



MARCH 2020



A different life. Freebies. Rewards

The Ginninderra Catch-Up newsletter



One of the two McKellar wetlands in December (*left*) and in February after the recent rains which have filled most of the wetlands in our region, including the Mulligans Flat dams which were also dry.

Photos by Luke Wensing, volunteer Waterwatcher.

Don't miss reading

Compilation of nature things to do. It's at the end of this newsletter.

And, 'Get to know the Croke Place Wetlands', explaining the wetlands. It's attached

From the Convenor, Executive Officer & Projects Officer

IMPLICATIONS ARISING FROM COVID-19 ON GCG OPERATIONS AND PROJECTS

I would like to first bring your attention to the National Landcare Network Communique regarding COVID-19 (see NLN attachment; also on the website). In line with the Federal and ACT Governments directives, our number 1 priority is to ensure the safety and well-being of our member groups, their volunteers, our staff, our partners and the general community. Even though a majority of our formal events and activities have been cancelled, it is important for your personal wellbeing that you all still continue to enjoy and participate in the local environment.

Please also read (below) the directives from TCCS and PCS which govern our landcare and ParkCare activities.

This is a difficult time for all of us, taking into account the other events in the last 6 months (drought, fires, toxic air and storm damage). I would recommend that you

reach out to your landcare community, to your fellow volunteers to check up on how they are going. Personally, I am planning to contact (by phone), each of the Landcare Convenors to check how things are going in their group, and how we can support you. This is an opportunity for us to identify innovative approaches to our landcaring work. I have already seen examples in the upcoming newsletter from our Landcare Convenors – the staff and Landcare ACT are also looking at other ways to spread our word (such as a regular online video clip on different landcare topics).

In response to the COVID- 19 virus, we have implemented the following measures for the foreseeable future:

Office closure: The GCG's Kippax office is closed to the public. ACT Community and Health Centres such as at Kippax have been required to cease operations except for hosting voluntary or public services such as food banks or homeless services. GCG staff are now working from home until further notice. They can be contacted by mobile or email.

Bernie (Executive Officer) 0427779684 landcare@ginninderrallandcare.org.au

Fiona (Projects Officer) 0412245910 projects@ginninderrallandcare.org.au

Anke Maria (Frogwatch) 0429066046 frogwatch@ginninderrallandcare.org.au

Bruno (Waterwatch) 0435866418 waterwatch@ginninderrallandcare.org.au

Julian (Accounts Officer) 0406408228 gcg@ginninderrallandcare.org.au

GCG meetings: GCG meetings will no longer be face-to-face. In their place we will use: teleconferencing; emails; video & voice calling such as *Zoom*, *Microsoft teams* or *Slack* depending on the meeting and participants.

The members meeting scheduled for 6 April is cancelled.

The next GCG Executive meeting will be a teleconference at 4 pm on 6 April.

GCG Catchment Projects: Currently all approved projects are being reviewed to determine what can be undertaken within the scope of both Government directives and work health & safety considerations. Those contracted project milestones that are deemed to be unachievable within the contracted timelines will be renegotiated with funding providers. Recommendations for project contract renegotiations will be tabled at the 6/4/20 Executive meeting.

Frogwatch: All Frogwatch activities are cancelled until further notice. Anke Maria has reduced her hours to 2.5 days/week for the time being. ***See her notes below.*** A priority will be to help secure continued Frogwatch funding as at this stage Frogwatch has no funding beyond the 30.06.2020 apart from the ICON Water funding for the Tadpole Kits project (\$12000).

Waterwatch: *See Bruno's notes below.* Bruno will be working 3 days/week instead of 4 until things get back to normal. Then funding/salary saved now will be reallocated to when activities resume.

