you can come and help ID macroinvertebrates (water bugs). No firm dates have been set yet: this is a reminder and warning to look out for the announcement. For more information contact Kathryn Vincent in the GCG Office

### ***Radio Landcare***

On 21 February, GCG was the special guest on Radio Landcare broadcast through 2XX Community Radio, 98.3FM. Radio Landcare is on each Tuesday morning from 9 til 10am. It includes summaries of 'What's On' in the Landcare/catchment management community, and interviews that feature a wide variety of stakeholders including on-ground volunteers, coordinators, businesses, government and those with scientific and technical backgrounds. Karissa spoke about upcoming events in the Ginninderra Creek Catchment, including the Strategic Planning process, Aboriginal Green Army Team, Grassland Restoration project, Frogwatch and Catchment Health Indicator Program (CHIP) report. Radio Landcare is sponsored by Icon Water. **Tune in on Tuesdays from 9 am on 98.3FM.**

### ***25 March, Charny Carny***

The GCG and member groups will be represented at the 'outdoor' stall at Charnwood's Charny Carny this year, 11 am – 5 pm. See us there! (Charny carny details: <https://www.facebook.com/charnycarny/>)

### ***Landcare ACT update***

Landcare ACT (LACT) had its first meeting with new Chair Peter Bridgewater on 8<sup>th</sup> February. This meeting involved both the LACT Board and Members Council. Peter quickly stepped into the role of Chair and has been lifting LACT profile with recent media activity. At the meeting it was decided that key focus areas for LACT during 2017 would be Indigenous landcare and peri-urban issues; education was highlighted as another important issue. The LACT Members Council and specific subcommittees will be forwarding these issues. Contact Karissa if you would like more information. Peter will likely be attending the next GCG General Meeting to talk to members about Landcare ACT.

## *Northern National Park feasibility*

The ACT Government has made a commitment to undertake a feasibility study into establishing a new northern Canberra Region National Park, focused on grassy woodlands and including existing nature reserves. Karissa attended the Reference Group Meeting on 7 March as the Landcare ACT representative. There will be a forum for Landcarers/ParkCarers on 27 March from 5 pm, prior to the next meeting of the Reference Group. More information about the process will be on the GCG website soon, [www.ginninderralandcare.org.au/](http://www.ginninderralandcare.org.au/)

## *Draft Eastern Grey Kangaroo management plan submission*

GCG will be supporting a Landcare ACT (LACT) submission representing what we consider to be the view of the majority of GCG members. A letter to further garner perspectives from members will be sent out shortly. This is likely to outline that LACT broadly supports the plan as proposed by the Conservator of Flora and Fauna. Public comment on the Eastern Grey Kangaroo: Draft Controlled Native Species Management Plan is due by **24 March 2017** at [www.environment.act.gov.au/](http://www.environment.act.gov.au/). Please contact [landcare@ginninderralandcare.org.au](mailto:landcare@ginninderralandcare.org.au) for more information.

## *ACT Heritage Grants*

On Saturday 4 March, Minister Gentleman announced the opening of the new round of ACT Heritage Grants. The link below will take you to the ACT Heritage Grants page. If you have any ideas for projects that you would like assistance with, contact Karissa ([landcare@ginninderralandcare.org.au](mailto:landcare@ginninderralandcare.org.au)) to discuss. [http://www.environment.act.gov.au/heritage/heritage-and-the-community/heritage\\_grants\\_program](http://www.environment.act.gov.au/heritage/heritage-and-the-community/heritage_grants_program)

## **Member groups' news & other Catchment happenings**

### *Frogs in Autumn*

**AUTUMN HAS ARRIVED:** waterbodies are cooling down quickly and as a result audible frog activities have dropped off. My pond has gone from 2 more egg masses to nil calling sounds over the past 10 days. The last breeding efforts (of *Limnodynastis tasmaniensis*) were possibly prompted by my very overdue decision to clean out the pond. Plants from small reeds to watermilfoil had taken over and had turned the pond into a jungle. I only realised the full extent of it when I stepped into the pond. Where once had been water there was a fine but very dense mesh of roots- everywhere... It took a lot of elbow grease and, in the end, a saw to get through them. The excess plants/roots filled a large wheelbarrow to the brim – pretty impressive as the pond is only 1.5 m in diameter!! The initially brown and muddy water has since settled and the pond looks pretty again!! PLUS I can see large tadpoles swimming about and trying to catch a bit of warmth in sunny spots. I am sure they are much happier now that they have more space and better 'basking spots'. So, while out in the garden, getting trees and bushes and perennials whipped into shape for autumn/winter, you might want to check on the state of your pond as well, before it is too cold to get your feet wet!!!

