



FRIENDS OF MOUNT PAINTER NEWS APRIL 2022

**This is the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, 2021-2030:
to prevent, halt and reverse the degradation of ecosystems on
every continent and in every ocean.**

PLANTING ON EASTER SUNDAY



Easter Sunday gave Friends of Mount Painter (FOMP) and our visitors from Friends of Aranda Bushland (FoAB) the most perfect weather for our planting in the Wildflower Triangle. We were replacing introduced grasses with native ground cover species; grasses and lomandras went into a killed-off patch of Phalaris, and sedges and reeds into a drainage line once occupied by Fescue and Paspalum. This planting continues our efforts to alter the balance of native versus introduced species in the Wildflower Triangle's lower grassland.

The planting marks the culmination of many people's efforts. FOMP's Jane and Von grew the grasses and sedge, Parkers Plants donated the lomandras, we bought reed seedlings with a donation from Macquarie Primary School, Ranger Marty augured the holes, Sue Smith sourced recycled plant guards from her friend, Michael, and FOMP, FoAB and Ranger Kel planted. It was a great effort!

OUR NEXT EVENT: CELEBRATING THE RENEWAL OF AN INTERPRETIVE SIGN



At 2pm on Sunday, 1 May, we will gather, weather permitting, at the gate on the ridgeline path to the summit, uphill from the water tanks. We will be celebrating a partnership between The Cook Grocer, the Parks and Conservation Service and FOMP that has revived an old interpretive sign.

All are welcome. To reach the summit gate, park on Booth Crescent, enter the reserve between houses no 20 and 22, and follow the gravel road uphill to the right.

A STORY ABOUT SIGNS AT THE SUMMIT GATE

The only record we have of the first in the succession of summit gate signs is its skeleton. It existed alongside a larger sign headed 'Regeneration of Mount Painter'. The latter sign marked the launching of a community project to regenerate Mount Painter that was started in July 1996 as part of the Clean Up Australia 2001 environmental program. The project was a partnership between the ACT Parks and Conservation Service, FOMP, the Cook Horse Paddock Carer group and other community groups. It aimed to rehabilitate the hill and restore the natural habitat through weed control, repair of gully erosion, planting of trees and shrubs, and encouraging regeneration of native grasses. Sponsors included Westpac, Vital Signs, ACTEW, Macspread Industrial and Forestry Herbicides, Farmoz and the National Trust.



Both signs were removed in 2011, and a new one erected with information about restoration projects undertaken since 2000, the challenges of overgrazing by rabbits and kangaroos, and FOMP's role. The text was accompanied by photos of lilies, daisies and Hardenbergia that had been recently planted in 15 clumps along the path from the gate to the summit. (Sadly, this planting was largely unsuccessful, apart from the survival of a number of Hardenbergias. However, that lack of success has helped FOMP understand better what conditions are needed for establishing ground cover plants.)



By 2020 the old display with its faded text and indistinguishable photos was very much in need of renewal. Although installed only nine years earlier, it had deteriorated from its original condition, perhaps as a result of solvents being used on its surface to remove graffiti. The display was vandalised twice in 2014, a year when the anti-cull protesters were particularly active. The words sprayed on the sign read, 'Kangaroo Killers'. More threatening and offensive messages were painted on the noticeboard and emailed to the Convenor!



Renewing the display was made possible by generous donations from The Cook Grocer's Daniel and Marie Anne Raad. Daniel gave FOMP five dollars from each of the 2020 Cook calendars that were sold. With \$550, there was exactly enough to pay for the new display panel, and the Parks and Conservation Service funded the repainting of the stand. FOMP members assembled new photos, wrote new text and put them all together. This joint effort is what we will be celebrating on 1 May.

WHAT'S FOMP BEEN DOING ON MOUNT PAINTER OVER THE LAST THREE MONTHS?

The answer: a great deal of **weeding**, either by spraying or taking out weeds by hand, including bagging their seed heads. It has been a particularly good season for St John's Wort, Fleabane, and Verbascum and they have kept us busy. Tony with his spray backpack has targeted large areas where Cobblers Pegs occur. We have targeted the Wildflower Triangle and parts of the north of the reserve where there are higher quality areas of native vegetation, and worked along some of the paths and tracks to make them more accessible to visitors and reduce the spread of seed from those locations. We are really pleased to see how many of the Blackberry clumps we mapped during lockdown have been sprayed by a contractor. It has been distressing to see how fast and large they had grown over the last two very rainy years.



We have also **collected a small quantity of seed**, especially from Yellow Burr-daisies, Sticky Everlastings and New Holland Daisies. With grass seed that we already hold, we will be able to continue our trials of seed planting. The seed photos are from the Australian National Botanic Garden's web site: above are Yellow Burr-daisies and below New Holland Daisies.



And some of you may have noticed **small signs**, made by Cec, on a few of the trees on the hill. They identify the trees and provide some information about them.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE INQUIRY INTO ENVIRONMENTAL VOLUNTEERISM

FOMP made a submission to this inquiry in which we commented on the benefits and challenges of volunteering for the environment, how opportunities to volunteer might be improved, and policy and regulations that impede volunteering. If you are interested in seeing our submission, you can find it on the committee's web site at <https://www.parliament.act.gov.au/parliamentary-business/in-committees/committees/eccb/inquiry-into-environmental-volunteerism#tab1917409-2id>.

ACTIVITY ON THE RESERVE BOUNDARY

A large area of paddock between the reserve and William Hovell Drive has been scalped, causing some to wonder if houses are to be built there. It is, in fact, the site for an electricity substation and part of work that will also see an underground cable being laid along William Hovell Drive. The cable will run along the south side of the road from the power lines a little further to the east, so avoiding the reserve, and then travel through an underpass to the substation on the north side of the road.



The scrape seen from the perimeter track on the reserve

In the process of laying the cable, dirt roads in the south-east corner of the reserve will be used by trucks to access the above ground power lines in the horse paddocks next door. In response to the ACT Government's development application for the cable laying project, FOMP pointed out that drivers should be warned of riders and walkers using the roads, and riders, and riders and walkers should be warned of trucks on the road and protected from them. We also requested that the roads used by the trucks be monitored for the introduction of weeds, especially African Lovegrass, and any weeds removed. The Government agreed to these requests.



The Government has also announced a second William Hovell Drive project: the construction of a bicycle path along the north side of the road which is likely to impinge on places where FOMP members park for nearby events.

Scrape seen from the verge of William Hovell Drive

UPCOMING WORK PARTIES

Monthly work parties which are held on the third Sunday morning of every month will be on 15 May, 19 June, 17 July, 21 August, 18 September, 16 October, 20 November, and 18 December.

May's work party is on Sunday, 15 May, 9-12pm.

For more information about anything in this newsletter: contact friends.of.mount.painter@gmail.com or Sarah Hnatiuk, FOMP's Convenor on 0424 263 565.