

# News of Friends of Grasslands

supporting native grassy ecosystems

March - April 2001



## FOG'S 2001 PROGRAM

**Saturday 10 March - Ginini Flats** This trip to Namadgi National Park is the closest we'll get to an alpine grassland this year. We'll meet at 9am in the carpark at the Cotter pub.

**Sunday 29 April - Salinity** We'll meet on the left hand side of the Barton Hwy near the Gold Creek development (Curren St going into Harcourt Hill) at 1pm.

When they bought their place, 'Talaheni', John and Robyn's farm was fairly degraded with very bad salinity problems, unproductive pastures and poor natural flora and fauna health. Over the past 21 years, they have gradually turned it around to the point where it is a relative oasis and a site where many ideas have been applied, results monitored and valuable lessons learned. For over a decade, groundwater levels have been persistently falling to the point where pasture now covers what was previously bare eroding land. They have a very balanced approach - they want the farm to look good and be a great habitat for native wildlife but it has to be productive as well. It is a great source of information and inspiration. Pasture production has increased and with it wool and beef production but at the same time some 20% of the property has been excluded from grazing by domestic stock and 4 km of linking corridors established. The net result is that production and conservation values have both been significantly improved.

If you are interested in the latest on salinity abatement works, erosion control, recharge reduction, building a wildlife habitat, turning rainfall into money through pasture improvement and farm forestry then this visit will be well worthwhile. It is also a great spot and the right time of year to enjoy a lot of birdlife.

We hope you can make it along - we would like an idea on numbers beforehand, so if you can make it please contact me on 6241 4065 or by email at [margaretning@primus.com.au](mailto:margaretning@primus.com.au).



**Saturday 19 May, 2pm - Rainer Rehwinkel's slides** of western grasslands at Mugga-Mugga, Symonston. Rainer's slides will include grasslands from the Young area, which we shall visit on 22 September, as well as grasslands from the Deniliquin and Tumut areas.

**Saturday 16 June - Local grasslands from Action Plan Number 1** More of our annual familiarisation with local remnants. We'll meet in the Gungahlin Lakes carpark at 9.30am under the golf course sign. (cnr Gungahlin Dr/ Gundaroo Dr)

**Saturday 28 July, 2pm - Grassland Earless Dragon** - Lyn Nelson presents her Grassland Earless Dragon research. (at Mugga-Mugga, Symonston)

**Saturday/Sunday 25/26 August - South coast grasslands** A weekend of south coast grasslands with Rainer Rehwinkel, including the unique Eurobodalla Headland grassland.

**1/2 (or 8/9) September - Riverina grasslands** Please see below for an invitation from one of our FOG members who lives in this area.

Have-you-been-a-wandering-along-a-mountain-track.....?"

Well that may be OK, but give that away this year and come wandering out to the plains country of the Western Riverina of southern NSW to wander amongst some very large expanses of diverse grasslands. There is a FOG field weekend proposed for the second week of September around the Hay/Deniliquin area to experience first hand the native grasslands species including Downy Darling Pea (*Swainsona swainsonoides*), Small-flowered Goodenia (*Goodenia pusillifolia*), Hard-headed Daisy (*Brachyscome lineariloba*), Yam Daisy (*Microseris lanceolata*), Rough Burr-daisy (*Calotis scapigera*), Pale Beauty-heads (*Calocephalus sonderi*), Grey Sunray (*Rhodanthe corymbiflora*), Woolly Plover-daisy (*Ixiolaena tomentosa*) and Bristly Sea-heath (*Frankenia serpyllifolia*). There are course many, many more. All welcome.

**Saturday 22 Sept - Grasslands in the Young area** with Rainer Rehwinkel.

**Saturday 6 October, 2pm - Orchids at Gungahlin Hill** A compact grassy woodland remnant which contains a surprising number of spring orchids.

**late October - Kowen Forest**

**Saturday 16 November - Theodore grassland** We'll visit a grassland site in Theodore.

**Saturday 1 December - In pursuit of the Golden Sun Moth** We'll visit Belconnen Naval Station.

**8/9 December - more Monaro grassland gems**

### MEMBERSHIP

#### RENEWAL

**We have placed 'gentle' red dot reminders on the front of newsletters being sent to those who have not yet renewed their FOG membership for 2001. Apologies to those whose cheques have crossed in the mail with this.**

#### Important notes on coming events:

- Please put firm dates in your calendar.
- For outdoor activities, don't forget your hat, sunblock and drinking water.
- For insurance purposes, sign in/out at activities.
- For any information about activities (including times, venues and carpooling details), please contact Margaret Ning on 6241 4065 (home) or 6252 7374 (work).
- To make program suggestions, contact Margaret.

## IN THIS ISSUE

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- President's report, et al – FOG AGM

## NEWS ROUNDUP

## FOG AGM

On 10 February FOG held its AGM, followed by a barbecue. Weather, scenery, temperature and conviviality were excellent; thanks to Mugga for providing such excellent facilities.

There were reports on activities, the newsletter, membership, FOG's TSN project at Radio Hill, the recent workshop, and David Eddy spoke on some of the early deliberations concerning FOG developing a regional strategy. The Treasurer's report revealed the good news that FOG had made a tidy surplus for the year. Geoff Robertson summed up what he considered were FOG's major strengths and areas of weakness. He recognised the large numbers of people who were responsible for FOG's strength. The full text of his report as well as reports on membership, activities and newsletter are included in this newsletter.

An invitation from Sarah Sharp (Environment ACT) for some FOG members to look at aerial photographs of the ACT from 1945 onwards was received enthusiastically. An examination of these photographs would reveal past events occurring on parcels of land, eg ploughing, which may assist in interpreting current vegetation structures.

Other contributions came from Dierk von Behrens who spoke on the horse threat to Kosciuszko's alpine grasslands and Art Langston (former President) who said that FOG needed to keep ACT grassy ecosystems clearly in its sight.

The elections saw some changes on the Committee, although President (Geoff Robertson), Vice President (Michael Treanor), Secretary (Naarilla Hirsch), and Treasurer (Alan Ford) stay the same. Dierk von Behrens, David Eddy, Kim Pullen, Margaret Ning, Benj Whitworth were re-elected. Three new members join the Committee: Di Chambers, Kate Nielsen and

Rosemary Blemings. Congratulations to these new members – we hope that you will take FOG in the directions it needs to go. Linda Hodgkinson and Will Inveen did not re-stand. Thanks to both for their efforts. Will will continue his role of producing the newsletter and encouraging FOG's involvement in Mugga. Geoff announced that he had a work commitment for three months overseas, starting late February, but considered that the new committee would take this in its stride.

## ACT weeds survey

A number of FOG members reported on a range of sites around the Canberra region. We hope to have a report on this survey in the next newsletter.

## Audit of Cooma TSRs

An article in the latest Cooma RLBP (Rural Lands Protection Board) News, entitled 'TSRs – their future', reports on an audit of the Board's travelling stock reserves. The Cooma Board is custodian of 105 travelling stock reserves (TSRs) totalling 2643 hectares. The audit included researching records, flora and fauna surveys and maintenance costs. All reserves were given a ranking based on their value for travelling stock, grazing, environmental, economical, recreational and apiary usage. The highest ranked was Rocky Plain, the lowest Jindabyne Dam Wall. The Board passed a motion to list six of the reserves to be revoked. If approved, these reserves will revert to Vacant Crown Land.

