



News of Friends of Grasslands

Supporting native grassy ecosystems

May-June 2010

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Program - take the diary out now

SAT 1 MAY 9am-4pm **FOG-ANU Fenner School working bee at Stirling Ridge.** More on page 2.

SAT 15 MAY 9am-noon **Hall cemetery working bee & 2-4pm Visit to Hall TSR.** More on page 2.

TUES & THURS 18&20 MAY **Translocation of *Lepidium hyssopifolium*** FOG is organising the translocation of this threatened lepidium and needs about ten volunteers on each occasion to do it. More on page 2.

THURS 20 MAY 7.45pm to 10pm **Grassland Forum** organised by FOG et al, This is by invitation only. More on page 2.

TUES 25 MAY 3 to 5.15pm **FOG workshop on developing offset policy.** More on page 2.

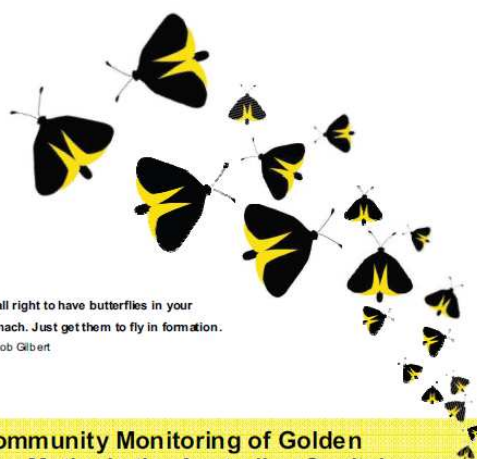
TUES 29 JUNE 5.30 to 7pm **FOG newsletter despatch** More on page 2.

SUN 27 JUNE 9am-4pm **FOG-ANU Fenner School working bee at Stirling Ridge.** More on page 2.

FOG et al's Golden Sun Moth report is now on our website/publications. Check it out. Story page 3.



Hoary sunray above and Australian anchor plant below - see *Wort attacked* on page 5.



It's all right to have butterflies in your stomach. Just get them to fly in formation.
Dr. Rob Gilbert

Community Monitoring of Golden Sun Moths in the Australian Capital Territory Region, 2008-2009

Funded by the Threatened Species Network, a community-based program of the Australian Government and WWF-Australia

Anett Richter
Will Osborne
Geoff Robertson
Sarah Hnatuk

Canberra, November 2009



Upcoming FOG Events

Please register for FOG activities with the **FOG contact person** who can assist with directions and possibly car pooling. By registering, you assist FOG to organise any catering and to provide you with other information you may need.

FOG-Fenner working bee Sat 1 May & Sun 27 June, 9.30am to 4pm

The FOG-Fenner Group is organising its second and third working bees for 2010 at Stirling Ridge, a spectacular woodland site which is home to the endangered button wrinklewort. The main problems here are woody weeds (blackberry, Cootamundra wattle and exotic trees) and blue periwinkle, St John's wort and Chilean needle grass.

FOG-Fenner School Group aims to involve ANU students and other volunteers at this and another important ACT grassy ecosystem site, Yarramundi Reach. Both sites are managed by the National Capital Authority (NCA) which welcomes FOG's involvement, and is sponsoring equipment and lunches. NCA has employed a well known grassland ecologist to prepare management plans to facilitate the restoration of these sites and is organising larger tasks, not suitable for volunteers, to be undertaken.

Jamie, FOG's energetic coordinator, needs volunteers to lead weeding teams, set up monitoring points, run the registration or barbecue, or just assist in any weeding tasks. Working bees provide a great opportunity to learn about these sites and to improve skills and to enjoy good company and food.

Volunteers, please bring old, long sleeved clothing, a water bottle and sun protection. Barbecue lunch provided. Enquiries and registration: Jamie Pittock (jamie.pittock@fog.org.au or 0407 265 131).

Grassland Forum Thurs 20 May 7.45pm to 10pm

FOG is one of four sponsors of the Grassland Forum which aims to bring together grassland managers and stakeholders to discuss the managing and monitoring of the ACT's grasslands. The forum was one of the important recommendations in the *Grassland Report* submitted by the Commissioner of Sustainability and Environment in November 2009.

FOG will be putting forward a number of recommendations, which are being formulated by the FOG Advocacy Group, to the forum.

The forum is by invitation only and only a limited number of places are available to FOG members. If you want to join in the Forum, please contact Geoff Robertson (geoff.robertson@fog.org.au, 02 6241 4065).

Hall Cemetery working bee & visit to Hall TSR. Sat 15 May 9am-noon (working bee) & 2-4pm (TSR visit)

While we planned our second 2010 working bee for spring, the Hall Cemetery group decided to have the second working bee in May. We shall be removing regenerating eucalypts, which are threatening orchids in the grassland areas, and woody weeds (cutting and daubing) in the woodland paddocks. Please bring gloves and tools. Morning tea will be provided. The cemetery is on Wallaroo Road about 200m from the Barton Highway.

Following sightings of brown tree creepers at the nearby Hall Traveling Stock Reserve, we thought we would also visit that in the afternoon. There is a lot more to see there. We will likely have lunch at Hall.

You are welcome to join us for the morning or afternoon. Enquiries: Andy Russell (6251 8949 or andy.russell@fog.org.au).

Threatened species translocation Tues 18 & Thurs 20 May

FOG is assisting Rainer Rehwinkel to translocate *Lepidium hyssopifolium* on these two dates and needs about ten volunteers on each day to assist. Volunteers will meet at Rainer's at 23 McCusker Drive Bungendore at 9am both days, and from there travel to the necessary sites. If you can assist, please contact Rainer (rainer.rehwinkel@environment.nsw.gov.au) and he will give you more details and tell you what you need to bring.

FOG workshop **Developing offset policy** Tues 25 May 3-5.15pm

The advocacy group with the help of the Conservation Council is developing its policy on offsets, i.e., how can developers make up for the destruction of biodiversity. Venue: Conservation Council, 3 Childers St, Civic. Enquiries: Naarilla Hirsch (6288 2413 or naarilla.hirsch@fog.org.au).