OTHER GCG OFFICE & EXECUTIVE NEWS

GCG and Landcare Insurance: Last week, GCG renewed its Austcover [Community Environment Insurance Program] policy. The new policy is effective from 1 April 2020. The policy covers Landcare Public and Products Liability and Voluntary Workers Personal Accident insurance for GCG and the following subgroups:

- Crace LC Group
- Friends of Wangara Parks [in Aranda]
- Giralang Ponds LC Group
- Hall LC Group
- Jarramlee LC group
- Macgregor LC Group
- Maribyrnong Community Climate Action Group [Kaleen]
- Mt Rogers LC Group
- Mulanggang Traditional LC Group
- Native Grassland Restoration LC Group
- Nth Belconnen LC Group
- Sutton LC Group
- Umbagong LC Group

We are currently awaiting advice from Austcover regarding any potential COVID-19 related insurance exclusions that may impact our ability to undertake volunteer or program activities. This is obviously a dynamic risk.

The remaining GCG groups are ParkCare groups and they are covered by the ACT Government, and PCS is responsible for the health & safety of Parkcare volunteers.

2020–2021 ACT Environment and Nature in the City Grants: Funding of \$285,000 is available for community projects. Applications close on 28 April 2020. There are maximum limits per application:

- ACT Environment Grants – \$35,000 per grant application.
- Nature in the City – \$20,000 per grant application.

Please contact Bernie or Fiona if you require GCG assistance in formulating an application.

Urban Landcare: At the GCG Executive meeting on 10 March it was resolved to establish a working group to progress improvements in TCCS administrative requirements – a move that was initiated by Caroline Wenger (Umbagong Landcare). The working group comprises: Caroline, Ken Hodgkinson, Lyn Jenkins and Bernie.

At a GCG all groups meeting on 19 February 2020, draft TCCS documents were reviewed and feedback was provided to GCG.

It is proposed that the working group will make recommendations for our Urban Landcare groups and GCG to share with other catchment groups as well as to

negotiate with TCCS.

With changed operating circumstances due to COVID-19 the working group hasn't met face to face but it plans to address these issues by video conferencing and email exchange in the next 2 weeks.

Barton Highway upgrade: The Executive has made a submission to NSW Roads concerning the Barton Highway Duplication, focusing on effective offsets. The proposed upgrade affects the southern section of the Barton Highway, and nearly all the work proposed is within the Ginninderra Catchment.

Santo Lolicato, Convenor, and Bernie Bugden, Acting Executive Officer

PROJECTS UPDATE

As part of our **Healthy Waterways project** we ran a Clean Up Australia day site at Lake Ginninderra on Sunday 1 March, along with a stall (photo) with some simple ideas about how to reduce our impact on the stormwater system by raking up leaves, installing rainwater tanks, and washing your car on grassed areas. Nine people took part, and in 2 hours they pulled out about 20 kg of rubbish which was surprising, plus a bike frame.

We also had a stall for Clean Up day at Yerrabi Ponds. When things go back to 'normal' this is an area which we intend to focus more on.

On Saturday 14 March we held a Walk at Lake Ginninderra to talk about wetlands and help keep our waterways clean. Whether people were spooked by the idea of groups of people or if it was the cold that morning, we had only 1 person attend, but that person happened to be (again) local resident and MLA Tara Cheyne, who learnt a whole lot about what bugs



Ms Tara Cheyne MLA at the Clean Up stall with Fiona Spier, GCG Projects Officer.



live in a healthy environment and how we can help improve the quality of the water. Tara is really interested in the health of our waterways and was keen to learn more.

We walked along the lake to the wetland next to Lake Ginninderra College (photo)

where Bruno told us all about how wetlands work.

Note: There were only 5 people in nearby The Lighthouse pub at 12 noon that day, so I think it was more than the cold that kept people away.

The planned **walk at Croke place wetlands and the grasslands** organised for 21 March, like everything at the moment, had to be cancelled due to COVID-19. A description about these wetlands (Get to know the Croke Place Wetlands) is attached to this newsletter email, and on the website under Latest News.