The article pointedly asks: where will funding come from? It suggests that landholders, government grants, conservation groups, historical societies, or others may be prepared to assist.

Historically, the stock route network provided a service for stockowners. Should landowners be the only ones providing maintenance funding? Increased awareness of disease is reducing use of these reserves by travelling stock, as is increased traffic flow on some widened roads, especially in winter. To move stock safely on roads it is necessary to have people in front and behind the mob, and narrow verges provide sparse grazing opportunities. Some reserves/roads have recorded no usage, others have not been used for over 15 years. A further 34 reserves were listed as "may be revoked unless external funding is available".

The projected income for the reserves for 2001 is in the region of \$13,500. Maintenance and

improvement costs are ever increasing. The difference is funded out of landholders' general rates. Estimated expenses, including wages, chemicals, fencing materials, vehicles, etc. are \$55,000. The Board has applied for funding, mainly for fencing and chemical costs for weeds, through NHT (Grassy Ecosystem Grants) to help with management issues on eleven of the high conservation reserves. It is also proposed to prepare a brochure so people can find and inspect these native grassland reserves. The article concludes 'we are open to any suggestions that you, our ratepayers, have to assist with the funding and management of the reserves.'

## FOG forest foray

Alan Ford Birds, frogs, an exquisite wolf spider, a beautifully camouflaged grasshopper and the occasional Highland Copperhead were part of the menagerie as eighteen members and friends visited Bob and June Wilkinson's property and the adjacent Tantawangalo section of the South East Forests National Park on a slightly damp Saturday 6 January 2001. The problems caused by wild pigs were quite obvious and raised the question of the long term management options to control these beasts.

We were greeted on arrival at the property by six or so Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos and were soon engrossed in the problems of plant identification in a strange place. Of course, the big question was whether we would find a certain orchid in flower. We were lucky, as the endemic Wilkinson's Leek Orchid (*Prasophyllum wilkinsoniorum*) was found in flower as were a number of plants of the seldom-encountered Austral Toadflax (*Thesium australe*). From the property we went round the corner to the intriguing Nunnock Swamp. (You had to watch your step on the edge of the swamp as the leeches were really bad.)

During the day the group had practice identifying the Vanilla Lily (*Arthropodium milleflorum*) and Smooth Flax Lily (*Dianella longifolia*). You have to look hard at the foliage as well as the flower to make sure you have it right. You'll be aware that one of our problem weeds is St Johns Wort (*Hypericum perforatum*) and that it has a smaller native version (*H. gramineum*). I learnt that it has an even tinier cousin known as *H. japonicum* that you seem to find in the very wet areas of a swamp or gully. The swamp had a truly beautiful bladderwort

(*Utricularia* sp.) to ensure that our senses were fully tuned to nature's beauty.

The open wet areas and Nunnock Swamp appear to be a Eucalypt free zone, and present a real challenge to management to prevent degradation by pigs or from human activities.

Our thanks to Margaret Ning for organising the weekend and for making Garuwanga available for those who did not wish to camp in the rain, and to Andrew Paget, Jackie Miles and Betty Wood for providing expert botanical advice.

### Threat to Alpine Grasslands

Alpine grasslands, some of the most significant, unique and beautiful grasslands in Australia, are under threat from wild horses, according to long-time conservationist and FOG committee member, Dierk von Behrens. He and Ian and Karin Haynes recently spent ten days in the Kosciuszko National Park, particularly in the alpine area west of Kosciuszko, documenting the areas affected and the extent of readily visible damage.

They undertook this survey in response to a forum on wild horses in the alpine area held in Jindabyne on 13 January 2001. Some fifty persons, including eleven from Canberra, attended that meeting. The majority at the meeting supported the retention of horses in the national park, but a consensus emerged that they be excluded from the alpine area and that any management plan should cover the whole of the Park. One (bizarre?) recommendation was to fence off the alpine area from the rest of the National Park. Some at the meeting suggested that there was no evidence that horses damaged the Park. In response, Dierk, Ian and Karin started to collect evidence.

A further meeting on this subject was held in Queanbeyan on 13 February and Dierk spoke of his discoveries.

### The Monaro Grasslands

Wendy Hain

(Wendy is the Director for Division A of the Cooma RLPB and a new FOG member from last year. This item is reprinted from a Cooma RLPB newsletter.)

The Monaro Grasslands Advisory Committee comprises representatives from the three Monaro shires, both RLPBs (of which I represent Cooma), Landcare Coordinators, DLWC Cooma, NSW Agriculture Cooma, NPWS Queanbeyan, Friends of Grasslands,

Wordwide Fund for Nature, NSW Farmers and Greening Australia.

The group meets every three months to discuss the "Monaro Native Grasslands Project". Kuma Grassland Reserve, just outside Cooma on the Nimmitabel Road, is part of this project. Work is also now being carried out to clear hawthorn, briar and box thorn from Radio Hill, or Old Cooma Common, as many of us know it. This area is all public land and is listed in the Regional Forest Agreement (yes, this seems strange when the area has never had a natural tree on it). Most of the clearing has been carried out by Friends of Grasslands and WWF from Canberra. If any locals are interested in helping, phone me on (02) 6452 4510 and I may be able to give you dates for working bees.

The project also aims to get private landholders to identify areas of good native grassland. A number of landholders have come forward from across the Monaro, and in stage one of the project, over 1000 hectares have been identified as good native grassland areas. Landholders will not be told how to manage this land, as it is acknowledged that management must have been correct for these areas to still exist. There is no pressure on anyone to put any land aside, but if they are interested, they can become involved in preserving these grassland areas. The Monaro Grassland Advisory Committee is extremely concerned with the lack of funds and other resources for management of vegetation on much of the Crown Land in our region, eg Kosciuszko National Park. Earlier this year members from this Committee toured a number of TSRs in both Cooma and Bombala Boards. They saw some very pristine grasslands with many plant species present.

### Watson worries Senator Hill

An article by Daniel Landon appeared in the Canberra Chronicle on 16 January 2001, stating that Federal Environment Minister Robert Hill has entered the debate over possible development of the North Watson woodland, saying he is concerned about the area's future. It was reported that Senator Hill has written to ACT Urban Services Minister Brendan Smyth. The Senator said that the planned 1300 home development would have "a likely impact" on the Regent Honeyeater, a "nationally threatened species", and clear mature vegetation, the sort of which was being replanted in the same area by National Heritage Trust funded projects. This would be contrary to agreed Federal Territory environmental outcomes.

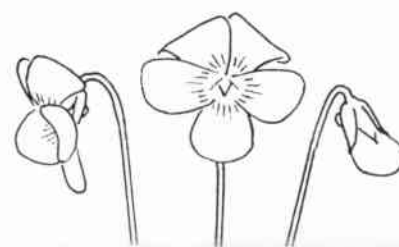
He stated he was yet to be convinced that this proposal would not have a significant impact on a matter of national environmental significance. He said he shared the concerns of the Watson Community Association, which has been opposed to any development in the area since it was zoned for housing in 1993. There have already been homes built on parts of the woodlands. The ACT Government has previously said the woodlands do not fit the criteria for listing as endangered, and that any development would consider the amenity and habitat value of the area.

