



May-June 2018

Important messages from FOG committee

Geoff Robertson

At our first committee meeting (27 March) after the AGM, there was much administrative work to do. The meeting recorded a vote of thanks to outgoing committee members **Sarah Sharp** and **John Fitz Gerald**. Their absence will make a big hole especially after many years of solid work and contribution to FOG's leadership.

Thanks were also recorded to **Barbara Payne**, another active member, who stood down from the committee earlier in the year, and several non-committee members who continue to undertake key FOG positions: Richard Bomford (Webmaster), John Fitz Gerald (some administrative and advocacy functions), Naarilla Hirsch (Advocacy coordinator), Ann Milligan (Newsletter & eBulletin), Jamie Pittock (Coordinator, FOG's NCA Volunteers), Andy Russell (Public Officer), Sarah Sharp (Book sales) and Linda Spinaze (Coordinator, FOG's 'Scottsdale' monitoring).

The committee expressed its gratitude to **Paul Archer** for taking on the onerous position of Secretary and welcomed new committee members **Ken Hodgkinson**, **Juliey Beckman** and **Rainer Rehwinkel**. It also welcomed back **Kim Pullen** (Vice-president), **Janet Russell** (Treasurer), **Tony Lawson** (FOG rep on several groups & advocacy), **Kat Ng** (Supported projects), **Margaret Ning** (FOG rep, general rouseabout & backup) and **Andrew Zelnik** (Co-ordinator, Supported projects).

Help with Membership

FOG requires a new membership officer to maintain our membership records. This requires regular work which peaks when membership renewal occurs. A combination of a friendly and patient disposition and good record keeping skills are required.

Help with Advocacy

The Advocacy group consists of several people with a range of skills and provides an opportunity to learn about the importance of grassy ecosystems and to influence decision makers to do the right thing by grassy ecosystems. *We need to strengthen the group to continue to do this work on behalf of FOG.* Any skills such as good research, writing, a flexible attitude and/or ability to review the work of others would be appropriate. This is not difficult work as such and can be very rewarding.

Membership fee rise

At its last meeting, the previous committee decided to increase membership fees. From 1 January 2019, Individual, family or Not-for-profit organisation fees rise by \$10 to **\$30**;



This is an experimental 'autumn burn' during a March evening in one of the Ginninderra Catchment Group's grassland restoration plots (*photo: Roger Nicoll, courtesy of CSIRO*). Dr Ken Hodgkinson, a FOG member and also now on FOG committee, runs the grassland restoration trial. Rural Fire Service volunteers and coordinators did a splendid job on these burns, sometimes working late into the night. In spring, people from FOG and other groups will help assess the plant species' responses to the various fire and mowing treatments at sites across north-west ACT.

Ken Hodgkinson and Karissa Preuss (of GCG) describe the research in a 4-minute video, online at: <https://ginninderraproject.com.au/grassland-trials-help-answer-burning-question/>

Corporate fees rise by \$10 to **\$60**; and Concession fees (those on social security benefits, or full-time students) rise by \$5 to **\$10**. Membership fees last changed in 1998. These rises are in line with the CPI over this 21-year period. Those members who have paid in advance for 2019 or beyond will not be affected.

Vice-president position

FOG has two Vice-president positions, one of which is vacant. By putting up your hand for this position, you gain an opportunity to influence and contribute to FOG's development.

If you want to serve in a less ambitious role, we have vacancies on our committee – this is good way to learn much about grassy ecosystems, to develop new skills and to contribute.

Ambitious program

FOG will continue with our ambitious program of education, advocacy, on-ground work, and activities. There is much in train.

Thank you

On my own behalf I wish to thank the FOG membership for giving me another term as your president. It is a great honour to hold this role and to work with courageous and innovative people who are making a difference to the conservation, management and restoration of our grassy ecosystems.

FOG-related activities in April – June

Is that a wetland? Saturday 28 April

You know that part of the paddock that goes under water certain times of the year? Or that boggy patch that has different plants growing in it? It's a wetland!

SELLS, FOG and K2C invite landholders and others interested to visit **Maffra Lake Travelling Stock Reserve** on **Saturday 28 April, 10.30–11.45 am**. Come and find out more about Monaro lakes and the values that these kinds of wetlands have – for you and the environment. After the field walk, we will move to **Dalgety pub for (free) lunch, four speakers and discussion, 12.15–2.15 pm**. Alie Cowood, Donna Hazell, Nicki Taws and David Eddy will speak about the plumbing of the Monaro lakes; the value of ephemeral wetlands; birds' use of Monaro wetlands; and grassland and other plant values of the area. **RSVP essential for catering purposes**. Contact geoffrobertson@iprimus.com.au or phone him on 02 6241 4065 **by 5 pm Wednesday 25 April**.

'Spot that Tree Hollow', Tuesday 1 May, 3–5 pm

All are welcome to join in a walk through Campbell Park, ACT (lower eastern slopes of Mt Ainslie, behind Campbell Park Offices) looking for and recording trees with hollows and noting any birds we see. This is a Friends of Grasslands activity for ACT Tree Week. Bring binoculars, a camera (with GPS if you can), a pen, clipboard if possible, and drinking water, and wear bush-walking footwear and clothes. We will provide checklists and marking and measuring equipment, and **John Brannan's** and others' expertise on local fauna. At the end of the day, we hope you will know more about the kinds of trees that have hollows of various types that some fauna might use, and that you will be inspired to watch out for hollow-bearing trees from then onwards. **Register with ann.milligan@fog.org.au by 30 April** (also, for directions).

Grassland management forum, Friday 18 May, 9.30–3.00

'**A Vision for Grassland Management & Restoration – Recent Achievements & Next Steps**' is a forum being organised by K2C, ACT Parks & Conservation Service and FOG, for organisations and individuals working in grasslands across the SE region of NSW and ACT. The aim is to share and celebrate efforts on the front line of grassland conservation, and to discuss next steps. This free forum will include morning tea and a light lunch, and is open to the public. It will be at Jerrabomberra Community Centre, NSW, on Friday 18 May, 9.30 am to 3 pm.

To register, or for information, please contact **Geoff Robertson**, ph. 02 6241 4065 or mob. 0403 221 117, geoffrobertson@iprimus.com.au or **Maree Gilbert**, ph. 02 6205 2842, mob. 0432 990 896, maree.gilbert@act.gov.au.

FOG workparties before July

Weeding workparties are planned for the dates below. All start at **9 am**.

Your help is needed and always welcome.

Tools are provided. You need to wear suitable protective clothing (including hat) and footwear appropriate for the work and the weather, and bring your own drinking water.

Each workparty convenor **provides morning tea**, making these into pleasant social occasions.

Please **register by two days before the date** of the workparty at the relevant email address below, so there are enough tools and tea for everyone, and to find out where to meet if you are not sure, and so you can be told if the weather forecast has led to a cancellation.

Workparties are cancelled if: the forecast is 35°C or more; it is a total fire ban day; there is lightning; or there is heavy rain.

