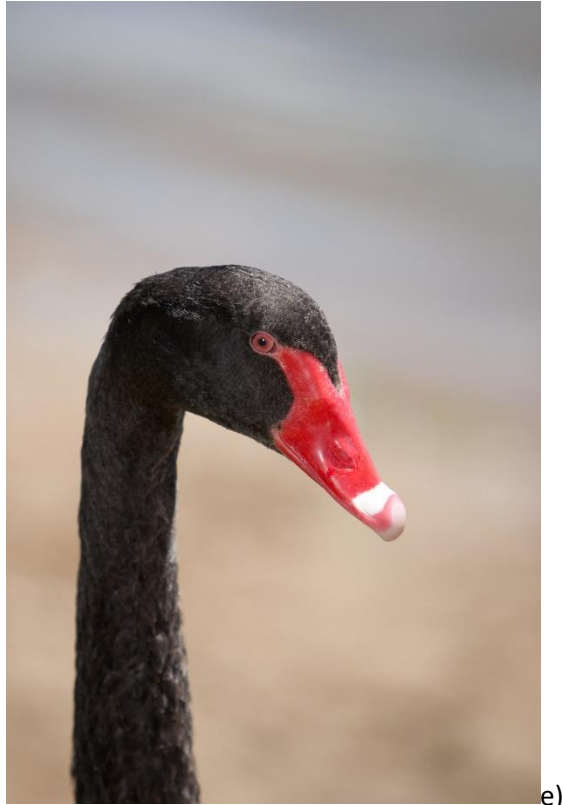


Carers of Point Hut Pond



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Member of Southern ACT Catchment Group



About the Carers Group

The Carers of Point Hut Pond group (CPHP) was formed in winter, 2014 by a small group of Gordon residents. Their common aim was to contribute positively toward the preservation and improvement of Point Hut Pond and its immediate surrounds.

Pauline Gattenhof is the group chair.

The group has been is a member of the Southern ACT Catchment Group, and because of that is able to provide Insurance support for Group Members involved in approved activities.

Additionally the group seeks to work cooperatively with the Tuggeranong Community Council and the Gordon Neighbourhood Watch Committee.



Objectives

The objectives of the Group are:

- To promote the positive and constructive use for active and passive recreation of the Point Hut Pond area and its surrounds;
- To engage with the community to assist in informing the community about the benefits of this asset and the risks to its continuing quality;
- To promote the use of the Pond as a learning tool, especially for young residents of the district;
- To develop and maintain a plan for the positive use of the Pond, and to assist with the management of issues surrounding the continued quality of the asset;
- To lobby for attention from Government and relevant agencies to invest effort and resources in maintaining and developing the Pond;

- To contribute, as far as possible, directly toward maintaining the Pond through individual and group effort; and
- To protect and foster wildlife.



History

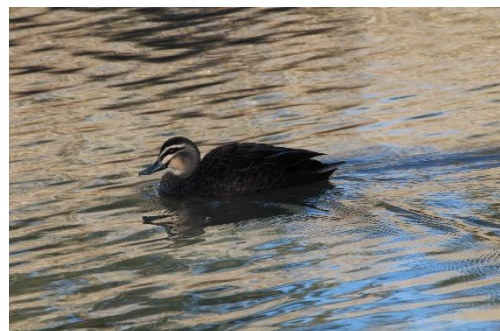
The southern end of the Tuggeranong Valley was originally part of the Lanyon Homestead but was developed for residential purposes in the 1980s. Gordon and Banks were created by gazetting on 12 March 1987. I have not been able to find the age of Conder. These three suburbs surround Point Hut Pond, and most users of the Pond come from these areas.

As part of the development of these three suburbs, drainage was developed to assist in disposing of street rainwater, and in order to ameliorate the occasional but dramatic tendency for floodwaters to develop after heavy rain. The storm water system has been channelled through a series of three major drainage systems, and a number of minor ones, to direct rainwater runoff in the suburb through to Point Hut. There, the water is slowed, after being filtered through plantings of rushes. At the low end of the Pond the water then travels down-hill, through two further small dams, again intended to slow the flow of water, and eventually it joins the Murrumbidgee at Point Hut Crossing.