### Gungahlin Landcare Group

A good number of people including young adults turned up to the first meeting of the new Gungahlin Landcare Group on 4 February organised by the Ginninderra Catchment Group (GCG). There were demonstrations of water watch techniques and discussion of what activities the group may undertake. A FOG member who turned up said he would like the group to have a particular focus on patches of remnant vegetation in the area and suggested a number of specific things that the group may do in this area. For further information you may care to contact GCG on 6278 3309.

### Nettlefold trees saved

The old Yellow Box (*Eucalyptus melliodora*) near the old Milk Depot in Belconnen (cnr of Coulter Dr and Nettlefold St) is to be saved, and the block containing the tree has been temporarily withdrawn from sale. This will enable a review of lease and development conditions on the site to allow a development which is sympathetic to the retention and protection of the trees on the site. The tree is estimated to be at least 300 years old, and possibly up to 400. It would qualify for preserving on the grounds of aesthetics as well as heritage. Three other trees on the site identified as having a High+ status will also be protected. (See Alan Ford's summary of the ACT Government's draft Tree Policy on page 7.)



Mountain violet  
flowers and flower bud

## Sutton Road

In recent months there have been preliminary discussions by the Woodlands and Grasslands Working Group (WGWG) with PALM on plans to improve the ACT eight kilometre section of Sutton Road. This follows a report by David Hogg 'Sutton Road Improvements Ecological Assessment'. On 3 February there was an on-site inspection, which a number of FOG members attended. It is planned to rebuild this busy road which is in a very poor state and currently breaking up, especially as the road carries a large volume of traffic from parts of NSW north of the ACT border, to Queanbeyan. The cost over the next several years will be \$4m. There have been two deaths on this road.

Mike Lyons, the engineer for the project, outlined the various engineering goals, which were to improve the vertical alignment (remove dips and troughs), improve the site distance, widen the road to allow a proper pulling off lane and straighten the road (horizontal alignment). The current road has a 100km/h section and a 80km/h section; and it is planned to bring the whole road to a 100km/h standard. David Hogg has done a fairly intensive survey of the roadside to determine what impacts the road will have on remnant vegetation and how to ameliorate these where possible.

Along the road there are several groups of Yellow Box, some with poor to medium understorey. It is planned to remove some of these trees, but the overall strategy is to save as many trees as possible through moving the road (although this is a very limited option for the most part) and using safety barriers along sections of the road. One nice Scribbly Gum remnant with a good understorey is planned for the chop.

While not wanting to see reductions to remnants, hiring someone like David Hogg and taking his advice, ameliorates the destruction as far as possible, given the parameters involved. One gets the impression that the consultation, from here on, will not alter anything, but may assist at the margin and will help ensure that the conservation promised is achieved. There was some discussion of lowering the speed limit to 80km/h but PALM seems to rule this out. WGWG will be putting in a submission on the proposal.

## Long Flat Reserve – Majors Creek

Another small slice of history is under pressure. Long Flat Reserve was once the Common for the villagers of Majors Creek, (said to be the largest Common in NSW), where the residents could run their few head of cattle, horses, house cow, etc. This area was managed by 12 Commoners until the 1980s, when Premier Wran decided that Crown Land could be sold, hence the Common became Long Flat Reserve. With no management, the fences fell into disrepair and the grids filled up. Since the late eighties the reserve has not had cattle grazing on it.

Long Flat was once home to goldminers, and it has much history from that era (water races, etc). During the depression the Narrow-leaved Peppermint (*Eucalyptus radiata*) was harvested for oil.

FOG members visited the reserve in March 1999 and thought it was worth going back for another visit. It was a wet day but many species were ticked off on wet lists. This small reserve is home to a wide variety of plants, forest animals and birds, and it is a great example of how a heavily used piece of land can regenerate with very little weed.

Economic rationalism struck some years ago and most of the common was leased and fenced for grazing. There is now pressure from that same person to graze the rest of the reserve.

(The FOG member who wrote this piece of news is currently trying to secure the lease for the reserve.)



Mountain Violet  
fruit and open seed pod

## A STEP BACK IN TIME

Geoff Robertson

I have been browsing through an old book, Canberra: a Nation's Capital edited by Harold L White. The papers in the book were prepared for the Thirtieth Meeting of ANZAAS, 1954. One of the contributions, titled Plant Communities, was by Professor Lindsay Pryor. I considered that it would be useful to publish

some extracts in the newsletter as it is not possible to repeat the whole chapter. I have also summarised some parts of it, added some common plant names and updated others where possible, to assist in case of name changes. (Professor Pryor's chapter is faithfully reproduced.)

As a non-botanist, I found the explanations simple and very useful for getting my head around the broad vegetation structures that exist in the ACT and surrounding region - I hope others may find it helpful. Second, as this work is now almost fifty years old, it helps us to get a better perspective of what the original vegetation in this area was like. Third, it enables us to gauge what we have learnt since that time. Fourth, the reaction to the Maisie Fawcett article in earlier FOG newsletters showed that some FOG members take a keen interest in history. Lindsay Pryor presents a very useful table showing the different levels of vegetation in the ACT. He identifies areas dominated by grasses (grassland) and areas dominated by trees, broadly classified as woodland (open canopy) and sclerophyll forest (closed canopy).

Within woodland he identifies savannah woodland and alpine woodland. Savannah woodland is described as having rare shrubs while alpine woodland is described as dominated by *Eucalyptus niphophila* (a Snow Gum) and having plenty of shrubs.

Within woodland, two broad alliances are identified: *E. melliodora*-*E. blakelyi* (Yellow Box and Blakely's Red Gum) and *E. pauciflora*-*E. stellulata* (Snow Gums, also referred to, respectively, as White Sallee and Black Sallee). Within each group, there are several associations of trees. In the Yellow Box-Red Gum alliance, he includes the following associations:

*E. melliodora*-*E. blakelyi*  
*E. melliodora*-*E. bridgesiana* (Apple Box)  
*E. bridgesiana*-*E. polyanthemus* (Red Box)  
*E. cordieri* (NSW Flora calls this *E. nortonii* – Mealy Bundy)

Within the *E. pauciflora*-*E. stellulata* alliance, the following associations are identified:

*E. pauciflora*-*E. rubida* (Candlebark)  
*E. rubida*-*E. stellulata*  
*E. pauciflora*-*E. bridgesiana*  
*E. pauciflora*-*E. viminalis* (Ribbon Gum)

Within forests, dry and wet sclerophyll are distinguished. The former is described as *E. macrorrhyncha*-*E. rossii* (Red Stringybark

and Scribbly Gum). This alliance is described as having sparse and discontinuous grass cover, plentiful small shrubs (under six foot) and rare taller shrubs. Within this alliance, he notes the following associations:

*E. macrorrhyncha*-*E. maculosa* (now *E. mannifera*, Brittle Gum)  
*E. macrorrhyncha*-*E. maculosa*-*E. melliodora*  
*E. maculosa*-*E. rossii*  
*E. maculosa*-*E. dives* (Broad-leafed Peppermint)  
*E. rossii*-*E. polyanthemus*  
*E. macrorrhyncha*-*E. cordieri*  
*E. rossii*  
*E. rubida*-*E. dives*