Stirling Park woodland, Yarralumla ACT
Sunday 29 April, 9 am, based at Forster Cresc/Empire Cct intersection,
jamie.pittock@fog.org.au

Yarramundi Grassland, 245 Lady Denman Drive, Yarramundi Reach ACT,
Sunday 27 May, 9 am,
jamie.pittock@fog.org.au

Stirling Park woodland, Yarralumla ACT
Sunday 27 May, 9 am,
jamie.pittock@fog.org.au

See page 15 for dates of FOG activities later this year and lots of other groups' activities coming up soon.

Getting to know your native grasses

9 – 12.30 Sunday 13 May

Golspie, between Crookwell & Taralga, NSW

Geoff Robertson (of FOG) will talk about native grasses and grasslands and their management in the Upper Lachlan, including helping you identify individual grass species. Free, with morning tea. Contact Ruth Aveyard to RSVP or for information, mob: 0447 242 474, coordinator@upperlachlanlandcare.org.au.

From Crookwell head to Laggan. Turn left at Laggan; pass the pub and go on another 4 km. Turn right down the Golspie Rd, towards Taralga. Travel for about 17 km. Golspie Hall is a galvanised building on the left hand side (looks like a shearing shed).

FOG table at Conservation Council World Environment Day dinner, Saturday 2 June 7 pm

Make an **earlybird booking before Thursday 3 May** to join the **FOG group** attending this annual dinner at the **National Arboretum Canberra**. There will be a 3-course meal with table wine included, preceded by canapes and champagne, all catered by Janet Jeffs of Ginger Catering.

This dinner is the major fun and fundraising event for the Conservation Council. Guest Speaker is **Stuart Barry**, author of *The Rich Greenie*. Stuart is also a life-long environmentalist, a philanthropist and an award-winning financial adviser specialising in ethical investing.

Tickets: **Earlybird** \$104 (or \$99 if you are Active Transporting).
Or after 3 June, \$145 (or \$135 if you are Active Transporting).

'Active Transporting' means travelling by bus, bike or foot, and gives you a free ticket in a special raffle for a \$2000 electric bike (donated by Switched on Cycles).

Book at: <https://conservationcouncil.org.au/CiviCRM/?page=CiviCRM&q=civicrm/event/register&reset=1&id=95>.

Be sure to put **FOG** in the 'table name' box on the booking form.

News – from the FOG committee and otherwise

1. There were 21 people at the FOG AGM on 20 March, and five apologies. The group heard short synopses of FOG's multiple activities during 2017, and discussed the value we feel FOG contributes to the continuing struggle to conserve grassy landscapes. The FOG Annual Report can now be downloaded from the AGM link at the bottom of the FOG home page (www.fog.org.au). For a printed copy, please contact FOG (see page 16).

2. FOG has distributed a letter to about 300 residents of Yarralumla ACT, neighbours of Stirling Park. The letter has two key messages:
(i) it seeks recipients' help to stop rubbish and garden waste being dumped in Stirling Park; and (ii) it explains the importance of Stirling Park ('a Canberra treasure') for conservation, and FOG's involvement there.
Thanks to Jamie Pittock for taking this initiative, and to the team who have hand-delivered it to letterboxes in Yarralumla.

Geoff Robertson, President

FOG involved in National Trust walk



The group admiring old-growth eucalypts at Stirling Park.
Photo: Trevor Lipscombe, National Trust (ACT).

Congratulations to the National Trust (ACT) for the series of events they are running as part of the Canberra and Region Heritage Festival 2018. **John Fitz Gerald**, on behalf of FOG, was a guide on their Westlake/ Stirling Park/ Guru Bung Dhaura Guided Walk on Thursday 19 April. The other guide was well-known local historian Ann Gugler. The group of interested people walked on a perfect Autumn morning to absorb some of Ann's encyclopedic knowledge about the early settlement at Westlake where she lived as a child. John provided complementary details and answered questions from participants about the Box–Gum Grassy Woodland trees and understorey, in particular the Button Wrinklewort (which is heritage listed). People very much appreciated learning about many of the aspects that involve FOG with the National Capital Authority at Stirling Park including Aboriginal Heritage, weed control, sharing of knowledge about these environmental assets of central Canberra, and advocacy for their conservation.

Ann Gugler, historian, providing information extra to that printed on the heritage sign. *Photo: Trevor Lipscombe, National Trust (ACT).*



Welcome to our new members!

John & Irene Kiely (ACT)

Tim Booth (NSW)

Brian Everingham (NSW)

Libby McCutchan & Ian McConville (ACT)

Kirsten Vine (NSW)

Kylie & Simon Evans (NSW)

Royalla Landcare (NSW)

Frank Gasparre, Bunya Native Nursery (NSW)

Membership renewals

This May–June edition of the newsletter is the last one that will be sent to you if you do not renew your membership for 2018. A reminder notice about renewing has been sent to those whose records indicate they have not yet renewed. Please contact Sarah or Margaret at membership@fog.org.au if you have any queries about your membership. If you haven't got a renewal form you can download a copy from <http://fog.org.au/membership.htm>. Thank you to all the members who have renewed for 2018. Thank you also for your generous donations. They will go towards the supported projects grants.

FOG Advocacy by Naarilla Hirsch

February

FOG commented on an EPBC referral for the expansion of Mugga Quarry, impacting on the Box–Gum grassy woodland south of Callum Brae Nature Reserve (which is at Symonston, ACT). FOG expressed concerns about the cumulative impacts of developments in this area, following on from the referral to expand the Mugga Lane Resource Management Centre a few years ago. Any further developments should wait on investigations from the ACT Government's Eastern Broadacre Study to be complete.

March

A major task this month was commenting on the long awaited Draft Reserve Management Plan for the Molonglo River Reserve. FOG thought that this Plan was sound as it stands, in providing high-level aspirational objectives and actions, but was very concerned that it does not directly guide decision-making and that it is not compatible with the NES (Matters of National Environmental Significance) Plan in several ways. Major concerns include the number of outstanding planning decisions, a lack of detail in the Plan, a lack of protection of Kama Nature Reserve from urban disturbances, and concerns about the impact of fire protection and conservation within the Reserve. FOG expressed the view that dogs and protection of conservation are incompatible, that the Plan contains out-of-date references and material that should be updated, and that it does not include knowledge already gained from management of the Molonglo River Reserve. Our submission contains much more detail that is available on the website.

The full text of FOG submissions appears on FOG's website.



Articles

Ghastly grasses – A close-up

John Fitz Gerald

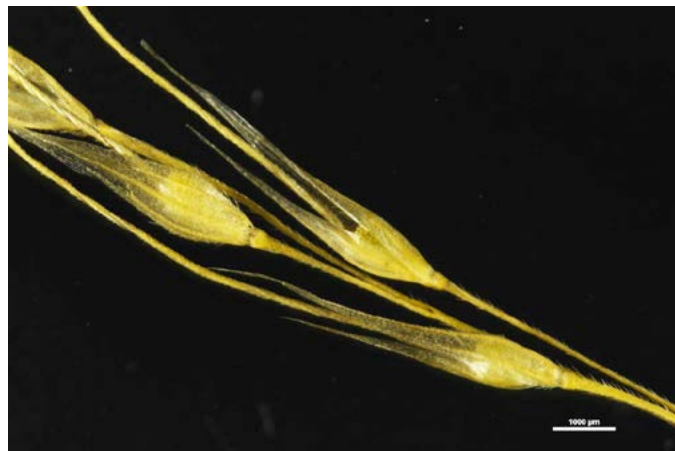
Ghastly – what better way to follow the last newsletter edition's close-up on *Glorious*? I hasten to add that ghastliness here is all about the invasive state of the four introduced species I chose, and not their delicate microstructures.