Fiona Spier, Projects Officer

LANDCARE WORK MODIFIED, not to be organised

Allan McLean sent this message to Landcare convenors on 25 March:

Firstly, we want to pass on how much we value and appreciate your efforts in caring for our urban parks and places within Canberra. It enriches and enlivens the neighbourhoods in which we live. Because of this and despite the chaotic times that we are living in now, we have tried to support your efforts for as long as we can. Unfortunately, as the situation with COVID-19 worsens this needs to change.

As of today, we ask that all the volunteers and volunteer groups who work within TCCS managed land, cease all organised volunteer activities. This includes all organised and regular activities, meetings and functions that you might hold. This is made simply in the interest of health and safety and limiting the number of public gatherings within our community.

If you use conservation activities for your physical and mental wellbeing, we are happy for you to continue, but this needs to be in **small groups (no more than 2 people)** and needs to be a non-organised or promoted activity within the community. You will also need to follow all relevant information. This again may change as the situation escalates. You will also need to follow the protocols that we have mentioned before including: Social Distancing protocols – staying 1.5 meters away from others. You **do not** go out if you are feeling unwell. You wash your hands regularly.

We ask you to keep up to date and follow with the latest health advice from the ACT and Federal government -

<https://www.health.gov.au/news/health-alerts/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-health-alert> (Federal), and <https://www.health.act.gov.au/> (ACT).

We feel this is the right step to take currently, considering the latest health advice. We want to ensure the health and wellbeing of all volunteers and the general community.

We have also decided not to put a timeframe on when this decision will be reversed.

There are lots of uncertainty with the current situation and we want to be responsive as the situation develops.

PARKCARE WORK CANCELLED BUT WALKERS STILL WELCOME

Alison McLeod sent this message out to ParkCarers recently:

‘In light of the Government’s response to COVID-19, The Environment Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate including the ACT Parks and Conservation Service will today halt all external community and volunteer events until 19 September 2020 (6 months). This includes all RangerAssist, WildlifeAssist, VisitorAssist and ParkCare Patch activities.

As individuals you are still welcome within our parks and reserves that are open to the public, but no ParkCare volunteer activities will take place.

This has been a difficult decision but has been made with the single intent of protecting the health of our volunteers, employees and the general public.

We will remain in contact through this challenging time and hope to see you all safe, healthy and ready in Spring.’

Waterwatch news

WATERWATCH VOLUNTEERING

Waterwatch volunteering activities are currently suspended due to the COVID-19, until September, as suggested by the ACT Government. We are currently working on a submission for an exemption for the Waterwatch volunteers, as they usually do their sampling on their own or with a partner. We should have some news for our volunteers by next month.

AUTUMN BUG BLITZ

We are also organizing our bug blitz. Unfortunately, we cannot take volunteers with us at the moment, but the coordinators will team up and do these samplings during March, April and May.

CHIP REPORT 2019 – Catchment Health Indicator Program

Thanks for all the support from our volunteers. We are currently finishing the CHIP report. Our annual event for the launch had to be cancelled, so we are doing a soft release in early April and pdf copies will be available on our website. More news on these soon!

EDUCATION ACTIVITIES

No education activities are currently being delivered, as the schools are closed. We await news from the directorate on when the activities will be available again.

AND...

I would like to thank everyone who supports our program. Let's wait and see how things unfold with COVID-19, and hope we can get back to normal soon.

Bruno Ferronato

Waterwatch coordinator, Ginninderra Creek and Yass River

Frogwatch news

Hello lovely frogwatchers. I hope you and your loved ones are all well and by now really good at the social distancing!! [Here's a great link](#) about how to wash hands properly - the same techniques are applicable when using hand sanitizer!!

