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Friends of Mt Majura (FoMM)
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CBRE

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**Friends of Mt Majura
Comment
ACT Trails Discussion Paper 2011-2021**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input to the ACT Trail Discussion Paper 2011-2021 (TDP).

The comment is informed by the experience gained from working in Mt Majura and Mt Ainslie nature park sections of Canberra Nature Park (CNP).

- (1) We agree that there is a need to develop a trail strategy. At present only the management of fire trails and maintenance roads is adequately resourced whereas other trails are repaired on an ad hoc basis and often as a result of ongoing community lobbying (example Casuarina Trail). At present management does not address the formation of informal tracks and cut offs, which impact on the conservation values of CNP.
- (2) We would like to see adequate resourced management of the whole existing trail network.
- (3) We observe an increase of recreational use of CNP as more local residents visit the reserves.
- (4) The construction of new environmentally sound tracks and track connections to cater for park visitors is a preferred option compared to the current practice of unmanaged formation of multiple informal tracks. The construction of new tracks must be accomplished by rehabilitation of informal tracks to avoid environmental losses and must not lead to further fragmentation of intact environment and refuge habitat for wildlife.
- (5) The current recreational use of CNP along with lack of resources to manage this use, the use of CNP for infrastructure such as reservoirs, water mains, telecommunication facilities, transmission power lines, underground cables, trig points, radar and aircraft infrastructure, along with the loss of connectivity through urban residential and road development seriously compromise nature conservation at present.
- (6) The TDP and the Centenary Trail project suggest accommodating an ever increasing recreational use of CNP through large sale events, high intensity activities and nature based tourism to feed the local economy (TDP p18, pp 37-39). Under the headline the "Need for a Trail Strategy" the paper cites the ACT Sport and Recreation Council's 2003 Facilities Study which found that "*the natural environment of the ACT was underutilized as a selling point for events and activities.*" (TDP 2.4, p11).

- (7) It seems that there is very little understanding for the need to set aside and *use* land to protect the natural environment and Australia's unique biodiversity. There is no discussion on how the intended increased access, high intensity use and tourism will impact on the natural environment, threatened species and critically endangered ecological communities.
- (8) Before any further activities are being considered to introduce additional stress to the natural environment of CNP we request that a comprehensive study is being undertaken on the recreational carrying capacity of CNP taking into account that the primary land management objective of CNP is to conserve the natural environment (ACT Planning and Development Act 2007; Management Plan for CNP (1999)).