Wet sclerophyll is described as having abundant grass cover, with small and tall shrubs being plentiful. Two types of alliance are described. The first is *E. fastigata*-*E. viminalis* comprising the following associations:

*E. fastigata* (Brown Barrell)-*E. viminalis*  
*E. viminalis*-*E. robertsonii* (Robertson's Peppermint)  
*E. robertsonii*-*E. maculosa*  
*E. maculosa*-*E. dives*  
*E. robertsonii*-*E. rubida*  
*E. robertsonii*-*E. bridgesiana*

The second alliance is *E. gigantea*-*E. dalrympleana* (Mountain Gum) which contains the following associations:

*E. gigantea*-*E. dalrympleana*  
*E. dalrympleana*-*E. pauciflora*  
*E. dalrympleana*-*E. dives*  
*E. dalrympleana*-*E. robertsonii*

Lindsay Pryor also describes the minor communities which only grow in certain habitats (eg swamps, river sandbanks or 'undeveloped soil'). These include:

*Ranunculus pimpinellifolius*  
*Juncus falcatus*-*Carex gaudichaudiana*  
*Hypolaena lateriflora*  
*Restio australis*  
*Richea gunnii*  
*Epacris paludosa*  
*Baeckea*-*Callistemon*  
*Leptospermum lanigerum*

Another interesting observation that emerges is that 520 species of indigenous plants had been identified by 1954, including 56 daisies, 51 grasses, and 31 orchids.

## EXTRACT FROM CANBERRA: A NATION'S CAPITAL 1954

### Grassland

The *Themeda australis*-*Poa caespitosa* grassland, which is the only major community not dominated by Eucalyptus, was earlier thought to have been dominated by some of the now common species, but there is little doubt from evidence now available that most of the Canberra plain was occupied by a community in which the principal grass was *T. australis*. In areas with heavier soils and more water from drainage, this may have been replaced by a tussocky lowland form of *P. caespitosa* and perhaps in some places by *Stipa aristiglumis*. On some of the shallower soils *S. falcata* or *S. semibarbata* may have been the dominant.

The pattern of distribution and composition of these communities has, however, been so altered by close sheep grazing for more than a hundred years that it is not yet possible to describe their virgin condition. Nevertheless, there is little doubt that the Canberra plains, Ginninderra and Tuggeranong were treeless and therefore true climax grassland. The evidence in support of this is found first of all in the fringing trees: round the edges of all the grassland patches there is a narrow zone of either *E. pauciflora* or *E. rubida* interposed between the grassland and the *E. melliodora*-*E. blakelyi* of the common surrounding community over most of the area. Secondly, there is no sharp soil or physiographic change associated with the transition from grassland to woodland other than that it generally occurs close to the 2000-foot contour, irrespective of other factors. There is also direct evidence from a survey made in 1836 by Hoddle of a portion of land now adjoining the airport, in which a sharp boundary between trees and open plain is shown. A further indication is given by the presence, in areas of supposedly original grassland, of certain species in much greater concentration than is usual in secondary grassland that is obviously degraded woodland. The species are, in particular, *Eryngium rostratum*, *Goodenia pinnatifida* and *Helichrysum apiculatum*.

The association of low rainfall with low temperatures that characterises the grassland region is the most obvious reason why the climate is unsuitable for tree growth and it has produced a habitat that is unusual in most of southern Australia although it is found on the southern tablelands, including the Australian Capital Territory, and south to

Delegate, east to Nerriga and north to Yass. The communities now occupying the grassland area must be described amongst those conditioned by settlement.

### Savannah woodland

The two alliances characteristic of savannah woodland, namely, *E. melliodora*-*E. blakelyi* and *E. pauciflora*-*E. stellulata*, differ markedly in the dominant species and, to some extent, in the composition of the undergrowth.

#### The *E. melliodora*-*E. blakelyi* Alliance

This alliance occupies the Canberra plains and the Tidbinbilla Valley, extending south to Naas and about fifteen miles up the Naas Creek, and north to the Territory boundary. It is usually limited to elevations below 2000 feet with a rainfall of about 23 inches per annum and a rather severe summer drought.

The dominants are rather widely spaced, leaving an open canopy and giving a parkland appearance. The trees attain greater dimensions than those in the *E. pauciflora*-*E. stellulata* alliance, and in some places may grow to 90 feet, but as a rule they do not exceed 70 feet. They have short holes and widely spreading crowns.

Very few shrubs occur. *Bursaria spinosa* and *Cassinia quinquefaria* are sporadic and reach about 6 feet in height.

The ground stratum is a continuous cover of grasses, now chiefly *Stipa falcata* and *Danthonia* spp., but thought to have been *Themeda* in the virgin state for the same reason as in the grassland. Such herbs as *Wahlenbergia gracilis*, *Hydrocotyle laxiflora*, *Helipterum australe*, *Asperula conferta*, *Oxalis corniculata*, *Plantago varia* and *Glycine clandestina* also occur. In spring geophytes come up, giving a distinctive appearance to the ground cover. The most frequent species are *Anguillaria dioica*, *Bulbine bulbosa*, *Dichopogon strictus*, *Tricoryne elatior*, *Hypoxis hygrometrica* and *Burchardia umbellata*.

This alliance with its well-developed grass stratum has been used for grazing for about a hundred years and is much altered.

#### The *E. pauciflora*-*E. stellulata* Alliance

This alliance occurs extensively in the south-east of the Territory from Naas to its southern boundary and towards Cooma, and is typical of the Gudgenby River valley at an elevation of 3000 to 4000 feet. There is also a considerable area at the head of the Cotter



valley, and the fragments of the alliance may also be seen fringing the grassland near Canberra.

The chief difference in environmental factors between this and the previous alliance probably lies in the lower temperatures and consequent shorter growing season under which the *E. pauciflora*-*E. stellulata* alliance develops.

The dominants seldom exceed 50 feet; they are short-boled and the crowns are more or less rounded in outline. As in the previous alliance the canopy is open, giving the typical parkland appearance, and similarly the slight changes in aspect do not greatly affect the distribution of the dominants, which is influenced rather by soil and drainage conditions.