Serrated Tussock

Let's start with the most ghastly of the four: **Serrated Tussock**, a weed declared to be of National Significance. The right-hand image shows part of an inflorescence with several awned spikelets. The image below shows two florets pulled from such a structure, still carrying long awns, and dimpled lemmas with bearded calluses. In the centre are 3 seeds liberated from their lemmas.



Serrated Tussock: two florets, and three seeds taken out of their florets. The scale bar indicates 1 mm.



Serrated Tussock: part of inflorescence with awned spikelets. The scale bar indicates 1 mm.

Phalaris, Bearded Oats, Paspalum

Now to three still-ghastly but less-feared species, all introduced pasture grasses that have become troublesome weeds in many native grasslands, including those that FOG helps to manage.

Firstly **Phalaris**, widely planted as a valuable stock food. You'll probably know it as a quite tall grass with its cylindrical head, dense and 10 cm or more long. The image below shows, on the left, a fragment of a green head broken off to show spikelets. On the right are two florets from a matured head with shiny, hairy lemmas still containing the grass seed.



Phalaris: fragment of a green seedhead (left) and two florets from a matured head. The scale bar indicates 2 mm.

Looking back to previous articles: on Serrated (Bristled?) Tussock, and Panic Grass invasions

John Fitz Gerald

In *News of FOG* May-June 2015 p. 8, my 'close-up' article had micro-photographs of minute bristles that I discovered made the roughness on leaves of **Serrated Tussock** *Nassella trichotoma*: that's **bristles** ... not serrations.

See <http://fog.org.au/Newsletters/2015-05newsletter.pdf>

In *News of FOG* March-April 2016 p. 12, I presented photographs of the native **Hairy Panic** *Panicum effusum* spikelets (~0.5 mm across); <http://fog.org.au/Newsletters/2016-03newsletter.pdf>. I mentioned Panic Grass had been piling up in NE Victoria that autumn. It's happening again this year, and also in S NSW. Charles Sturt University researchers explain that *P. hillmanii*, Hillman's Panic, one of 9 exotic species, is causing the trouble; <http://news.csu.edu.au/latest-news/charles-sturt-university/csu-research/panic-spreads>. Panic Grasses can harm grazing livestock. Another exotic, *P. gylvum*, has killed kangaroos: <http://www.ecovoice.com.au/fatal-impact-of-toxic-weeds-on-kangaroos>.

If you decide to control Panic Grass on your land, please make sure first that you are not destroying the native *P. effusum*. It deserves its place in native grasslands.

...continues next page

Want to see these photos in beautiful colour when the newsletter is first published, and still have the convenience of reading the newsletter on paper?

As a member, you can have both the mailed grey printed version and the emailed full-colour pdf file. Just tell us, by email to: newsletter@fog.org.au.

Go on ... spoil yourself!

Ghastly grasses – A close-up, continued from page 4

Next, **Bearded Oats** *Avena barbata*. With its very-similar sibling, *Avena fatua*, these more-or-less annual species are far too common across native grasslands in our region, growing and seeding quickly in early spring.

The image at top right shows a green spikelet holding two awned florets. The image below it shows mature structures of the same species: one densely bearded floret, and three liberated seeds. Scale bars are 5 mm (top image) and 2 mm.

Finally to **Paspalum** and the common species *P. dilatatum*. The left image below is of an inflorescence, illustrating the multiple rows of spikelets on a nearly ripe stem. No wonder this grass is such a pest given that a hundred or so spikelets lie along each flowering stem. The right-hand image below shows *Paspalum* structures in three stages: at the far right is a single hairy spikelet (just like those abounding in the left-hand image). On the far left are two florets taken out of their outer sheath of hairy papery glume plus infertile lemma. Each shiny floret is decorated by rows of tiny dimples on both palea (above) and lemma (below), with the stiff lemma tightly wrapped around the equally stiff palea. The floret in turn contains a single seed, and three liberated seeds are imaged at the centre. The scale bars in both images represent 1 mm.

All of the Serrated Tussock, Phalaris and Oats that I gathered for this exercise released large numbers of seeds. However I struggled to find developed seeds of *Paspalum* despite collecting heads at several different locations in the ACT – plenty of stems with their hundreds of spikelets, but the vast majority of spikelets are empty.

Perhaps readers knowing this species can advise if this is normal, or is the result of an unusual summer? Please drop a note to the editor sometime (newsletter@fog.org.au).

Images were recorded at the National Seed Bank at the Australian National Botanic Gardens, and can be reproduced freely if attributed and linked to the Creative Commons licence CC BY (<http://creativecommons.org.au/learn/licences/>)



Above. A green spikelet of Bearded Oats *Avena barbata*.

Below. A densely bearded floret and three liberated seeds of *Avena barbata*.



All photos by John Fitz Gerald

Below left & right: A *Paspalum* inflorescence & its components.



Snippet

Nature in our city: The value of the natural environment to urbanising Canberra

The ACT's Standing Committee on Environment and Transport and City Services invites submissions to its inquiry into the value of the natural environment to an urbanising Canberra. The Committee's terms of reference and other materials are accessible via the ACT Legislative Assembly website:

<https://www.parliament.act.gov.au/in-committees/standing-committees-current-assembly/standing-committee-on-environment-and-transport-and-city-services>

Written submissions should be lodged with the Committee Secretary by close of business on Friday, 8 June 2018.

Common Grass-blue, *Zizina otis*, a tiny pea-loving butterfly

Michael Bedingfield

In local grassy ecosystems we are used to things being small, and butterflies are no exception. The Common Grass-blue has a wingspan of up to about 2 cm with the female being larger than the male. When perching they normally have their wings folded so what you see of them may be only 10 mm wide. Being so diminutive they don't attract attention as easily as do other butterflies, but they are one of the most common butterflies in local grassy ecosystems. They are native, non-migratory residents, and choose to live in any open grassy area. So they are also very common in Canberra gardens and urban parks. They can be found in most parts of Australia, including all states. One day last January when walking in the lower slopes of Rob Roy Nature Reserve I saw hundreds of them.

There are four stages in the life cycle of a butterfly: the egg, larva, pupa and the adult with wings. The food source for the larvae of this species is any kind of legume or pea, in the botanical family Fabaceae, whether native or exotic. It will feed on native plants like Variable Glycine *Glycine tabacina*, False Sarsaparilla *Hardenbergia violacea*, Tick-trefoil species *Desmodium* sp., as well as clovers *Trifolium* species. The female lays single eggs in random fashion on these plants. When hatched the larvae eat the leaves, flowers, flower buds and seed-pods. They are well camouflaged and eat through the day, sometimes attended by small black ants. When mature the larvae pupate on the undersides of leaves of the host plant. When the pupation is complete the flying adults emerge and are ready to mate and begin the cycle again. There can be several generations in a growing season. Their flight pattern is meandering, erratic and close to the ground. They are attracted to the flowers of the host plants and like to perch on or near them. Our understanding of these butterflies is incomplete and how the species survives over the winter period is not clear.

