

SEPT/ OCT WORKPARTY CALENDAR

9 Sept, 14 October

Isaacs Ridge ParkCare

16 Sept, 21 Oct

Coolleman Ridge ParkCare

8/9 Sept, 15 Sept, 13 Oct,
20 Oct

Friends of Tidbinbilla
ParkCare

12 Sept, 30 Sept, 10 Oct, 28
Oct

Friends of Featherstone
Gardens

2 Sept, 7 Oct

Farrer Ridge ParkCare

2 Sept, 12 Sept, 7 October,
17 October

Red Hill ParkCare

29 Sept, 27 October

Urambi Hills

2 Sept, 7 October

Mt Taylor

Contact the SACTCG office for
further details

SOUTHERN NEWS

SEPTEMBER 2018

SACTCG AT THE NATIONAL LANDCARE AWARDS:

VOTE NOW!

The National Landcare Awards celebrate the achievements of Landcare volunteers around the country who dedicate their valuable time and energy into caring for the land and water that sustain us. SACTCG has been nominated as part of the Green Army Partnership Program nomination for the Australian Government Partnerships for Landcare Award. This was a partnership between SACTCG, GCG, MCG, and CVA.

This is only one of the 65 outstanding Landcare champions, across nine categories, who are finalists for the 2018 National Landcare Awards. Vote now for the People's Choice Award! This award is presented to the finalist who receives the most votes from the general public in the lead-up to the awards. The winner will be announced on Thursday 11 October at the Awards gala dinner. *Voting is now open and closes on Wednesday 10 October 2018.* Follow the link at

<http://nationallandcareconference.org.au/awards/>

REMINDERS ABOUT SAFETY WHEN WORKING OUTDOORS

There have been a few reminders recently for volunteers working in Landcare activities.

Please keep a lookout for **European Wasps**. If a nest is disturbed stop work immediately and move away from the site. Contact Access Canberra 13 22 81 to report the nest, or use the E Wasp phone app or webpage.

If somebody is stung please seek medical attention immediately. The incident also needs to be reported to TCCS (Rachel Tokley) or Parks (Alison McLeod).



Due to the dry conditions, and there is also a **risk of limbs** dropping unexpectedly. As spring approaches and the wind picks up there may be an increased risk.

Please assess your surroundings for dead branches and if you are unsure please postpone the work party and move away from the area.

Report any dangerous trees or branches to relevant ranger or Rachel Tokley (TCCS).

If you find a **syringe** while landcaring, be aware you should mark the location and call Access Canberra 13 22 81 to report the syringe. You should NOT attempt to pick up or remove the syringe. A TCCS-trained staff member will remove the syringe from site once notified.

GOOD NEWS FOR PLATYPUS, TURTLES AND WATER RATS

Opera house traps or yabby traps are set to be banned from Victoria from 1 July 2019. This is a great win for Australian native wildlife and conservationists, as there is an enormous amount of wildlife that end up drowning as a result of bycatch. It is interesting to note that major retailers such as Kmart, Big W, BCF, Anaconda, eBay will discontinue stocking opera house traps as of 1 July this year.

More in here: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-05-19/retailers-withdraw-yabby-nets-that-killplatypuses-ahead-of-ban/9775924>

It is illegal to use opera house traps in NSW and ACT in all public lakes and rivers east of the Newell Highway. If you see an illegal trap in lakes and rivers anywhere in the ACT and Upper Murrumbidgee region, please report immediately. Reports can be made by calling Crime stoppers on 1800 333 000(NSW) or Access Canberra 13 22 81 (ACT). Please be prepared to provide exact location details (GPS coordinates would be ideal), a description of the trap and your contact details in case further information is required.

ECOFOCUS SEMINAR

The Conservation Research section of EPSDD would like to extend an invitation to our volunteers to attend their 'Eco-Focus' annual research seminar. We've attached the flyer with more information for you. It's a great opportunity for you to be able to learn more about their projects including:

Corroboree frogs, fertility control of the kangaroos, an update from Offsets, Little Eagle and lots more

We have a new section with very short updates (one-slide) on a range of projects – bandicoots, fish, drones, CNM

And of course a great morning tea and get-together.