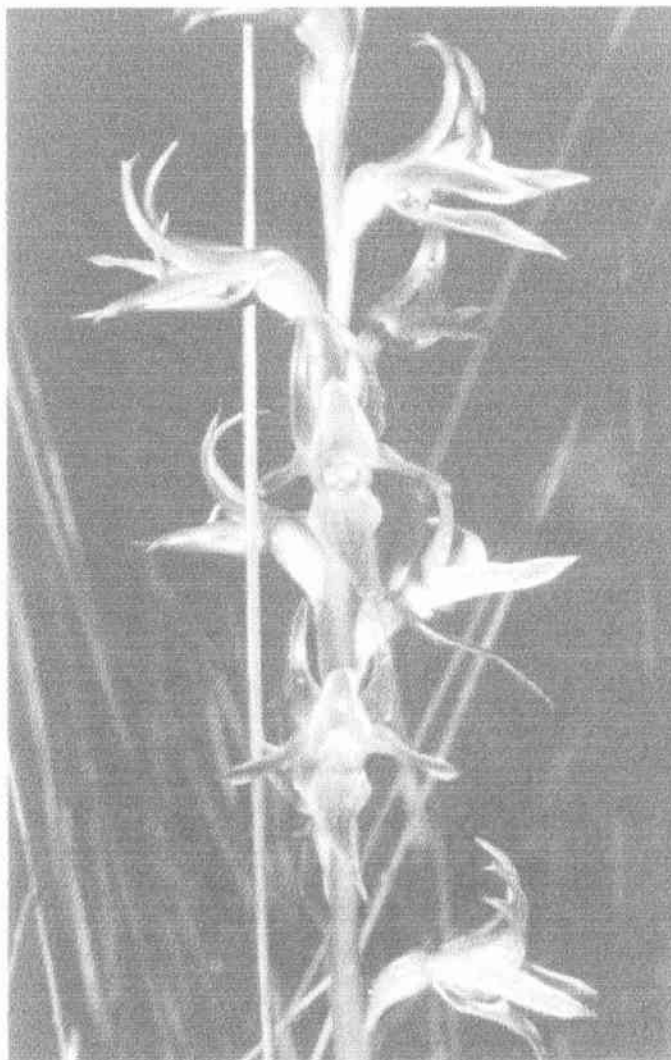
*Banksia marginata* is the only tall shrub recorded. Near the moister limits of the association a few small shrubs, reaching 1 to 2 feet in height, occur sporadically. The chief are *Discaria australis*, *Oxylobium cilipticum* var. *alpinum*, *Hibbertia obtusifolia* and *Bossiaea buxifolia*.

The grass stratum is very well developed and forms a continuous cover, the chief grasses being *Themeda australis*, *Dichelachne* sp., *Danthonia* spp., and *Andropogon* sp.; these more or less dominate the smaller herbaceous plants such as *Geranium pilosum*, *Oreomyrrhis*, *Brachycome* sp., *Psoralea adscendens*, *Wahlenbergia gracilis*, *Ajuga australis*, *Asperula* sp., and *Hydrocotyle* sp.

Most of this country has been used for grazing, so that the dominant trees have been destroyed over considerable areas. The floristic composition is less modified than in the *E. melliodora*-*E. blakelyi* alliance, possibly because cattle rather than sheep are the chief grazing animals; on the Canberra plains the opposite is true.

#### Alpine woodland

This is represented by the *E. niphophila* alliance, which consists of a single association, although on other parts of the



This Wilkinson's Leek Orchid spotted at Nunnock Swamp on the Tantawangalo trip in January was indeed a visual treat!

Photo: Geoff Robertson.

Highlands some of the rarer alpine species occur infrequently. It is found on the highest parts of the western and southern boundary range above 5200 feet, and is even present on the summit of Mount Bimberi (6262 feet). No figures are available for this region, but it is likely that the rainfall reaches 60 inches per annum. The growing season is short by comparison with other parts of the Territory and the winters are severe, snow often lying on the ground for three or four months.

There is only the single dominant tree, forming an open community. The trees seldom exceed 30 feet in height and are often only 15 feet. Where there is some shelter they have the short bole and rounded crown characteristic of the dominants of savannah woodland. On exposed sites, however, the crowns are often

unilateral and the trees shorter, owing to the strong winds that sweep the mountain tops.

Below the dominants there develops a small shrub stratum, about a foot high, of true chamaephytes, which is covered completely by snow in winter. Some of these shrubs, such as *Leucopogon hookeri*, *Bossiaea foliosa*, *Grevillea australis*, *Leucopogon lanceolatus*, *Orites lancifolia* and *Grevillea lanigera*, are upright but die back periodically. Others, such as *Oxylobium alpestre*, *Pultenaea mucronata* and *Persoonia chamaepeuce*, are procumbent or trailing plants.

The grass stratum is very well developed, and consists of *Poa caespitosa* with many associated species. Some of the more important are *Helipterum anthemoides*, *H. incanum*, *Helichrysum semipapposum*, *Podolepis acuminata*, *Craspedia* sp., *Brachycome aculeata*, *B. scapigera*, *B. decipiens*, *Celmisia longifolia*, *Wahlenbergia gloriosa*, *Linum marginale* and *Oreomyrrhis* sp., all of which

make a brilliant show in January.

*E. niphophila* is rather sensitive to fire - it has a thin bark - and burning in the past has killed it over considerable areas. In one or two places severe gales, aided by the fact that the butts had previously been burnt, have blown down several acres of trees.

Next time - the forests





# AN ACT TREES POLICY

Alan Ford

Following the release of the Tree Management Task Force Discussion Paper (July 1998) the Planning and Urban Services Committee of the Legislative Assembly was asked to examine the issues. The Discussion Paper reviewed the three major Acts which are used by the ACT Government to manage and protect trees - and concluded they gave only 'piecemeal' protection.

The Assembly committee sought public comment to inform its inquiry. The comment included concern about design and siting issues, both greenfields and redevelopment areas, verge protection, inappropriate plantings, tree pruning and thinning, the replanting program and the piecemeal/fragmented management of trees by government.

In its conclusion the Committee noted that there were about 600,000 trees on public land in the urban area, with perhaps a few more on private land. The Committee considered that this valuable resource warranted "careful and skilful management in order for it to be enjoyed by future generations".

The Committee noted that the *Discussion Paper* stopped "short of supporting a tree management strategy which would integrate the planning and action around trees within the government". Nor did it spell out the requirement for routine tree care reflecting the different stages of the life cycle of trees and the need for a specific budget allocation.

The Committee was particularly struck by some of the observations among the wealth of information it received. Among these were:

- there 'has been a reduction in the amount of resources (devoted to trees) as the city has expanded and the tree heritage has grown. Resources are not matching the tasks';
- 'trees are a long-term investment in need of continual renewal and should not be made the victim of short-term budgetary stringencies.';
- 'The great tree heritage of Canberra (is) being squandered, not deliberately but because of the absence of co-ordinated policies to nurture this heritage...There needs to be commitment to long-term funding, management and research as well as a greater awareness within government agencies of the

importance of planning with trees in mind'; and

- trees are 'an integrated part of the resources of this economy and community'. There should be 'a systematic, broad-based, vigorous strategy for tree resource management'.

Against that background, the Committee made 27 recommendations. Some that might be considered more important are reviewed below along with the Government's response.

**Recommendation 1** That the Government prepare a draft *Trees Policy* based on this report and the *Discussion Paper* prepared by the ACT Tree Management Task Force, to be widely circulated in 2000 for public comment.

The Government agreed that there was a need for a comprehensive Tree Management and Protection Policy. It is expected that the draft will be released in March.

**Recommendation 2** That a blanket Tree Preservation Order NOT be introduced.

The Government agreed with this recommendation, noting that since its inception, Canberra has had an ethos of planting and nurturing trees, both in public and residential landscape. It went on to argue that adequate legislation provisions exist to ensure that the integrity of Canberra's treescape remains protected in perpetuity and while the ethos of planting and nurturing trees persists in the community, a general tree preservation regime is considered to be unnecessary. Some of us would find it difficult to agree that there were adequate legislative provisions to protect this element of our biodiversity.

## Significant Tree Register

**Recommendation 3** That a central element of the Trees Policy be a Significant Tree Register which identifies and protects trees on Territory land and on private leases, according to criteria agreed upon through a collaborative public consultation process.

The Government has supported a register of significant trees being established for both unleased and leased Territory land.