My main source of information is Suzi Bond's book (see references), which has excellent descriptive notes and is beautifully illustrated with multiple photos of each species of butterfly. The scientific name Suzi uses in her book for the Common Grass-blue is *Zizina otis*. The Atlas of Living Australia uses this name too and lists several sub-species. But the Butterfly House website has the name *Zizina labradus*. The species belongs to the family Lycaenidae, known as Blues and Coppers.

Some species of butterflies have the practice of hilltopping at the time of courtship. The males go to the top of a suitable hill or prominent location where they set up territories. The prominent location need not be very high but may be just an elevated place within a particular area. The same sites may be used every year. Once the males have set up a territory they defend it against rivals, sometimes with dramatic aerial 'dogfights'. The females visit the area with the intention to mate. Those species of butterfly that do not hilltop stay in their normal habitat and the males and females find each other on their normal host plants, at places where they feed on nectar, or in sunny clearings. The Common Grass-blue does not hilltop, but some other members of the family Lycaenidae do. Hilltopping sites are important to the continuation of many species of butterfly, and the NSW Scientific Committee lists loss and/or degradation of sites used for hilltopping by butterflies as a Key Threatening Process. Quite small changes in the hilltop landscape or vegetation can deter the males from using it.

I have provided two photos of the Common Grass-blue. The one of the mating couple is a side-on view with them perching in a typical location at the top of a grass stem, the female being slightly larger. From this angle the male and female wing patterns are much the same. The photo from above is of a female, which shows wings that are



Images © Michael Bedingfield



mostly bronze with some blue. The male's upper wings are mostly purplish blue, with a little bronze. The bodies of both are black. There are a number of small butterflies in the family Lycaenidae that look similar to our subject from a distance of more than a few metres, so you need to have a close look to be able to identify them to species.

The Common Grass-blues are petite wild creatures and appear very delicate and beautiful, but given their abundance in the sometimes harsh landscape in which they thrive, they must be tougher than they look!

References

Field guide to the Butterflies of the Australian Capital Territory. (2016) By Suzi Bond with Steve Holliday and John Stein. National Parks Association of the ACT Inc..

<http://lepidoptera.butterflyhouse.com.au/lyca/labradus.html>

<http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/determinations/hilltoppingktplisting.htm>

<https://bie.ala.org.au/species/urn:lsid:biodiversity.org.au:afd.taxon:9768ddcb-3e84-42cc-bfd5-797965f537e4>



Rod Mason sharing Traditional fire knowledge for land management

Geoff Robertson & Rainer Rehwinkel



Perfect, if not slightly hot, weather was ideal for a Traditional Burning Workshop on 3 April at 'Severn Park', Bobundara, the land held in stewardship by the Massy family. There was a gentle breeze, ideal for a cool burn. Over 30 people attended the event, the third to be held at the property since Greening Australia (GA) has been organising these workshops, which are funded by the NSW Environmental Trust. These events were initiated by FOG several years ago, then taken over by K2C, and are now organised by GA. The GA funding will enable three further annual events.

Rod Mason, a highly respected Ngarigo Elder and Traditional land manager practitioner, shared ideas with the group about caring for land and the use of fire.

On this occasion we adjourned to a dry badly eroded creekbed where Rod explained how burning created charcoal which could be used in rehabilitating the soil. Part of the function of carbon is to increase aeration and organic action. There followed a lively discussion about soil repair and functioning of the revegetation.

The group then gathered much fallen timber and placed it in several locations along the base of the erosion bank, especially where new channels were appearing along the sides of the creek, and also in the creekbed.

Then these piles of material were lit; they burned hot and quickly, leaving a layer of charcoal. These charcoal deposits will catch water and nutrients and allow soil-building and habitat for plants.

Additionally, fallen branches were placed in the creekbed downstream of burnt wood heaps, to further slow water flowing down the creekline and to catch any of the loose ashes that may flow downstream.

Then we adjourned for a lovely lunch. We had already been well fed and provided with billy tea when we arrived. There was much energetic discussion, with old and new friends also taking the opportunity to catch up. There is nothing like firefighting to excite a crowd.

After lunch we went on another small walk and discussed other landscape management issues and how the land could be repaired, according to Rod's Traditional knowledge.



Top: Rod Mason (in beige shirt, facing camera) led the workshop, preparing to restore a dry badly eroded creekbed.

Above: Lauren Van Dyke, one of the organisers, gathering wood as Rod had directed.

Right: Small fires were lit in the dry firewood that had been placed in new channels or gullies that have been appearing along the sides of the creekbed.



Rod Mason sharing Traditional fire knowledge for land management, continued



Top left: Rod checked the fires to make sure they were in the right places, and safe.

Top right: Everyone got involved in this hands-on workshop.

Throughout the day, Rod reminded us that Ngarigo culture is alive and well. He peppered his talk with Ngarigo words and explained how his people had viewed this part of the world and much else about their customs and history.

Thank you to Rod, for once again sharing his cultural knowledge.

Thank you to Charlie Massy for hosting the event.

And thank you also to Nicki Taws from Greening Australia and to Lauren Van Dyke from Upper Snowy Landcare, for organising the event.

Above: The small fires each left a patch of charcoal. These charcoal deposits will catch water and nutrients and allow soil-building and habitat for plants.

Traditional burning for the 21st Century: Aboriginal cool burning workshops for land managers

Join Ngunawal and Ngarigo Traditional Custodians Wally Bell and Rod Mason in this series of Aboriginal cool burning workshops coordinated variously by Molonglo Catchment Group, Upper Shoalhaven Landcare and Upper Murrumbidgee Landcare.

The workshops aim to increase understanding and adoption of traditional burning practices, and explore what contemporary fire management can learn from traditional fire management. They will have both ecological restoration and reconciliation outcomes.

- 28 April – Bullan Mura, near Stirling Park, for ACT Heritage Festival, 9.30–12.30; parking at 200 Alexandrina Drive;
- 6 May 2018 – Millpost Farm, near Bungendore NSW;
- 18 May 2018 – Icon Water Biodiversity Offset Property, Williamsdale ACT;
- 2 June 2018 – Mt Oak, Billilngira NSW.

Events are free but weather dependent, and numbers are limited. **Bookings are essential.** To register and ask for details, email: josie.banens@molonglocatchment.org.au **now**.

More information: <http://molonglocatchment.org.au>

Mcleods Creek Nature Reserve as a wild Open Garden: two walks

Rainer Rehwinkel, Susannah Power, Tom Baker, Kat Ng and Ann Milligan

Wild 'Open Gardens' can attract considerable interest, as was demonstrated on Saturday 7 and Sunday 8 April at Mcleods Creek Nature Reserve, near Gundaroo, NSW.