FOG newsletter despatch Tuesday 22 June 5.30-7pm

It would greatly assist if members regularly or occasionally help in despatching the newsletter. If you can assist, we will compile a list of volunteers and email a reminder as despatch dates come up. Venue: Conservation Council, 3 Childers St, Civic. Enquiries: Margaret Ning (6241 4065 or margaret.ning@fog.org.au).

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News Roundup

Liberating button wrinklewort

Jamie Pittock

SAT 27 MARCH On a wonderful sunny day, twelve FOG-Fenner volunteers worked to clear weeds from Stirling Park grassy woodlands in Yarralumla. Recent rains had resulted in extensive wildflowers, particularly button wrinklewort, which has extensive populations at the site. A young blue tongue lizard reinforced the habitat value of this woodland. While making plant identification easier, unfortunately the rain had also favoured African lovegrass, *paspalum* and an invasive pea.

An extensive and diverse range of tasks was completed. African lovegrass seed heads were bagged, and along with serrated tussock, infestations were then sprayed. The desert ash tree thought to be the source of infestations in the Park was eliminated. Two large broom infestations were treated (one requiring further work). Vast numbers of Cootamundra wattle, coto-neaster, briar, *pyracantha*, *cyprus* and blackberry were eliminated.

A key area that divides the two main areas of habitat - "the Gap" - was found to contain populations of button wrinklewort. These plants and regenerating woodland eucalypts were staked to prevent their loss to mowing. Having found a most pleasant, shady base in the Gap, we plan to meet there again on 1 May to complete the restoration of a key area of button wrinklewort habitat and take out the last of the broom. So join us!

Lunchbreak at Stirling Park

Thanks go to Andrew Zelnik's for this photo of some volunteers lunching at Stirling Park. From right, John looking on, Jamie assisting a first year Canberra Uni landscape architect student, Barbara and Geoff in deep conversation about String Theory, as are Andy and Linda, and Margaret and Sarah.



GSM report on FOG website

The report on FOG's golden sun moth (GSM) project is now on FOG's website. Starting in October 2008, members of the Institute for Applied Ecology at the University of Canberra and FOG successfully ran a pilot program to monitor the endangered GSM in natural temperate and exotic grasslands in the ACT region (including nearby sites in NSW). You may read about the aims and findings of the highly successful pilot study in this highly informative report. FOG wishes to thank the many volunteers who took part in this project, and will be reporting on further plans for GSM monitoring and recovery work.

FOG AGM *Grasscover*

13 MARCH The change of venue from earlier years did not change the participation and enthusiasm at the FOG AGM - though the Conservation Council Room was a little tightly packed. Champagne and nibbles, organised by Isobel Crawford, commenced at 5.30pm and the meeting at 6pm. Geoff Robertson spoke to his president report, published in the last newsletter. There was a lively and fruitful debate about FOG's on ground work and how to

publicise the strategies and techniques which form its foundation. Geoff mentioned that the proceedings of the on-ground workshop in January will be published by FOG later this year. There was also some discussion of the FOG accounts, an explanation of which appears later in the newsletter.

Thanks to receiving nominations in advance of the meeting, the election of offices was an efficient affair. There were a few changes, Sarah Sharp became one of FOG's two vice Presidents and Naarilla Hirsch joined the committee. She will be a useful addition as she is heading up FOG's advocacy work. Bernadette O'Leary stepped down after a number of years of enthusiasm, drive and leadership. Details on the new committee are recorded on the back page. The group then adjourned for a delightful meal at Shalimar's.

Correction

In the article by Anne I'ons (page 4, previous issue) it was stated that the Australian anchor plant was found on Mount Taylor. This was a misunderstanding by me and in fact, Anne was referring to the car park at Brandy Flat, south of Tharwa. The anchor plant was found there. – *Editor*.

Wort attacked

Jim Williamson

13 and 14 JAN Margaret Ning and I attacked St John's wort at the Old Cooma Common Grassland Reserve with a vengeance known only to serious weedophiles. Despite some significant setbacks (like pump breakdowns, dead batteries and leaving quad bike keys at Nimmy), we managed to spray around 800 litres of herbicide onto wort infested areas.

This effort is one of the most intense attacks on St John's wort on the reserve in recent years. The last four years has seen regular working bees where spraying of wort has been undertaken, but this year is a major effort which should see a significant decrease in the population of plants in the reserve. However continued spraying will be required in the future to further reduce numbers of this noxious weed.

This weed in particular threatens the existing population of a number of native plants, including the Monaro golden daisy (*Rutidosia leirolepis*), hoary sunray (*Leucochrysum albicans* var. *tricolor*) and Australian anchor plant (*Discaria pubescens*) which grow on the reserve.

Without regular spraying and other weed control measures, the existence of these threatened species would almost certainly be in jeopardy on the reserve.

Hall Cemetery

Grasscover

10 APRIL While only five people made it to the Hall Cemetery working bee, a lot was accomplished, continuing the attack on woody and herbaceous weeds. Andy and John tried their skills with injecting some of the large woody weeds, while Janet got on with cutting and daubing mainly regenerating hawthorn and Margaret, with her wheelie pack of Roundup, hit any unwanted plant. The group decided to undertake

another working bee on 15 May, see cover page, and page 2 for details. They propose to have lunch in Hall and then visit the nearby Hall TSR.

Bush Management Team

Naarlilla Hirsch

The concept of a bush management team in FOG's submission to the Commissioner for Sustainability and Environment (CSE) in February draws upon a separate submission to the CSE's Investigation into Canberra Nature Park, the Molonglo River Corridor and Googong foreshores by four individuals, including FOG members Isobel Crawford, Adam Muyt and Geoff Robertson.

The submission proposed a fundamental shift in the management of the nature park system of Canberra towards the principles and practices of integrated 'bushland management', together with suitable resourcing (both physical and financial).

The submission advocated that the ACT undertake a study of bushland management principles, practices, scope, costings and sources of funding in south-east Australia, with particular reference to regional cities of comparable size and values, and also investigate recurrent funding options for bushland management programs in Canberra. This may lead to the development of a team with a high level of skills in ecological restoration and management, who would work with existing government managers and staff, non-government and community groups, to train and undertake work in sites across jurisdictions.

Such a bushland management program would sit within the broader TAMS model and operate as an equivalent unit to the general parks and gardens management team, ranger service or arboriculture unit.

