

Hi Waterwatch teams,

This month I am going to focus on 2 water testing issues many suffered in February; extremely turbid samples and phosphorus readings that were off the scale.

Dealing with extremely turbid samples



If your sample is full of ash, mud or algae, you will need a filtering kit as shown on the right ->

It comprises a large syringe and a set of filters. (2 brands are shown here). This is available from your friendly local WW Coordinator.



Steps for successful filtering.

1. You **don't** need to filter the water before testing **E.C., pH, Temp** or **Dissolved Oxygen** (nor obviously the **Turbidity** test)

The **Dissolved Oxygen** test can be completed with even very turbid samples, as shown in these photos;



Turbid sample



After adding chemicals 1 & 2



After adding starch



Titration to colour change

For the **Phosphorus** and **Nitrate** tests proceed as follows;

2. Draw up 40-50mL in the large syringe (Figure 1),
3. Attach the filter and squeeze water into both **Phosphorus** tubes (Figure 2 & 3). It may take more than 1 filter for each. **Safety Note;** Hold the filter and push gently until the water only comes out in slow drops, then change filter. Don't try to over force the syringe. (smashed glass, cut knuckles)
4. When you have completed the Phosphate test, pour the filtered liquid from the control tube (ie. the one that you didn't add the chemicals to) into the little beaker (Figure 4). You can then use this to fill up the **Nitrate** tubes for that test (Figure 5) (No more filtering. Yay!)



Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4



Figure 5

Dealing with extreme Phosphorus levels



If your phosphorus reading is off the scale (>0.25 for low range kits, >1.0 for high range kits). You can do the following.

Pour the sample in the little beaker. The level will come to the 17mL mark. Pour 8.5mL (half) back into the tube that will have the chemicals added to and top up with 8.5 mL of clean drinking water.

Redo the test as normal then multiply your reading by 2.



If the reading is still off the scale use 4mL of sample and 13mL of drinking water. Redo the test and multiply the reading by 4.

Last February both of these problems occurred at all sites along the Murrumbidgee River as well as some of our other rivers due to the massive loads of ash and burnt silt that was washed into the waterways by sudden high rainfall. It is likely that some Waterwatchers will still be experiencing high turbidity and phosphorus levels for some months.

Cheers,
Martin Lind.



Click here ↓ to head to the latest on the SACTCG website
[**SACTCG Calendar/News**](#)

- **COVID-19 Policy** The SACTCG is developing a policy around volunteer interactions in this crisis. **We will keep you updated.**
As a first step please contact me BEFORE coming to the office 62966400. Please Do Not drop in.
- SACTCG will be holding a special meeting at some point at the **SACTCG Offices** to pass changes to our constitution. The proposed changes are to accommodate the new rules for Incorporated Associations which were introduced in 1 July 2019.
See https://www.accesscanberra.act.gov.au/app/answers/detail/a_id/1504/~/incorporated-associations for more information on changes to the Act.
Our **revised constitution** and a table that accompanies the changes are available on request waterwacht@sactcg.org.au so people can understand why we have proposed the changes.
- The ACT Government have just released the **Draft Canberra Urban Lakes and Ponds Land Management Plan**. The plan can be found at https://www.yoursay.act.gov.au/urban-lakes-and-ponds-land-management-plan?fbclid=IwARoPhQxINozceeSkp5P7THUDRJp1WdnaE8nWpKi_RsYmfmxqbWharsEbSkQ
Comments close 6th April. We are happy to submit something from the groups if people have concerns but don't want to submit personally, just let Fiona know. projects@sactcg.org.au
- **Friends of Grasslands (FoG)** is again offering a small number of grants of up to \$1500 each in 2020 to support projects that promote investment in the understanding, conservation and management of grassy ecosystems. Any individual or organisation can apply.
For further information and the 2020 Application Form please check out FoG's website at <http://www.fog.org.au/>.
For further information, registration of interest, or discussion of potential proposals please contact FoG at supportedprojects@fog.org.au.
Closing date for applications is Monday 13 April 2020. Applicants will be notified of the outcomes of their applications by the end of May 2020.
For an overview of who we are, how we operate, and what we do you can also check out our 2018 Annual Report, tabled at our March 2019 AGM, at <http://www.fog.org.au/AGMs.htm>.
- **2020-2021 ACT Environment and Nature in the City Grants**
The 2020-21 ACT Environment and Nature in the City Grants were opened for application on Tuesday 17 March 2020.
Funding of \$285,000 is available for community projects.
There are maximum limits per application:
 - ACT Environment Grants - \$35,000 per grant application
 - Nature in the City - \$20,000 per grant applicationThe assessment criteria for the Grants are detailed in the application information pack.
To apply for a grant you need to read the [2020-2021 ACT Environment and Nature in the City Application Information Pack](#) carefully and complete the online Application Form.
The link to the Application Information Pack and Application Form can be found at: <https://www.environment.act.gov.au/act-nrm/grants-and-support-packages/act-environment-grants>
Applications close AEST at 11:59 pm on Tuesday 28 April 2020.