**Recommendation 4** That the Land (Planning and Environment) Act 1991 be amended in

conjunction with the establishment of a Significant Tree Register to ensure that trees listed on the Register are given legislative protection and require approval for alteration or removal.

The Government indicated agreement in principle. The extent of necessary legislative changes is to be considered in the context of developing the Trees Policy. Legislation will be amended if necessary to ensure protection consistent with the intent of the Register.

## Planning

**Recommendation 7** That the minimum performance standards for verge widths be increased in order to facilitate the growth of appropriate street trees.

The Government agreed to this, stating that the revised ACT Code for Residential Development is explicit in its intent, that streets are to be designed to accommodate larger scale street trees.

**Recommendation 10** That the (then) current review of rural property management agreements ensures appropriate protection of existing trees and provide for suitable replantings.

The Government agreed with this approach indicating that the review, undertaken in 1998/99, resulted in the development of Land Management Agreements (LMAs). The Government stated that LMAs establish a framework for ecologically sustainable management of leased rural land, and are negotiated with each new rural lessee. They address issues such as landcare requirements, fire and drought protection, and natural resource management including the protection of woodlands. Nature conservation issues identified in a LMA may lead to a proposal for funding by the Rural Conservation Fund.

## Resources

**Recommendation 12** That the existing level of resourcing for tree management be urgently improved to protect and maintain Canberra's world-recognised tree asset; and that sufficient in-house resources be maintained (in government) to manage the ACT's *Trees Policy*.

The Government noted the recommendation and indicated that any financial issues

arising from finalisation of the 'Trees Policy' will be addressed in the Budget context.

The remaining six recommendations under Resources were either agreed in principle, noted or not agreed.

### Budget

**Recommendation 19** That a 'tree management budget' - covering all activities of government - be part of the annual Budget Papers.

The Government agreed in principle, indicating that a statement highlighting the Government's commitment to the protection and ongoing enhancement of Canberra's public tree assets will be included in the Environment section of Budget Paper 3.

### Incentives

**Recommendation 22** That the Government encourage the development of 'partnerships' (fostering tree planting and tree care) by community, business and other groups and individuals.

The Government agreed, stating that it was active in encouraging the development of tree related partnerships on a number of fronts and indicating that further opportunities for expansion of the community's involvement will be investigated in the context of developing the 'Trees Policy'.

### Assessment

**Recommendation 26** That the Commissioner for the Environment regularly report on implementation of the *Trees Policy* as well as on developments (in Australia and

elsewhere) involving the care of trees.

The Government agreed in principle stating that the recommendation will be raised with the Commissioner for the Environment with a view to the inclusion of a statement on implementation of the *Trees Policy* in the State of the Environment Report.

### COMMENT

Clearly, there are a number of issues to be considered, notably resources issues, when the policy paper is released.

## MOUNTAIN VIOLET (*Viola betonicifolia*)

*Michael Bedingfield*

The Mountain Violet is an attractive perennial plant with distinctive spear shaped leaves, growing in a small tuft, and reaching about 20 cm in height. The 5-petalled flower is similar to others of the violet family and the colour varies from deep purple to pale violet. The plant prefers some shade and is most common in the mountains. However, it is also found in moist sites in grassy woodlands, and occasionally in grasslands.

Those I have observed near Tuggeranong Hill usually flower in spring and create a small fruit later. When dry, the fruit capsule opens to reveal a good number of seeds in three boat shaped cells.

An intriguing aspect of this plant is its ability to produce fruit without making visible flowers. If there is sufficient rain the Mountain

Violet will do this throughout summer, thereby manufacturing large numbers of self-fertilised seeds.

The drawing presented here is at 50% of natural size. Parts of the plant at full size are also scattered throughout the newsletter.



*Viola betonicifolia* (Mountain Violet)  
*Michael Bedingfield, 2000*

Mountain violet  
(at 50%)

## Grassland Beyond the Reserve Workshop Proceedings Now Available!

Cost, including postage, \$10

The 80 page workshop proceedings are available. They contain a wealth of information and come highly recommended for anyone interested in grassy ecosystem conservation and management. For example:

- For ACT residents, Sarah Sharp's paper is a must-read for an up-to-date understanding of the ACT Government's active grassland management program.
- FOG's paper provides a good

understanding of what is happening in grassland conservation and describes its approaches, experiences and successes.

- NSW Government agencies, NPWS and DLWC, are major players in grassy ecosystem conservation and their papers put their work into perspective.
- Experiences in Victoria, South Australia, and Western Riverina provide valuable insights into approaches being tried elsewhere.
- The three case studies illustrate how farmers, Local Government, and Rural Lands Protection Boards see their role.

The presentation by the NSW Farmers Association and the opening address illustrate how farming and conservation values interact.

- There is ample information on what financial and other assistance is available.

To order your copy send payment and your address details to Friends of Grasslands Inc PO Box 987, Civic Square ACT 2608. For inquiries contact [margaretning@primus.com.au](mailto:margaretning@primus.com.au) or 02 6241 4065



## FIREWOOD

*Michael Treanor*

Many of you would know someone with, or have yourself, a beautiful open fireplace or an old potbelly stove, and have enjoyed the warm comfort associated with them. The flip side of the picture is itself two sided. Solid fuel heaters (open fireplaces, etc.) produce the sometimes choking layer of smog that settles in the valleys of Canberra and elsewhere. The lesser known negative to this centuries-old tradition is that with the increasing population and an equivalent demand and ability to afford wood-burning heaters, there is a drastic effect on the sources of the fuel.

The fuel is, of course, wood in the majority of cases, and the best and longest burning wood sources are the 'Box' Eucalypts, in particular the Red, Yellow and White Box. These species unfortunately have already been heavily depleted over the centuries, and, just as importantly, form probably two of the most threatened ecosystems in south-eastern Australia. Quality Yellow Box-Red Gum Grassy Woodlands, as well as the White Box Woodlands (southern NSW and Vic), are fast-diminishing ecosystems, with many of the species that depend on them suffering as well. Of particular note are the bird species that have sometimes strict habitat requirements linked to woodlands, such as requiring mature (sometimes over 400+ years old) Box trees for nesting.

The three main threats that come from the removal of timber from these ecosystems are:

- Removal of fallen timber -> leading to loss of habitat for many species
- Removal of dead standing timber -> loss of very important habitat, in particular, hollows
- Reduction in the number of large mature trees -> again habitat loss as well as salinity issues

With Canberra alone having over 17,000 wood heaters and consuming over 80,000 tonnes of wood a year there is great concern for the ecosystems and species of our region. Groups such as Friends Of Grasslands and the Conservation Council of the South East Region & Canberra have for some time being heavily involved in campaigning for the ACT and NSW Governments to do something quickly. With the pressure of many groups, as well as many complaints in regard to the pollution caused and the negative health effects, the ACT Government in 1999 put forward the

ACT Firewood Strategy. Although the aims and strategies were innovative, they lacked the power to be enforced. A key component of the Strategy was the Firewood Industry Code of Practice, which was unfortunately voluntary. Presently the ACT Government is working towards licensing all wood merchants to ensure that other wood sources (such as construction areas) are looked at, providing a range of education and advertising to the public, and eventually developing a National Firewood Strategy.

