



# THE GINNINDERRA CATCH-UP

Ginninderra Catchment Group Newsletter



At Giralang Pond, along the Ginninderra Creek.

## *News from the Convenor and the Executive Officer*

It has been a busy month. Even though our future is not secured, we have some promising signs.

### ***Budget Submission for sustainable funding (ACT Government)***

GCG has been working together with Landcare ACT, Southern ACT Catchment Group and Molonglo Conservation Group in an attempt to secure funding from the ACT Government for next financial year. A budget submission was developed with a focus on 2019–2020 transitional funding and future sustainable funding (on par with what the Commonwealth provided under National Landcare Program) and based on the assumption that Waterwatch and Frogwatch will continue to be funded. Similar to last year, a communication plan is being implemented with a focus on meeting with Ministers, MLAs and senior bureaucrats. LACT will be providing a strong coordinated voice. **We are meeting with ACT Minister’s and MLAs in the next month to lobby our case. Any emails of support would be appreciated.**

### ***Urban Waterways Grants (Commonwealth Labor)\****

On 28 January, the Labor Opposition announced a grant program to restore urban waterways (See [here](#) for more information). Andrew Leigh’s office (Member for Fenner) invited GCG to put in a proposal prior to the grant round opening, which if successful, will be treated as a pre-election promise. We submitted a proposal that would significantly support and value-add to the work of community Landcare in restoring the Ginninderra Creek Catchment. Andrew Leigh’s Office have created an online petition to demonstrate community demand for restoring the Ginninderra Creek. **Please add your name to this [link to help Ginninderra Creek be chosen as a priority project site](https://www.tonyburke.com.au/act/ginninderra): <https://www.tonyburke.com.au/act/ginninderra>. It would be appreciated if you could distribute this link as appropriate.**

*\*In relation to this item, this newsletter has 9 photos of the creek (one above, and eight below in [News of the Catchment Member Groups](#)).*

### ***Other grant opportunities***

We have submitted an ACT environment grant application on *Managing Box Elder Threats to Biodiversity in the Ginninderra Creek*. A Commonwealth Community Environment Program will provide electorate based funding up to \$150,000 if the Coalition return to Government (refer <http://environment.gov.au/cep>).

### ***ON OTHER MATTERS***

**Governance Review.** Christine Hawkins from Cinnabar has been contracted by ACT Government’s Environmental Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate (EPSDD) to review the governance arrangements around NRM and catchment

management within the ACT Government. She is talking to stakeholders to get perspectives on how the current arrangements are working and potentially consider alternative options. Ken, Karissa, Bernie and I met with Christine and emphasised the importance of governance arrangements to enable the community to take a stronger stewardship role in Landcare in the ACT.

**Partner meetings with ICON Water and CSIRO.** This has been very positive and ensures an ongoing relationship. CSIRO has raised a strong interest in continuing to partner with GCG on conservation works in the future development of the Ginninderra Field Station – a community site visit for GCG members is planned in June. ICON Water have been receptive on our comments on the sewerage trunk line.

**Nature in the City Inquiry.** The three Catchment Groups and LACT presented at the inquiry and emphasised the important of community engagement in decision making. The Hansard transcript of the event can be seen here <http://www.hansard.act.gov.au/hansard/2017/comms/environment13a.pdf>.

**Last Members Meeting Monday 1 April.** The meeting had a strong focus on Future Funding for Landcare and Waterways. The discussion on waterways included an update on the Healthy Waterways Initiative, Waterwatch and the CHIP Report release, and draft proposals under the Urban Waterways Grants (as per above).

**Protecting Our Catchment Project.** We have now completed the first stage of this project to provide a Framework for a Regional NRM strategy for the ACT and report on Catchment Models applicable to the region. The final report, which will be on the website shortly, has a number of recommendations which will be considered in a governance review being led by EPSDD (see above). A significant recommendation is adopting a regional NRM governance model that is community based and independent of Government, drawing on the lessons to be learnt from successful approaches of other jurisdictions.

Under the tranche 2 stage of this project, GCG is drafting a framework for “Managing ACT infrastructure corridors for enhanced environmental outcomes”. This framework will be completed in the coming weeks and highlight the benefits of a community / government partnership model.