The full submission is available on the FOG web site, attached to FOG's submission to the CSE.

Workshop on TSR management

The Australian Network for Plant Conservation has informed FOG that it has been successful in receiving the grant from the NSW Trust for running workshops on Travelling Stock Reserve (TSR) management/use. It has thanked FOG for its support as FOG helped with the application and supported it. FOG will assist with developing the course.

Birdwatch 2

Grasscover

Greening Australia Canberra Region BirdWatch 2 survey covered almost one hundred sites some eight years after the first BirdWatch 1 surveys. GA has released a brochure containing percentage changes over time of bird species, using remnant and re-vegetation patches. It is becoming increasingly evident that some declining woodland bird species seem to prefer re-vegetated areas over remnant areas. I suspect that this is due to the youth, vigour, and quicker growth of re-vegetated areas compared to the senescent nature of many of our remnants – an interesting challenge for vegetation management. Copies of the brochure are available from Sue Streatfield, phone 6253 3035 or www.greeningaustralia.org.au.

FOG minute taker

FOG would like a volunteer or volunteers to take minutes at committee meetings and AGM when our secretary is unavailable. There are a maximum of seven meetings a year. Enquiries: Al Gabb on 0433 357 654 or al.gabb@fog.org.au.

Do you want to advertise an event, job, etc. through FOG?

The FOG Newsletter only advertises FOG activities. However, non-FOG activities, of interest to FOG members, are included in the FOG e-Bulletin, which appears frequently (usually before a major FOG activity). To publicise an activity, etc., please provide a short description to the FOG e-Bulletin editor (contact details back page).

FOG at Festival of the Forests

Geoff Robertson

14 MARCH While FOG had planned to have a separate stall at the Festival of the Forests, over-commitment on many fronts resulted in FOG throwing its hat in with STEP (the Southern Tablelands Ecosystems Park). That make life somewhat easier as there is a high overlap of FOG and STEP activists. Another advantage was that I was allowed to turn up late, even though I was bringing along most of the FOG distributional material.

The Festival was well organised and it was a coup to have *Australia All Over's* Makka broadcasting his show there from 5.30pm. Many curious Canberrans, often new settlers, turned out to find out what the arboretum was all about. So there were many fresh faces interested in our stall attracted by the showy STEP and FOG posters. For those who were interested in what the arboretum was all about we told the STEP story within the arboretum. For those interested in biodiversity conservation in the region or on their rural property, we talked about FOG. Many landowners of smaller rural blocks were eager to learn how to discover what flora and fauna they might have, and how to encourage its presence and conserve it.

Cathy Robertson, STEP's president, apart from talking to all sorts of people in her spirited and energetic style, had many things on the STEP agenda. These included the STEP raffle with wonderful ground-storey plants donated by



Warren Saunders; David Shorthouse's and Cathy's talks in the Speakers Tent at various periods throughout the day; and the planting of over sixty trees - the last of the plantings on the STEP site.

I found myself, as did others, bailing up numerous people and asking them if they wanted to plant a tree in the STEP site. I thought many would balk, especially when I told them they had to walk some distance and do a little work, but they didn't. Then I observed an amazing sight as David Shorthouse talked to seventy people organising them into five groups and explaining how each group was to plant a particular tree species. Many people looked bewildered, but with enthusiasm got on with the job at hand, led by the team leaders David had selected. Many looked around to see what else needed to be done and volunteered for additional tasks. For my part, I came into this exercise only at the last minute and felt a little unsure

about how to do my part – thankfully, Tom Baker was just there, and made an excellent 2IC.

It was a great day. My visit to the many other interesting and enlightening stalls revealed that many groups are becoming part of the arboretum. While initially lacking interest in local biodiversity, the arboretum and new allies are becoming enthusiasts and advocates for local biodiversity, a great outcome for STEP and its parent FOG. I also met many friends, out on a stroll, and talked grassy ecosystem conservation issues with many new people. Another highlight was selling a raffle ticket to my stepson who took out second prize in the STEP raffle.

Photos: Above - the FOG-STEP display with Cathy and proud grandparents, Linda and Roger, and, below, David Shorthouse explaining what STEP is about, to the about-to-be tree planters.



NCA releases Lawson plan

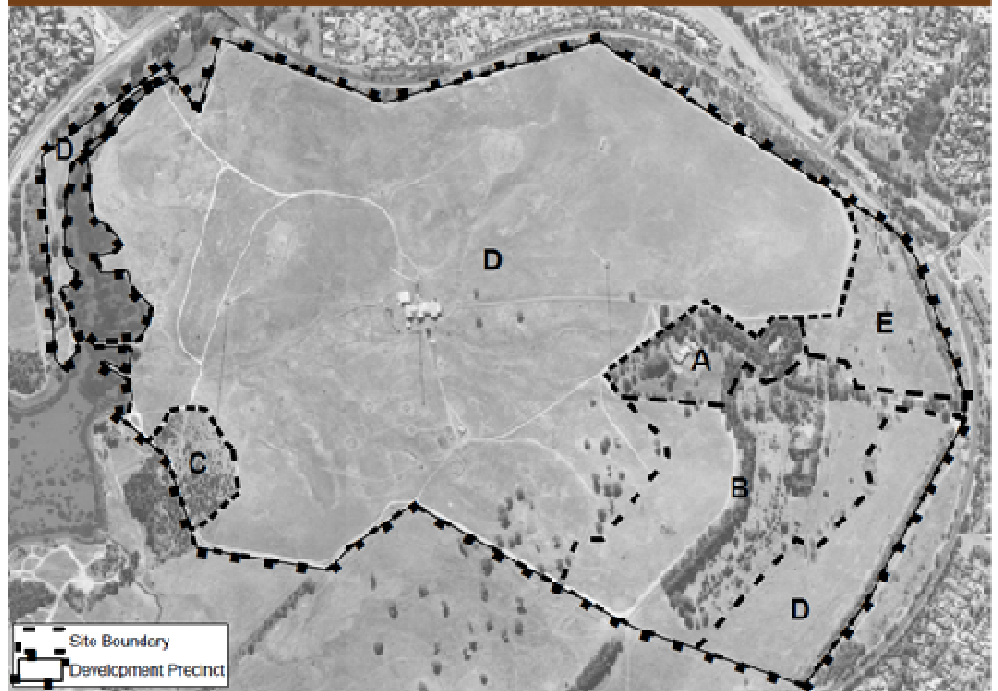
22 MARCH The National Capital Authority released its draft development control plan for north Lawson and it is pleasing that NCA is recognising the conservation values that need to be protected. Briefly, the map marks various precincts and the draft control plan indicates their proposed uses: A and B will be primarily for residential use, C may be residential development, D will be used for nature conservancy and E primarily nature conservancy. FOG's response is on our website and will be reported upon in the next newsletter.

