

1 OCTOBER 2019

Website: <https://ginninderralandcare.org.au/>



THE GINNINDERRA CATCH-UP

Ginninderra Catchment Group Newsletter



Volunteers sampling waterbugs in Yass River. *Photo: Bruno Ferronato.*

News from the Convenor

I hope everybody is enjoying the warm conditions. As detailed in Karissa's report below, CSIRO hosted a very successful field trip of the Ginninderra Experimental Station and outlined issues in the proposed development. GCG Staff have worked tirelessly in the last two weeks to put together a number of applications within the Community Environment Program (Commonwealth program across electorates) and Adopt-a-Park (ACT Government). The proposals have demonstrated the strong partnership spirit across the catchment community. I am optimistic that we will be successful in a number of these proposals, and in the establishment of a number of new landcare groups and significant on-ground works across the waterways and adjoining grasslands. I was fortunate to be involved in the Mulligans Flat Strategic Plan workshop – this is an exciting period for the Sanctuary – particularly with the expanded fence and new visitor's centre.

Santo Lolicato, Convenor

News from the Executive Officer

CSIRO FIELD TRIP

On Tuesday 17th September, CSIRO hosted GCG members on a field trip to the CSIRO Ginninderra Experimental Station, where urban development will be undertaken in the future. During the morning, we visited 7 sites on the 701 hectare property, with a focus on the areas that will be in the conservation zone following urban development. CSIRO scientists, as well as Wally Bell and Ken Hodgkinson, provided valuable information about the ecological and cultural values of the site and explained some of the innovative research being undertaken. Site focus areas included: Blakelys Red Gum provenance trials, rare Eucalypt hybrids, Little Eagle, Halls creek, Grassland restoration, community shrub plantings into Box–Gum Woodland, Aboriginal Scar trees and cultural heritage, threatened grassland fauna. Thank you to CSIRO and GCG members who attended for a valuable experience (see more about the field trip in member-group news below).

WATERWAYS EDUCATION

- GCG people have completed the H2OK Water Education contract. This involved stencilling drains with messages to increase community awareness of living in a catchment and the need to reduce pollutants entering stormwater drains.
- We are now working on community Water education through our funding from the ACT Government. This project will provide community-driven education activities aimed at 1) reducing pollutants into the waterways, and 2) generating interest in stewardship groups to care for the new Healthy Waterways assets.

JAMISON DISPLAY

GCG was part of a joint display and community education stall, involving 9 local community environmental groups, which was held at Jamison Plaza from 13 to 15 September. This was an opportunity to provide information to the general public about Catchment Health, water-quality issues and community environmental stewardship more generally. The photo (*by Sarah Hnatiuk*) shows Rosemary Blemings beside one of the GCG display panels, holding the GCG information handouts. Thanks to all involved in making the stall a success!



ADOPT-A-PARK

GCG worked with member Landcare Groups to submit a number of Expressions of Interest as part of the ACT Government Adopt-a-Park Grant Scheme. If successful, these EOs will support existing and emerging stewardship groups to improve and

maintain their local areas and get more people involved.

COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT PROGRAM

GCG submitted a number of Expressions of Interest to both the Fenner and Canberra electorates as part of the Community Environment Program. EOIs are focussed on riparian restoration, grassland restoration, woody weed control and Landcare for millennials. We will hear back this week, which projects have made it through to application stage, with **applications due on 10th October**.

Karissa Preuss, Executive Officer

Waterwatch news

SPRING BUG BLITZ

Starting this week our Spring bug blitz (September/October), we will be sampling macroinvertebrates (water bugs) throughout Northern Canberra and Yass. This activity is part of our assessment of river quality as water bugs are good indicators of catchment health. If you are interested in joining, please get in touch: waterwatch@ginninderralandcare.org.au

WATERWATCH QAQC

Waterwatch program will host our Spring Quality Assurance, Quality Control (QAQC) in the Ginninderra Creek region on the 30/11/19. Venue and details to be confirmed soon.

WATERWATCH EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Our educational activities will continue until July 2020, so if you know any teacher or school that might be interested, please contact Bruno at 62783309 or waterwatch@ginninderralandcare.org.au

NEWS AND EVENTS

Please check our updates at News and Events for the Waterwatch program at: <http://www.act.waterwatch.org.au/news-events.html>



Waterwatch education activities at the NAIDOC Week Event in Yass.