**Ginninderry BOB (Bush on the Boundary).** Following a workshop to review the BoB’s terms of reference and future, the membership of the group has been expanded to improve effectiveness of this reference group. It now has membership from the Ginninderry Group, GCG, Ginninderry Aboriginal Advisory Group, Ginninderra Falls Association, Canberra Ornithologists Group, ACT for Bees, Greening Australia, Friends of Grasslands, Belconnen Community Council, Conservation Council, TCCS, Suburban Land Agency and Strathnairn Arts Centre.

**Update of Tour de Ginninderra Brochure.** A Project Team has been set up and we are investigating funding opportunities for updating the brochure, which identifies key sites along the Ginninderra Creek, for use by bicyclists and walkers.

**Appreciation to Staff.** I would to express my appreciation to Karissa, Bernie, Anke Maria, Bruno, Fiona and Julian for their strong passion in their work in this uncertain funding environment.

#### **Future events:**

Monday 6 May - Executive meeting

Early June (date tba) – Field trip to CSIRO Ginninderra Field Station

Monday 3 June – Members meeting

*Santo Lolicato, Convenor*

## *Waterwatch news*



### **IN OUR CATCHMENT – December to February (Summer) 2018–19**

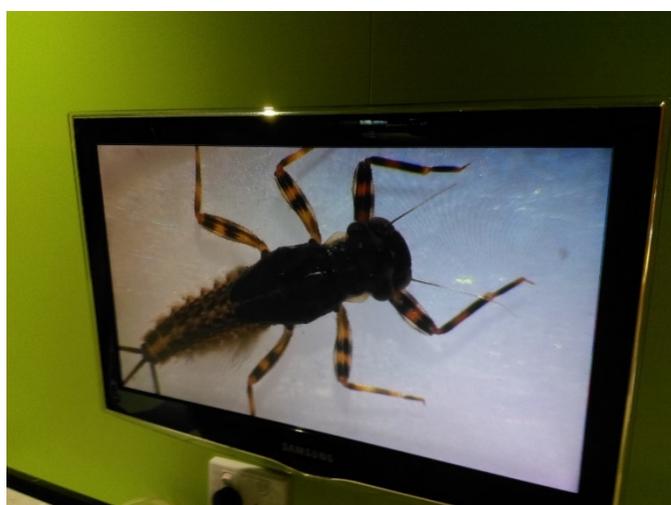
After such dry months during Winter and Spring in 2018, it was good to see more rain in the Canberra region during Summer. December showed higher than average monthly rainfall, with more than 10 ml of rain on two occasions (35.4 ml and 29.5 ml, respectively). January rainfall was slightly higher than average, with 10 days of rain but only one occasion over 10 ml. February had slightly lower than average rainfall, with 6 days of rain, but on two occasions it was more than 10 ml (11.2 ml and 30.2 ml). Mean maximum temperatures during all summer were considered higher than average, with more than 40°C on six occasions in January

Electrical conductivity values were in the ‘excellent’ range (Fig. 1) in three sites in northern Canberra, specifically in Jarramlee Pond (STW005), Dam near Madre

Theresa School (GDC010), and McKellar Wetlands (MCW002). Water levels in the large dam in Mulligans Flat Nature Reserve continue to be low, yielding elevated values of turbidity (up to 100 NTU). In the Yass region, nitrates continue to show high reading in the Yass River within the township (YAS370 and YAS400) and Murrumbidgee River (CMM110, CMM100), with values in the ‘degraded’ range. On the other hand, turbidity values in those sites are within ‘excellent’ and ‘good’ range (Fig. 1).

**Fig. 1. Threshold values for water quality in the ACT Waterwatch program (Catchment Health Indicator Program – CHIP report).**

Parameter	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Degraded
pH	6.6 – 7.8	6.1 – 6.5, 7.9 – 8.0	5.7 – 6.0, 8.1 – 8.2	5.4 – 5.6, 8.3 – 8.6	< 5.4, > 8.6
EC (uS)	≤ 98	99 – 156	157 – 212	213 – 404	> 404
Turbidity (NTU)	≤ 10	11 – 16	17 – 36	37 – 90	> 90
DO (mg/L)	<i>(Not included in CHIP)</i>				
DO Sat. (%)	88 – 99	84 – 87, 100	81 – 83, 101 – 106	78 – 80, 107 – 115	< 78, > 115
Phosphorus (mg/L)	< 0.02	0.02 – 0.03	0.04 – 0.05	0.06 – 0.08	> 0.08
Nitrate (mg/L)	< 1.0	1.0 – 1.3	1.4 – 1.7	1.8 – 2.6	> 2.6