Anke Maria Hoefer, Frogwatch Coordinator

### *Friends of Mt Painter ParkCare (3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of the month)*

Mt Painter's **next work parties** are on Sunday 19 March and Sunday 23 April.  
And there will be an **autumn bird-walk** led by Nicki Taws on Sunday 2 April.

**MARCH WORK PARTY. Sunday 19 March, 9 am – 12 noon**

**Location:** On the slope above the road up to the water tanks

**Meet:** At the reserve entrance between 20 and 22 Booth Crescent, Cook and follow the dirt road to your right.

**Tasks:** Weeding

**Wear:** Sturdy footwear and clothes to protect you from the sun, prickly weeds and grass seeds.

**Bring:** Some drinking water, a mug and some food to share for morning tea. Other drinks provided.

**AUTUMN BIRD WALK. Sunday 2 April, 7.30 am** for an hour or two.

**Meet:** At the reserve entrance between 20 and 22 Booth Crescent, Cook.

**Bring:** Binoculars if you can.

**APRIL WORK PARTY: Sunday 23 April, 9 am – 12 noon**

**For more information:** contact Sarah Hnatiuk on phones [6251 2228](tel:62512228) or [0424 263 565](tel:0424263565), or email [friends.of.mount.painter@gmail.com](mailto:friends.of.mount.painter@gmail.com)

*Sarah Hnatiuk, Convenor*

### ***Mt Rogers Landcare (4<sup>th</sup> Sunday and 1<sup>st</sup> Monday of the month)***

Our next working bee is on **Sunday 26 March, 9.00 am** and on **Monday 3 April**. See some of you then, & thank you!

*Rosemary Blemings, Convenor*

### ***Umbagog Landcare (1<sup>st</sup> Saturday of the month)***

**On Clean up Australia Day, Sunday 5 March**, despite forecast rain, we had a lovely day as 11 volunteers turned up to help (as well as two border collies! Thanks Chief and Whisky). We ended up with 8 bags of recyclables and 6 'rubbish' bags (some filled with recyclables because we had a limited number of recycling bags).

- Cigarette butts were mainly found in the car park area.
- Confectionary / fast food and other snack food wrappers were along roadside areas.
- Most other rubbish was brought in by the river, with the largest number of items including drink cans, plastic bottles and glass bottles (in that order).
- A major area where rubbish collected was either side of the river just upstream from the stepping stones.
- There was also a lot of rubbish around the Ginninderra Way underpass. The playgrounds were also cleaned up.
- **Noteworthy items** included an illegal fish trap and a roadwork witch's hat and a computer casing. Fish traps are ongoing problem at Umbagog: this is not the first illegal trap we have found.

Thank you to everyone for a successful Clean-up Day.

*Caroline Wenger, Convenor for 5 March*



## *Friends of Aranda Bushland (1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of the month)*

**TELSTRA VOLUNTEERS:** This group paid us a visit on 22 February to do follow-up weeding of St John's Wort in our newly acquired grassland. The day was appallingly hot and, although we expected 12 workers, only two showed up. These two worked gallantly until 2 pm, filling eight bags with seed heads, and then had an early mark before they collapsed from heat stroke.

At our monthly work party the following week we followed up on this job and cleared the area of almost all the remaining St John's Wort.



Left: The two valiant Telstra volunteers. Right: The Green Army wrangling star pickets.

**GREEN ARMY:** The Green Army came to the Aranda Snowgums reserve on 27 February and did three days' work for us, removing some old farm fences. Half a dozen young workers arrived with their supervisor and set to work on the 600 metres of fence. It had three strands of wire, to which netting was attached by ties which had to be laboriously removed with pliers, and there were star pickets every few metres, embedded in the concrete-hard ground.

We expected them to get about half way, and possibly have to leave the start pickets in position until the next fall of rain, but they finished the whole job, to our amazement and delight. The stile that used to cross the fence now stands enigmatically in the middle of the paddock (see photo).



The lonely stile.

*Jenny Andrews, Convenor, FOAB*

## **Around the region**

### *Weed Swap – call for volunteers*

**Please will you** volunteer time at Canberra Sand and Gravel's Landscaping yard along Southern Cross Drive - Parkwood Road, to help at this autumn's Weed Swap. Ideally, you will be at the green waste site for 2 hours.

We need one volunteer checking loads to identify those who are bringing in target weed species at the 'tip-face'. Target weeds are likely to have berries and be easily recognisable. We'll also accept *Agapanthus* heads as eligible species. Privet, Cotoneaster, Broom, Periwinkle, Ivy are the main weeds that attract **free** plants.

We also need one volunteer at the native plant stall (see last year's photo) helping attendees with selecting native plants as 'rewards' to eligible gardeners. At the stall, all the native plants will have labels and be arranged in height order.

We need volunteers throughout **8.30 am – 4.45 pm** both days.