Photo: Bruno Ferronato.

Bruno Ferronato, Waterwatch Coordinator

Frogwatch news



FROGWATCH CENSUS MONTH IS HERE!!

Tuesday the 1st of October is the official start of this year's FrogCensus.

This year **the Census lasts the entire month of October!!!**

New and previous Frogwatchers are welcome – the more the better. To collect frog data you need to be willing to commit 2 of your evenings during October to visit one or more frog sites and record the sounds there for 3 minutes.

If you plan to be a Frogwatcher in 2019, please check the full Frogwatch information attached, and the safety guidelines. I have set up an [online booking sheet](#) to try and maximise the number of sites that are surveyed this year. Details are in the attached information file.

Training is ESSENTIAL for new Frogwatchers, and recommended for those who have done it before. Training in **Canberra** is on:

Thursday 10 October, 6 – 8.30 pm

or Friday 18 October, 6 – 8.30 pm,

or Wednesday 16 October at Cooma NSW, 6 – 8.30 pm.

To **book your spot at training**, see the attached full Frogwatch information.

[Note from a new Frogwatcher: I attended the first training session for 2019, last Friday 27 September, along with a nearly full house of other volunteers. I learned so much! Then lots of frogs were calling when we went on the training walk after the quick supper of hot soup and breads that was provided in the booking cost. Thanks, Anke Maria, for all the info, and the delicious soup!]

OTHER THINGS HAPPENING IN THE OFFICE

Spring is always extremely busy – definitely no time to be bored!!

A main source of excitement is the **2019 Tadpole Kits for Schools** program, during which 120 tadpole kits will go out at the start of Term 4, for 10 weeks at a local school (Pre- to High).

Another great happening is the formation of a **Frog Taskforce** planning to do more remote frog surveys with a focus on rarer frog species. If you are a keen frog-chaser in reasonably good health and with some free nights in late summer, please let me know and I will put you on my taskforce list.

I am looking forward to another successful and action-packed spring, with plenty of surveys submitted via our online portal. **The person submitting the highest number of surveys will win a dinner cooked by me** – it's my way of giving back to you!

LOOKING FOR SOMETHING ELSE TO DO IN DAYTIMES?

Here are a few other [monitoring programs](#) that you can get involved in – but

PLEASE keep the **nights for frogs** 😊: [Carp love 20](#) or join a [Waterwatch Bug Blitz](#)



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That's it from me for now. Feel free to get in touch, by email to frogwatch@ginninderralandcare.org.au, or phone 62783309 during business hours.

Frogwatch ACT and Region is run by the Ginninderra Catchment Group through funding provided by the ACT Government.



Anke Maria Hoefer, Frogwatch Coordinator

News from the Catchment Member Groups

MT ROGERS NOTES

Dr Jacqui Stol, a grassland ecologist of CSIRO, led our visit to the CSIRO Ginninderra Field Station on 17 September. It was exciting to be in those new habitats and open-space places. We were offered fascinating, instructive and inspiring glimpses of the CSIRO land, and it was so interesting to see familiar places from the different angles our journey presented. Jacqui's explanations made the Ginninderra Creek catchment come alive as a riverine system and landscape when given ecological perspectives.

The photos in this article illustrate different stories for me now:

- the incredible achievements of CSIRO scientists over many decades;



- the persistence required to undertake experiments for agriculture;
- the way more recent rehabilitation programs are informing land management for the coming decades;
- the reverence shown for the ancient landforms, Box–Gum Woodland trees and NTG habitats as a result of understanding fragile soils, the area’s hydrology and other species needs throughout the CSIRO property.

Photos, top: Ginninderra Creek (green in this image) flowing through the Field Station, as seen from Percival Hill in April 2019, showing the proximity of the CSIRO experimental sites. Note the crimson foliage belongs to flourishing Hawthorn trees.

Middle: The view to the south from Ginninderra Field Station, 17 September.

Bottom: View towards Mt Rogers (with its telco tower in the distance), from the sheds near Kuringa Drive. *Photos: Rosemary Blemings.*



We are grateful to Jacqui for showing us this incredible gem on our doorsteps in the Ginninderra catchment.

*Rosemary Blemings,
Convenor*

UMBAGONG NOTES

First, a reminder (sent by a Mt Rogers supporter) about snake season.