**Fig. 2. World Water Week at Questacon, in partnership with the Murray-Darling Basin Authority (MBDA) Education Team (in detail a mayfly nymph, Leptophlebiae family).**

### 2018 CHIP REPORT LAUNCH

Thanks to all our volunteers for your support in the Waterwatch program. Here is the link for the 2018 CHIP report:

<http://www.act.waterwatch.org.au/Files/CHIP/CHIP%202018.pdf>

These are media releases related to the 2018 CHIP report:

<https://the-riotact.com/dry-weather-taking-a-toll-on-act-waterways/292606>

<https://www.canberratimes.com.au/environment/climate-change/canberra-waterways-and-platypus-suffer-under-record-temperatures-20190324-p5173m.html>

### PLATYPUS TALK

Please check the details of the talk by Geoff Williams from the Australian Platypus Conservancy, organised by the Field Naturalists Association next month.

**Thursday 2 May 2019, 7 pm**, RN Robertson Building, Biology Place, ANU (Slatyer Seminar Room).

‘Keeping track of the world’s strangest mammal’. Geoff Williams, Director of the Australian Platypus Conservancy, will highlight the features that make the platypus so special and explain its conservation needs. He’ll give hints on how to spot platypus in the wild and talk about opportunities for becoming involved in the Australian Platypus Monitoring Network (APMN) – an exciting new ‘citizen science’ project that is being launched to track how the species is faring across its entire range. **ADMISSION FREE – ALL WELCOME.**

*Bruno Ferronato, Waterwatch Coordinator*

## Frogwatch news

Please consider cat management in relation to frogs. Cats, both feral and domestic, damage frogs and lizards as well as birds and native mammals, with millions dying every year.



**Until 28 June**, we can contribute our thoughts to the ACT Government, which is

asking how we can better manage cats in the ACT. They have launched a [Draft ACT Cat Plan](#) (the draft plan). We can **find out more** and have a say by:

- **Taking their cat survey**
- **Reading the draft plan**
- **Visiting an information session** (dates to be announced), or
- **Sending a written submission** on the draft plan to <mailto:epsddcomms@act.gov.au>

Consultation closes on 28 June 2019 and the survey should take less than 10 minutes to complete.

*Anke Maria Hoefler, Frogwatch Coordinator*

---

## *News from the Catchment Member Groups*

### **JARRAMLEE PARK LANDCARE**

We recently cut and dabbled suckers while they were still nice and green, coming up from Chinese Elms which were cut down some years ago but not poisoned. The cut off branches are still to be removed.

I discovered a European Wasp Nest in one of our plant sites by Jarramlee Pond, which was reported to the TCCS ACT Landcare Co-ordinator on 4th April and the information was passed on to the Wasp people, but as of Easter it was still not eradicated. Will check it again. It is not likely to be a danger where it is, but we would like it to be gone.

We had to cancel our last meeting due to illness and incapacity. Plans to put in some plants are currently on hold awaiting advice as to timing and availability. It has suddenly turned cold after some glorious autumn weather.

The research on water quality at Jarramlee Pond by Canberra University is ongoing until June. The last big downpour at the end of March filled it up again, plus some more rain in mid April and is now at normal level.

STOP PRESS: Jarramlee Pond, as of Monday 29th April, is being lowered again after reaching full capacity.

*Pamela Fawke, Jarramlee Park Landcare*

### **NORTH BELCONNEN LANDCARE**

The 'Scrape and Sow' grassland, also known as the Betty Davis Wildflower Patch, beside the Evatt Footbridge, began a year ago. Our senior landcarer Betty Davis died when it was being sown. Betty's husband Harry and daughter Susan Jameson visited the Patch recently. This patch is a joint ACT Government and Greening Australia venture with our Group doing the ongoing care under the guidance of Nicki Taws of Greening Australia. The surface soil containing high nutrients and weed seeds (particularly Chilean Needlegrass and African Lovegrass) was mechanically removed to a depth of 10 centimetres and native grasses and wildflowers were sown with a machine.

