

Friends of Mount Majura (FoMM) November 2010 newsletter

- Spotlight Walk – Friday 19 November
- Pre-dinner Curse Bash – Weekdays, 3 November to 12 November, 5.30pm 6.30pm
- Working Bee – Sunday 21 November
- Vegetation monitoring workshop in Hackett and on Mt Majura – Saturday 13 November
- ChemCert training workshop – Wednesday 17 November
- Proposed Canberra Nature Park Advocacy Group – meeting in November

Dear Friends

The timing of our first spotlight walk was perfect, the moon full, the night calm and warm and the kids excited, interested and well behaved. We saw sugar gliders gliding in shortly after sunset and later we observed a number of them close by. We saw ringtail possums (mother and young), scorpions, hunting spiders and bats. On our walk back we listened to the enormous chorus of frogs and Jenni, a keen frogwatcher identified the calls of five different species including the Peron's Tree frog. I'd like to thank Jenni for her tips on where to go to observe Mt Majura's nocturnal residents. She kindly agreed to lead a second walk on Friday 19 November. Most people on the waiting list of the first spotlight walk have registered. There's one place left and I will start a waiting list. Thank you also to Nadia of Parks and Conservation for introducing participants and for the spotlights with red filters.

Paterson's Curse is now flourishing and producing seeds. I call on volunteers to help hand pull and bag Curse at target sites at the Majura paddock adjacent to the water reservoir. We will run a **Pre-dinner Curse Bash** each weekday in the coming two weeks from 5.30pm to 6.30pm. The first Bash will be tomorrow Wednesday 3 November; join in on one or more days if you can. We will start at the south-eastern part of the Majura paddock and work our way to the north. Of course you can do your own bash anytime. Every time you have your regular walk, bring a bag or use one of those placed at various sites around the paddock. Leave your bag filled with weeds close to a trail for pick-up. Please BYO gloves and wear good shoes.

Our regular **working bee will be on Sunday 21 November** from 9am to 1pm. We will continue to hand remove weeds around the young eucalypts and mid-storey shrubs planted on National Tree Day. We will use wire netting to construct sturdy guards to protect the vulnerable plants from ongoing grazing damage. Enjoy a stroll and see how native plants reclaim sites that are cleared of weeds.

You can find more information on work activities around the Majura paddock at the following link <http://majura.org/2010/10/26/working-bee-21-november-2010/>. The photos taken of the paddock in October 2007 and October 2010 clearly show the difference as a result of volunteer work.

In September I circulated information about a series of **vegetation monitoring training workshops** run by Dr. Sarah Sharp. The monitoring is a great tool to determine whether measures to restore bushland are effective. Please note, that **the 13 November workshop will be held in the ACT Sportshouse in Hackett and the practical training on Mt Majura**, and that there is an **additional workshop being held on 14 November** in the Greening Australia headquarters in Aranda and the Aranda bushland reserve. The details for the workshops on the weekend 13/14 November are listed below.

At present there are no vacancies on the 13th November. However: If you have already booked for 13th November, and wish to change to 14th, please let Sarah Sharp know. If you haven't

booked, but would like to come on 13 November to the Hackett/ Mt Majura workshop, Sarah will endeavour to fit you in. However, if you are available on 14 November, put this as second preference, or otherwise you may miss out. Please reply directly to Sarah (sarahsharp@grapevine.net.au)

A **chemcert training course** is being held on Wednesday 17th of November at the Deakin Bowling club. The course will run from 8.30am to 4.30pm (approx). Please get in touch with Sally McIntosh Sally.McIntosh@act.gov.au or ph 6205 7384 if you are interested in receiving this training. Please consider the training only if you can make some commitment to ParkCare. The training is paid by the Government and only a limited number of places are available for volunteers. Training courses are held about once a year. ParkCare activities at which chemicals are handled require at least one chemcert trained person on site; only trained volunteers are permitted to mix chemicals for use.

As a result of the ParkCare Co-coordinators' recent meeting the establishment of an **advocacy group for Canberra Nature Park** (CNP) was suggested. The call for such a group shows the depth of concern many have about CNP and the management processes that influence our volunteering and work. Please find further information and comments about the proposed group in the documents below. A meeting will be held to discuss this idea further at Stromlo Depot (500 Cotter Road, Weston Creek) from 4:30pm – 6:00pm. Two meeting dates are proposed: Thursday 11th November or Tuesday 23rd November. The date with the most RSVP's will be selected for the meeting. If you are interested, please indicate your availability by Monday, 9th November to Sally.McIntosh@act.gov.au or ph 6205 7384.