Concerns over Lawson

FOG received some excited emails raising concerns over the Lawson grasslands. According to FOG Vice President and Limestone Plains Coordinator, Isobel Crawford, the concern arose because Naomi Henry, in a letter to the Canberra Times (26 February), directed readers to the Sinclair Knight Merz (SKM) *Site Audit of the Belconnen Naval Transmitting Station, an engineering assessment* prepared for the ACT Environment Protection Agency. Isobel pointed out that the report certifies what uses each part of the site would be suitable for, from an engineering point of view, and was motivated by concerns about limitations which might be imposed by soil contamination.

The report divided the site into: i) former village and landfill areas; ii) main transmitter building area; and iii) the open space/parkland of the rest of the site (excluding the western end). The latter contains the natural temperate grassland. The SKM report certified that this area 'is suitable for ... : residential with minimal opportunity for soil access, including units; secondary school; park, recreational open space, playing field; or commercial industrial'. However, it also noted that it 'includes heritage and ecol-

FIGURE 2: INDICATIVE DEVELOPMENT PRECINCTS



ogically constrained areas where the most sensitive land use would be open space/parkland', and that it is zoned RZ1.

FOG has been paying close attention to the Lawson site for many years, and the ACT government has reiterated many times, that the ACT Government intends to protect the grasslands 'in perpetuity as a grassland reserve'. As Isobel points out, 'Just because an engineering assessment has certified that this area 'is suitable for' certain uses, does not mean that any of them will happen'.

Parlour Grassland

FOG congratulates the Canberra Airport which has purchased the 48.5ha Parlour Grassland property from the Nature Conservation Trust of NSW. The property contains natural temperate grassland of the Southern Tablelands, and patches of snow gum woodland.

FOG was informed that Airport staff had a site visit on 18 March to meet the neighbours, active FOG members Linda and Roger and owners of Bunhybee, and to familiarise themselves with the site. Their first task will be to develop a weed management plan to control noxious weeds remaining on the site and a grazing

strategy to manage biomass.

Like the adjoining Bunhybee property, the Parlour Grassland has a high diversity of plants with 161 native plants recorded in initial surveys. The Airport is undertaking further investigation and mapping of the site, and will continue to build upon the impressive species list.

Travelling stock routes

Warren Hudson, Canberra

Dear FOG, I am a landscape artist and I travel widely in south-eastern Australia but never far from home. I like to experience landscapes and also to envisage how they may have been. I am particularly interested in rediscovering old travelling stock routes and reserves and I found that FOG's website and discussion with your information officer, Geoff Robertson, very helpful in pointing me in some useful directions to discover more about the routes and reserves. For those who may be interested, my website is <http://wildwassa.deviantart-t.com>. It contains many of my photographs of SE Australia - all but a few are SE Australian landscapes. I hope that you find it interesting. *Editor: these are some of the most amazing images - The National Art Gallery collects Warren's work.*

FOG advocacy

Naarilla Hirsch

February 2010

FOG made a submission to the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment's (CSE's) Investigation into Canberra Nature Park, the Molonglo River Corridor and Googong foreshores. The overall view expressed was that our natural ecosystems are under threat and that sustainable activity must be based on suitable regional catchment management, water and salinity policies which in turn require naturally functioning ecosystems. Efforts to manage the Canberra landscapes have not been totally successful, and strategic planning and management is needed for new areas set aside for conservation, as well as existing areas of Canberra Nature Park (CNP) and Open Spaces, based on a long-term vision to enhance CNP and Open Spaces as a mosaic of naturally functioning grasslands, woodlands and open forests.

Many of the issues identified in the CSE's Native Grassland Investigation also apply to the high conservation lowland woodland areas of CNP and the Molonglo River corridor. Particular examples are those recommendations concerning the threats posed by overgrazing by kangaroos (as well as rabbits and stock), and the need for increased community awareness of the importance of native grassland.

The submission covered a range of

different issues, the first being the terms of reference of the review. In particular, FOG is concerned that the exclusion of lowland natural temperate grassland reserves (addressed in a previous investigation) may lead to grassy woodlands within these grassland reserves being overlooked, together with native pastures in the remainder of the review areas.

A major issue raised is the lack of adequate resourcing of TAMS to manage these areas adequately, particularly the high conservation value components. FOG suggested that an ongoing bushland management team (BMT) with specific expertise in bushland management principles and practice could be set up. Such a team should be a professional team with a high level of skills in restoration and management that would work with government, non-government and community groups to help train and undertake work on sites across jurisdictions. (Also see article, page 4.)

FOG also raised connectivity issues, in particular with areas outside CNP but adjoining it that have obvious biodiversity, connectivity and ecosystem services functions.

With development commencing in the Molonglo Valley, fragmentation is of particular concern. Another and a continuing problem is the placement and maintenance of service roads and urban infrastructure throughout CNP and other reserve areas. Restoration attempts following damage to sites (such as those in Conder) are not always well done, with TAMS staff lacking the re-

sources and, at times, the specific expertise needed to completely restore such areas to a reasonable condition.

March 2010

FOG has written to the National Capital Authority (NCA) concerning the management of trees on national lands and offering to work with the NCA to help identify opportunities to strategically remove additional trees to enhance the natural heritage values of National Lands. A number of existing trees in Stirling Park and Yarramundi Reach are inappropriately located and impacting on the natural heritage values of the areas. A large firethorn hedge, desert ash and Chinese pistachio trees are key sources of weed invasion, and impacting on a population of endangered button wrinkle wort and on the endangered wet poa grassland community. The letter also suggests mitigation measures such as re-establishment of locally indigenous woodland trees.

