

10 February 2012

Friends of Mt Majura (FoMM)  
Coordinator: Waltraud Pix

[www.majura.org](http://www.majura.org)

TAMS Centenary Trail Consultation  
[TAMSCentenaryTrail@act.gov.au](mailto:TAMSCentenaryTrail@act.gov.au)

**Friends of Mt Majura  
Second Comment  
Proposed Centenary Trail (CT)**

Parks and Conservation Service (PCS), the ACT agency in charge of the management of the conservation values of Canberra Nature Park (CNP) proposes the construction and operation of the Centenary Trail (CT) in parts of CNP that are currently little visited and which provide important food and breeding habitat to several uncommon, rare or declared woodland birds. A study conducted in Sydney's woodland areas found that recreational access displaces native birds from natural areas. The study found that dog walking reduced bird diversity by 35% and bird abundance by 41%. Disturbance by people alone resulted in less than half the loss induced by people walking with dogs<sup>1</sup>. A number of studies inform that noise and light pollution negatively impact on amphibians, bats and birds<sup>2,3,4</sup>.

The construction and operation of CT in relatively pristine and remote areas of CNP carries significant risks to the conservation values of CNP. It is very disappointing that PCS is not listening to our concerns.

1. During the extended consultation the PCS project management team (Team) suggested that the construction of the CT will benefit the natural environment of CNP. The Team has so far not provided information on how the construction and operation of the CT will benefit the environment.
2. The Team suggested that *education* will balance the negative impact the CT will have or is likely to have on conservation values of CNP, in other words the Team proposes to educate CT visitors about the values the CT is likely to destroy or negatively impact on.
3. The Team could not explain how education will balance the loss, further fragmentation or

---

<sup>1</sup> Banks & Bryant (2007). Four-legged friend or foe? Dog walking displaces native birds from natural areas *Biology Letters* 3, 611-613, 2007

<sup>2</sup> Stone E, Jones G, Harris S (2009) Street Lightning disturbs commuting bats. *Current Biology* DOI: 10.1016/j.cub.2009.05.058

<sup>3</sup> Brumm H, Slater P (2006) Ambient noise, motor fatigue, and serial redundancy in Chaffinch song. *Behav Ecol Socialbiol* DOI: 10.1007/s00265-006-0188-y

<sup>4</sup> Sun J, Narins P (2005) Anthropogenic sounds differentially affect amphibian call rate. *Biological Conservation* 121 (2005) 419-427

degradation of critical food habitat of declared Glossy Black Cockatoo as a result of the CT construction and operation.

4. There is conflicting information how the education will be delivered. PCS suggested at a meeting with representatives of Friends of Mt Majura, the Mt Ainslie Weeders and the Aranda parkCare groups to implement large signs that advise visitors about entering critically endangered grassy woodland on Mt Majura. On the other hand the Team informed participants of parkCare meeting held on 15 December 2011 that large signs will be avoided because they are considered to be intrusive.
5. The Team suggested that money raised from large scale events *may be* used for conservation management. The impact of large scale events on the natural environment and wildlife is unknown however it is more likely that the impact is negative rather than neutral or positive. It is rather unlikely that money, if it is to be invested in CNP, will bring back species once they are lost as a result of habitat fragmentation and disturbance.
6. At a special CT meeting held on 15 December 2011 parkCare was informed that large scale events are not suitable for the CT through Mulligans Flat nature reserve. The Team offered no explanation why large scale events are considered suitable for other parts of CNP.
7. The minutes of this special parkCare meeting wrongly state that study of the environment was part of the ground-truthing study of the proposed CT route. Several letters requesting a correction of the minutes were not successful. The manipulation of parkCare meetings is frustrating.
8. As a precautionary approach FoMM suggests a moratorium of proposed new track construction work in CNP.
9. FoMM requests an independent study of the environmental impact the construction and operation of the CT would have on the conservation values of CNP.