The intention of slowing the flow of water is to enable the silt and rubbish load which is carried by the water to break down or drop out of the water to ensure that the water that reaches the Murrumbidgee River is as clean and as free from pollutants as possible.

Water from the Murrumbidgee River is tapped for some of the ACT water supply, but most of it joins the Murray River and eventually finds its way to Adelaide, being used along the way for the needs of many small towns and irrigated farms. The water from these three suburbs provides a small but important contribution toward Australia's biggest water system.

While the Pond was created during the 1980s for utilitarian purposes it was from the very beginning also intended to enhance the local environment and to provide a focal point for passive recreation.



The Pond was not built over a natural watercourse, although casual observation would suggest this. Prior to the land development this was a low part of the valley, but there was neither standing water nor seasonal nor permanent streams.

There are five islands of various sizes within the Pond, and they have been created for bird habitat and for the attractiveness they give to the area.

In 2001 the ACT Government issued a book confirming that the lake was created for *Water Quality Management and Informal Recreation*.¹ The ACT Government has beautified the area with trees and landscaping around the Pond, and in more recent times has permitted the borders of the Pond to be populated with housing

The ACT Government notes in this same book that Point Hut Pond will *be ...managed and maintained to a high standard...*

The Carers of Point Hut Pond commend the ACT Government for their foresight in creating this dual purpose facility and note how the Pond is now a natural heart for the suburb of Gordon.

Usage

The Pond is actively used most days of the year. It contains free barbeques, grassed areas, children's play areas and public toilets. There is also a path around the circumference of the Pond of around 3 kilometres. This path, which is accessible for disabled people, is very popular with pedestrians, especially for people and families with dogs, recreational bike riders and runners who all enjoy the vistas presented by the Pond.

The ACT Government has specified approved activities for the lake and notes that the following activities are permitted on and adjacent to the waters of the lake

- Fishing
- Model boating
- Recreational boating
- Windsurfing (North West area only); and
- Motorised research craft.

The entire area has also become important for the wildlife. There are a large number of water birds, and other birds which take advantage of the permanent water supply. As well occasional wombat and kangaroos can be found for those willing to venture out after dark. The Pond water contains carp and red fin and a lot of fishing of the Pond occurs.

Issues of Concern

There are two main threats to the quality of the Pond, its surrounds and the viability of the Pond as an attractant and sanctuary for wildlife . The first relates to the inflows from the storm-water system that feeds into the Pond, and the second results from the use of the edges of Pond by local people.

Storm-water inflow

The purpose of the Pond, as stated above is to capture run off from the surrounding suburbs, purify that water and then release it into the Murrumbidgee River. By its very nature, therefore the Pond attracts silt, nutrients and rubbish. These inflows cause a build-up of pollutants in the water and at the inflows.

¹ Urban Services *Canberra Urban Lakes and Ponds* 2001 Page 10
Carers of Point Hut Pond Plan ©

At the major points where water flows into the Pond, the ACT Government has installed Gross Pollutants Traps (GPTs) and these are cleaned out according to a schedule, about twice each year, and the Committee observes that this is largely done. This helps reduce, but does not stop, rubbish reaching the Lake.

The silt is making the Pond shallow, and this is making several island built in the Pond more accessible to human visitors and bird predators.

The build-up of silt is also the reason for concern about the long term future of the Pond. The Committee has been informed that the Pond will be de-silted when necessary, but local residents do not know of any instance of the Pond being dredged since it was created, and as a result, the shallow Pond is becoming progressively more and more shallow. While it may be arguable that the level of silt is not yet impeding the purpose of the lake as a water control feature, it has certainly had a growing impact on the Pond as a recreational facility.

The Committee has also noted the periodic outbreaks of Blue Green algae on the Pond. These outbreaks seriously reduce the attractiveness of the Pond, make the water dangerous for boaters and pets, and because of the noxious odours the algae creates, make it quite unpleasant for residents living adjacent to the Pond.

Human Impact on the Pond



Most of the activity around the Pond represents enjoyment by local residents, but there are a number of activities which have the effect of causing the environs to deteriorate, and which diminish the pleasure of the majority of local people.

