

## WORKPARTY CALENDAR

2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of the month  
Isaacs Ridge ParkCare

2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of the month  
Cooleman Ridge ParkCare

2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday of the month  
Friends of Tidbinbilla ParkCare

Last Sunday of the month  
Friends of Featherstone Gardens

1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of the month  
Farrer Ridge ParkCare

1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of the month  
Red Hill ParkCare

Last Sunday of the month  
Urambi Hills ParkCare

1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of the month  
Mount Taylor ParkCare

2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of the month  
Griffith Woodland Volunteer Group

Contact the SACTCG office for further details

# SOUTHERN NEWS

AUGUST 2019

## From the Office

We are very pleased that after another year of lobbying and negotiations, SACTCG received \$240,000 in 2019–2020 from the ACT Government for broad community engagement. This includes \$145,000 for community engagement regarding Catchment issues with a focus on urban landcare and waterways. SACTCG has particularly been encouraged to build community stewardship in recognition that the majority of new Healthy Waterway wetlands, raingardens and ponds are in our area.

In addition, funding for Waterwatch has been secured for another year commensurate with last year's funding, with some additional funds for education. The single contract with Environment, Planning & Sustainable Development Directorate has been signed and staff are busy finalising work plans for the year.

We will be employing a new staff member to help us deliver our community education and stewardship program for urban water quality. Applications for this position are open till COB Monday the 12<sup>th</sup> August. Details are at: <http://www.ethicaljobs.com.au/Members/sactcg/urban-water-education-officer>

Happily, GCG's Regional Frogwatch Program also received funding. The Catchment Groups, working with Landcare ACT, will continue to explore further funding opportunities with the Commonwealth, ACT Government and business.

## 30 Years Of Landcare

Landcare celebrates its 30-year national anniversary on July 20th! Born from the Australian can-do spirit and a passion for combined sustainable agriculture and natural resource management, Landcare has evolved

into a sweeping, inclusive movement which continues to bring communities closer together.

We will be celebrating with our partners and Landcare ACT at our event this weekend at Holder Wetlands. *We'd love to see you there!*



## OPEN DAY HOLDER WETLANDS

Interested in learning about urban wetlands?

Come and enjoy a free community day at the new wetlands in Holder!

**Sunday, 11th August 2019**

**11am—3pm**

- ◆ Free BBQ
- ◆ Wetland interpretation walk
  - ◆ Frog calls demo
- ◆ Waterwatch displays and waterbug ID
- ◆ Learn how to get involved in caring for new ponds, raingardens and wetlands

**Meet your neighbours, bring your family, bring your dog!**

Please park in designated parking area, not on the street

**Entrance from Dixon drive**

Hosted by Southern ACT Catchment Group and the new

Holder Wetlands Carers Group

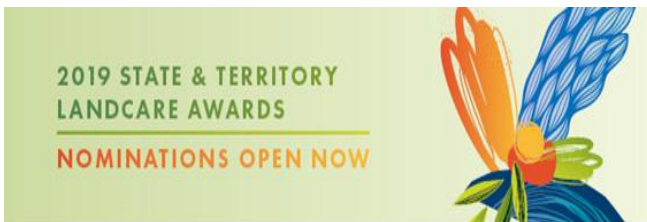
Supported by ACT Government



Listen to Martine and Dr Maxine Cooper talk about 30 years of Landcare on local ABC radio last week at:

[30 Years of landcare ABC Interview Dr Cooper and Martine Franco](#)

Read about the new Landcare Ambassador and the ACTs own Anke Maria Hoefer and Frogwatch in the latest edition of [Landcare in Focus](#).



Do you know an individual or group who deserves to be recognised for their contribution to caring for our country?

Landcare ACT is inviting nominations for the ACT 2019 Landcare Awards that recognise individuals and groups across the country for their outstanding contribution to preserving the unique Australian landscape.

The Landcare Awards are an opportunity to recognise and celebrate Landcare champions from rural and urban communities motivated by a shared vision to restore and protect the environment in their local community. [Nominate someone you know today](#). We have made improvements to the awards criteria to make them more accessible to the community.

Nominations in by Friday 13<sup>th</sup> September 2019

## Current Projects

SACTCG were successful in receiving 4 ACT Environment Grants this year.