Please contact Rosemary Blemings, [rosemary@blemings.org](mailto:rosemary@blemings.org)



### ***Fire Ants Down Under: National emergency tour***

The Invasive Species Council is holding a **Fire Ant forum** in Canberra on **21 March, 6.30 pm**, with US Fire Ant expert Dr Robert Puckett, who has a clear message: **'Failure to eradicate the current infestation of red fire ants in Queensland will eventually have devastating consequences for your entire country.'**

21 March 6:30 pm ANU Commons Room, Barry Drive, Acton.

**Tickets:** <https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/fire-ants-down-under-brisbane-sydney-melbourne-canberra-perth-tickets-32077443497>

Fire ants will stop us using our backyards and parks, damage our natural environment and have impacts on our health and infrastructure. All Australians need to know we can't afford to let this genie out of the bottle. To learn more, <https://invasives.org.au/australias-red-fire-ant-emergency-eradication-funding-urgently-needed>

### ***Project launch: Friends of Black Mountain, 20 April, Thursday***

We are invited to the official opening of the

**Black Mountain Woodland Walk Enhancement Project** by Minister Mick Gentleman:

**11 am Thursday 20 April 2017**, at Telstra Tower, lower ground floor.

The project features a series of interpretation signs and e-brochures displaying beautiful photographs and up to date information about the plants and vegetation of Black Mountain.

There are marker posts with Aboriginal artwork relating to plants along the route.

RSVP by **12 noon, 18 April**, to phone 6296 1936 or [friendsofblackmountain@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofblackmountain@gmail.com)

The project has been implemented by the ParkCare group Friends of Black Mountain together with the Molonglo Catchment Group, and supported by the ACT Government through the ACT Heritage Grants Program.

### ***Exhibition: Ginninderra environment, history and community***

**'BOTH SIDES OF THE FENCE'**

This is the title of an exhibition by Robert Bleyerveen, at Belconnen Arts Centre, 118 Emu Bank, Belconnen. The exhibition explores the symbolism of our first fence erected locally at Emu Bank around 1825. Bleyerveen responds with reflective contemplation to contextualise both sides of the fence with changing perspectives and attitudes.

*Robert will be sitting with the exhibition*

on Saturday 18 March and Saturday 25 March 2017. See

<https://www.facebook.com/events/1334810259890843/>

## *Ginninderra Field Station (CSIRO) development update*

The latest monthly newsletter from CSIRO is out now. It outlines two aspects of CSIRO's research (with partner organisations) that may feed into making this a 'science-backed sustainable urban development': (i) a way of identifying the electrical 'fingerprint' of individual electric devices in the home so as to improve energy efficiency; and (ii) the possibility of using four-dimensional models of suburbs, 'to map and project sustainable resource flows, recycling and environmental management benefits as the development unfolds'. You can sign up to the newsletter at <https://ginninderraproject.com.au/>

## *H2OK: Stormwater Education Program Launch*

On 20 February a new stormwater education program targeting Canberra and the surrounding regions of Cooma, Yass and Queanbeyan was launched. The Australian and ACT governments have joined forces to deliver an education program called **H2OK: Keeping our waterways healthy**. This is an effort to reduce pollutants such as rubbish, cigarette butts, soil, chemicals, paint, pet poo, and even leaves and grass from going down the stormwater drain. The program will engage with the community and teach people how they can help keep pollutants out of our waterways, similar to what Catchment Groups have long been doing. The program will run until June 2019 and engage with residents and businesses through a range of activities such as artwork on drain infrastructure, demonstration sites that show people how they can improve the quality of water coming off their block, and industry training. GCG was asked to comment on waterways in this catchment as part of the launch: see [here](#) for the article published in the *Canberra Times*. <http://bit.ly/2lQ4vA6>

## *Friends of Grasslands: small project grants*

Starting in 2017, Friends of Grasslands (FOG) is offering a small number of grants of \$500–\$1500 each to promote investment in our understanding and management of grassy ecosystems. A grant might enable the recipient to undertake a small project or add to a bigger project. Projects might include publications, research, education, on-ground work, advocacy, publicity and training. Projects which leverage additional resources will also be favoured. FOG will publicise the projects it funds, and may offer practical in-kind support. The recipient will need to keep FOG informed of progress, such as by writing about it for the FOG newsletter, giving talks to FOG, leading FOG visits to your sites, etc.

To apply for a grant, and keep paperwork to a minimum, please send FOG a short written application explaining the nature of your proposed project. FOG recommends that you contact the sub-committee (via email to [grants@fog.org.au](mailto:grants@fog.org.au)) to ensure your idea fits with FOG's objectives before you start your application. You don't have to be a FOG member to apply.

**Closing date for the initial round of grants is 30 April 2017.**