These particularly include the following:

- **Intrusion onto the Pond edges by vehicles.** Many people, particularly people who fish, park illegally on the grass or footpaths rather than walking a few metres to their favourite fishing spot. Currently, this is particularly prevalent at the north-west corner of the Pond. This causes damage to the natural grasses, and contributes to erosion along the margins of the Pond, and detracts from the use of the Pond by other users.
- **Riding motorised vehicles.** A small number of people use the paths and the green areas for riding un-registered off road motor bikes. This is most prevalent at weekends and during school holidays. The riders of these bikes are inexperienced and cause hazards to other Pond users as well as destroying grassed areas and nesting sites and unpleasant noise levels.

- **Dumping of rubbish.** There are bins provided at the southern and eastern edges of the Pond near designated car parks. But a number of people do not clean up after themselves, and leave their picnic residues behind. The Gordon Neighbourhood Watch Committee provides an annual clean-up of the Pond as its contribution to clean up Australia day, and the ACT Government also cleans the Pond surrounds from time to time, but these efforts are inadequate against the frequency and volume of the littering that occurs. This causes pollution in the Pond, creates danger to pedestrians and wildlife, especially from rusting cans and broken glass, and is an eyesore which detracts from the Pond amenity.
- **Vandalism.** Vandalism takes many forms, but in recent times there has been deliberate and repeated damage to the playgrounds at the eastern and northern edges of the Pond. As well walls are defaced with spray paint, rubbish bins are sometimes set on fire, and safety devices including drain covers are deliberately damaged or removed.

Possible actions by the Carers of Point Hut Pond

The Carers of Point Hut Pond are interested in any thoughts or contributions that interested parties may wish to make and are willing to review its strategies and priorities from time to time to reflect community views.

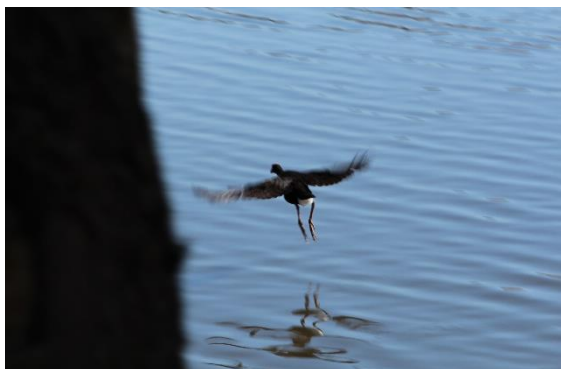
The Carers group is also aware that there are a number of other parties with the potential to influence and assist in the management and development of the Pond. These include, but are not limited to:



- The Southern ACT Catchment Group
- Gordon Neighbourhood Watch
- Tuggeranong Branch of the ACT Police
- Tuggeranong Lake Carers
- Local primary schools
- Local high schools
- The Vikings Group Lanyon Club
- Canberra Ornithological Group
- Tuggeranong Community Council
- Local businesses in the Lanyon and Gordon Shopping Precincts
- Our elected local representatives in the ACT Government
- The relevant Minister, and the relevant member of the opposition
- Territories and Municipal Services
- (there is potential for some further development of this list)

Engagement Opportunities

Considered against the objectives for the group, possible activities include



Objective 1

To promote the positive and constructive use for active and passive recreation of the Point Hut Pond area and its surrounds

Possible strategies include

- Promotion of the Pond through local media as a destination of choice for passive recreation;
- Renewal of the walk signs that were once around the edge of the Pond, and were an encouragement for walkers;
- Replacement of a seat at the north eastern corner of the Pond which was vandalised and removed;
- Provision of exercise points for stretching and aerobic stretching for people who choose the Pond as a site for running and maintaining fitness; and
- Encouraging the use of the Pond-side by fitness training for local sporting teams, or personal trainers.

Objective 2

To engage with the community to assist in informing the community about the benefits of this asset and the risks to its continuing quality

Possible strategies include

- If possible, identification of a suitable spokesperson or Patron for the group;
- Regular positive articles in the local media promoting the use of the Pond;
- Creating opportunities for interested residents to become more involved by promoting special events, for example celebrating public holidays;
- Involving local schools in engaging with the Pond, through interacting with nature, including conducting learning experiments and or recording and observing natural fauna and flora around the Pond;

- Presenting information about the Pond, for example at the local shopping centres, at local aged care services, at schools, at elections, or at local informational events such as those sometimes sponsored by Gordon Neighbourhood Watch;
- Development of an information presentation containing interesting information and facts about the Pond for use at suitable occasions;
- Development of an information pack that could be given to local students or local residents; and
- Making Observations the Pond in order to be able to advise local people about interesting flora or fauna living at or visiting the Pond.

