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1. ACT Weeds of National Significance (WONS) Grants Program

The ACT Natural Resource Management (NRM) Council, with support from the Australian Government's Caring for our Country (CFOC) program, is making \$330,000 available for targeted control of Weeds of National Significance (WONS) within the ACT.

Funding is available to support community groups and rural landholders in managing WONS in the ACT through strategic and well planned on-ground actions. The principle WONS that funds can be used to control are: Blackberry (*Rubus fruticosus aggregate*); Chilean Needle Grass (*Nassella neesiana*); and Serrated Tussock (*Nassella trichotoma*).

Grants of between \$5,000 and \$100,000 will be offered, with proponents being expected to match the funds sought 1:1 through cash and/or in-kind contributions.

Guidelines, applications and weed facts sheets are available at the ACT NRM Council website <http://www.actnrmcouncil.org.au/node/170>

Applications must be received by 5pm on 2 February 2012.

For more information contact Tammie Spackman, NRM Investment Manager on 6207 2114 or tammie.spackman@act.gov.au

2. Biodiversity Fund opens

The Minister for Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities, Mr Tony Burke, officially launched the first grant application round of the Biodiversity Fund. On Friday 9th December. Read the Minister's media release at <http://www.environment.gov.au/minister/burke/2011/mr20111209.html>

The Biodiversity Fund is a key element of the Australian Government's Clean Energy Future Land Sector Package and supports land managers to store carbon, enhance biodiversity and build resilience across the Australian landscape.

Applications are now open and you can get a copy of the Biodiversity Fund grant application guidelines, along with information about how to apply for a grant at www.environment.gov.au/cleanenergyfuture

Applications close 5pm AEDT Tuesday 31 January 2012.

The Biodiversity Fund provides support to land managers to establish new biodiverse carbon stores or better manage existing stores in high conservation areas. So, if you have a good idea for a project that involves activities which restore, manage or better protect biodiversity on public or private land, you are encouraged to submit a Biodiversity Fund application.

3. Don't be a Drifter Herbicide spraying workshops

Southern ACT Catchment Group is organizing another 'Don't Be A Drifter' herbicide use training course at Westwood Farm near Kambah and run by Craig Day from 'Spray Safe and Save'. Craig adapts the course content to suit the requirements of the participants. Craig is an excellent presenter with a truly in-depth knowledge of all aspects of herbicide use and the legislation surrounding it. The practical sessions clearly demonstrate the learning gained from the theory sessions. All people using herbicides at any level could gain a greater understanding of all aspects of herbicide use by undertaking this course, whether they are seeking accreditation, reaccreditation (AQF3/4) or simply a better knowledge base to work from regarding drift reduction, nozzle selection, equipment selection and calibration and OH&S to name a just few aspects. All costs are covered through funding to the catchment group from ActewAGL and the ACT NRM Council. The course is on the weekend 18-19 February and is open to urban, landcarers / Park Carers and landholders and managers across the ACT or in the Googong or Upper Murrumbidgee catchments (within 50 km south of the ACT border). Contact Steve Welch on 6296 6400 or info@sactcg.org.au if you are interested.

4. ACT landcare book

Following the success of 'The World of Tidbinbilla' book published by the Southern ACT Catchment Group with the aid of ACT Heritage grants, Southern ACT Catchment Group has successfully applied for further Heritage funding to produce a book telling the story of ACT landcare with high quality photographs, profiles of landcarers and short descriptions of landcare groups. The book entitled 'A Labour of Love' – *landcare in the ACT* is a Catchment and Landcare Association (CLA) project. Invitations to participate in this project have been sent out to all groups associated with the CLA. Contributions will be accepted up until 1st February, 2012. For further information or to send your contributions contact Steve Welch 6296 6400 or email info@sactcg.org.au

5. Mowing Schedules

Interested in finding out about mowing schedules around Canberra and mowing policies? Below are some links to TAMDS websites which should provide information:

TAMSD issues a media release every week (either on a Monday or a Friday) which lists where the TAMDS crews/contractors are mowing in and around Canberra for the next week (can't find if there is a site where all these mowing releases are held).

http://www.tams.act.gov.au/live/about_our_department/tams_media_releases

The link below provides information on ACT Government mowing policies.

http://www.tams.act.gov.au/play/pcl/city_centre_and_shopping_centres/maintenance_of_public_areas/mowingpolicy and this link provides a longer-term plan for mowing (subject to lots of factors – i.e. rainfall, weather conditions etc.

http://www.tams.act.gov.au/play/pcl/city_centre_and_shopping_centres/maintenance_of_public_areas/grassmowing Contributions will be accepted up until 1st February, 2012

For further information or to send your contributions contact Steve Welch 6296 6400 or email info@sactcg.org.au

6. African Lovegrass poster and associated brochure available

Southern ACT Catchment Group (SACTCG) has produced a poster and a complimentary pamphlet with the aim of raising the awareness of African Lovegrass amongst the general community. These publications have been produced with the support of the Australian Government's Community Action Grant for the Regional education on African Lovegrass - an integrated approach project run by SACTCG.