Although the main debate and media about fire wood and its effect on grassy woodlands has subsided for the time being, it is imperative that the pressure and community education continue well into the new millennium, and that groups such as Friends Of Grasslands supports as well as watches the Government this winter.

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT, delivered at FOG's Annual General Meeting, 10 February 2000

*Geoff Robertson*

### Introduction

2000 has been a very successful year for FOG and I would like to cover some of the main areas of activity.

### Activity program

Last year our activities encompassed:

- Many visits to outstanding sites in the ACT, in the region and further afield.
- A grass ID workshop in January
- Two trips to alpine regions (Kosciuszko and Bright)
- The Grasslands Beyond the Reserve Workshop in December
- Surveys of the rail easement from Williamsdale to Cooma, and Bombala TSRs, and
- Regular work at Radio Hill (now to be called the Old Cooma Common Grassland Reserve, OCCGR).

So the program reflects our efforts to be active in the ACT, the Southern Tablelands and Monaro, and regions further afield - last year we visited Bright and Cowra, this year we plan to go to the Coast, Young and the Riverina.

### Newsletter

The newsletter remains a keystone of our activity. There are many regular contributors amongst members. By keeping in touch with a wide network, we are also able to include

many articles from further afield. The newsletter contains a 'news round-up' and we are always looking for newsy snippets. So if you have anything of interest that you think some members will be interested in, please let us know. This is your newsletter and it is important that it reflects your views and experiences.

### Membership

Membership is growing. As it grows it is not as easy to keep in contact with everyone and to reflect his or her interests. However, we still attempt to maintain contact with all members and we certainly appreciate hearing from you.

### On-ground activity

Over the years, FOG has attempted to build up the on-ground skills of its members. The outcomes of this activity are:

- A flowering of plant identification skills which underpins many of FOG's contributions,
- Identification and arranging conservation of important remnants,
- Identification and removing noxious weed species from sites,
- Providing assistance to members (and others) involved in site management to identify what plants are present and some information on management,
- Taking on the management of OCCGR, and
- Conducting or participating in grassy ecosystem surveys, although we still need to finalise our first result here.

What has been poor is our ability to restore areas by reseedling and other techniques. This is a natural hesitation based on the precautionary principle - we have seen too many examples of inappropriate planting in grassy ecosites. However, this is an area where we need to move forward and understand more about restoration and various management tools, eg grazing and fire. No doubt this will come in time.

### Science

FOG likes to base its actions on good science. It is easy to become upset when one sees native vegetation and native habitat, or even green areas and trees, destroyed. However, emotions do not always stop such destruction, and in fact can be counter-productive. It is in this area that FOG can contribute by understanding native vegetation and habitat, identifying species, undertaking surveys, identifying and taking

action against threats, or just spotting rare or endangered species.

### Relations with government

Both Environment ACT and NPWS, Southern Directorate are members of FOG, and we believe the relationship is a strong one and of mutual benefit. Essentially, like FOG, they aim to identify, manage and conserve grassy ecosystems, and to make the public generally aware of the issues and skills involved. These tasks are made more complicated by the fact that most conservation will take place off-reserve. Information sharing and development are key roles. For example, with NPWS we jointly undertook the rail easement and Bombala TSR survey. With the ACT government's recent weed survey, a number of FOG members, played an active role. Both government agencies have been very supportive of our workshops. FOG is represented in a number of groups organised by these agencies eg ACT Parkcare. There may from time to time be the odd political difference, but we hope we are learning to handle these issues more sensibly. Lobbying remains an important part of this activity.

We have been building relations with local government, particularly with Cooma, Bombala and Snowy River, but much more needs to be done. FOG is a member of a weeds group set up by those three councils. We are also making a start on building relations with RLPBs. We also need to focus more attention on developing better links at the Commonwealth level.

### Relationship with WWF

The relationship with WWF has developed strongly through several channels. WWF administers both the Threatened Species Network (TSN) and Grassy Ecosystem devolved grants. Natural channels of communications are Radio Hill (TSN project), Grassy Ecosystem Grants where I am the community representative for the ACT, and the Monaro Grassland Advisory Committee.

### Relationship with CCERSAC, Environment Centre and Mugga

CCERSAC is an important player in conservation in the ACT and has a history of active

concern on grassland issues. The Working Group on Grasslands and Woodlands holds monthly meetings at which FOG is well repre-

plants. Keeping in touch with these groups is of mutual benefit.

### National links

FOG attempts to keep in touch with people and issues centred around temperate grassy ecosystems. This happens in a variety of ways through the exchange of newsletters, Grassecol, the Grassy Ecosystem Community Grants, personal contact etc. Personally I would like to see a more formal structure in place so that there can be better coordination of community grassy ecosystem initiatives at a national level.

### The Committee

The committee meets monthly and takes important decisions. Issues that need more immediate attention are handled by e-mail. We attempt to keep administrative and organisation issues outside these meetings so that as much information sharing and deliberation can be undertaken at meetings. We hope that we will have some new people on this committee. Many people play an active role outside the committee, which is another reason why FOG is successful.

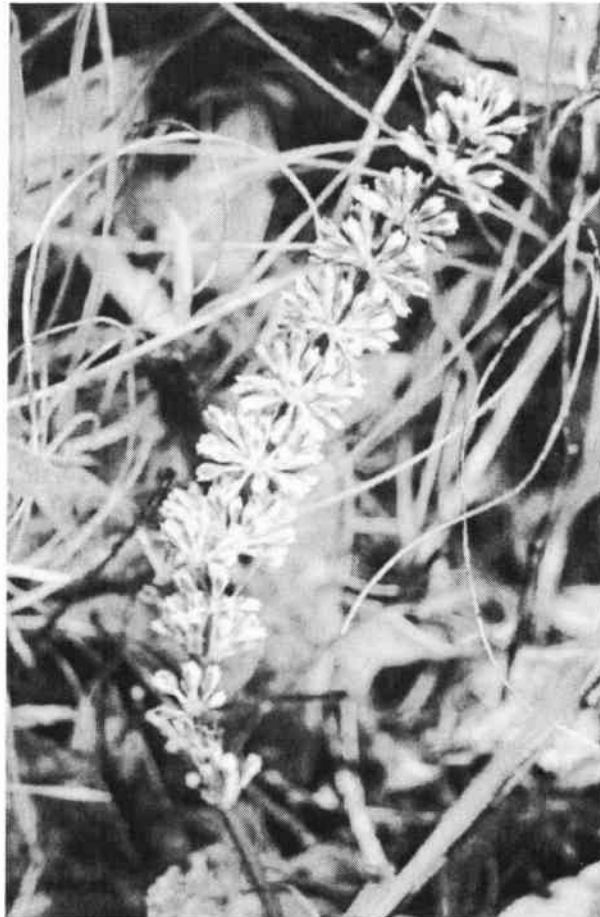
### FOG strategy

Stuart McMahon has facilitated a series of workshops with committee members. They have re-

vealed certain weaknesses which need to be addressed. These include the need to create better structures for organising FOG, and for a regional vegetation strategy. Hopefully a workshop will be called in the not too distant future to workshop these issues further. Other areas that need more attention are the internet site, greater publicity and focus on other species such as reptiles and invertebrates.