Objective 3

To promote the use of the Pond as a learning tool, especially for young residents of the district

Possible strategies include

- As noted in Objective 2, Involving local schools in engaging with the Pond, through interacting with nature, including conducting learning experiments and or recording and observing natural fauna and flora around the Pond;
- Encouraging regular excursions to the Pond as part of the school learning curriculum; and
- Harnessing the work already undertaken around the Pond (by Waterwatch) to advise and inform local school children.

Objective 4

To develop and maintain a plan for the positive use of the Pond, and to assist with the management of issues surrounding the continued quality of the asset

Possible strategies include

- Positive consultative engagement with the local community about the Pond;
- Interaction and partnership with relevant ACT government bodies;
- Constructive ongoing engagement with the Southern ACT Catchment group, and other interest groups as detailed earlier in this document;
- Development of, and periodic refreshment of this plan, including a strategy for making it widely available.

Objective 5

To lobby for attention from Government and relevant agencies to invest effort and resources in maintaining and developing the Pond

Possible strategies include

- Development of a prioritised approach to dealing with the issues identified in this plan and as updated from time to time;

- Meetings with relevant government employees particularly including Territories and Municipal Services;
- Meetings from time to time with the relevant local member, and or the Minister or local opposition spokesperson;
- Through a targeted campaign, draw attention to the deteriorating conditions of the Pond inflows and the build-up of silt and rubbish in the Pond;
- To advocate a regular maintenance program to control silt build up; and
- Development of suitable strategies to discourage illegal intrusions onto the Pond verges by unauthorised vehicles.

Objective 6

To contribute, as far as possible, directly toward maintaining the Pond through individual and group effort

Possible strategies include

- Enhancing our collective knowledge and understanding of the habitat presented by this Pond, and developing strategies to preserve and enhance those habitats;
- Planting of suitable flora that will protect the Pond-side and encourage and support local wildlife to live on the lake and breed;
- Contribution toward monitoring of water quality;
- Establishing a mechanism for alerting relevant authorities to illegal or damaging or inappropriate use of the Pond;
- Lobbying for the ongoing maintenance and improvement of the Pond amenities including its playgrounds, barbecue areas, public toilets and seating and observing areas.

Objective 7

To protect and foster wildlife

Possible strategies include

- Linking with expert groups (EG the Canberra Ornithological Society) to promote the use of the Pond for research and observational purposes;
- Developing an enhanced understanding of the Pond as a breeding site for birds and small mammals; and
- Planting of bird attracting flora.

Priorities for action

The Committee has identified the following items for its priority attention

1. Developing a better understanding of the silt build up in the Pond and ways of having this ameliorated;
2. Promoting action to reduce intrusion onto the Pond edges by unauthorised cars at the north east corner of the lake by suitable strategies that may include the provision of additional parking in that area and reductions in access by bollards or similar.
3. Identification of strategies for enhancing the lake through tree or shrub plantings including macrophytes;
4. Contributing toward maintaining plantings in their establishment phase; and
5. Documenting the Fauna found in and around the lake, especially birds.

These priorities have been developed further in an attachment to this plan, which is available to members of the group.

Review

This plan was developed between July and September 2014 and is due for review in mid-2015. The plan is copyright, but may be freely distributed and copied. Any use of the information contained in this plan in other publications must be acknowledged.

Contacting the Carers of Point Hut Pond

Please contact one of us by calling the Southern ACT Catchment Group on (02) 6296 6400 or emailing us at Carersphp@yahoo.com.au

The Committee is interested in positive suggestions about how the Pond and its surroundings may be used, and will also welcome new volunteers, either to join the Committee, or to work with the Committee on the various projects it may undertake.

NB: All photographs in this plan were taken in and around the Pond by a member of the Carers of Point Hut Pond Committee.