- Innovative Chemical Free Weed Control for the ACT. This is purchasing and trialling a steam weeder!
- Urambi-Amberley Connectivity Corridor and Pink Tail Worm Lizard Habitat Improvement.
- Protecting Pink Tailed Worm Lizard Habitat on Mount Taylor.
- Hughes Garran Woodland Biodiversity Improvement.

The ACT Red Hill Regenerators were also successful in a grant to look into the Ecology and Movement of ACT's Adult Female Little Eagle.

## Healthy Waterways Drain Stencilling Project

SACTCG staff have been busy stenciling drains to increase community awareness of the H2OK program to encourage the community to think about what goes down our stormwater drains, which goes directly to our creeks and rivers. Our 100 stencils and community inception survey results are a part of the work undertaken by ACT Government.

## 48<sup>th</sup> Black Mountain Spring Wildflower Ramble

Celebrate the spring flowering on beautiful Black Mountain with a social ramble for wildflower lovers in the tradition established by Nancy Burbidge, and continued by George Chippendale. Discover the surprising diversity of tiny orchids, bush peas, wattles and billy buttons on easy bush tracks with experienced guides and good company. All springs are not the same. The pattern remains but timing and abundance vary with the weather. Friends of Black Mountain welcomes all comers, be they experts or those who have never slowed down to see the

somewhat cryptic diversity. We plan several guides, with helpers, who will take different directions.

**Where:** Belconnen Way entry just before Caswell Drive turnoff - watch for balloons. Please allow time to park and walk to the meeting point.

**BYO:** morning tea, water, hat, sunblock and stout shoes.

**BOOKING ESSENTIAL** to ensure we have enough guides. Contact

[friendsofblackmountain@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofblackmountain@gmail.com) or Cathy 0406 976 751 or Libby 6296 1936

### Parkcare Update

For parkcare volunteers there are a few training opportunities coming up;

- 4 September Practical Chemical Training
- 11 September Fringe Forum #3
- 26 September Chem Cert
- Convenor meeting: **21 August**

A reminder Parkcare groups (with chemcert training) can use herbicide products containing active ingredients Glyphosate (Round Up), MCPA (Agitone 750), Fluroxypr (Starane) and Metsulfuron Methyl (Brushoff). but TCCS Urban Parks groups **can only use Glyphosate.**

Volunteers who don't have chemcert training can only do cut and dab under the supervision of a chemcert trained volunteer.



#Recycle Right is a new region-wide campaign asking people to make some simple changes to our recycling routines.

The main message of this new campaign is to keep it simple and ensure only clean and correct

recycling materials are placed in the yellow bin. It is essential that we have clean recyclables that can be sent off for remanufacturing in Australia and overseas.

Changes to China's recycling rules in January 2018 have affected the recycling industry across the world and this has resulted in a few changes to what can be recycled and how we place it in the bin. A poster showing the changes is at the end of the newsletter.

Bread tags and plastic bottle lids can be donated to [Lids for Kids](#) who use them to make prosthetic limbs for kids.

### Mountain Bike Experience

The ACT Government have been running public consultation workshops for a planned Workshops for the '**Mountain Bike Experience**'

If you would like to know more go to <https://www.yoursay.act.gov.au/CanberraMTBExperience>

### RESILIENT FARMING COMMUNITIES: Planning for Climate Uncertainty

After the success of the Climate Conversation in Yass last year, Boorowa Community Landcare are holding a workshop to empower land-managers to make change.

**Friday 16 August, 8.30–4.30**, Boorowa ExServices Club, 55 – 59 Pudman St, Boorowa, 2586.

Themes/Topics of the day:

- Maintaining health and wealth in dry times;
- Decision making drivers in farm business;
- Achieving profit and resilience in your business in a changing climate;
- Financial, Ecological & Well being bench marks for success;
- Managing land to leave in a better condition for the future;
- Understanding behaviour and support to allow practice change.