Under the EPBC Act ACTPLA has submitted a change to the urban development plan in parts of the suburb of Coombs (Molonglo Valley). FOG again commented on this proposal, in particular in relation to the conservation of pink tail worm-lizard (*Aprasia parapulchella*). While FOG noted that a management strategy is emerging, we remain concerned that, until the final documents and agreements are in place, opportunities may be missed to protect the grasslands important for the conservation of the pink tail worm-lizard.

A particular concern is the impingement of the sewer realignment for the development on medium quality worm lizard habitat, considering that the habitat zone itself is not especially wide and it sits on steeper slopes that run down to the Molonglo. In general FOG proposes that the principle of minimum impact from construction be overriding, since this should reduce both costs of and need for rehabilitation.

FOG Membership To join or renew

FOG membership entitles you to receive our newsletter and e-Bulletin, to attend FOG's many and diverse activities, and much more.

The cost is small: \$20 for individuals and families, \$5 for students/concessions and \$50 for organisations. Membership is due on 1 January each year.

Membership forms are available on our website: www.fog.org.au and you may pay by cheque or electronically.

While donations are not tax deductible, they are always very welcome.

For inquiries contact Margaret Ning on 02 6241 4065 or membership@fog.org.au

Cultivation Corner:

Goodenias and the importance of good form - Janet Russell

I have mentioned lanky goodenia (*Goodenia elongata*) in passing before. We have had a pot of them which has been an absolute delight. If Wordsworth had seen them *fluttering and dancing in the breeze* he might never have got round to writing about daffodils. The plant increased very quickly in the pot to such an extent that it took over all the space available. The flowers are showy (to 2.5 cm across) and solitary on slender auxiliary stalks. In NSW, they can be found in sclerophyll forests south of Holbrook usually in more moist spots. Finding a damp spot is a bit of a challenge for Canberra gardeners.

I have not tried to grow *Goodenia elongata* plants from seed yet. I did go out to inspect the plants for seed for the purpose of this article but I was clearly too late. The lanky goodenia has ovoid fruit, 8–9 mm long. The seeds are elliptic, 3.5 mm long, brown with a brownish wing. They can grow in shady or exposed sites and can tolerate fertile, poor, poorly drained or well-drained soils. They are phosphorous intolerant. Seed collection times are November and January and sowing months are February and March. However, they are difficult to grow from seed which is disappointing. This is the case with many of our natives. My information, as is often the case, is courtesy of *Flora of NSW* and *Understorey Tasmania* web sites.

The goodenia that people may be more familiar with is the ivy-leaf goodenia (*Goodenia hederacea*). I bought an attractive named form called Sunshine with dark shiny green leaves. It has flowered for four months continuously and it looks as though it is here to stay. I have not had much success before with growing goodenias. The exception has been *Goodenia ovata*



Goodenia elongata above and *G. hederacea* below.



which is a wet sclerophyll forest species but unfortunately after a few years, it succumbed to scale.

Horticultural practices of propagating plants by splitting, taking cuttings or any other vegetative process is producing more plants with less genetic diversity. Ensuring plant genetic diversity is a high priority when carrying out revegetation projects but this does not apply necessarily to horticultural or individual gardener's projects. Gardeners want good forms of the plants in their garden and horticulturalists want to sell them, and popular forms of some species are sold in huge numbers. Genetic material is being distributed all over the country – a form of a plant which arose in Victoria can

find its way into any number of gardens including Canberra.

Local commercial nurseries are selling more grassland species such as convolvulus, goodenia and brachyscome but they are obviously not the random selection that one gets from growing seed. The local plants in revegetation projects cannot be protected from very mobile pollinators which flit around the countryside landing indiscriminately on cultivars, selected forms of plants and local plants alike. I like the diversity that seed brings, but as a gardener, I understand the importance of the good form. If I have any success with growing goodenias from seed, I will let you know.

On-ground workshop

Naarilla Hirsch

FOG's on-ground workshop was held at the lovely property Garuwanga near Nimmitabel on 9 January 2010. The first aim of the workshop was to showcase several of FOG's projects to inform everyone on the nature of each project, to share experiences, and to build a more solid framework/methodology for our endeavours. Then we looked at how advocacy, Bush Regenerations principles, and state-of-the-art practice might better inform and direct what FOG does. Finally we considered the lessons learnt, the on-going challenges and future plans.

The first of the six projects showcased was the work with the National Capital Authority (NCA) at Yarramundi Reach and Stirling Ridge. Jamie Pittock talked about both the work that has been undertaken at these sites in recent working bees, and the advocacy issues at these sites. One is designation of the grasslands for conservation to eliminate threats such as road easements, a new Lodge for the Prime Minister and a Museum storage building. Another is coordination between the NCA and the ACT government for management of adjacent lands, since the current agreement appears ineffective. Finally, there needs to be promotion of adequate management, such as weed control, burning and/or mowing, conservation of threatened species and control of access to the sites.

Margaret Ning commenced her presentation of FOG's work on the Old Cooma Common Grassland Reserve with an interesting overview of the history of the site and FOG's original involvement with it. Grants for this project have led to removal of internal fences and creation of an external fence, weed removal, and funding Andrew Young's (CSIRO) genetic work on the Monaro golden daisy. Working bees are now half yearly, and about forty FOG members have attended working bees over the ten years of the project. After reflecting that the project has helped grassland conservation to become part of the Monaro culture, Margaret discussed on-going issues such as loss of earlier partners, the effort needed to recruit volunteers and supervisors, press coverage and the informal nature of assessment, planning, budgeting and monitoring for the project.

The Hall Cemetery project is a partnership between FOG, Canberra Cemeteries (TAMS) and Environment ACT, with some involvement from the Hall community. As Andy Russell outlined, FOG's involvement has been to manage a weed reduction program at the cemetery to conserve the population of the endangered Tarengo leek orchid (*Prasophyllum petilum*) and numerous other grassy woodland species that occur here. TAMS, through Canberra Cemeteries, supply the herbicide and heavier duty hand tools needed, with FOG's input mostly being labour. FOG has requested that

Canberra Cemeteries deal with some of the hawthorn that are too large to be cut with hand tools. One aspect of the working bees is the provision (by FOG) of morning tea for all attendees, so that the working bees are pleasant social occasions that will encourage our volunteers to return on other occasions. Andy also discussed risk management, and the skills and training needed to do the work.