Susannah Power (Ranger with NSW NPWS, which manages the nature reserve) hosted visitors who came to join in the two walks guided by Rainer Rehwinkel, 11 am to 12.30 pm on each of the two days. Over 30 people including children were in the Saturday group and around 25 on the Sunday, not including Rainer, Susannah and the FOG gatekeepers (Kat or Ann). These walks in this recovering nature reserve had been billed as being run jointly with FOG, and so we had books and grassland brochures available for people to see or buy, and we were happy to accept donations to FOG in place of the entry fee normal for a private Open Garden.

Susannah introduced the reserve to the walkers, Tom Baker introduced the Open Gardens Canberra scheme, and Rainer Rehwinkel led the walks. David Taylor, from the Australian National Botanic Gardens, attended on both days and also provided valuable insights for the walkers.

Look out for similar walks to be held at a nature reserve near you soon, or at least next spring.

Tom Baker, representing the Open Gardens Canberra (opengardenscanberra.org.au) Committee, said afterwards:

"[We are] pleased with the success of the Mcleods Creek walks and this developing positive collaboration with nature conservation bodies. Our criteria for assessing open gardens include sustainability and we are actively promoting the various aspects of sustainability including water conservation, soil conservation and organic gardening and we are now working with the ACT Government in public openings of demonstration 'Water Gardens' in the region under the Healthy Waterways Program ('H2OK'). We are finding very positive responses to this innovative approach to open gardens and hope we can come up with more natural area visitations in coming seasons. Open Gardens Canberra see these as opportunities, not only to promote and enjoy our natural areas but also to increase public understanding of the short and long term management issues."

About the site by Rainer Rehwinkel and Susannah Power

Mcleods Creek Nature Reserve is a newly established reserve containing a large sample of the endangered Box-Gum Woodland, as well smaller areas of Dry Forest and Natural Temperate Grassland. The section containing Box-Gum Woodland had been mostly cleared for stock grazing in its former incarnation as a Crown reserve with grazing leases. The groundlayer was mostly dominated by native grassland, which presented an opportunity to rehabilitate the site. Also, erosion gullies had developed and needed to be repaired.

After developing a rehabilitation plan, a team from NSW NPWS and NSW Office of Environment and Heritage, in consultation with scientists and rangers within those bodies, as well as external scientists and specialists from CSIRO and the ACT Government, Australian National Botanical Gardens, and



In the dry forest on the Saturday. Photo: Susannah Power.



Discussions on the Sunday. Photo: Kat Ng.

community groups (including FOG and Greening Australia) and the local community, set about planting. The team used local species sourced from a variety of regional provenances (to ensure a resilient, climate-ready genetic mix), including eucalypts, wattles and various shrub species. These were planted at a density that, it was hoped would result in an open woodland formation. There has been a great deal of natural recruitment around existing trees, as well. Since the cessation of grazing by stock, the forbs are making a strong comeback, with some areas particularly showy in springtime. Soil erosion has been treated by groundworks and diverting water flows, as outlined below.

NPWS Ranger Susannah Power has monitored the success of the plantings, and concluded that there has been a 95% success rate on the lower slopes, and 65% success rate on the upper

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Mcleods Creek Nature Reserve Open Garden walks, continued

slopes. There have also been experimental translocations of forb species. Initially, the endangered Aromatic Peppercress (*Lepidium hyssopifolium*) was trialled, and then various other forbs, each without success. More recently there has been a trial translocation of the endangered Large-fruited Groundsel (*Senecio macrocarpus*). A neighbouring property held the only known NSW population of this species. This translocation has been a success, with plants surviving with regular watering. Of course, the success can only be truly judged if and when the plants start recruiting. Further planting of groundsel and peppercresses will occur in 2018–19 as part of a Save Our Species translocation program.

Greening Australia conducted the tree plantings at Mcleods Creek Nature Reserve, funded by a grant from the ACT Government, and supported by volunteers from Friends of Grasslands, the local community, K2C and many others.

Several drainage lines within the reserve are actively eroding, resulting in gullies that are several metres deep. Ongoing erosion results from water flow within the soil profile; the exposed sub-soils disperse readily and the resultant slurry is carried rapidly away downstream. Several side-arm gullies are also eroding because of undercutting, caving and slumping. This land degradation and soil loss is reducing the values of the endangered Box–Gum Woodland community. Stabilisation works have commenced on three gullies within the reserve, involving reshaping the gully heads, covering the exposed B horizon with straw, jute netting, thatch and logs, and constructing sediment collection points using straw bales and logs. It is hoped that there will be natural recruitment of native woody vegetation and groundcovers; however, future direct seeding may be required. Over time, the increased transpiration from the vegetation will dry out the profile and oppose tunnel erosion processes.

Notes about the walks by Kat Ng

Rainer led the walks on both days, spending the first half in the woodland, and the second half in the grassland part of the reserve. His comprehensive talk covered a range of topics, including:

- differences between forest, open forest, woodland, and grassland – that these communities form a continuum along a gradient that is defined by the density of tree canopies;
- the importance of mistletoes in the ecosystem – that they occur naturally, are neither good nor bad, and have a nice relationship with Mistletoebirds; mistletoes don't necessarily kill their tree; some trees, like one Yellow Box *Eucalyptus melliodora* along the path, carry more mistletoes than others and that may be to do with relative isolation from other trees;
- the dry look of the grassland was because of recent warm dry weather – in spring we should see plenty of wildflowers; even so, there were a few Hoary Sunray (*Leucochrysum albicans*) in flower, though not looking their best;
- also in the grassland there was lush green grass, despite no rain in weeks; this was the native Kangaroo Grass (*Themeda triandra*), which kangaroos like to eat; Rainer also pointed out half a dozen other native grass species visible there;
- regenerating *Cassinia arcuata* (Sifton Bush), evident in the grassland, is a native species that has become a weed in this part of Mcleods Creek NR since the livestock were taken off. After much deliberation and consultation with experts, the managers have decided to have it removed. (See page 14 for a one such workparty in March.)
- David Taylor spoke about the *Senecio macrocarpus* on his adjacent property – the only naturally occurring population of that species – and continuing community engagement.



Starting off at the gate on the Sunday. Photo: Kat Ng.



Green grass & mistletoe in the grassland area.
Photo: Susannah Power.



The area is very dry-looking near the track. Photo: Kat Ng.

The groups demonstrated considerable interest, with plenty of questions and most people staying for the whole hour-and-a-half of the walks on both days.

There is an overview of the Mcleods Creek Nature Reserve Woodland Restoration Program (for both vegetation and soil erosion) at: https://k2c.org.au/files/7-Power_-_Mcleods_Creek_NR_Woodland_Restoration.pdf



Malleefowl @ Rick Farley Reserve (5-9 April)

Geoff Robertson

Our plan to visit Rick Farley Reserve started some months ago when my close friend Geoffrey Simpson of NSW Office of Environment & Heritage (OEH) talked to me about 'malleefowl learning'. As he explained at the time, current methods of engaging Aboriginal youth in biodiversity were restricted to planting and weeding, but these projects do not teach culture. The malleefowl learning project was conceived with the aim of bringing Aboriginal culture and Traditional land management practices together with biodiversity conservation.