### Thankyou

FOG's success relies on the efforts of many people who not only support FOG but are also making other professional and/or personal contributions to grassy ecosystem conservation. A big thanks goes to all the committee members, each of whom make a substantial contribution in terms of effort



A superb *Lomandra multiflora* flower spike at Mulligan's Flat Nov 2000. **Photo:** Jean Geue

sented. By working through this group we are able to spread the achievements for grassy ecosystem conservation. The Environment Centre is a resource centre for conservation and FOG attempts to keep in touch with what is happening there. FOG holds its monthly committee meetings at the Environment Centre. The Mugga-Mugga Education Centre, where we are holding this meeting, has become a home for many FOG activities. We are very grateful for the use of these wonderful premises.

### Relationships with community groups

Many of FOG's members are involved in environmental community groups, such as landcare and parkcare, ornithologist, herpetologist, field naturalists, friends of the botanic gardens, and society for growing Australian

and wisdom. In addition, FOG relies on a number of individual committee members who take on particular responsibilities. Additional thanks therefore to Margaret (newsletter, program and membership), David (workshop, Radio Hill, leading activities), Alan (Treasurer and all round support), Naarilla (Secretary), Will (newsletter and Mugga hospitality), and Michael T (vice president and workshop). Outside the committee special thanks to Rainer, Sarah and Isobel (mentors and leaders), and Michael B (breaking new ground), Jackie, Dave and Andrew (plant ID skills), Rosemary and Jean (behind the scenes support, including photos), and Keith (auditing).

This completes my full third year as FOG's president, a position which I have felt honoured to serve in and one which is personally very rewarding.

## ASSORTED REPORTS FOR THE YEAR 2000

*Margaret Ning*

### Membership

By 31 December 2000, FOG's membership had steadily risen over the year to exactly 150. This actually included 177 members by the time family memberships were expanded. The total also included 11 corporate memberships (including government agencies and the private companies); 13 honorary members (basically annual memberships given to presenters at one of our 1999 workshops); and 7 carryover memberships (ie members who joined in the second half of the previous financial year).

Membership always drops off at the beginning of each year, as renewals sometimes take a while to come in, before the numbers look respectable again. So, if you've overlooked sending in your membership cheque, could you please attend to it, or pass it on to Geoff, me or a committee member if our paths cross at other venues.

### Activities

2000 was a pretty full year with a broad range of FOG activities being held. Participation was at a healthy level, and that even generally included the occasions when we asked for help at the Radio Hill Cooma site with cutting, daubing, and the final act of chipping, the hawthorns, briars, etc.

Our trip to the alpine grasslands in

February 2000 was a great success and special thanks go to Leon Horsnell for his help with that activity. It was good to welcome some members to FOG activities for the first time in 2000. Occasionally we joined other local environmental groups to hold joint activities, and we shall do the same again this year. We also travelled to the east and south of Canberra, as well as holding activities closer to home. In 2000 we held two workshops (grass ID in January and conservation beyond the reserve in December) where we once again received considerable input from many of our highly skilled members as well as contributions from people outside our organisation. My thanks go to everyone who helped me with the year 2000 program, and I am constantly amazed at their resilience and willingness to give so generously of their time.

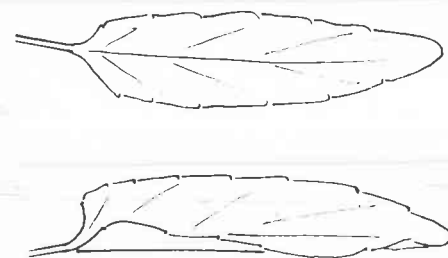
This year we shall be holding more activities in the afternoons in response to members' requests for more opportunities to sleep in (younger members of course!). We shall also have a number of weekend trips for those who want to explore grasslands even further afield. This is a great opportunity for us to meet some of our members who live outside the Canberra and Monaro region, and explore areas unfamiliar to many of us. So, have another look at page 1 and put a note in your diary if you want to join us for any of our 2001 activities.

### Newsletter

Our newsletter continues to be of a high standard and we hope we manage to include content that appeals to most of our members most of the time. We are very appreciative of the feedback we receive as it helps keep us motivated and focussed on what members are looking for.



*The Lone Benj* admiring the scenery at Mulligan's Flat. Photo: Jean Geue



Mountain violet leaves

We are always looking for contributions for our newsletter. If you think your own experiences might be a worthwhile topic for an article, please call me and discuss it. If there's something you'd like to know more about, and you think FOG or its members may be able to help with the information, call me about that too. It could become the topic for a newsletter article!

Some members make regular contributions to the newsletter which considerably lessens the load for others, and I will take this opportunity to thank them for their help in the past, and the future, of course! And, somehow, Will manages to fit in the formatting of the newsletter every two months even with the demands of parenthood. Even more amazingly, Geoff always manages to whip up an informative storm of words relating to things that happened in the preceding couple of months or so.

A couple of times during the year we have used a small team to help with the despatch of the newsletter, and if our numbers continue to expand so healthily, it would be nice to receive a few more offers of help with this task. It only takes about an hour every two months and would be held at a central location. I'd like to thank those who helped in 2000 with this, and invite other members to please call me if they can help with it in 2001.

### NEW COPIES OF GRASSLAND FLORA—GET YOUR COPY NOW!!!!

We have autographed copies of the 'new' reprint of Grassland Flora, which contains a few amendments and is printed on glossy paper instead of the previous satin. Cost is still only \$15. Contact Margaret on 6241 4065 (h).

**FRIENDS OF GRASSLANDS INC***Supporting native grassy ecosystems***Address: PO Box 987, Civic Square ACT 2608**Web address: [http://www.geocities.com/fog\\_act](http://www.geocities.com/fog_act)**Your committee:**

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Membership inquiries: Please contact Margaret Ning whose details appear above.

**FRIENDS OF GRASSLANDS  
NEWSLETTER**

You have read this far, so we must have kept your interest. If you are not a member of Friends of Grasslands why not subscribe to the newsletter? It comes out six times a year and contains a lot of information on native grassland issues.

You can get the newsletter by joining Friends of Grasslands. You do not need to be an active member - some who join often have many commitments and only wish to receive the newsletter.

However, if you own or lease a property, are a member of a landcare group, or actively interested in grassland conservation or revegetation, we hope we have something

to offer you. We may assist by visiting sites and identifying native species and harmful weeds. We can suggest conservation and revegetation goals as well as management options, help document the site, and sometimes support applications for assistance, etc.

Of course you may wish to increase your own understanding of grasslands, plant identification, etc. and so take a more active interest in our activities. Most activities are free and we also try to arrange transport (or car pool) to activities.

If you are already a member, you might encourage friends to join, or even make a gift of membership to someone else. We will also send one complimentary newsletter to anyone who wants to know more about us.

**HOW TO JOIN FRIENDS OF  
GRASSLANDS**

Send us details of your name, address, telephone, fax, and e-mail, etc. You might also indicate your interests in grassland issues. Membership is \$20 for an individual or family; \$5 for students, unemployed or pensioners; and \$50 for corporations or organisations - the latter can request two newsletters be sent. Please make cheques payable to Friends of Grasslands Inc.

If you would like any further information about membership please contact Margaret Ning, or if you would like to discuss FOG issues contact Geoff Robertson. Contact details are given in the box above.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Friends of Grasslands Inc  
PO Box 987  
Civic Square ACT 2608