

2012 National Landcare Awards

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National Finalist

Nominee: Friends of Mount Majura, Mount Ainslie Weeders and Watson Woodland Working Group, ACT

Category: Urban Landcare Award

Friends of Mount Majura, Mount Ainslie Weeders and Watson Woodland Working Group (FoMM, MtAW & WWWG) have been nominated for a National Landcare Award for their significant contribution towards community education and on ground works towards combating local environmental issues.

FoMM, MtAW & WWWG operate in a band of connected Nature Reserves within Canberra Nature Park, a series of remnant bush areas of mainly hills and ridges that frame suburban Canberra. Located adjacent to some of the ACT's oldest suburbs and newest developments, the groups address the many issues associated with urban bushland areas such as pest plants and animals, illegal rubbish dumping, protecting native species and erosion.

The groups are responsible for some outstanding projects which bring together partnerships with the ACT Government, the Molonglo Catchment Group, the North Canberra Community Council and local schools to run community events. They conduct research through projects such as Explaining Change, a project assessing the impact of herbivores on the reserve. The groups' collaboration, ensuring a flow of knowledge, resources and enthusiastic volunteers, is a model for community groups everywhere.

Over the years the groups have worked together on a range of projects to manage the reserves and to engage the local community. They have run a variety of walks and talks aimed at the general public as a way of educating the local community about the variety of life in the reserves. These walks are extremely well attended and are a fantastic way to link the urban community with the ecosystems of the nature reserves.

The groups hold monthly working bees which give the wider community an opportunity to learn about the reserves through active participation. The groups have worked together on organising a range of highly successful on-ground community days such as a National Tree Day planting (which typically attracts in excess of 100 people) and Clean-Up Australia Day events, both run annually since 2008. The three groups also work in partnership on a series of walks on World Environment Day with each group hosting a walk to showcase conservation projects in their area.

A great example of their ability to work in partnerships is the rabbit warren mapping project. The groups initially trained each other in the use of GPS units before working with the management bodies to provide assistance with training volunteers. They then mapped warrens across the three reserves of more than 1,300 hectares, locating 1,167 warrens, and recorded the data in a format that has been used to assist control programs. In 2011/12, 55 volunteers from the three groups spent 754 hours mapping and 343 hours training, processing the data and project coordination. This integrated approach was very successful and has become a model for how Landcare can assist rabbit control programs in the ACT.



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The groups have been successful lobbyists particularly in regards to the North Watson development where they were able to modify the proposal to protect the adjacent reserves, including encouraging a developer to protect the local wildlife by promoting a cat containment policy.

The Friends of Mount Majura, Mount Ainslie Weeders and Watson Woodland Working Group are one of 88 finalists in the National Landcare Awards to be announced in Sydney on 4th September, 2012. Commencing in 1991, the Awards celebrate the achievements of individuals and groups that make a valuable contribution to the land and coast where they live and work.

Landcare is a community based volunteer movement made up of individuals and groups who work on managing environmental issues in their local areas. Groups that fall under the Landcare umbrella work on a diverse range of environmental projects and include farmers embracing sustainable farm management and any community group that partakes in volunteer environmental activities. To find out how you can become a Landcare volunteer and for full details on all 2012 National Landcare finalists, visit www.landcareonline.com.au

Ends

For further information, photographs or interviews contact;

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Web summary

Friends of Mount Majura, Mount Ainslie Weeders and Watson Woodland Working Group have worked together on a range of projects to manage the remnant bushland reserves within Canberra Nature Park and to engage the local community. The groups coordinate on ground rabbit warren monitoring programs, planting, weeding and litter collection days in partnership with local government and community organisations. The groups’ collaboration, ensuring a flow of knowledge, resources and enthusiastic volunteers, is a model for community groups everywhere.

Pull out quote

“The Friends of Mount Majura, Mount Ainslie Weeders and Watson Woodlands Working Group are a great example of the community and environmental outcomes that can be achieved when Urban Landcare Groups work together with each other and government.”



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