- From **Coolleman Ridge Parkcare Group March 2020** newsletter;
Cleaning out the Old Dam and the Wonder and Joy of Rain

“In late February Chris, Linda and Rob spent over 12 hours clearing fleabane out of the Old Dam. After first cutting off the seed heads and taking them off the Ridge, the fleabane was pulled out, leaving native Persicaria behind in a few centimetres of water. Early March rain saw the Persicaria almost covered.” Rob Lundie



The Old Dam before weeding fleabane
Photo: Rob Lundie



The Old Dam after weeding fleabane
Photo: Rob Lundie



Farm Dam 6 Feb 2020 Photo: Rob Lundie



Farm Dam 19 Feb 2020 after 88mms of rain Photo: Rob Lundie



The Old Dam 5 Mar 2020 after about 70 mms of rain
Photo: Chris Oates

SACTCG has been supporting the Southern Canberra community and its catchments for over 18 years, and we need your help to continue to do so in the years ahead. There has never been a more important time to be stepping up to protect our local environment now and for the future. SACTCG’s environmental work is mostly funded by competitive grants, which are often small, short term, intermittent and don’t meet all our community or catchment needs. If you would like to support us, please consider donating to the Southern ACT Catchment Fund through [our secure online platform](#) or via [direct debit](#).



WW Calendar and shared links;

- **CANCELLED** March 22nd **World Water Day** at **Jerrabomberra Wetlands** to launch the **Catchment Health Indicator Program (CHIP)**
- The **Australian Freshwater Sciences Society** will be hosting a one day conference in **December**. Please fill out the very short survey if you are interested in attending. <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/MDCFTXL>

• **From the UMWW Facilitator's desk:**

"Hi Waterwatch/Frogwatch team

For those who haven't seen it, see a link below to the 2019 SoE report.

It's with great pride that I highlight the prominence of the CHIP in the water section of both the Summary Report and in Chapter 5 on Indicators, Condition and Trends. There would be many a citizen science program that could only dream of such an acknowledgement and acceptance of their work.

Frogwatch and Waterwatch also are well featured in Chapter 3 on Community Leadership. I see great potential for Frogwatch to be more integrated in other sections in the 2023 report!

I feel this report is a culmination of many years hard work to have our data recognised and used by the broader networks. Well done to all of you and, of course, to our tremendous volunteers.

And a special thanks to Dan Starrs who did way more than he should have to pull the four CHIPs together for the SoE to use. You are indeed a Starr (pers comms Deb Kellock 2020)."

[2019 ACT State of the Environment Report](#)

Cheers – Woo



[Waterway closures.](#)

[Recreational Water Quality](#)

[Bacteria alerts](#)

For water and sewerage faults and emergencies phone 02 6248 3111 (option 1)



Eflow releases;

Below is a summary of water releases from Icon Water dams in the Southern ACT, courtesy of Sarah McLaren, Icon Water.

Bendora

Currently not overflowing.

Current release is approximately 15 MLD.

Release currently above licence requirements:

11 Mar 27.0 – 29.9 MLD 0.91 – 0.92 m

18 Mar 8.6 – 10.1 MLD 0.82 – 0.83 m

Licence requirements:

11 Mar 28.5 MLD

18 Mar 9.5 MLD

Corin

Currently not overflowing.

Current release is approximately 44 MLD.

Release is above licence requirements

12 Mar 14.8 – 16.1 MLD 0.24 – 0.25 m

19 Mar 4.75 – 5.62 MLD 0.15 – 0.16 m

Licence requirements:

12 Mar 16.5 MLD

19 Mar 5.5 MLD

Cotter

Currently not overflowing.

Current flow 17 ML/d through Cotter Dam Cone Valve.

Licence release requirements:

Base release flow of >15 ML/d, with bi-monthly riffle release of >100 ML/d for >24 hours. OR Flow requirements as described in M2C section of the Water Abstraction EMP.

Click on these links to go to the latest newsletters or events;

Some of the icons below are hyperlinked to online newsletters if there is no adjacent article.

The views expressed in some media releases and opinion pieces are not necessarily the same as SACTCG or UMWW. But they make interesting reading and all sites linked to here are bonafide.



[Rain brings new life after a shocking summer](#)

[Opening statement to Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee on 6 March 2020](#)

[Lower levels expected on the Murray River as rains arrive](#)

[The time is right for NSW to complete their water resource plans](#)

[The deluge for some and the continuing dry for others](#)

[Recent rain refreshes rivers and communities alike](#)



[Wellbeing Framework - shaping Canberra's future](#)



[After the Fires](#)
[Bush Fire Recovery Projects and Citizen Science](#)



PARTICIPANTS WANTED FOR ONLINE SURVEY!



Many of us use products containing pesticides in our household to protect ourselves, our pets and our assets. Take part in our anonymous survey about the products you use and contribute to scientific research! Help us determine the impact of pesticides on the aquatic environment.

Survey link

<http://bit.ly/PesticideUse>



The Aquatic Environmental Stress Research Group (AQUEST) is conducting an anonymous online survey called PESTICIDE USE IN AUSTRALIAN HOMES AND GARDENS.

- This is an exciting opportunity to participate in a national citizen science project funded by the Australian Government.
- The survey is anonymous and voluntary.
- By participating, you contribute to scientific research and learn about the common products used in households and gardens in Australia.
- Results of the survey will be available on our webpage at www.pesticidedetectives.com.au

Contact aquest.citizenscience@rmit.edu.au for queries.