One morning recently while I was looking at this patch from the footbridge, two other people did the same. Upon enquiring about their interest I was told they were from Greening Australia and had done most of the work. One had "scraped" and the other "sown". They were amazed at the result and said it was their best ever over 5 years. This great result was assisted by Mother Nature with a summer flood followed by the hard work of a small team of landcare weeders coming up to 3 times a week throughout the summer months at 7 am to pull out the weeds.

The Joey Scouts came to our site recently with a group of children who were very keen to participate in some landcare activities. We started with our landcare songs and then they re-mulched the track down to the footbridge. Buckets of mulch were spread over the newspapers to renovate this track that had become somewhat weedy. The large mulch pile was donated by Gye Draney, a tree surgeon, just in time for the Joey's visit. We now have a large mulch pile on the southern side of the creek too, donated by the same person. See the photos of the Joeys' Visit.



Our Landcare start times will to be later as the weather cools. Currently we start at **9 am on Saturdays**. Wednesday groups for Mums and Bubs and home-schooled children are currently by arrangement when families can come. See the photo of Lenore with a junior landcarer with his dog on top of the mulch pile.

Please check our Facebook page for any further information. Look in "Open Groups" and type in "North Belconnen Landcare Group".

*Lenore Hodgkinson, North Belconnen Landcare*

### **FRIENDS OF MULLIGANS FLAT**

*The Friends of Mulligans Flat has over 540 members who have registered on our My Volunteer database Through this database, supported by the Woodlands and Wetlands Trust, and FaceBook, we communicate updates about the Mulligans Flat Wildlife Sanctuary, upcoming events and activities. Friends are able to participate in Parkcare activities with PCS rangers and can also get involved in a number of ecological projects managed by the Trust and ANU.*

### **The April Work Party and the Search for the Lost Echidna!**

On the 10th of April a group of courageous Friends of Mulligans ventured out to help Kristi from the Woodlands and Wetlands Trust find a lost echidna with a GPS tracking device. Along the way they came across bettongs, wallabies and 3 echidnas, but sadly not *the* echidna. A great adventure in which the Friends' echidna tracking skills were honed, ready for the echidna count later in the year!

**Turtle Nest Patrol** was an initiative that began last November, run by Dr Ricky Spencer and team with the help of the Trust, Friends and volunteers. This project was dedicated to finding and protecting turtle nests from any predators. Quolls are the major threat inside the sanctuary, and foxes outside the sanctuary at our sister site Jerrabomberra Wetlands. Two potential nests were identified and protected by volunteers this season.

**Turtle Hatchlings!** The second stage of the turtle nest patrol was the turtle hatchling project. This was dedicated to collecting the hatchlings shortly after they had left the nest and taking them to a nursery to grow strong before being released back in to the sanctuary. Friends and volunteers were rostered daily to check the nesting sites and collect any new hatchlings. Sadly there were no hatchlings from the sanctuary, but there were 15 hatchlings found at Jerrabomberra Wetlands! These hatchlings were collected and will be re-released with teeny tiny radio transmitters so the movement patterns and survival rate can be monitored. With the weather getting colder Turtle Patrol has now closed for this season.

**Autumn Seasonal Work Party:** On Sunday 7 April the Friends helped Ranger Dave stabilise areas that had started to erode away from heavy rain. To do this the banks are built up and covered in wood debris, to help slow down the flood of water and erosion. See below for photos!

**Monthly Work Party** – held on the second Wednesday of each month. May’s work party will be taking place on **Wednesday 8 May**. Meet at the Woolshed at 9:30 am.  
*Bridget Pearl & Julia Raine, for Friends of Mulligans Flat*



**FRIENDS OF MOUNT PAINTER**

**Autumn weeding.** The last couple of months have been dominated, for Friends of Mount Painter, by the need to weed as much as we can of the recently discovered infestation of Cobbler’s Peg, before it goes to seed. The largest patch of it is unfortunately at the summit of the hill and so not reachable by vehicles that could bring spraying equipment up there. We have done a great deal of hand-pulling and filled more than 30 bags with seedheads, and there is much more to be done. With their



small barbs, the seeds are surprisingly good at attaching to clothing and animal fur and travelling far and wide. We are finding small Cobbler’s Peg infestations in many other parts of the reserve that are foci for the further spread of this very invasive weed.