Your help is requested in distributing these publications and finding locations to display the poster (see pictures below). Contact Steve Welch on 6296 6400 or info@sactcg.org.au to obtain copies.

7. Local Group wins national award

SACTCG member MOTH (Minders of Tuggeranong Homestead) has won a prestigious award from the Savewater Alliance, a not-for-profit organisation that is considered to be Australia's leading advocate for water efficiency and sustainable practice. At their annual awards in Melbourne on 11 November, MOTH received the Community award for its achievements in water conservation at Tuggeranong Homestead. With funds from a Commonwealth grant, MOTH arranged for the replacement of seven unusable water tanks and the installation of new ones which provide non-potable water for the use of the homestead and gardens. This project has led to an estimated 60% savings in the use of potable water on the property.

8. Centenary Trail in Canberra

The idea for a Centenary Trail in Canberra arose from community submissions received in 2009 as part of the Canberra 100 call for Centenary projects. The Trail is intended to be a showcase of Canberra, taking users on a seamless journey between urban and rural environs and incorporating the ACT's iconic sites and hidden treasures. A Canberra Centenary Trail Feasibility Report was prepared for Parks and Conservation Service, which assesses the feasibility of the proposal in terms of estimated costs and predicted benefits.

Comments and suggestions about the trail or the report are welcome at any time and can be sent to TAMSCentenaryTrail@act.gov.au

More information including maps of the proposed trail can be found at http://www.tams.act.gov.au/live/about_our_department/community_engagement/community_engagement_activities_and_events/canberra_centenary_trails

9. Radio Landcare

For an interesting update on local landcare listen to Radio Landcare:

2XX FM 98.3 Tuesdays 9 - 10am **QBN FM** 96.7 Sundays 8 - 9am

Southern ACT Catchment Group has a regular spot on 2XX every third Tuesday of the month. Contact Steve or Martin if you have a desire to be involved.

10. Catchment Group meeting

Our next General meeting will be 24 January, Urambi office, 4.30 pm.

11. Weeds

There have been a number of new weed alerts of recent times including Mexican Feather Grass African Fountain Grass and Fireweed information on these can be found at Molonglo Catchment Group’s website:

<http://www.molonglocatchment.com.au/>

If you find any please hand remove the plant, bag, dispose of, GPS the site and send a map or the GPS waypoint to Jenny Conolly, Weeds Ranger 0417 716 920

jenny.conolly@act.gov.au or Steve Taylor, Senior Weeds Management Officer 6207 22878 steve.taylor@act.gov.au.

Additionally Cooleman Ridge recently had major earthworks undertaken around the base of the Ridge to produce a large drain to carry large amounts of water away from the houses. A member of the Cooleman Ridge Parkcare Group, has noticed Bathurst Burr may have been imported with the soil used in the works.

On a brighter note Steve Taylor has provided this information on ST John’sWort:

- *We are experiencing a bumper year for St John’s Wort (a ‘High’ risk weed with new infestations appearing seemingly everywhere).*
- *Our management strategy for this weed is to ‘Protect priority sites’. The two photos below show what can be achieved if you stay focused on doing frequent follow-up control at your ‘priority sites’.*
- *Lesson here: don’t go chasing the new infestations till you have completed control work at all your follow-up sites.*

	
<p>BEFORE CONTROL WORK: St John’s Wort invading Yellow Box-Red Gum Grassy Woodland at Red Hill NR. A nationally endangered <i>Rutidosis leptorrhynchoides</i> wildflower site is nearby. Photo taken in December 2009 just before the area was sprayed with selective herbicide.</p>	<p>AFTER PRIMARY CONTROL AND TWO APPLICATIONS OF FOLLOW-UP CONTROL: This photo was taken in December 2011. Control treatment was spot-spraying with Starane Advanced at 300mL per 100L water and Uptake Oil at 500mL per 100L water. The remaining yellow flowers are regenerating paper daisies (<i>Xerochrysum viscosum</i>). There will still be a lot of St John’s Wort seed in the soil (seed bank) – so follow-up control will be required at this site for many years.</p>