Cathy Robertson talked about the beginnings of the Southern Tablelands Ecosystem Park (STEP) and establishing Block 100 within the National Arboretum, covering STEP's objectives and its involvement with both revegetation and providing management advice for various blocks within the Arboretum. STEP is also seeking to fence and revegetate a high quality yellow box woodland area adjoining the Arboretum. Cathy outlined STEP's plans for 2010, a busy agenda that included working bees



On-ground monitoring by FOG in March 2009

and planting events, the Festival of the Forests, applications for various grants, STEP open days and Floriade. Future costs include potting and planting of 6,000 trees, grasses and forbs, provision by the Arboretum of mechanical equipment, fencing and other materials, and non potable water for planting and establishment, and space for interpretation and events. On the other hand, STEP's contribution to the Arboretum includes voluntary work on garden beds and weeding, in kind donations and services from agencies such as Greening Australia, and co-operation with the Friends of the Arboretum on site management and resource sharing.

Sarah Hnatiuk talked about the project to monitor the golden sun moth (GSM), undertaken in spring 2008. The aims of this project included increasing knowledge about the GSM, developing survey methods for community volunteers, surveying grasslands and identifying threats there, and fostering awareness of the GSM. Individuals from government, universities and elsewhere were involved as well as FOG members. The lessons learnt from the project included the workloads involved in such a task and the need for good communication with volunteers, simpler survey methods, greater joint involvement in planning, clarification of the different partners' roles,

and experts to undertake the vegetation surveys. Most volunteers indicated that they would like to be involved with the GSM project in the future.

As Peter Saunders was unable to attend, Geoff Robertson presented information on the African love grass (ALG) monitoring project at the Bush Heritage property of Scottsdale. The aim of this project is to correlate the effects of the present management practices with changing grassland composition with regard to ALG. The monitoring is undertaken in spring and autumn, initially at five sites over varying grazing regimes, but has been extended to include ten non cattle grazing areas. There are a number of interesting observations to date, including that ALG appears not to spread into 'healthy' native grasslands experiencing low total grazing pressure, it does not grow beneath yellow box and silver wattle nor on old sheep camps, and that dense undisturbed ALG thatch enters a period of senescence with minimal new growth which allows germination of other plants such as snow gum, calitrus pines and austrostipa grasses. While the project has relatively low associated risk and cost, the future of the expanded program is a potential issue. The project has potential to engage and train more FOG members, and will significantly add to the successful management of ALG at Scottsdale and in the region

In my presentation, I considered how FOG's on-ground work creates opportunities and better informs FOG's advocacy and education work. Advocacy work tends to take a general overview, whereas on-ground work is site-specific. However, on-ground work at a particular site may identify tasks that others might do to rehabilitate the site or mitigate threats, and identify issues that apply to several sites and are best dealt with together. There are also issues that affect on-ground work, such as better protection and management of the site by the land manager, that might be better addressed by advocacy. In its submissions, the advocacy group needs to comment on a range of issues such as mitigation of the negative impact of construction activities and rehabilitation of impacted areas. FOG's on-ground work can inform the advocacy group about these, with information such as what problems occur in sites due to nearby disturbance, what characterises a site that can be rehabilitated and ones that can't, what can be done by the community and what needs input from grassland/bush regeneration experts or government, how long does it take and what factors interfere with the rehabilitation process. There are challenges in connecting the two activities, in particular communication, lack of resources and time, and the shortness of some submission timeframes.

In discussing bush regeneration, Adam Muyt started with an historical overview, tracing its development from the Bradley sisters in Sydney in the 1960-70s to the current widespread practice involving both professional and community practitioners. Joan Bradley de-

scribed the aim of bush regeneration as "We are concentrating, not on eradicating weeds, but on enabling native plants to grow, unhampered, in the environment that suits them best". The broad principles of bush regeneration are to start with a site inventory and operational plan, then to identify the flora and select the right method or 'tool' for the job. Weed controls need to be timed properly, taking into consideration the easiest method and best herbicide to use, the best time to target a particular weed, its lifecycle and how it spreads, how to minimise disturbance and responses to changed conditions or circumstances. Records should be kept of all work, and the effectiveness of different treatments monitored. It is important to be realistic, working within resources from the good areas to bad areas, and recognise that site conditions may be so altered that it's not possible to remove every weed or restore the original vegetation completely. Always minimise disturbance and follow-up, remembering that site conditions, resources and capacity to follow-up will determine the rate of weed removals.

At the end of the morning, Sarah Sharp drew together the different threads of the workshop and summarised them. On-ground works should be based on a management or annual operational plan; and those involved should be familiar and comply with this plan, and discuss it with the owner(s) of the land to see if there are any conflicting aims. It should be backed up by research and monitoring, e.g. are there any changes in richness and frequency of native and/or introduced plants, are plants on my site regenerating, is my revegetation program successful? However, such monitoring does not need to be difficult or above the skill level of volunteers. The advocacy role should include enthusing and pushing land owners to be active in managing and restoring the land, and passing on responsibility to neighbours and interested locals where possible. Sarah reminded the workshop that volunteers have different skills to contribute, and should not be taken for granted. They have limited financial resources to put into the project, are subject to burn-out, and need to get something personal out of the work. She proposed a model that initially includes the land owner, FOG advocacy, management plans and on-ground works by FOG. This could be followed by passing on training, education, interest and responsibility to owners and other local people with continuing involvement by FOG. The role of advocacy then is to push for alternative approaches such as a bush regeneration team.

Other suggestions made in the final discussion were that there is a need to get young people and the education sector interested in the environment, FOG's advocacy should have a policy of "core areas shouldn't be destroyed" rather than a negative response in each submission on specific sites, and that perhaps FOG could share information internally via an "Intranet". Both FOG's on-ground work and its advocacy work are to some extent reactive, and that perhaps FOG should come up with 3, 5 and 10 year visions for its advocacy, on-ground and education work.