Take care
Waltraud
admin@majura.org

Spotlight walk - Friday 19 November

When: Friday 19 November 7.15pm (sharp) to 9.00pm

Where: Meet at Hackett reservoir off Rivett and French Street
Bring good shoes, a torch and binoculars if you have them

Booking essential at admin@majura.org or 6247 7515

Pre-dinner Curse Bash – Weekdays, 3 November to 12 November

When: Weekdays from Wednesday 3 November to Friday 12 November, 5.30-6.30pm

Where: Meet at the Hackett reservoir off French & Rivett Street in Hackett
Bring gloves and wear good shoes

Enquiries: admin@majura.org or 6247 7515

Working Bee - Sunday 21 November

When: Sunday 21 November 9am to 1pm

Where: Meet at the Hackett reservoir off Rivett and French Streets

Bring: Sun protection, sturdy shoes, long sleeve/pants, and garden gloves.
We will provide the tools and morning tea.

Enquiries: admin@majura.org or 6247 7515

Vegetation monitoring training workshops

The ***Vegetation Monitoring Manual, A Step-by-Step Guide to Monitoring Native Vegetation in the ACT*** (Sarah Sharp and Lori Gould, 2010) has been developed to provide a ***consistent approach*** to monitoring and surveying vegetation, habitat and environmental condition.

Simple methods have been chosen so that natural resource managers, community volunteers and other individuals with only minimal skills will be able to carry out monitoring to get meaningful results and share information with other groups using the same methods.

Greening Australia Capital Region and Molonglo Catchment Group, with assistance from an ACT Government Environment Grant, are sponsoring monitoring workshops, to be run by Sarah Sharp, for community members and individuals who are involved in managing our natural resources.

The training will involve:

- A review of the manual and what it does
- Preparation for monitoring: deciding what to do
- Site visit to practice using all the methods
- Review to show how the data can be analysed and used.

Participants will be given instruction material, a set of recording sheets and a CD containing a copy of the manual. Morning tea and lunch will be provided.

Information will be sent to you before the training session. You are advised strongly to read through this before you come so that the training session is more useful to you.

The dates and venues are listed below. Each workshop will run from 9.30 to 4.00.

Saturday 23 October at Mugga Mugga Education Centre and Callum Brae Nature Reserve

Saturday 30 October at Carwoola Hall and a field site to be advised

Sunday 31 October, at Mugga Mugga Education Centre and Callum Brae Nature Reserve

Thursday 4 November at Mugga Mugga Education Centre and Callum Brae Nature Reserve

Saturday 13 November (new venue) at the ACT Sportshouse, 100 Maitland Street, Hackett at 9.30am, followed by training in Mt Majura nature reserve until 4.00pm

Sunday 14 November (additional date) at Greening Australia office in Aranda at 9.30am, followed by training at Aranda Bushland until 4.00pm

RSVP is essential. If you wish to attend one of these workshops, please email Sarah on sarahsharp@grapevine.net.au with the following information:

Name:

Email:

Preferred workshop date:

Alternative date if preferred date is full:

Group you are representing (if relevant):

Confirmation will be provided regarding the date that you have proposed to attend.

Proposal to form a Canberra Nature Park Advocacy Group

At the recent parkcare coordinators meeting there was interest in our groups working collectively to advocate on behalf of the Canberra Nature Park (CNP). The purpose of this proposed meeting is to explore that interest, and where there may be value in this collective action.

ParkCare volunteers like to work on their patch. However we are aware that for instance a government decision relating to resource allocation, or the way an agency operates within CNP, has the potential to affect CNP as a whole. In these situations a joint approach from all groups could more effectively address the issues than individual groups advocating independently.

