

# **Southern ACT Catchment Group Coordinators Report**

November 2012 / October 2013

## **MAJOR PROJECTS/FUNDING**

### **‘A Labour of Love’’: Celebrating Landcare in the ACT’**

- ‘A Labour of Love’’: Celebrating Landcare in the ACT was launched by Simon Corbell MLA on the 19<sup>th</sup> of April 2013 at Tuggeranong Homestead with Welcome to Country by Agnes Shea. A large crowd of over 100 was in attendance. ParkCare and Landcare Groups held a joint display along with Catchment/Community Group stalls. MOTH held a planting session with Greening Australia and food provided by Macarthur Scouts added to the successful day. Since then sales of the book have continued steadily particularly through the Parkcare community and is available at the National Arboretum, National Library, Tidbinbilla and Namadgi Visitor Centre along with the Botanical Gardens Bookshop. Books are also sold at public information stalls and events and have become a great tool for the promotion of Landcare in the ACT. This wonderful publication has been made possible by an ACT Heritage grant now acquitted totalling \$10000 (ex GST).

### **Regional Education of African Lovegrass**

- The Community Action Grant application for Regional education on African Lovegrass - an integrated approach was acquitted. CAG funded \$16075 with the three catchment groups contributing \$2000 each (in-kind from GCG & MCG, CROWK \$500, RLA \$500 and the NRM Council \$2000 in kind. This was a highly successful project to raise awareness of Lovegrass and improve knowledge of distribution. Pamphlets and posters produced from the project continue to be distributed.

### **ACT Environment Grant 2011/2012**

- The Hughes Garran Woodland Group is in the final stages of completing expenditure of this grant. This grant has provided funds for the maintenance and further development of walking tracks within the Park, planting of native trees and shrubs, building and installing nesting boxes for native birds, purchasing portable fire fighting equipment and engaging a consultant to develop the Hughes-Garran Park Plan of Management.
- This grant was varied to 31<sup>st</sup> October 2013 to accommodate negotiations with TAMS around issues such as tree removal and mowing. The variation has replaced cost of arborist services with the purchase of nest boxes, a handheld GPS device, and native grass seed and forbs and seed raising tubes and tree ladder.

### **ACT Environment Grants 2012/2013**

- The Catchment Wide Pest Species Mapping and Coordinated Control Grant has provided funding for the purchase of equipment for SACTCG member groups. Equipment purchased includes 2 mini-tablets, 4 ‘phablets’ all with GPS capability as well as 5 motorised high-pressure backpack sprayers for lending by groups. Lending arrangements will be established once all the gear is fully operational.
- The Atlas of Living Australia is being contracted by ACT Government to develop an application that can be used on any smart phone to collect information and send it to the ALA site. The portal will have a tab for each ParkCare group to have a list of weeds that are important to them (for mapping and otherwise) as well as list from Parks. The coordinator has been involved

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in consultations around the development of this application and will assist in training of this application for groups with the new devices.

## **ACT Environment Grants 2013/2014**

- We have been successful in funding of around \$43 000 for the project Weed Control Assistance for the Paddy's R Rural Lessee's. This will be assistance to help meet the costs of weed control in the catchment including tussock grasses and woody weeds to prevent further spread into the MDRC. The coordinator will be visiting all sites to photograph change and meet with farmers about other environmental issues to be targeted in the area in the future.

## **ACT Heritage Grants 2013/2014**

- Friends of Tidbinbilla with the support of SACTCG were successful in obtaining funding of over \$12 000 for signage at Nils Desperandum Homestead. This will be for four signs describing the Heritage value of the cottage, Eucalyptus distillery, Koala enclosure and Swimming pool and will be part of the Canberra tracts signs. It is envisaged that an associated heritage walk will accompany the unveiling of the signs.

## **Weed Spray Trailer**

- We were successful in a small grant with ACTEW Water for the storage of the mobile spray trailer. The coordinator has established an agreement with Lions Youth Haven at Westwood Farm for discounted storage of the unit and this is being managed well. Funds for maintaining the unit, registration and storage are being covered by the ACTEW Water grant and donations from the use of the trailer. With limited grants available for equipment the decision for all Catchment groups to purchase a second trailer are on hold.

## **Spray Safe and Save Courses**

- Since last October SACTCG has conducted a Spray Safe and Save Courses at Birrigai at Tidbinbilla. Sarah sharp was also employed to give the participants a presentation on identification of native grasses. Funding has not been available for further courses at this point as the application for a CAG for this purpose has been unsuccessful. The coordinator is liaising with the regional Landcare Facilitator to seek further funding for another course. This training promotes efficient, ecologically aware use of registered herbicide and associated products for agricultural and environmental weed control using hand-held or boom spray equipment. The funding provided by the ACT NRM Council and ActewAGL has provided this training.

