

Friends of Mount Majura Annual General Meeting

ACT Sports House, Hackett, 7.30pm 9 October 2013

Present: 'Bluey', Cynthia Allen, Louisa Barnsley, Avery Andrews, Michael Barnsley, Penny Gibson, Ann Gibson, Shirley Lewis, Chris Paterson, Steve Bittinger, Jo Lynch, Trudy O'Connor, Paul Thomas, Aaron Clausen, Jenni Marsh, Margy Burn, Michael Mulvaney, Margaret Simpson, Sarah Ryan, Waltraud Pix, Jochen Zeil (chair). (Minutes prepared by Trudy O'Connor, interim secretary)

Introduction – Jochen Zeil

- Opening remarks re organisational change to spread roles in FOMM (secretary note – many thanks are due to Waltraud for the enormous energy she has poured into various roles in FOMM over the past 10 years).
- Brief description of some of the successful FOMM projects:
 - Upper sheep camp planting (can now be seen on Google Earth)
 - 'Project dragonfly' dam rehabilitation
 - Horse paddock re-vegetation
 - Grazing control plots established
 - Ainslie tip rehabilitation – now handed over to Mt Ainslie Weeders
 - 'The Fair' site development – contributions to new project to ameliorate effects of development, with new documents now presenting more suitable rules for similar developments
- Overview of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for the organisation:
- Strengths:
 - innovation expressed through the work of volunteers e.g. rabbit warren mapping leading to valuable database
 - public relations e.g. walks and talks and National Tree Day events
 - development of good relationships with land managers
- Weaknesses:
 - thin personnel base and *ad hoc* organisational base leading to danger of burn out

- Opportunities:

Note, it is critical to consider the means of achievement, through the work of volunteers and work within these means, avoiding burn out

- Monitoring skills acquisition (potentially using new technological approaches learned from other park care groups)
- Use of special groups to take on activities e.g. The Fair maintenance, second sheep camp planting
- Sharing knowledge and understanding what can be learnt from past projects

- Threats

- Ongoing development in north Watson – submissions have been prepared together with North Canberra Community Council
- recreation pressure e.g. Centenary Trail impacts need to be minimised
- ACT government are under-staffed and under-resourced – it is important that resources allocated reflect the importance of Canberra Nature Park
- Compliance e.g. domestic animals and informal tracks. This is not a job for park care groups, but there are opportunities to contribute to policy
- Possible burn out of volunteers
- Limited grazing carrying capacity of the landscape

- Comments:

- There are opportunities for all park care groups to combine to effectively campaign, for example, to counter the anti macropod culling lobby, achieve better dog control etc
- Response – this has been tried in the past and limited media interest gained. There is, however, an opportunity to learn successful approaches from other states.

Election of office bearers – Jochen Zeil

- Brief overview of positions:

(secretary note – the full descriptions of these roles are available in the draft constitution on the FOMM website <http://majura.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/FoMM-draft-constitution2-2013.pdf>)

- Convenor: the first port of call, prepares submissions and is liaison with park care coordinators etc
- Secretary: prepares meeting notes and minutes,
- Coordinator: coordinates organisation of monthly working parties
- Treasurer: oversees finances

- Another position not specified in the constitution is 'Advisor'.
- General committee roles include organising walks, updating the website, providing cake at working parties and publicity

- It is possible to have deputy positions to help learn the roles
- The positions have been filled by interim officers

- Nominations received:
 - Convenor – Jochen Zeil
 - Secretary-
 - Coordinator- Paul Thomas
 - Treasurer- Chris Paterson
 - Advisor- Waltraud Pix
 - Committee – Jenni Marsh

-Peter O'Neil

-Louisa Barnsley

As no nomination was received for the secretary position it was suggested that this role could be divided into a minutes secretary and newsletter secretary (Secretary note – changes to role descriptions should be reflected in the constitution).

- The committee was declared by acclaim (with the exception of the unfilled secretary position)
- Membership is yet to be addressed

- Annual General Meeting closed

Rare plants in the ACT –talk by Michael Mulvaney

- Michael has 25 years of experience as a park carer at Red Hill

Compilation of existing rare plant records

- The Flora and Fauna Committee for ACT Government identified 318 plants to be protected for reasons such as rarity or ecological role
- Compilation of existing records of rare plants using ACT Government records, Atlas of Living Australia, consultancy reports and survey
- Most records were presence- absence. It is important to know abundance of plants to guide management – this is achieved through targeted surveys

Use of flora records

- Recent mapping of vegetation communities is available electronically.
- A 2002 survey of Canberra Nature Park assigned condition categories
- Revision of this survey shows the impact of rehabilitation work, such as that by the park care groups, For example, at Red Hill there has been a dramatic change in condition with work undertaken between 2002 and 2013

Rare plant survey for Mount Majura

- A survey of rare plants is suggested for Mount Majura
- This would involve collection of locations using GPS and assignment to abundance categories.
- Plant locations are described by a point, if narrowly distributed, or as a polygon of similar vegetation, if they are widespread
- At Red Hill there is a mix of expertise, so volunteers joined to walk in a line across the reserve and share results.

Discussion and questions:

- The ephemeral nature of some plants either by life cycle or grazing pressure may affect survey results.

Response: The area covered by the survey and the time should be recorded.

- What is the possibility to model likely distribution of plant species, rather than surveying?
Response: Survey is important with the current level of knowledge

- Can the survey results record existing knowledge without formal survey?

Response: recording this knowledge is useful

- Are records contributed to Atlas of Living Australia?

Response: this will be done as a batch later on.

- Waltraud knows of a good location to introduce people to a range of plant species.
Michael is happy to join a training session

Rare plant survey training session

- Sunday 3rd November, meet at 9am at MacKenzie St park entrance, opposite Grayson St Hackett. (This is the same day as the planned wildflower walk).