Date: 19 September 2018, 9.30 am start.

Gold Creek Station, Hall

Please RSVP so we can track numbers to: Stacey.taylor@act.gov.au

COMMONWEALTH GOVERNMENT SMALL GRANT

The Commonwealth Government is offering grants of \$1000-\$5000 to help volunteers.

The money is available to help volunteers do their thing, with eligible items being:

- equipment that will be used by volunteers such as computers, first aid equipment, gardening and maintenance equipment
- fuel costs for volunteers to travel to where they volunteer,
- courses and development opportunities for volunteers,
- furniture and kitchen equipment that will be used by volunteers, and a whole range of other things.

The key thing is that the equipment has to help volunteers do in their volunteering - it's not for items that will support the broader community in general.

The application process is straightforward. Non-incorporated groups are eligible but an office holder (eg. Chair, treasurer) must be the applicant. SACTCG is happy to submit for any member groups as an umbrella organisation.

A 150 word statement about what they want to purchase and why it will benefit their volunteers is required.

Details are at <https://www.communitygrants.gov.au/grants/volunteer-grants-2018>

Please call if interested in SACTCG applying for you. Closes 2pm, 18 September.

21st Australasian Weeds Conference, 9–12 September, Sydney

The Weed Society of New South Wales Inc., on behalf of the Council of Australasian Weed Societies Inc., is hosting the 21st Australasian Weeds Conference at Manly, in Sydney from 9 to 12 September 2018. To discuss new developments, go on field trips, and share information about cutting-edge and best weed management practices, register via <http://www.21awc.org.au>.

'Striving for Restoration Excellence', 25–28 September, Brisbane

This is the conference of the Society for Ecological Restoration Australia, for people who care about the bush, sea & waterways: scientists, managers, practitioners, policy makers & planners. Details: <https://www.sera2018.org/>

National Landcare Conference 2018, 10–12 October, Brisbane

'Landcare – Building a Better Tomorrow' is the title of this year's conference. Registrations are now open for the conference and awards. Details are at <http://www.nationallandcareconference.org.au>. The organisers have just announced that Pip Courtney, host of Landline on ABC TV, will MC the conference and awards gala dinner.

Biodiversity and Climate Change Roadshow – 31 October Queanbeyan

The Biodiversity Node of the NSW Adaptation Research Hub is running a series of free roadshows, on the theme 'How can we conserve species from the impacts of climate change? This is a day of tailored training with leading climate adaptation researchers and practitioners, which will suit conservation practitioners at all levels. Explore interactive adaptation web tools; ask questions, engage in discussion & connect with other adaptation researchers & practitioners. More information: Victoria Graham, phone 02 9850 6298 or email Victoria.graham@mq.edu.au

To register: <https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/biodiversity-climate-change-roadshow-queanbeyantickets-47943605615>

12th Australasian Plant Conservation, Conference, 11–15 November

'Moving house – a new age for plant translocation and restoration' is the title of this week-long conference at CSIRO Canberra ACT. If you join the ANPC you receive a discount on the registration fees. Find out more about APCC12, and register, at <http://anpc.asn.au/conferences/2018>.



MEMBER GROUP HAPPENINGS

Coolleman Ridge

Coolleman Ridge Parkcare Group have been busy over winter focusing on Phalaris and Verbascum on Mount Arawang.

They have noted pig damage at a few sites in the Arawang saddle and near the old dam, although no pigs have been seen. The group have been aware of the presence of feral pigs between Coolleman Ridge and the Murrumbidgee River for a number of years but until now had not seen evidence in the reserve. This is a high erosion risk as the disturbed grasses take some time to reestablish.

Mount Taylor

Recently the ACT Minister for Roads Chris Steele announced that the ACT Government will spend \$200,000 on improving the car park on Sulwood drive. This is the direct result of a petition by local residents to improve safety at the carpark, which can have as many as 80 cars at one time.

“To improve safety, there will be only one clearly signed entry and one exit point to the car park 150m west and east from the intersection with Mannheim Street.

“A kerb barrier will also be placed on the road edge to prevent vehicles exiting and entering the car park directly around the intersection.