A number of us began this visit by leaving home on 5 April, arriving at the lovely camping ground at Balranald that afternoon. Then on Friday 6 April we travelled to the Lake Mungo Visitors Centre, arriving early in the day. It gave us an opportunity to acquaint or reacquaint ourselves with this amazing landscape of Lake Mungo and its ancient Aboriginal heritage. Unfortunately, when it came time to leave for Rick Farley Reserve, one of our couples had a major car problem and was forced to stay behind, only managing to get back to Canberra almost a week later.

On the Friday evening our convoy of ten adults and five teenagers and children arrived at the campsite at Rick Farley Reserve. There we met Mick Kelly, our host, and many more Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. Apparently whenever an event is organised at the reserve many people take the opportunity to turn up – up to 30 people were present over the weekend.

On the Saturday we drove to a number of sites around the reserve, including several now unused malleefowl mounds in the mallee country, an ancient lake bed, a ridge where we could see the landscape stretch out before us, and a remnant pine woodland. We had a hunt for dragons and skinks. The roads leading to and on the reserve were good, although sometimes steep and sand covered, making a four wheel drive vehicle essential. The vegetation is largely mallee; a big fire several years ago had burnt a wide strip through the reserve.

Malleefowl monitoring is an important activity at the reserve and the behaviour of malleefowl, the monitoring program and steps being taken to reduce predation were explained to us. At the ancient lake bed we visited, evidence of thousands of years of Aboriginal occupation was clear. Along the shores of the lake bed were ancient camping grounds. Mick took us over the large area where our group picked up and handled many types of tools and flakes before returning them to the ground.

We went to an area of native pines which were not regenerating because any young plants were being grazed by rabbits, roos and goats. However, a solution was at hand – Mick had observed that seed dropping into spinifex allowed new trees to get established. He introduced us to his 'PVC method' of planting seed directly into spinifex, and we all had a go.

On the Friday and Saturday evenings, many of us joined in Gecko hunts led by David Hunter of OEH. David also conducted dragon and skink hunts during the day.

The camp at Rick Farley Reserve is extremely well set up and comfortable. There is a large area for putting up a tent or dropping a swag. The kitchen-dining area has the hallmarks of a modern kitchen, with a large undercover stainless steel washing up and food preparation area, combined with an outdoor open wood fireplace for cooking large quantities of food and for boiling water. A shipping container fitted with shelving provides a huge amount of storage and contains chairs, swags, stretchers, cutlery, work equipment, food, etc. Ample water tanks provide water for drinking and, separately, for washing. An outdoor shower is available but was not much used, and a portable toilet comfortably handled those other needs for our group.



Mick Kelly, our host.



Geoff Simpson demonstrates the 'PVC method' of sowing native pine seed into clumps of spinifex grass which protect newly germinating seedlings from grazing by rabbits, roos and goats.

All 4 photos by Geoff Robertson.

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Malleefowl @ Rick Farley Reserve (5-9 April), continued

For me, the highlight of the weekend was the malleefowl learning session on Saturday evening. It began with a group rebuilding the malleefowl sculpture in the sand (*top photo this page*). The sculpture is moulded from raised sand in the traditional design of a mallee fowl. The ridges of the sand were covered in white ochre powder. When darkness fell, about eight fires were lit around the malleefowl sculpture (*lower photo*).

Around the malleefowl sculpture, Mick explained the symbolism and importance of the malleefowl and related it to its place in broader Aboriginal culture, while asking many questions of his audience. Mick explained how the different parts of the malleefowl represent both life journeys and roles in society. His explanation was both insightful and challenging. The young and old were likely deeply impressed with the experience.

The Sunday program initially proposed a cultural burn. However, hot weather and a strong breeze prevented that and so we broke camp early on Sunday and spent most of the day and that night at the Lake Mungo shearers' quarters.

My own observations

My own contact with Aboriginal people has been sporadic yet not infrequent since my mid-twenties. Each contact has been personally very challenging, reminding me of the pain, violence and lack of dignity and respect with which we treat Aboriginal people, yet has given me a sense of hope that Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people together will one day value Country and its capacity for healing, and that Aboriginal land management practices are recognised and practised. What I experienced at Rick Farley Reserve was both familiar and new.

First, Rick Farley Reserve allows people to reconnect to country and reinforces the belief that Indigenous, and non-Indigenous, people belong to Country, their ultimate teacher. Second, the Reserve is bringing people together and breaking down barriers that may have previously divided them. Third, the Reserve may provide the potential for national training programs bringing people from distant areas together. Fourth, the Reserve clearly shows that local Aboriginal communities need to be in charge of land that they control and don't require permission to conduct activities they consider important. As a previous landowner I appreciate this freedom to act without a lot of bureaucratic controls and permissions.

My recommendation is that if you have the opportunity to be part of a Rick Farley Reserve activity, grab it with both hands.



About Rick Farley Reserve and its Traditional managers

Rick Farley Reserve is a 12,500 hectare property which is gazetted as both a reserve and a pastoral lease. It adjoins Mungo National Park as well as the Willandra Lakes World Heritage Area which is recognised for its high cultural and spiritual significance to Aboriginal people. In 2007 the Rick Farley Soil Conservation Reserve Trust was granted a licence under the *Crown Lands Act 1989* to the Mothers Ancestral Guardians Indigenous Corporation (MAGIC) so that the Reserve could be managed in accordance with Aboriginal land management practices and used to conduct cultural activities and teaching programs. The Mothers Guardian group, a not-for-profit association, comprises men and women who manage the land according to traditional Aboriginal practices and philosophies. The group also has been creating opportunities for Aboriginal people to reconnect with their culture, Country and spirituality through continuing Traditional practices. It has carried out cultural burning activities, and cleaned up over 13 km of internal trails. It has conducted several large men's gatherings and held cultural activities such as stone-tool making, wood-working and teaching of cultural protocols while on-Country. It has also held culture camps for young people (Indigenous and non-Indigenous) aged 12 to 14 years, to start the teaching process for the younger generation.

'A celebration of our region's wildlife' – photo exhibition until 15 May!

The exhibition, at **CSIRO Discovery Centre, Clunies Ross St, Acton ACT**, shows 52 winning images from the 2017 Wildeye and 2018 Canberra Nature Map (CNM) photographic competitions. It is open **until 15 May on Mondays – Fridays, 9 am – 4.30 pm.**

A future conservation and recreation reserve in ACT?

Geoff Robertson

One of Canberra's Category 1 grasslands (see 2017 *ACT Native Grassland Conservation Strategy*) is the North Mitchell Grassland (NMG), actually located in the new suburb of Franklin. FOG organised a Clean-Up day there some years ago, and while I drive past it almost daily it has never impressed me – it is largely covered by Phalaris.

Last October, through the Conservation Council, I received an inquiry from Suzanne Orr, a Labor MLA who lives in an apartment overlooking the large grassland and who raised a query about future plans for NMG. I arranged to meet her at the site on 15 November, but before that I did my homework ... and was surprised at what I found. After making my way through almost chest-high hayed-off Phalaris and avoiding large patches of dead blackberry, I came across many nice areas of grassland. Visits since have revealed much more.