FOG 2009 Accounts

Geoff Robertson

When we looked at FOG's accounts for 2009, which have essentially been on a cash basis, we had income of \$14,837 and expenditure of \$18,915, giving a loss of \$4,077. This gives a misleading picture of our overall financial situation. Our key sources of income, membership fees and donations, were dwarfed by grants and book sales, now that FOG has become the distributor of *Grassland Flora*. On the expenditure side the payment we made under the GSM grant, which had been received in the previous year, gave a false impression of expenditure.

To provide a more true picture, I converted the accounts to an accrual basis and adopted other well recognised account procedures. In 2008, our accounts had some accrual adjustments made to them, but more substantial changes were in order. In Table 1 (FOG profit and loss account), we can see that income for 2009 is \$6,981, expenditure is \$5,934, giving an overall surplus of \$1,046, certainly a different and more true picture.

To achieve this, two key changes were made. First, instead of showing receipts from book sales and payments for book purchases, we show the net income from book sales. This is much smaller than the gross numbers, and requires adjusting for the change in stock of books and other accounting changes. Second, all grants received, and expenditure from those grants, are excluded from the profit and loss account and included in a supplementary profit and loss account. The grants we receive are for committed expenditure and the only income that FOG may derive from them is any fee that it may charge to administer them. We have not done this so far. In so far as grants are not fully spent in the accounting year the balance is rolled over and becomes a liability in the balance sheet.

This accounting treatment also enables us to show grants-in-kind. The handover of *Grassland Flora* from the ACT Government has been valued at \$10,349, which is the actual cost of purchase of the books. On a strictly cash basis this grant would not be shown.

Table 1: FOG Profit and Loss Statement for Year Ended 31 December 2009

	2009		2008	
Income				
Net income from sales				
Publication Fund	592.18		0.00	
Other	66.50	658.68	84.95	84.95
Net earnings from grants		0.00		0.00
Membership		4,290.00		3,815.00
Donations		1,466.70		642.50
Workshops				100.00
Miscellaneous		118.00		314.40
Interest on term deposit		448.13		330.17
Total		6,981.51		5,287.02
Expenditure				
FOG projects (other than grants)				
GSM	268.81			
OCCGR	1,114.15			
Transfer to Publication Fund	592.18	1,975.14		0.00
FOG membership of other groups		215.00		512.00
Administration including insurance		954.21		846.81
Newsletter		2,187.11		1,790.20
Workshops and catering		164.05		138.57
Miscellaneous		439.35		164.04
Total		5,934.86		3,451.62
Surplus (loss)		1,046.65		1,835.40
Adjustment to profit		0.00		238.10
Adjusted net profit		1,046.65		2,073.50

Table 2: FOG Supplementary Profit and Loss Account for 2009

	2009		2008	
Golden sun moth grant				
Funds received/carried forward	1,575.00		10,575.00	
Expenditure of grant monies	1,575.00		9,000.00	
Unspent grant carried forward	0.00		1,575.00	
Net earnings from grant		0.00		0.00
Petrol grant				
Funds received/carried forward	2,500.00			
Expenditure of grant monies	339.30			
Unspent grant carried forward	2,160.70			
Net earnings from grant		0.00		
NCA grant				
Funds received/carried forward	3,600.00			
Expenditure of grant monies	2,410.96			
Unspent grant carried forward	1,189.04			
Net earnings from grant		0.00		
Grassland Flora and Management Kits				
Books received	10,439.00			
Books transferred to FOG Pub Fund	10,439.00			
Net earnings from grant		0.00		

The various assumptions made here carry forward to the FOG balance sheet, on Table 3 on page 12. The balance sheet shows that at the end of 2009, FOG had assets of \$30,059 and liabilities of \$14,986, thus members' funds were \$15,073. Members' funds are available to FOG either to invest or to sink into projects. Most of these funds take the form of bank deposits, a significant portion is a fixed term deposit.

Carrying forward the assumption that grants FOG receives are not resources available to FOG, but are resources that FOG manages for some agreed purpose, unspent grants are treated as liabilities. At the end of 2009, FOG had unspent grants of \$3,349, excluding the Publication Fund.

FOG has created a Publication Fund. This comprises the stock of *Grassland Flora* books and monies from the sale of those books. To show the true earnings on book sales, we show income from the Publication Fund in Table 1, but that table also shows that earned income is offset and shown as expenditure. The Publication Fund is shown as a liability in Table 3. At the end of 2009, this stood at \$11,031. This treatment also clearly illustrates that FOG will manage these resources to provide for further purchases for sale of *Grassland Flora*, or that the funds will be used to publish other literature to promote an understanding of grassy ecosystems.

There are many other stories that these numbers may tell us and I am happy to answer queries members may have. Very importantly, undertaking the transactions, banking the money, bookkeeping and keeping the accounting records is a very large task and my deepest thanks goes to our Treasurer Sandy who is a gem. Sarah Sharp is now taking responsibility for a significant share of this work as the seller of *Grassland Flora* and other publications, while Margaret Ning, along with Sandra and Sarah, undertakes the many electronic transfers. Margaret also undertakes a lot of banking transactions because of her membership portfolio. My sincerest thanks to you all.

Keith Jones has for many years been our auditor and has played a wonderful and helpful role. He recently stepped down. Hopefully we might see more of him in a non-auditing role. Frank Judge is FOG's new auditor. Thank you Frank for auditing our 2009 cash accounts.

Rediscovered bell-frog

A population of the yellow-spotted bell frog (photo by David Hunter) has been discovered in the Southern Tablelands. Previously it was thought to be extinct, a victim of chytrid fungus. It was found in 2008 by government researcher Luke Pearce, but only recently did David Hunter confirm the finding. The yellow-