“The dirt car park will also be levelled and resurfaced with chip seal to suppress dust and dirt and improve the look of the car park,” Mr Steel said.

Mount Taylor has become the newest reserve to be part of a study into evaluating the interactions between kangaroo density, amount of available food, and the amount kangaroos eat across Canberra Nature Park. This data will be used to continuously update kangaroo culling models, so that they can increasingly account for varying reserve condition and climate influences. A number of cages have been erected as part of the study so as to be able to compare grazed and ungrazed vegetation structure.

Learn about new research regarding kangaroo ecology and fertility control here:

<https://www.environment.act.gov.au/cpr/conservation-research/research>

Friends of Tidbinbilla

The Friends of Tidbinbilla have been undeterred by the freezing cold mornings and snow on the hills to venture out and work with fences. Over winter fences have been a theme, with a few work parties focused on helping Tom and Rocky clear vegetation away from the wildlife enclosure fences. A small band of volunteers worked with Travis to extend the rabbit fencing around Rock Valley as well, no mean feat working with fiddly metal ties in 5c.



Friends of Tuggeranong Hill

The Friends of Tuggeranong Hill and Parkcare group has recently reformed and has a varied program planned for the year ahead. We started off with a Clean Up Australia Day activity in March with 10 people attending and several bags of rubbish collected, clearing north and easterly sides of the hill.

Our next activity in April was weeding, and we cleared one of our target gullies of African Daisy. It is amazing what 6 people can do! Update on winter next time.

We have a Facebook page [FriendsofTuggeranongHill](#)

Vera Kruz and Cath Blunt



Friends of Strangers Pond

The Friends of Strangers Pond is a new group this year. So far the group have had 2 activities, the first was on Clean UP Australia day, followed by Plant a Tree day.



Urambi Hills Parkcare

Urambi Hills Parkcare group and SACTCG held a very successful tree planting event on the 26 June, as part of a 2017 ACT Environment Grant. The purpose was to provide more linkages across previous bare paddocks between Box Gum woodland patches and the Murrumbidgee River. It was so cold Tuggeranong Creek was frozen over, but it didn't stop about 30 people keen to put some trees in the ground. A few runners from a cross country event also stopped to plant a few with us. In all 500 trees and shrubs were planted.

A watering day was organized through the ParkCare Hub the following week to water previous plantings which were looking a bit parched, thank you to all of the volunteers who helped plant or water on these days, and thank you to rangers Richard and Kristy for helping us organise logistics and deliver water cubes.



Yep, it was cold!

Griffith Woodlands

Our second Landcare Working Bee held on Sunday 8 April 2018 was another resounding success. Keen to ensure Transport and City Services were impressed with our pile of removed exotic bushes and trees by days end, we had the hand and bush saws working hard the whole morning with around 20 volunteers. A robust group first tackled a central area of oak trees and seedlings in the middle of the reserve that had wandered up from Jansz Crescent and La Perouse Street.

A major accomplishment was the removal of the prickly pear and aloe outcrop in the north east corner of the reserve, which involved some careful digging and team work to avoid abrasions and scratches.

Team Viburnum – thanks Geoff and Paul!! 4 hours of patient cutting and daubing yielded wonderful results

Thanks to the wonderful TCCS crew who turned up on Monday morning to efficiently remove many truckloads of green waste.



SACTCG WATERWATCH NEWS: WINTER 2018



Drought conditions have taken their toll this winter. This June, we received half our average rainfall for month. By July this had fallen to 1/5 of the average and is the lowest on record (7.8mm). August statistics are yet to come in but I imagine they will not be any better. A record number (7) of our Waterwatch sites have remained either completely dry or reduced to stagnant pools for most of this year so far. All farm and reserve dams report being at the lowest level since teams many began monitoring.

Photo: Westwood farm's main dam in July (ACT EPA)

Teams update:

New SACTCG Waterwatch teams this year include, our new youngest volunteer 15 y.o. Jaydon O'Donohue (Murrumbidgee R), Tom Nilsen (Tuggeranong Ck), Corin Pennock (Naas & Gudgenby rivers) and Lake Tuggeranong College's famous Nikey Mylordi retired last year and Scott Carter is her replacement teacher.