NMG has large patches of natural temperate grassland (NTG) dominated by Kangaroo and Tall Spear Grasses and other native grasses such as River Tussock, Weeping Grass and Wheat Grass. Wildflowers, best seen in spring, include Australian Bindweed, Common Everlasting Daisy, Lemon Beauty Heads, Scrambled Eggs, Woodruff and Blue Devil. NMG is home to three threatened species: Ginninderra Peppercress (known at only one other site), Golden Sun Moth and Striped Legless Lizard.

The site also contains a Yellow Box and Red Gum Grassy Woodland (YBRGGW) remnant, as well as a pond and drainage areas. We should also remember that NMG is part of Country which sustained Ngunawal people for tens of thousands of years.

Currently, NMG is highly neighbour unfriendly. Access is very difficult; Phalaris is very off-putting for many reasons; and neighbours may have concerns about fire, allergies and snakes. Suzanne and I discussed an alternative vision – a recreation and grassland reserve. Many examples of these are well established in and around Melbourne and documented in later chapters of *Land of Sweeping Plains*. Andrew Leigh (Federal Member for Fenner) and Suzanne Orr organised a Clean-Up day at NMG on 10 March and FOG and Ginninderra Catchment Group (GCG) were invited to participate – a dream opportunity.

Andrew and Suzanne arranged a letterbox drop and enticed would-be Clean-Up participants with the promise of a barbecue, and Karissa Preuss (of GCG) and I prepared a handout (still available from me) for the day. Many neighbours, Andrew's and Suzanne's supporters, and a contingent of FOG members joined the clean-up, and Philip Selmes attended on behalf of ACT Parks and Conservation Service. After it was done and some excellent sausages had been eaten, an enthusiastic group joined me to look at some of the NTG patches accessible by walking along the mown areas which form the fire abatement zone. Andrew and Suzanne have flagged another possible Clean-Up day in spring.

What next? FOG is keen to have NMG created as a grassland and recreation reserve following the principles outlined in *Land of Sweeping Plains* and will look for opportunities to advance the concept. A number of easy steps towards this goal



Photos: Geoff Robertson, John Wombey and Canberra Nature Map.

are within reach. First, access could be made easier by removing existing barriers and a walk could be designed using numbered star pickets and an on-line brochure. Next, a plan could be commissioned which would show how the site could be landscaped. Finally, the plan could be implemented.

As I mentioned, the site already has many patches of NTG, a remnant YBRGGW, and areas suitable for wetland features. The woodland can be restored by planting suitable understorey. Many degraded areas including within the woodland and elsewhere could be used to provide some recreational assets, such as seating and play areas. In many places, where the Phalaris has been mown, the NTG is springing back, although this is not true throughout NMG. A nicely landscaped open space would provide a good example of how to build successful grassland reserves that become part of (not apart from) the community. Possibly a Friends group could be formed. The reserve could be managed by conservation mowing (using clean mowers) and the occasional cultural burn, and these would also show neighbours how grasslands need to be managed. NMG would also provide opportunities for education, citizen science and research.

References

- ACT Native Grassland Conservation Strategy and Action Plans*. (2017). https://www.environment.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0010/1156951/Grassland-Strategy-Final-WebAccess.pdf
- Land of Sweeping Plains: Managing and restoring the native grasslands of south-eastern Australia*. (2015). Eds N.S.G. Williams, A. Marshall and J.W. Morgan, CSIRO Publishing. (For a summary, see enrit-10.blogspot.com.au.)

Working party reports

Stirling Park, 25 March



Left-right, top down: Jamie Pittock spraying; Adele Jackson reseeding areas where weeds have been removed; and Rob Walls cutting Boxthorn.

Mcleods Creek Nature Reserve, 18 March



A small group (including Kat Ng, 2nd from left, & Margaret Ning, centre) joined NSW NPWS Rangers Susannah Power (2nd from right) & Libby Lindsay (camera) on Sunday 18 March to lop off or pull out hundreds of young Sifton Bush (*Cassinia arcuata*) bushes and seedlings springing up at Mcleods Creek Nature Reserve.

Hall Cemetery autumn work



Photo: John Fitz Gerald

‘Team Blackberry’ at work in March (Lorraine, with loppers, and Ann). Unfortunately their efforts were ‘rewarded’ by several bull-ant bites, painful at the time and worrying for days afterwards. Mother Nature never shies away from putting us in our place?

Around 8 people volunteered for work on FOG’s weed control activities in the woodland at Hall Cemetery, on both 3 March and 14 April. Some targeted spraying was done (thanks Margaret), and most of the contribution was physical by snipping, digging or pulling, with seedheads being bagged and taken off site. For woody weeds, a small patch of blackberry was cut and daubed, and a few dispersed small Briar Roses were uprooted. Most effort went into other weeds, mainly Prickly Lettuce, Nightshade, Plantain, Cleavers and a range of Thistles.

While a growing group of Eastern Grey Kangaroos is keeping many native grasses trimmed, areas of tall Phalaris are still far more common than desirable, and a little slashing has been done. The most prolific native (besides grasses) at present is Fireweed, with 2–3 species recorded. It seems to have thrived since the controlled burn 2 years ago. Next on the list would be two species of *Dianella* and some clumps of Tall Sedge in damper zones.

The woodland shows clear signs of improvement from FOG’s dogged effort over many years – well done team!

John Fitz Gerald



A bunch of FOG and others' dates coming up this year

Paddock trees, Yass Landcare Group, Wednesday 2 May, 7.30–9.30 pm, Yass LLS

Boorowa–Hovell's Creek Landcare Group is establishing paddock trees to provide linkages between areas of remnant vegetation and new revegetation plantings. A talk by **Keith Hyde**, tea and discussion. **At:** LLS Building, top of Mitchell St, Yass (1st right after start of the Yass 50 km zone, i.e. onto Grand Junction Rd, then 1st right into Mitchell Street). **RSVP: by 1 May for catering:** bob.mccoll.bm@gmail.com

Canberra Tree Week symposium, ANBG, Friday 4 May, 12.30–5.30 pm, Theatre

Two sets of four talks either side of tea. Topics include Canberra's Urban Forest; Yarralumla Nursery; National Arboretum; Biochar; Superb Parrots (in tree hollows); etc. Free. Register at <https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/tree-week-symposium-tickets-44425748610/>.

Landcare and friends Celebration Dinner, Saturday 5 May, Royalla Community hall, 6.30 pm.

Upper Murrumbidgee Landcare invites you to our upcoming dinner, with host Rainer Rehwinkel, a selection of short videos of our local landcare groups, and a tasty 3-course meal from Vanilla Catering. BYO drinks. *Info:* Georgeanna, mob: 0429 779928, upper.murrumbidgee@gmail.com. Tickets, \$26.50, via <https://www.facebook.com/events/202067937060315/>

Aboriginal Agriculture Seminar, Wednesday 9 May, 5–7 pm, U. Canberra

Landcare ACT Chair **Peter Bridgewater** & Ngunawal Elder **Wally Bell** facilitate an evening conversation with guest speakers **Bill Gammage** and **Bruce Pascoe** (both eminent writers). It will focus on Aboriginal land management and Traditional agriculture. University of Canberra Theatre (Bldg 1 rm A21) next to Mizzuna Cafe in The Hub. Drinks and nibbles from 4.30 pm. **Book at:** RSVP@molonglocatchment.org.au **by 7 May.**

Burra Erosion Community Conversation, Saturday 12 May, 10 am

Hear about and discuss managing erosion in the Burra region (NSW), with Wayne Cook (soil scientist & hydrogeological landscape mapper), Lori Gould and Ben Hanrahan. Meet at Burra Community Association Hall for the talk and tea; then site visits, followed by time for questions and discussion over a BBQ lunch. Register at www.riversofcarbon.org.au.