FROGCENSUS REPORT 2019

As a consequence of the cancellation of the World Wetlands Day celebrations planned for last Sunday (which was World Water Day), the 2019 FrogCensus report will not be officially launched. Instead it will be published on the Frogwatch webpage later this month: <https://ginninderralandcare.org.au/frogwatch/>

OTHER FROGWATCH EVENTS

All planned FrogWatch public events, presentations and school visits have been cancelled for the remainder of this financial year. As the pandemic is predicted to peak in Australia around May/June we can only hope that the 2020 FrogCensus will go ahead in October. By then everyone will be absolutely eager to get out and about and do something active.

WHAT IS HAPPENING NOW

I will be working from home as much as possible. There is still plenty to do, such as report writing, data sorting, developing a WHS policy, applying for new grants and for deferrals for existing ones. However, I have reduced my hours to 2.5 days/week for the time being.

OFFICE CLOSURE & REVAMP

If you need anything from the Frogwatch (GCG) office, please call ahead so I can meet you there (as all GCG staff are now mostly working from home). In addition, the doors to the Old Kippax Health Centre building are now locked 24/7 to anyone without an access card. This is a shame as we would like to show off our fully rearranged GCG office with its new desks and drawers (from IKEA) replacing the old desks and cupboards. The result is extra workspaces, and the whole room is much more spacious and neat now. Hanging shelves are next, once we can return to IKEA.

FREE TO A GOOD HOME

Just in case you are setting up your own home office and need a desk, we have 3 spare ones now (see item above)!! We also have 2 under-desk cabinets on wheels to go to a new home!!

Please let us know if you are interested, and we can meet you at the office for a "handover" – with appropriate distancing.

Hope the next newsletter will bring lots of good news. Till then, stay well

Anke Maria Hoefler
Frogwatch Coordinator

News from GCG member group convenors

WEEDS WEEDS WEEDS

1. CORFLUTES AVAILABLE, **FREE**

There are several of the old Weed Swap corflute signs available for “repurposing”, should any groups want to use their reverse sides. The signs measure 61 cm X 85 cm and there are smaller ones also. Please contact me, Rosemary Blemings, via the GCG office.

2. THE NEW-LOOK WEED SWAP

<https://inaturalist.ala.org.au/projects/weed-swap>

The text below is the message at the above webpage:

‘ACT Parks and the Molonglo Conservation Group want people to check their gardens, suburbs and reserves for the invasive plants listed under ‘Project Requirements’ or ‘Observation Rules’. We want to stop these new and emerging weed species spreading into nature reserves and waterways where they will disrupt our native plant communities and ecosystems. A \$50 native plant gift voucher will be given to people who spot new infestations of these invasive plants on public land (a ‘spotter’s fee’). Residents who spot them in their garden and remove them, will receive a \$100 native plant gift voucher (a ‘weed swap’).

‘How to get involved:

- 1) Create an iNaturalist account, <https://inaturalist.ala.org.au/signup>
- 2) Join the Weed Swap project: Select Community – Projects, and search on ‘Weed Swap’. Then select the Weed Swap project. Then select join.
- 3) Ensure your mobile device has ‘Location Tags’ turned on in the camera settings, and if using the iNaturalist app allow the app to get your location.
- 4) Upload a photo to the Weed Swap iNaturalist project, of a plant you suspect to be one of the targeted invasive plants. Select the plant name from the ‘Project Requirements’ or ‘Observation Rules’ list.
- 5) If the plant id is confirmed:
 - a) If it is a new infestation on public land then you will be sent a **\$50 gift voucher** for native plants to your iNaturalist mail inbox (a ‘spotter’s fee’). Our Rangers and



contractors will remove or control the infestation.

b) If these are plants in your garden, then upload another photo showing you have removed the targeted invasive plants. You will then be sent a **\$100 native plant gift voucher** to your iNaturalist mail inbox (a 'weed swap').

'Note: Employees of ACT Parks and Conservation Service and the Molonglo Conservation Group are not entitled to the gift vouchers.'