**Autumn bird walk.** A much more enjoyable activity was a bird walk with Nicki Taws on 28 April. Nicki took us through the young woodland on the lower, western slopes of the hill. We saw more than 25 species ranging in size from Weebills to a Wedge-tailed Eagle. We were kept extra busy tracking the tiny birds in small mixed flocks that flitted past. A Peregrine Falcon overhead caused much concern among the flock.



**A stall at St Vincent Primary School’s fete.** And in mid-March, we had a stall at St Vincent’s fete, along with Friends of Aranda Bushland, to raise awareness of our reserves and the work we do on them.

*Sarah Hnatiuk, Friends of Mt Painter*

### UMBAGONG LANDCARE

On Friday 5 March, Want Place grassland received its annual mow using a spotlessly clean slasher piloted by Mick from Belconnen depot of TCCS. (Actually, its last mow was April 2017 but biomass had not climbed very high during two hot dryish summers, as you see in the photo.) Slash was raked and removed from the best *Themeda* areas and spread onto exotics under the trees near cycle path.



Allan McLean, the new TCCS volunteer coordinator, came along to see the end of the mowing action and we had a chance to talk about issues here, and Umbagong in general, along the lines of the on-site meeting we had in about 2018 with Rachel Tokley and Dean Freeman. Topics included removing exotic saplings and thickets from creek, Lovegrass control badly needed between creek and cycle path near axe grinding grooves, and the hope that this could be done via a cool burn with participation of the Indigenous Landcare group. We also discussed spraying of Lovegrass in other areas as outlined in the priority map sent to TCCS January 2019. Finally, Allan was given some background on the ICON trunk sewer enhancement.

*John Fitz Gerald, Umbagong Landcare*

### GINNINDERRA CREEK – UMBAGONG AND BEYOND



This photo shows a favourite Ginninderra Creekside place for many generations of locals: the Latham Stepping Stones.

The Poplar leaves are being held back from a speedy journey downstream by twigs and stout reed stems forming ephemeral obstructions across gaps between the stones. The water level had risen from rain earlier in the week reactivating the rapids and flushing out the flow.

After days of calm, unseasonably warm weather the westerly wind was strong and cool. Every deciduous tree lost its grip on leaves; they're blowing down in their thousands. For the next

few days we can enjoy the mosaics of colour the leaves create before decay or desiccation begins.

Decaying leaves, especially *en masse* from deciduous trees, in the creek's water affects water quality with oxygen being drawn from the water for the decay process; oxygen needed by hundreds of species of aquatic invertebrates and the animals that feed on them or their larvae.

Members of Ginninderra's Landcare groups have assembled suites of photographs showing the infestation of environmental weeds that pervades the whole length of Ginninderra Creek, its tributaries and stormwater drains. Eight of the photos are below, and a ninth is at the head of this newsletter.

Thank you Pam & Fred, Lyn & Graham, Eric, Caroline & Lucy, Anke-Maria on her Kippax to Page cycling excursion, Lenore & Ken, Denise, Fleur, Bob and Lawson's Rainer for being out and about photographing the creekline whilst the invasives' colours still showed the extent of the problem (or having historical photos that will contribute to the project.).

The invasive species growing in the creek-bed divert water flow and take water from the native plants that depend on it. We didn't specifically identify the weeds photographed as there's "every [environmental] weed in the book" taking water ultimately from the Murrumbidgee. It's to be hoped that the evidence we've gathered will reinforce the message that all the catchments' volunteer landcarers need professional help for their waterways if creeks and rivers are to remain healthy and naturally Australian!

Back to the leaves: I wondered whether any families had been to the Stepping Stones in their holidays to enjoy the mini-spectacle of the leaves that were thwarted on their journeys? The effects of chance obstructions at the Stepping Stones, creekside and in the gutters by our homes can offer interesting experiences about water behaviour to those who have a few minutes outdoors during or after rain. Nature has much to teach us if we respectfully think of our surroundings as part of ourselves; our outdoor classrooms.