12.Census of ACT Flora - 15 Dec 2011

Environmental Knowledge & Awareness Seminar:

This Census lists the scientific names of the native and naturalised vascular plants (Pinophyta and Magnoliophyta), hornworts (Anthocerothyta) and liverworts (Marchantiophyta) known to occur in the Australian Capital Territory. All records are based on herbarium specimens housed in the Australian National Herbarium in Canberra. The Census is a 'work in progress' and now includes data on some previously unrepresented flora groups including mosses, lichens, algae, fungi and slime moulds.

Speaker: Brendan Lepschi from the Centre for Australian National Biodiversity Research

Where: National Conference Centre, Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Ground floor, 7 London Circuit, Canberra City, ACT.

When: Thursday 15 December 2011 - 12.30pm - 1.30pm

Cost: Free for EIANZ members, \$20 for non-EIANZ members.

Lunch: Light refreshments to be provided.

More information: act@eianz.org

13.Mobile QuikSpray Unit available

The Southern ACT Catchment Group supported by an ACT Environment Grant and sponsored by ActewAGL has available a QuikSpray unit to assist landholders and managers across the ACT or in the Googong or Upper Murrumbidgee catchments (within 50 km south of the ACT border) to undertake weed control. The unit has 2 hand held spray guns each with 100 metres of push-button retractable hose and a small selection of spray nozzles.



To find out more or book the spray unit contact Steve Welch or Martin Lind on 6296 6400.

14.Launch of the reprinted 'Reptiles & Frogs of the Australian Capital Territory

The National Parks Association is launching the reprinted 'Reptiles & Frogs of the Australian Capital Territory' on Sunday 11 December. Reptiles Frogs of the Australian Capital Territory has been updated by the author, Ross Bennett, and reprinted by the National Parks Association of the ACT. The book will be launched by Shane Rattenbury, Speaker of the ACT Legislative Assembly and Greens Spokesperson for the Environment, on Sunday 11 December 2011 at 12.15 pm at the Namadgi Visitor Centre as part of NPA's end-of-year celebrations.

Enquiries to admin@npaact.org.au

15.Free Frogs

Around 200 northern corroboree frogs have been released into the wild for the very first time after eight years of breeding in captivity as part of a program to save the endangered species, Minister for the Environment and Sustainable Development, Simon Corbell, announced on the 25 November.

'In 2003, the ACT Government established a captive colony of the endangered northern corroboree frog at Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve in response to a continuing decline of wild populations,' Mr Corbell said.

'This release is the culmination of eight years of raising and breeding northern corroboree frogs by government ecologists and Tidbinbilla wildlife officers and represents a significant milestone for the Government in protecting this endangered species.'

16.NRM website

A new Australian Government natural resource management (NRM) website has been launched at www.nrm.gov.au.

The website provides easier access to information on funding opportunities and program outcomes relating to *Caring for our Country*, the Australian Government's NRM initiative, which is administered by Australian Government Land and Coasts.

The site includes a new design, a more user-centred structure and a strong focus on work achieved through *Caring for our Country* through a dedicated projects area.

It also features a substantial archive of reference material from Australian Government funded NRM projects. The reference collection is linked to commonly used search engines, including academic ones, and is expected to have more material added over time.

17.Statement of common purpose between Landcare and Regional NRM

The first draft of the statement of common purpose between Landcare and Regional NRM Organisations is currently being circulated to Landcare networks/members for comment. Deadline for comments 13th January 2012. This Statement of Common Purpose is an agreement between the National Landcare Network and the National NRM Regions' Working Group.

The National Landcare Network is the advocacy and representative body for Landcare at the national level. It consists of the representatives from peak bodies for Landcare in each State and Territory.

The National NRM Regions' Working Group is the representative body of the Chairs of Australia's 56 regional Natural Resource Management organisations. Its members are the representatives from the State and Territory groups of the Chairs.

This initiative is supported by the Australian Landcare Council, Landcare Australia Limited and the National Landcare Facilitator.

Contact Steve at info@act.org.au if you would like a copy of the draft Statement

18.Steve's Leave

I will effectively be on leave from the 20th December through to the 19th January. I take this opportunity to wish you all a safe and happy Christmas break.