Around the waterways:

The **Murrumbidgee** and **Gudgenby Rivers** have been clear and crisp all winter, but the water levels were extremely low, as were the **Cotter** and **Paddy's Rivers** which also showed an associated buildup of diatom silt.

At **Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve** the river was dry at the mouth at the start of winter. Water eventually found its way to the surface by July, but the upper creeks and stretches of the river were full of algal growth. **Gibraltar Creek**, which hosts Gibraltar falls and Woods Reserve, remained low but very clean. The **Sanctuary** ponds suffered from low water levels producing a (slightly) acidic, nutrient rich soup and the last pond. Out in **Namadgi National Park** early winter was extremely dry but the upland bogs and creeks received enough water to become muddy in July, then began to flow again by late August. Creeks in Namadgi and the **Naas River** both had ice crusts from the extremely low temperatures this season. The Naas River had no running water at its monitoring site at Caloola Farm.

All the **rural dams** we monitor suffered extreme turbidity build up as their water levels dropped and more clay was exposed. Some also suffered a phosphorus build up. Most monitored lower altitude **rural creeks** were reduced stagnant, yet clear, ponds. **Swamp creek** had an extreme turbidity event in August. Rangers suspect this may be a result of adjacent road works.

In the urban areas **Lake Tuggeranong** had a concerning amount of sediment at its southern section as construction continues on Isabella Pond's new enlarged dam and wetland. Fortunately this did not continue into the main body of the lake. The **suburban drains** feeding the lake maintained low yet pollution free flows all winter. **Point Hut Pond** and **Conder wetlands** were both clear with low water levels.

August Platypus Watch:

Four surveys were conducted at Point Hut Crossing this August for the Upper Murrumbidgee Waterwatch Platypus Census. I think we recorded two platypus and one rakali (aka water rat). I will confirm this once the results are all in. Many Waterwatchers and other community volunteers joined forces with the students from Lake Tuggeranong College to make these well attended events. Here is a link to show how tricky they can be to spot.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZfT1lztD-Q>

Volunteer events:

Southern ACT Catchment Group hosted a ‘**Understanding Rakali-Australia’s “Otter”**’ presentation by Geoff Williams director of the Australian Platypus Conservancy (APC). At the informative and entertaining event participants were invited to record any sites of these difficult to survey animals. Broachers on the monitoring project are available from at our office. More information can be sought from the APC at www.platypus.asn.au



Photo: Courtesy of APC

Waterwatch Education;

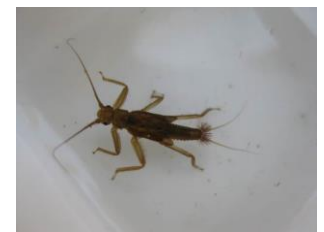


In early August, I presented a stall for the SACTCG at Marist College’s ‘Service Day’. Hundreds of students ranging from yr6 to yr12 attended. I treated them to a challenge to choose which water from 2 buckets they would drink. (I would choose neither of them!). They had to use pH and salinity tests to measure the water quality as they were both crystal clear and had no smell. The look of surprise from the students was worth the visit alone. Many signed a sheet expressing interest or took flyers. The school has this list so I hope to hear from them soon.

Blue Gum Preschool students also enjoyed a morning out at Dickson wetlands with Ben Hutter-Koros (Molonglo CG Ed Office) and I exploring the world of water bugs and other pond life.

Coming up in Spring:

Every spring I need volunteers to help with the ‘Spring Bug Blitz’. Even if you are not a regular Waterwatch volunteer you can join me in this activity. Surveys take about an hour to complete. Contact me to discuss logistics if you are interested.



Tidbinbilla Open Day is on Sunday 7th October from 11am to 2pm.



Those groups and individuals involved in collecting data. To view Upper Murrumbidgee Waterwatch data go to <http://www.act.waterwatch.org.au>. For more information contact the SACTCG Waterwatch Coordinator on 62966400 or at waterwatch@sactcg.org.au.

Contact Us

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