## **GVESHO**

- We have not yet heard if we have been successful in our application for the Australian Government Grants to Volunteer Environment and Heritage Organisation (GVEHO) Program for \$4000 each year for 3 years for 2013-2016. This funding will be used to assist with our book keeping expenses. Previous funding will be acquitted shortly.

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## **Coordinator Funding**

- After a long process with the ACT NRM Team we were successful in obtaining funding for the Ecological Resilience in the Southern ACT project. This will provide \$161616 for 2013-2014, and \$169949 for 2014-15. This funding covers the employment of 1.6 FTE (8 days/week) project officers. This funding will continue to support the Waterwatch program and Catchment Coordination for the Group as well as office costs, superannuation and other on-costs.
- The contract for the following 3 years has guaranteed \$129,396, \$130,303, \$127,778 consecutively. These funds will supply only 1.4 FTE's, which is 80% of the funds required to sustain current activity. The additional 20% will be available in competitive round for each of these 3 years.

## **IT & Office**

- Web updates & maintenance being undertaken with the help of Deb Kellock and a new volunteer.
- 2 new computers have been purchased in the past year and the coordinator has updated systems to allow linkage across computer for file sharing. The second computer is being used for volunteers and landholders for preparing applications and data entry.
- A new projects email address has also been set up for discreet projects.
- The coordinator established internet banking and established a new system for SACTCG electronic and paper files.
- We continue to be on a monthly lease arrangement with the Education & Training Directorate and is due to be handed over to a new Directorate (ACTPLA). We have been assured that the new landlords will find accommodation for us.

## **Other Activities**

This year has been the first since a change over from a long serving coordinator. Our current coordinator has the administration of the Southern ACT Catchment Group, including updating the website and office management. During the period October 2012 to June 2013 our coordinator:

- organised a spray safe and save course at Birrigai;
- acquitted 2011-2013 Regional Investment Strategy funding ;
- undertook final project management of the Labour of Love project and acquitted ACT Heritage Grant ;
- acquitted ACT WONS grants for Castle Hill and Cypress Springs properties;
- applied for FACSIA Volunteer Grant, GVESHG Grant for 4 years, CFOC Community Action grant, ACT Environment Grant, ACT Heritage Grants and ACTEW Water Grant;
- developed the SACTCG application and MERI plan documents for Caring for Our Country Regional Investment Strategy and negotiated outputs;
- organising the launch of the Labour of Love book at Tuggeranong Homestead;
- participated in the ACT Catchment and Landcare Association (CLA) and the ACT Facilitators/Coordinators meetings;
- organised and attended SACTCG meetings;
- initiated and organised bimonthly SACTCG field trips, including to Casurina Sands, Cuppacumbalong, ACTEW Water Treatment Plant and Red Hill;
- participated in 'Radio Landcare' on Radio 2XX.(The 2 coordinators now run their own monthly show)

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- organised and attended the Catchment group displays at the Canberra Show, Green Savv Sunday, UC Sustainability fair stall and ANU Volunteer fair stall and developed picture boards to promote groups;
- submitted application for the ACT Landcare Volunteer Awards;
- continued production and distribution of Southern News;
- produced a checklist for the use of the mobile weed spray unit, and managed the hiring out of the unit
- joined as a member Terrestrial Biodiversity Network;
- applied for and received ActewAGL sponsorship for insurance/maintenance of the spray trailer;
- produced ACT Environment & Heritage Grant applications for a book entitled A Labour of Love that will be a celebration of Landcare volunteers in the ACT;
- worked to strengthen the ActewAGL SWP partnership;
- assisted Paddy's River farmer in a Community Landcare Grant;
- attended Bush on the Boundary planning meeting;
- attended Rural Summer workshop for farmers;
- participated in planning for the Along the Molonglo art competition and exhibition;
- maintained the UMCCC display stand Bungendore;
- Visited Tuggeranong College green house to discuss future options of the college growing plants for nearby groups;
- attended meeting and worked on options for developing a cross-catchment project to address CFOC/NRM Council priorities;
- attended Conservation Council, Biodiversity Working Group;

I would like to thank our members and particularly the Executive Committee for their ongoing support. I would also like to thank my work colleague, Martin whose help with many of our projects and the day to day running of the office has been indispensable.