*Rosemary Blemings, Umbagong Landcare and Mt Rogers Landcare*



**Along the Ginninderra Creek corridor.**

***(See Urban Waterways Grants, on p.1 of this newsletter)***

*L-R, top to bottom: New wetland below the Lake Ginninderra dam wall. Where Dunlop meets West Macgregor. McKellar wetland – a frog hot spot, says the sign (Rosemary has cut the weeds down since this photo). McKellar wetland’s north-west corner. Ex-transmission station at Lawson. Lawson hill in the background with its native grassland (Lake Ginninderra in foreground). The creek northwest of Crace. CSIRO field station now, before redevelopment. GCG has a proposal to restore the Ginninderra Creek Corridor.*

**SUTTON LANDCARE – Weeds: what can we do?**

On **11 June 2019, 7.30 pm**, Brett Lees, Senior Biosecurity Officer for the Yass Valley Council, will join the Sutton Landcare group for our June presentation, **‘Weeds in our region: What can we do?’**.

As usual we will meet at the Sutton primary School from 7.30 pm. We will talk about the new Yass Valley Council weed strategy: The weed Action Plan. Also discuss the inventory Sutton Landcare Group did of prevalent weeds in our area of concern to residents of Sutton and surrounds. We will discuss how Landcare and Yass Valley Biosecurity Staff can collaborate to manage our most invasive and persistent weeds through chemical, mechanical and biological control and best land management practices. Following the presentation, supper will be provided with an opportunity to talk further with Brett Lees. For further information on Sutton Landcare Group, please contact our secretary on [sutton.landcare@gmail.com](mailto:sutton.landcare@gmail.com).

*Arnold Dekker, Sutton Landcare Group*

# Opportunities around the region

## **MCLEODS CREEK – CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS FOR CASSINIA CONTROL**

**3 May Saturday, 10 am, Gundaroo NSW (Yass River catchment)**

Come and help remove *Cassinia arcuata* (Sifton Bush) seedlings at Mcleods Creek Nature Reserve, just outside Gundaroo NSW. Already, 3000 trees and shrubs have been planted in the endangered Box–Gum woodland by dedicated volunteers from the Gundaroo and Canberra communities. But *Cassinia arcuata* is invading.

*Cassinia arcuata* is native to the Southern Tablelands region, but it can potentially outcompete recruiting native flora. Much *Cassinia* has already been removed by NPWS staff, Green Army, contractors, and FOG – *and volunteers are needed to help maintain that progress.*

Secateurs and long-handled loppers are provided, and there will also be morning tea. **Register by 3 May** with Susannah Power, ph. 0417 295 995 or via [susannah.power@environment.nsw.gov.au](mailto:susannah.power@environment.nsw.gov.au). Susannah will give you directions if you've not been to Mcleods Creek before.

## **FIELD DAYS: MCLEODS CREEK GULLY RESTORATION, 14–18 MAY, GUNDAROO NSW**

NSW National Parks & Wildlife Service will hold **community field days on 14–18 May at Mcleods Creek Nature Reserve**, near Gundaroo NSW, to cost-effectively stabilise eroding drainage lines. These are 'Learn by doing!' field days. The team will reshape gullies, cover exposed soils, construct sediment collection points, spread straw and logs, and plant or sow trees, etc., into the creeklines.

**Register** (essential) with Ranger Susannah Power, ph.0417295995, or email [susannah.power@environment.nsw.gov.au](mailto:susannah.power@environment.nsw.gov.au), if you have time to learn in these hands-on sessions, or if you'd like to share your experiences and knowledge about this type of work.

Equipment and lunch are provided. Bring your own hat, water bottle, workboots and clothes to get messy in.

---

Ginninderra Catchment Group connects, supports and leads local communities to improve the health of Ginninderra Creek and surrounding environments.

ACT and Region Frogwatch Program and the Ginninderra and Yass components of Upper Murrumbidgee Waterwatch operate from the GCG office.

Website:

<http://ginninderralandcare.org.au>

Office: Kippax Health Centre, Holt

Phone: 02 6278 3309

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Ginninderra Catchment Group, Frogwatch and Waterwatch (Ginninderra Ck & Yass R) are grateful for support from