Our early thoughts are that there may be value in considering whether:

- establishing a Canberra Nature Park advocacy group [Friends of CNP?] to advocate for the implementation of CNP management objectives, and to influence decisions in relation to the CNP objectives of conservation and sustainable recreation;
- commenting on policies, strategies, plans and legislation to ensure they are consistent with the CNP objectives as outlined in the CNP Plan of Management;
- monitoring measures proposed or taken by government agencies or other agencies or other / user groups that may have an impact on the CNP objectives (this includes measures not taken

to ensure that CNP objectives are achieved) and working to ensure these measures are consistent with CNP objectives;

- independently reporting to the community on management of the CNP. This could be delivered through an annual CNP report card which assesses implementation of the CNP Plan of Management in CNP components;
- presenting an agreed common view on the outcomes of the current inquiry into the CNP by the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment, as well as responding to the Government's response to the inquiry;
- organising ourselves to lobby for the timing and nature of any review of the CNP Plan of Management;
- taking forward our concerns about rabbit and weed control, erosion prevention and fire management, and promoting the need for sustainable/wise use of this conservation reserve network by user groups; and
- providing an avenue for members of the Canberra community - that may not wish to be active parkcarers – to advocate for the conservation of CNP values.

Signed

Waltraud Pix (Mount Majura)

Vaughn Cox (Pinnacle)

Sarah Hnatiuk (Mount Painter)

Proposal to form a Canberra Nature Park Advocacy Group

A note from Waltraud Pix, Friends of Mt Majura coordinator

Dear fellow co-ordinators and ParkCarers

At our recent ParkCare coordinator meeting, we briefly discussed whether there's a need to take a more collective approach to achieve good outcomes for the conservation of our beloved bushland. I'm writing to ask you to consider the value of forming a Canberra Nature Park (CNP) advocacy group. I'm aware that everyone is stretched for time. However I think investing some time in an advocacy group would make a lot of sense.

For instance I think it would make a lot of sense to lobby the government to implement an integrated ongoing rabbit control program rather than every one of us spending a huge amount of time to protect every single planted seedling to make up for the lack of natural regeneration. I think grazing pressure is one of the greatest threats to the integrity of nature reserves and grassy ecosystems. We are fighting an uphill battle to control weeds, erosion and to assist revegetation and I'm afraid that our efforts are not sustainable if the overgrazing is left uncontrolled.

Our concerted action in relation to ACTEW operating in CNP has been - at least partly - successful and I think we should build on this experience.

It would be great if you could make it to a meeting to discuss the idea of an advocacy group. Some initial thoughts are attached; input came from Vaughn Cox, Friends of Mt Pinnacle, Waltraud Pix, Friends of Mt Majura and from Sarah Hnatiuk, Mt Painter parkCare groups.

Proposal to form a Canberra Nature Park Advocacy Group

Comments by Rosemary Blemings

- Most of the issues that concern us have emerged as a result of the totally inadequate funding that is allocated to land management in the ACT and the personnel who are expected to deliver appropriate programs in and for nature reserves, urban open space, "city parks", river & creek corridors

- Even though Parkcare co-coordinators were reassured that "nothing has changed in the way volunteers are supported" the missing point is that overall funding-support for volunteers' work is already insufficient.
- Many Parkcare and Landcare volunteers made submissions to the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment which stressed that resourcing-inadequacies and mis-prioritising lead to most of the problems affecting Canberra's open space and Nature Parks system.
- Although the idea of an advocacy group emerged from the Parkcare co-ordinators' meeting I feel it is vital that other volunteer-coordinators such as Landcare Group coordinators be informed of and included in this proposed group. (The present system often pits one entity against others. That is no way to sustain biodiversity, connectivity and the region's ecosystems as a whole.)
- Having said that, if our voices are to be persistent and strong, would it be best to have an initial meeting of co-coordinators at which priority issues would be discussed, confirmed and listed? Delegates would then be appointed to take these issues and concerns to umbrella organisations such as the Catchment Groups and the Conservation Council for further action.
- It is imperative, I feel, that funding for the bush capital's natural heritage be dramatically increased. Part of the reason we are in this situation is because the values of natural areas, ecological services and the ACT's ambience do not appear on economic, health or social balance-sheets or in budget papers. Would the Environmental Defenders' Office be able to demonstrate that the ACT Government is derelict in its duty-of-care towards and management of the land of the National Capital? Could this be used as a lever to extract increased funding from the Federal Government for the management of the National Capital's land?
- It's likely that as many are reeling from the effects of recent "cuts" to and the re-structuring of PC&L and with the Commissioner's (CNP) report still to come there has never been a better time to press-home the above concerns.

This spring has shown the true potential of our favourite places and our chosen volunteering-venues. Can we use this inspiration to renew our determination to achieve better outcomes for habitats, flora, fauna, our labours and the region where we choose to live?