For more information and to buy a ticket (\$20), see:

<https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/resilient-farming-communitiesplanning-for-climate-uncertainty-tickets-64771792174?&>

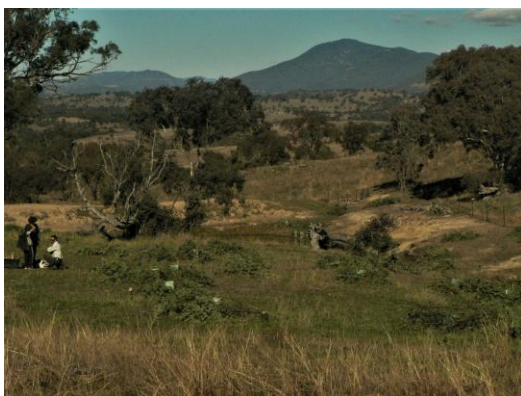
## MEMBER GROUP HAPPENINGS

### Urambi Hills Parkcare Group

On the 2 June we held a very successful planting day at the Dam near Meredith crescent, as part of the ACT Environment Grant we have with SACTCG.

36 people came out for the day, which was just amazing.

Huge thank you to everyone for their efforts to make our planting come together.



Louise

### Griffith Woodlands Volunteer Group

With over one year of encouraging progress since our establishment in March of last year, the Griffith Woodland Volunteer Group can reflect on a very satisfying 12 months of its existence. Not only have a number of exotic species being removed in our Woodland, but we have now commenced an exciting 'next' stage of the local species restoration with our recent planting programme. With tangible improvements to the woodland, growing local (and even political) interest and friendships formed amongst our local members, this has been a very positive example of community achievement which we can all be proud of. And none of this would be possible without our marvelous volunteers - giving time to weeding, planting, watering and even fund raising on a steamy hot day at a Bunnings BBQ!



Our 2019 Friends of Grassland (FoG) grant, used to hire a contract sprayer to help eradicate invasive grasses, has now been fully expended and acquitted. Jim Barriesheff of CoreEnviro Solutions, has visited several times doing follow up spraying using grant funds, and recently delivered good news. He advised that Griffith Woodland has now been added to a TCCS programme of routine surveillance and spraying, and that he will be returning regularly several times a year. This is very gratifying, as we know

that eradicating grasses such as African Lovegrass and Chilean Needle Grass will take many, many years of treatment and constant surveillance. The grant has been a wonderful help to begin to control these grasses. Jim has also been spraying the patches of Vinca with good results.



Our 2019 ACT Environment Grant acquittal is well underway, with planting done. Some funds are still to be expended on seed but we will do that after summer when conditions are more favorable.

TCCS continues to be a source of support and practical help. Allan McLean (Urban Open Space Volunteer Coordinator) has assisted with no dumping signage and others about the habitat values of fallen tree limbs.

And of course, the SACTCG for all of their help with applying for and the acquittal of grants

Libby

### Coolleman Ridge ParkCare

Vinca, has numerous common names including blue periwinkle, bigleaf periwinkle, large periwinkle and greater periwinkle. It's widely planted in suburban gardens and inevitably establishes itself in Canberra's nature reserves. It's not a major problem on Coolleman

Ridge but there are some outbreaks mainly on the houses side of the maintenance track.



How to deal with this common garden escapee recently was the subject of an innovation in the ParkCare community about pooling ideas and experience in dealing with weed infestations. An online discussion group labelled "ParkCare Brains Trust" is moderated by ParkCare coordinator Toss Gascoigne.

The consensus of the participants in the discussion was to mow the vinca with a brush cutter or similar device over winter, wait for the spring flush then hit the regrowth with a blend glyphosate at 15ml per litre of water and Pulse Penetrant at 5ml per litre. The Plus Penetrant is essential to overcome the glossy waxy coating on the leaves. Of course, picks and hand-pulling are an option but follow-up is necessary no matter what removal method is used.

*Doug Tinney*

### Mount Taylor Parkcare

Mount Taylor will be celebrating our 30th Birthday party on **Sunday 11 August - meet us at 2pm at the Mannheim gate** - this will be a 'no work and all play party' to celebrate this cracking milestone - our current and former rangers and coordinators will be invited to help us celebrate - birthday cake, champagne and tea provided - the party will be at the 25 year bench (walk due east

of the ParkCare Notice board up from the gate) Flyer attached to send to your friends.