<https://www.facebook.com/159832767891643/posts/528734451001471?sfn=s=mo>

The message is slightly different, perhaps, from the signs Rick Nehmy put up along the creek corridor at Latham: **"Snakes live here. They are not usually aggressive. If you meet one stay calm and back away slowly while maintaining eye contact."**

Anyway, please be aware of snakes being around in our shared habitats once the nights become warmer.



Sightings at Umbagong in late winter included a Rakali (also known as native water rat), photographed swimming (*see photo*), and Frogmouths. The Frogmouths could be found daytime roosting nearer their proposed nest sites in August. Few people know where to look for these delightful but cryptic birds and where they regularly nest. There can be several pairs within a few hectares if there are gardens with blossoming

flowers and therefore insects nearby.

In our working bee on 31 August we wore hi-vis vests and removed poplars. The photos (by Caroline Wenger) show Lucy (top) and James (below) in action.



Most recently, on 28 September, members of Umbagog Landcare Group participated in a trial organised by grassland experts Ken Hodgkinson and John Fitz Gerald to see how successful we can be in enriching remnant *Themeda* grassland with forbs. We planted a *Themeda*-rich rocky area with 60 plants including *Bulbine glauca* (Rock lily), *Arthropodium strictum* (Chocolate Lily) and *Leucochrysum albicans* (Hoary Sunray). We weeded suitable patches and added hydrated water crystals to the soil to increase survival rate. GCG will source 100 more plants for the project for a follow-up planting. Near the planting team, two others chipped out weeds elsewhere on the slope (Plantain, Mullein, Cats Ear and Tragopogon). Rosemary handed out to, passers-by, a flyer outlining this initiative that is beginning the rescue of native grassland in the catchment.



Rosemary Blemings & Caroline Wenger, Umbagog Landcare group members (& photographers)

Photos below are from 28 September.



At Umbagog, from left: Lesley, Lucy, John and Rosemary (and Caroline) were the planting team. John managed the watering. Rosemary also chatted to the passers-by.

SUTTON LANDCARE GROUP

Irrigation water, soil nutrients and salt

On Tuesday 8 October Dr Richard Stirzaker from CSIRO will come and talk with the Sutton Landcare Group about improving crop yields through better management of irrigation water, soil nutrients and salt. Dr Stirzaker is an authority on soils and soil moisture.

As a part of his work at CSIRO Agriculture and Food, he is involved with the **Virtual**

Irrigation Academy (VIA) where anyone can learn about improving crop yields.

For the vast majority of those who use water to grow food, there is no simple way to know how well irrigation is managed.



The 'Chameleon system' is a way of measuring soil water by producing colour patterns. These patterns tell you whether the soil is too wet or dry, how deep rain and irrigation moves into the soil and where roots are taking up water. They believe that water, nutrients, and salt

have to be measured together in order to really understand what is happening when we add water to the land in order to grow food.

The work is primarily funded by the **Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR)** and is directed at farmers in developing countries.



Measuring soil moisture

VIA has become a global network where monitoring sensors are buried on farms around the world. Each crop that is grown and monitored provides a unique colour pattern of water, nitrate and salt, and data are shared on the VIA website.

In an interview, Dr Stirzaker said: "Soil physics is boring to most but turning water into food for the vulnerable on earth is not."

We hope you can join us on **8 October; Sutton School; 7.30 pm.**

The presentation will be followed by an opportunity to ask questions and supper.

Arnold Dekker, Coordinator

JARRAMLEE PARK LANDCARE

The date for our next meeting is **Tuesday 15 October, 7.30 pm** at 26 Pomeroy St, Dunlop.

Pamela Fawke, Convenor, ph. 62590759

FRIENDS OF ARANDA BUSHLAND

Our work parties are on the first Sunday of each month. Starting time is 8:30 am during daylight saving and 9 am the rest of the year. See our website for details:

friendsofarandabushland.org.au

Naturally, Spring is weed-fest, for us, mainly in the paddocks. Our list of attack priorities, to 'nip in the bud': Capeweed; Sage; St Johns Wort; Patersons Curse; Mustard; Skeleton-weed; Serrated Tussock; Thistles (especially Saffron). In the



Bushland, there's some of above to be nipped on the fringes, but more thorny woody-weeds (hawthorn, briars), Mullein and garden escapes such as honeysuckle.