Created by: Steve Taylor - March 11, 2020

[Oxeye Daisy](#) *Leucanthemum vulgare*
[Purple Pampas Grass](#) *Cortaderia jubata*
[Clockweed](#) *Oenothera lindheimeri*
[Mexican Feathergrass](#) *Nassella tenuissima*
[Fountain Grass](#) *Pennisetum setaceum*
[White Bladderflower](#) *Araujia sericifera*
[Cape Smilax](#) *Asparagus asparagoides*
[Portuguese Heath](#) *Erica lusitanica*
[Cylindropuntia pallida](#)
[Delta Arrowhead](#) *Sagittaria platyphylla*
[Large Bindweed](#) *Calystegia silvatica*
[Water Lettuce](#) *Pistia stratiotes*
[Giant Salvinia](#) *Salvinia molesta*
[Parrot's Feather](#) *Myriophyllum aquaticum*
[American Frogbit](#) *Limnobium spongia*
[Amazon Frogbit](#) *Limnobium laevigatum*
[Cenchrus macrourus](#)
[Feathertop](#) *Cenchrus longisetus*
[African Feather Grass](#) *Pennisetum macrourum*
[Mignonette Vine](#) *Anredera cordifolia*
[Thatching Grass](#) *Hyparrhenia hirta*
[Climbing Dock](#) *Rumex sagittatus*
[Orange Hawkweed](#) *Pilosella aurantiaca*
[Mouse-eared Hawkweed](#) *Pilosella officinarum*
[Opuntia schickendantzii](#)
[Opuntia decumbens](#)
[Shell Mound Pricklypear](#) *Opuntia stricta*

[End of Weed Swap item at iNaturalist]

3. LOOK OUT FOR THIS NEW WEED



Along this fence at Palmerville are attractive climbing plants with white flowers. From the species list for the new-look Weed Swap (above) I think it's Large Bindweed *Calystegia silvatica*. The flowers aren't particularly large. There may be more along the north-south part of the fenceline.



The illustrated part of the mesh fence is at the end of the open land at Palmerville Heritage site. The path takes walkers to the right and to where the track ends at Ginninderra Creek's banks – with Giralang on the other side of William Slim Drive.

*Rosemary Blemings
Convenor, Mt Rogers Landcare, and previous Weed Swap organiser*

NORTH BELCONNEN

For Wednesday Landcare for Littlies, weeding has been the main task since the lovely rain. We have been discovering the Blue Devils are coming up on the "blue devils patch" and we were marking them with a small stake so we can find them again amongst the weeds. *Goodenias* (Scrambled Eggs) have been flowering since the rain.

However, now, as with everyone else, our Wednesday and Saturday Landcare Groups are in recess, to avoid any chance of catching COVID-19. Prior to the recess a mix of age groups on Saturdays mainly focused on weeding on the Betty David Wildflower Patch which is doing very well and was one-third under water after the recent rain.

We hope for more rain as the soil is getting dry again

*Lenore Hodgkinson
Convenor, North Belconnen Landcare*

THE PINNACLE, WEETANGERA/HAWKER

We've cancelled our program of guided walks this autumn (my bird walk was the only one scheduled anyway) and Hawker Primary have "indefinitely postponed" their school fete, which we were going to hold a stall at, so that doesn't leave much in the way of events. To add to that, the plug has been pulled on "ParkCare Patch" activities (see earlier in this newsletter) and there's not much left to talk about.

*John Brannan,
Convenor, Friends of The Pinnacle (FOTPIN)*

SUTTON, NSW

Unfortunately we have to cancel our presentation on hollow-using animals, which was to be held on 7 April. We hope to be able to resume our presentations as soon as possible, but will, of course, abide by the advice we get from the government.

*Arnold Dekker
President, Sutton Landcare Group*

MT PAINTER, COOK

The expected flush of herbaceous weeds is with us: acres of Amaranth and lots of Paterson's Curse, especially where drought and grazers had left bare patches of earth. We have been particularly concerned at the many weeds in the Wildflower Triangle, a section of the reserve separated from Mount Painter by Cook Horse Paddocks. This is part of the reserve which has been relatively free of major weeds for several years, but the hailstorm in January washed an enormous amount of debris off the paddocks into the Triangle. Weeds are growing in abundance from this debris, including Amaranth and Cobblers Pegs that were not present in the Triangle before. Our March work party made some impact on the weeds but there are many more to pull.