Regenerative Agriculture Seminar, Thursday 24 May, 5.30 – 8 pm

Landcare ACT is organising a regional evening seminar with guest speakers **Charlie Massy** (researcher and writer) and **Martin Royds** (regenerative farmer recently featured on ABC 4 Corners). It will focus on integrating more regenerative practices into land management in the ACT. Contact Karissa ph. 02 6278 3309, landcare@ginninderrallandcare.org.au to find out the location.

Dates planned ahead for FOG activities in 2018–2019

18 August, Saturday, 1.30–4.30, Mid-winter talks and tea, Mugga Educational Centre, Symonston.

21 – 24 September, Narrandera. Exploration of grassy landscapes with Rainer Rehwinkel.

14 October, Sunday. Revisit Ballyhooly, SE of Bungendore NSW, when the flowers are out.

9–11 November, Revisit Nerriga NSW, when the flowers are out.

11 November, Sunday 2 pm. Annual wildflower walk at Stirling Park.

17–18 November, Hunt the Monaro Golden Daisy, around the Monaro (various sites).

1–2 December, Badja Swamps Nature Reserve, Big Hole & Marble Arch walk.

January 2019, Visit lower part of Mt Gingera ACT.

February, Visit Charlie Massy's property, 'Severn Park', Bobondara NSW.

March, Visit alpine grasslands beyond Yarrangobilly NSW.

Rural communities making a difference

A forum on how land managers can contribute to limiting climate change and reap the benefits. **Friday 25 May 9 am–4 pm, in Yass Memorial Hall** with **Genevieve Jacobs** (MC), and speakers **Dr Bradley Opdyke**, **Dr Charles Massy**, **Dr Christine Jones** and **Dr Siwan Lovett**. For more information and to book, contact **Linda Cavanagh**, mob. 0459 681018, landcare@boorowa.net

ACT Grassy Woodland forum, Wednesday 27 June evening & Thursday 28 June

Speakers at this forum, at the **Anne Harding Conference Centre, University of Canberra**, will focus on 'What is your vision for grassy woodlands?' on the Wednesday evening. The theme for Thursday is 'Managing grassy woodland in the ACT', and the day comprises short talks & posters on new research, citizen science, and on-ground projects, ending with discussion of the ACT Woodlands Conservation Strategy. To register, go to Eventbrite, <https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/act-woodlands-forum-2018-tickets-44623765885?aff=es2>. Free, but places are limited.

Black Mountain symposium 2018, 24 August 9–4.30; 25 August 9.30–noon.

'The past 50 years informing the next 50'. Early notice. Themed talks at CSIRO Discovery Centre on the Friday (themes: natural environment and cultural environment). Walks in Black Mountain Nature Reserve on the Saturday. Cost: \$55 for the symposium talks, fully catered. Guided walks \$5. To register and for program: www.friendsofblackmountain.org.au/symposium



Contacts for Friends of Grasslands Inc. groups and projects

Website www.fog.org.au

To contact FOG (general & media): info@fog.org.au;
phones 0403 221 117 / 02 6241 4065 (Geoff Robertson)

Membership inquiries & payments: membership@fog.org.au
(application forms are at www.fog.org.au)

To join in FOG activities/events: activities@fog.org.au

To join FOG working bees:

Hall Cemetery woodland, ACT: john.fitzgerald@fog.org.au

Yarramundi Grassland, ACT: jamie.pittock@fog.org.au

Stirling Park woodland, ACT: jamie.pittock@fog.org.au

Old Cooma Common, NSW: margaret.ning@fog.org.au

'Scottsdale' (nr Bredbo), NSW: linda.spinaze@fog.org.au

Health & Safety matters: info@fog.org.au

FOG merchandise info (books, etc.): booksales@fog.org.au
(order forms are at www.fog.org.au)

Applying for FOG small grants: supportedprojects@fog.org.au

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Newsletters & e-bulletins: newsletter@fog.org.au,
or ebulletin@fog.org.au

To contribute on FOG advocacy submissions:
advocacy@fog.org.au

Website matters: webmanager@fog.org.au

FOG's comprehensive website gives: the calendar of FOG happenings; information about grasslands and grassy woodlands; proformas for applications & orders; all advocacy submissions; all past newsletters (except the most recent).

FOG and others' dates late April onwards

28 April	Wetlands field day, Dalgety area, NSW
29 April	Stirling Park woodland workparty, ACT
1 May	'Spot that tree hollow', Campbell Park, ACT
13 May	Geoff Robertson talk on grasses, Golspie NSW
18 May	Grassland management forum, Jerrabomberra NSW
27 May	Stirling Park woodland workparty, ACT
27 May	Yarramundi Grassland workparty, ACT
2 June	Conservation Council dinner (with FOG table)
....	
28 April	Traditional burning workshop, Stirling Park ACT
2 May	Paddock trees talk at Yass, NSW
4 May	Tree week symposium, ANBG ACT
5 May	Upper Murrumbidgee Landcare dinner, Royalla NSW
6 May	Traditional burning workshop, nr Bungendore NSW
9 May	Aboriginal Agriculture seminar
12 May	Burra Erosion Community Conversation, Burra NSW
18 May	Traditional burning workshop, Williamsdale ACT
24 May	Regenerative Agriculture Seminar
25 May	Rural communities vs climate change forum, Yass NSW
2 June	Traditional burning workshop, Billilgingra NSW
27 June	ACT Grassy Woodland forum, U. Canberra, ACT

In this issue (approximate titles)

Important messages from FOG committee, *Geoff Robertson*

FOG-related activities, April & May

– Wetlands and grassland field day

– Tree hollow hunt

– Grassland management/restoration forum

– Workparties in April and May

– FOG table at Conservation Council dinner, 2 June

– Grasses talk at Golspie, near Crookwell

News from FOG committee and otherwise

– Welcome to our new members!

– Membership renewals

– FOG involved in National Trust walk

FOG Advocacy, *Naarilla Hirsch*

Articles

– Ghastly Grasses, *John Fitz Gerald*

– Looking back: Serrated Tussock and Panic, *John Fitz Gerald*

– Common Grass-blue, *Zizina otis*, by *Michael Bedingfield*

– Rod Mason, Traditional fire, *Geoff Robertson, Rainer Rehwinkel*

– Mcleods Creek NR Open Garden, *Rainer Rehwinkel et al.*

– Malleefowl @ Rick Farley Reserve, *Geoff Robertson*

– A future conservation reserve, *Geoff Robertson*

Other stuff: Inquiry; Traditional burning workshops; Wildlife photos; Workparty reports; FOG and other dates coming up.

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