Kathy

### Farrer Ridge ParkCare

On Sunday 7th July, a group of ParkCarers did maintenance work on the Nature Trail track, allowing the water, if any (!) to flow away from the track and to stop erosion. Another group went to the eastern area removing weeds, and to check the erosion control measures that were constructed with SACTCG support. The use of bound logs and branches, has been sufficiently effective and the structures are holding the heads of the erosion-gully from cutting further upstream.



Logs holding soil in gullies on Farrer Ridge Nature Reserve.

Wendy Rainbird.

### Farrer Woodland Walk

On Saturday 11th May the Southern ACT Catchment Group in partnership with Farrer Ridge ParkCare Group and Ngunawal Custodian Wally Bell led a walk-up Farrer Ridge, beginning from Muresk street. This was a reasonably easy 2 km round trip, with a few short uphill patches. The purpose of the walk was to explore impacts of fire on Red Gum – Yellow Box Woodland, develop community understanding of this ecosystem and the activities of the ParkCare Group and highlight the beauty of the ridge to locals who maybe had never been there. In addition, the walk aimed at fostering a stronger sense of stewardship and community awareness of the need to protect our reserves. Wendy



### Of interest...

On Sunday 7th July, it was reported by the ABC that an ecologist noticed that sandal wood trees, estimated to be over 200 years old, are dying. They are on a property on the Eyre Peninsula in SA. Many people and particularly Park Carers are noticing old trees dying or dead.

In the “Dead Tree Detectives” program, citizen scientists, using their smartphone camera with GPS, are invited to take photos of dead or dying trees, and to upload those on to the Atlas of

Living Australia

website. <https://biocollect.ala.org.au/acsa/project>

The program is being run by scientists from the University of New England, and Western Sydney University.

### SACTCG Waterwatch: Autumn 2019

Our glossy 2018 Catchment Health Indicator Program (CHiP) report was launched by Minister Gentleman in March at the Murray Darling Basin’s annual World Water Week event at Questacon. Quality Assurance and Quality Control(QA/QC) was hosted at Scottsdale this season and many other teams including Caroline Chisholm School and the Brindabella Venturers set aside special sessions to check their skills and kits.

A new data base portal is now around the corner. Waterwatch will now sit on the ‘BioCollect’ site and will be much easier to upload and view. Details of the autumn period follow.

### Teams update

New groups coming on board this year include;

- Liz Stephens and Emily Brooks taking on the northern end of Lake Tuggeranong.
- John Goodall at Rosevue Homestead in Royalla, taking on a whole new sub-catchment, **Guisés Creek**.
- Davina Savang and Alannah Freeman heading into Naas Valley as far as Caloola Farm.
- Troy Delbridge getting ready to help out in the dark depths of the Naas Valley in the national park.
- Kate Rhook from Icon Water looking after the Cotter River near the ‘avenue’.



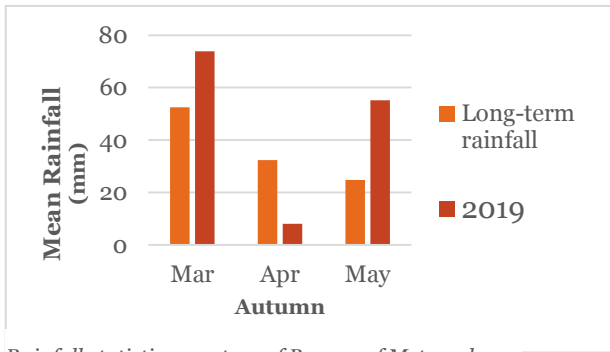
*Analise and Tia (LakeTuggeranong College)*

the

Fond farewells go to Jaydon O’Donohue and Wendy Warren. Both monitored the Murrumbidgee River. Wendy had been keeping an eye on the engineered log jam at Tharwa since 2017 as well as being an active member of the SACTCG Committee.