The patch near the summit of Mt Painter where we found Cobblers Pegs (*Bidens pilosa*) for the first time last year has once again got many, many germinating. **LOOK OUT FOR IT ON YOUR PATCH AND REMOVE IT FAST IF IT APPEARS. THE ONE GOOD THING ABOUT IT IS THAT IT PULLS OUT EASILY UNLESS THE SOIL IS WET. IT APPEARS TO BE BECOMING MORE COMMON IN THE ACT. ITS SEEDS ATTACH WITH IMMENSE EFFICIENCY TO CLOTHING AND ANIMAL FUR. WE HAVE FOUND IT IN WIDESPREAD PLACES THROUGHOUT OUR RESERVE, PRESUMABLY CARRIED THERE BY KANGAROOS.**

Its spread is likely to be related to the warming climate. It's more common further north and at the coast; our Queensland members of our group are well familiar with it.

There will be no work parties for the next six months, following the Parks and Conservation Service's ban on organised ParkCare activities until 19 September. Nor, as of 22 March, will there be any individuals allowed to work on their own on Canberra Nature Park reserves.

Best wishes to all Land and Park Carers.

Sarah Hnatiuk
Convenor, Friends of Mt Painter, friends.of.mount/painter@gmail.org

JARRAMLEE PARK, DUNLOP

Our group is going to exchange news and views by e-mail rather than meet, as a result of COVID-19. One member has nominated to do the St John first aid course which will make it easier to have a first aider at working bees, although they may be cancelled because of the virus.

A successful informal Clean Up Australia Day was held and quite a surprising amount of rubbish was collected considering it was such a hot day and went for just an hour and a half. A lot of plastic bottles as well as other general rubbish.

Pamela Fawke
Convenor, Jarramlee Park Landcare

A compilation of nature things to do alone and with kids

1. After breakfast, walk through your neighbourhood to the nearest pocket park or playground area. Start a diary or list of:
 - the birds seen
 - other animals noticed

- the neatest or the weediest gardens:
 - which weeds are most common, and are birds eating berries?
- After the walk knuckle down to schoolwork with the children.
2. If you're caring for children go to *Nature Play CBR* and download a **scavenger hunt** challenge, a *playlist* of things to do at their ages or in autumn and winter.
 - take notebooks on walks or begin a journal
 - use a camera to record what's seen, heard
 - Send sightings to Canberra Nature Map
 - Use the online listing to give ideas of places to go: https://www.environment.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0010/906472/Explore-Canberra-Parks-and-Recreation-Guide.pdf
 3. Write a one-liner about a special place in this area's open spaces or parks: why do you like it, or why is it an interesting place to visit, and what is there to see there. Send it to the GCG office for publication in a future newsletter.
 4. Explore along the creekline.
 5. Walk around Lake Ginninderra with a picnic in the backpack.
 6. Get the whole family out in the garden on a major tidy up, using ideas from *Nature play CBR to keep the youngest children busy and challenged*.
 7. Indoors board games.
 8. **Lizard Drive**. You need a DICE, a pencil, paper and a friend to share the fun!

Draw a LIZARD by following these 'rules'.

Throw the dice when it's your turn until it shows a 6.

Draw the body = 6

Add legs each time you throw a 4.... Leg = 4

When the dice shows a 5.....Add the head = 5

When the dice shows a 3Add the tail = 3

When the dice shows a 2Draw an eye = 2

When the dice shows a 1.....Draw the tongue = 1

This game idea is based on original BEETLE DRIVE games. You may prefer to draw a dinosaur, another larger animal or insect, car, truck, a pet, a plant with roots, flowers & fruit.

Rosemary Blemings

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