The photo shows our official event on 8 September – the 'launching' of our bushland bench, along the Powerline Link track, by local MP Alicia Payne, shown here 'christening' it with her family.

Jim Arnold, Convenor

FRIENDS OF THE PINNACLE

We are holding a Spring Wildflower Walk on **Sunday 10 October, 10 – noon**. Enjoy a stroll through our lovely natural vegetation and learn a little about the trees and plants to be found at The Pinnacle, and the revegetation work underway along the Molonglo pipeline excavations. All ages welcome and no need to book. Meet at the De Salis St entrance, Springvale Drive, Weetangera. Dress for the weather and in sturdy footwear and hat. Bring your own drinking water. For more information, contact John on 0405 331 405 or at convenor@fotpin.org.au.

To read about our bird walk on 22 September, please see our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/friendsofthepinnacle/>. And our website has news of Alison Milton's latest finds at the Pinnacle (<http://www.fotpin.org.au/news.html>).

John Brannan, Convenor

FRIENDS OF MOUNT PAINTER

We had a busy weekend in the middle of September, starting with a visit to the reserve by University of Canberra geology students. They were studying the relationship of geology to vegetation. They collected data along a transect from the volcanic rock of Mount Painter, across the Deakin Fault in the Wildflower Triangle, and on to the sedimentary rock of Aranda Bushland. A couple of Friends of Mt Painter went along to talk about the reserve and help Identify plants.





Over that whole weekend, Friends of Mt Painter, along with our neighbours from Aranda Bushland, The Pinnacle, Black Mountain and other local environmental groups, were part of a display at Jamison Plaza. We shared information about our reserves and the work we do to improve their condition. Several people were interested enough to leave their email addresses with us, and we look forward to seeing how many follow through by joining our future work parties.

On the Sunday, we held our annual, joint work party with Friends of Aranda Bushland, this year on our patch. We were very pleased to have extra hands to help weed on the northern slopes of the hill and along the summit path. Morning tea was an opportunity to enjoy the views and excellent food, catch up with old friends and make new ones.



Our next work party will be on **Sunday, 20 October from 9am till noon**. Details of what we will be doing and where will be posted nearer the time on Friends of Mount Painter's Facebook page.

Sarah Hnatiuk, Convenor and photographer
friends.of.mount.painter@gmail.com

FRIENDS OF MULLIGANS FLAT

A quick wrap-up for the winter months – August's work party saw us in the Bonner offset area at Little Mulligans on a cold and foggy morning restoring the riparian area around the dam with tree and shrub plantings, and rock arrangements (*first 3 photos*).



In September we removed tree guards (*photo below*) from tree planting



done by the community in Goorooyarroo a bit more than 2 years ago, and were pleased to see most were doing really well. We also held our biannual Bird Walk with thanks to Kathy Eyles, John Brannan and Bill Graham for offering their time and expertise.

Last weekend (*photos below*) we helped the Woodlands and Wetlands Trust plant trees around the planned Education Centre in Throsby with plenty of *Poa* for the bettongs!! We'll be back to weeding next week. Our

volunteers have also helped with kangaroo surveys, turtle patrol, twilight tours, and building ring enclosures for New Holland mice. Many thanks to Rangers Dave, Mim and John.

Julia Raine, Co-convenor (and photographer)



Opportunities around the region

MURRUMBATEMAN FIELD DAYS

This year the field days are on **19 – 20 October**, at Murrumbateman showground as usual. The weekend is advertised thus: 'Murrumbateman Field Days is one of the region's premier events and the flagship annual event. It features livestock, food, house and home products, technologies, education, vehicles, health, arts, crafts, horticulture and much more.'

WALK THE BORDER, ANTI-CLOCKWISE

Registrations are open to join Conservation Council President Rod Griffiths in Walk the Border ACT. Rod is walking around the 306 km border of the ACT to raise funds for the Conservation Council.

The walk will take 20 days from **5 to 24 October 2019**, from Mulligans Flat, following the border in an anti-clockwise direction. Read more about the walk in [this RiotAct article](#).

Register at: <https://conservationcouncil.org.au/walk-the-border/> for part or all of the walk, joining in from <1 day to 20 days.

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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.

Email landcare@ginninderralandcare.org.au

Website: <https://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 the

ACT Government, Landcare ACT and
ACT Upper Murrumbidgee Waterwatch