## Around the waterways



Rainfall statistics courtesy of Bureau of Meteorology

Autumn saw little improvement for many of our parched waterways in spite of above average fall in March and May. The **Murrumbidgee River** had a very muddy start to the year. This appeared again in April as high mud and associated phosphorus made its way past Tharwa. By May the river was looking a lot clearer. The **Cotter River** was low but clear. **Paddy's River** was dry or not flowing and losing oxygen by March. By May low flows had returned. The **Naas**

**River** was reduced to a dry bed along most of its length. The **Gudgenby river** also stopped flowing at its mouth by March and warm water returned in a low flow in April. **Tidbinbilla Reserve** was mostly dry too. The isolated puddles that were tested were muddy, full of phosphorus and low in oxygen from decaying matter. The upper creeks at Tidbinbilla and **Corin Forest** were low, but still flowing and clear. **Namadgi National Park** only had 'healthy' water all season in the upper section of its main bog lands (Bogong Ck and Orroral Valley). Smaller creeks remained dry. Lower sections of bog lands lost oxygen and/or became muddy and too high in nutrients for want of a flush. **Lake Tuggeranong's** nightmare summer of blue green algae dragged into early autumn and finally ended by April after a flush March. The headwaters of the main creek that feeds the lake continues to remain dry. **Isabella Pond** by way of contrast had good water quality so far this year when access allowed the students of Caroline Chisholm School to test it. **Point Hut Pond** had few issues other than getting low and **Stranger Pond** remains relatively intact. The dams around the region have not recovered from the prolonged lack of regular rainfall. The main dam on **Westwood farm** is now filling up with macrophytes (water plants) in the mud and taking on the appearance of a small wetland rather than a small body of water. The return of a small quantity of water to the **Coolman Ridge** dams was quite acidic as a result of the rapid dissolving of soluble decayed organic matter. One dam also had an extreme spike in nitrates for the same possible reason.

## Autumn Water bugs

The water bug surveys conducted last season are yet to be uploaded to the new data base. As a general overview though, very few sites returned healthy records. Stonefly larvae, a highly sensitive organism, failed to survive at most sights where they are usually high in numbers. The only waterway to have any that I found was **Gibraltar Creek**. Some of the saddest surveys included the **Tidbinbilla Sanctuary** which only 5 type of bugs, most of which were the ever irrepressible water boatman. **Lake Tuggeranong** similarly only supported 5 types at its southern end most of which were water boatmen, worms and maggots. **Barneys Gully** in Gordon had been dry all summer and when water finally arrived only 4 species were found. These included yabbies who can survive in the mud and water beetles, boatmen and fly larvae.



*Southwell Cubs and Venturers@ Namadgi NP*

## Education

On a much needed positive note a number of exiting school events happened over the last few months including a mini Catchment Health Indicator Program project by the Yr11 Ecology students at **McKillop College**. Your Waterwatch Coordinator delivered a sizzling series of workshops for teachers as part of the **‘STEMEd’** conference and **Gordon Primary School’s** delightful Yr4/5 classes all did a mini CHIP assignment, using bugs and basic water testing at Point Hut Pond. Other schools got involved in the autumn **‘BugBlitz’** including **Southwell Venturers and Cubs, Woden School, Lake Tuggeranong College, and Duffy Primary School**. Our usual hard working students at **Caroline Chisholm School** and **Lions Youth Haven** continued to keep the water quality data coming.



*Duffy PS students @LYH*



*Gordon PS students(Photo M Bissett)*

A huge thank you to all those groups and individuals involved in collecting data. To view Upper Murrumbidgee Waterwatch data go to <http://www.act.waterwatch.org.au>.



# PLATYPUS MONTH

## Volunteers needed for Platypus surveys in the ACT region

Waterwatch is running some group surveys throughout August to help learn more about platypus populations on selected rivers in the ACT region.

Late winter is the ideal time for spotting platypus as they spend more time feeding and the males are out and about preparing for the breeding season.

Waterwatch will be doing 22 surveys throughout August and we need your help!

No experience necessary.

There will also be a FREE platypus walk held on the Queanbeyan River.

Survey times and dates are on the following page

**WHAT TO BRING: WARM, STURDY CLOTHES & FOOTWEAR, BINOCULARS & A WATCH/PHONE**

**RSVP NECESSARY TO : [waterwatch@act.gov.au](mailto:waterwatch@act.gov.au) OR WOO O'REILLY 6207 2246**

Credits: Photo of platypus by Healesville Sanctuary and sunset photo by Tim The Yowie Man



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