Table 3. FOG Balance Sheet at 31 December 2009

	2009		2008	
ASSETS				
Current assets				
General account				
Current account (excl Pub. Fund)	11,605.06		18,350.50	
Term deposit account	6,540.45		6,092.32	
Accounts receivable	0.00		0.00	
Other including petty cash	50.00	18,195.51	50.00	24,492.82
Publication Fund				
Monies in bank	2,667.80			
Cheques to be banked and cash	1,222.00			
Accounts receivable	265.00	4,154.80	0.00	0.00
Total current assets		22,350.31		24,492.82
Non-current assets				
Investment		0.00		0.00
Property, plant and equipment		0.00		0.00
Books held				
Publication Fund	7,481.58			
Other	227.70	7,709.28	188.10	128.70
Total assets		30,059.59		24,621.52
LIABILITIES				
Current liabilities				
General account				
Accounts payable	0.00		9,000.00	
Unspent grants carried forward	3,349.74		1,575.00	
Un-presented cheques	0.00	3,349.74	19.70	10,594.70
Publication Fund				
Accounts payable	605.20	605.20		0.00
Total current liabilities		3,954.94		10,594.70
Non-current liabilities				
General account	0.00		0.00	
Balance of Publication Fund	11,031.18	11,031.18	0.00	0.00
Total liabilities		14,986.12		10,594.70
Total assets less liabilities		15,073.47		14,026.82
Members funds				
Opening balance		14,026.82		11,953.32
Add surplus (loss) for year		1,046.65		2,073.50
Closing balance		15,073.47		14,026.82

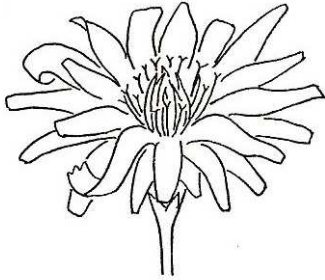
spotted bell frog has distinctive markings on its groin and thighs. An estimated 100 frogs have been found. Eight tadpoles have been taken to Taronga Zoo to establish a breeding pro-

gram. "If it has a predisposition to being resistant to this fungus, as opposed to having site attributes resulting in resistance, that will afford it much greater protection when we start putting it elsewhere," David Hunter said.

Two years ago, the armoured mist frog of northern Queensland was found after not being seen since the early 1990s, which highlights the point that we should not consider 'missing' species as extinct before thorough surveys are undertaken.



Yam daisy or murnong: *once a reliable food source, but now uncommon* Michael Bedingfield



The yam daisy or murnong is also sometimes called the native dandelion. It was once quite abundant and an important source of food for kooris and was harvested with a digging stick. The tuberous root can be eaten raw, but was usually roasted on a campfire first, and is said have a sweet, milky, coconut flavour. It was also eaten by European settlers as late as the twentieth century. However, over the last 200 years the plant's numbers have declined considerably throughout the grassy plains and slopes of south-eastern Australia. Though it is still widespread on the Southern Tablelands, it is regarded as "uncommon". These days it is usually found in nature reserves and on other sites that have had minimal disturbance. It prefers to be with its historical companions in the grassy native plant communities.

The flower of the murnong is a yellow daisy, which is up to about 30 mm across. It is solitary and grows on a slender, erect, unbranched stem, which is up to around 40 cm tall. One or several of these flower stems rise up from a small tuft of basal leaves. These are lance-shaped, erect, sometimes toothed, and up to approximately 20 cm long and 10 mm wide. They come up each year during the warmer months from a fleshy, perennial root. A distinctive feature of the plant is the drooping flower bud, which bows elegantly until it is ready to open. The seed-head is a fluffy orb similar to the dandelion, with many seeds in a cluster, each with a feathery structure attached to it, to aid dispersal in the wind.

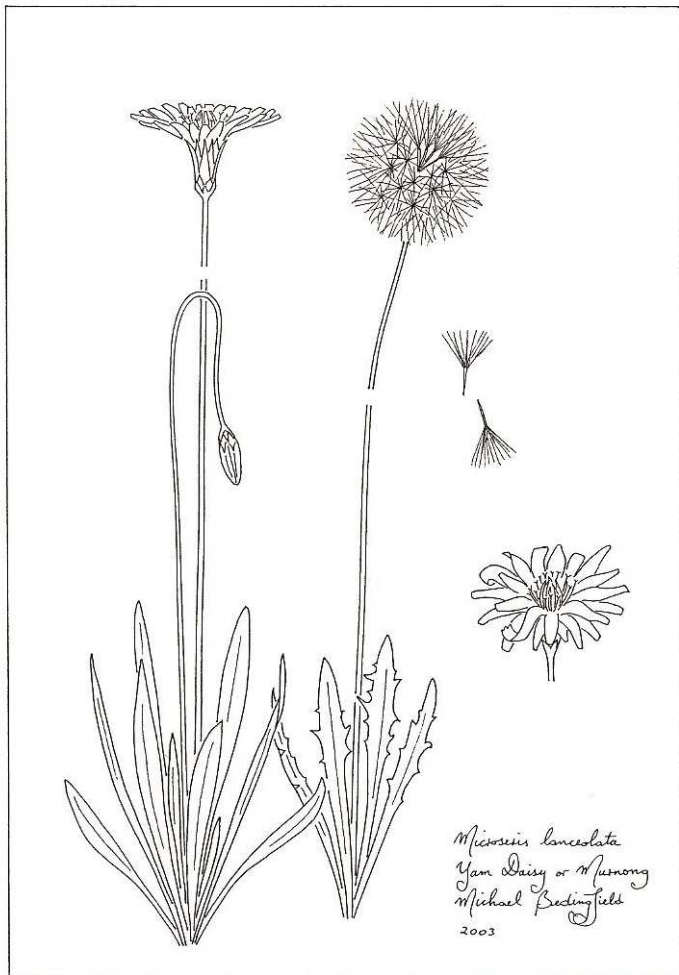
The preferred habitat of the yam daisy is natural grassy areas, and it is widely distributed throughout Australia, occurring in all states except NT. In NSW it occurs in all areas, the coast, tablelands, western slopes and plains.

The botanical name is *Microseris lanceolata*, which is pronounced my-cro-SEAR-is lan-see-oh-LAH-tuh.

The meaning of *Microseris* comes from Greek, 'micro' for small, and 'seris' is an old name for lettuce or chicory; *lanceolata* is from Latin and means lance-shaped. The plant was formerly known as *M. scapigera*, and sometimes this name is regarded as synonymous. But *M. scapigera* is now reserved for the alpine murnong, which is regarded as a different species. It too is edible, though it is more fibrous.

The most similar local plants are exotic weeds that are common in our gardens. These are the dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*) and catsear or flatweed (*Hypochaeris radicata*). Like the yam daisy, the dandelion has an unbranched flower-stem, but it can be distinguished because its stem is thicker and hollow. Its leaves are also more broad, and it has lots of pointed lobes. The catsear has branched flower-stems, and the basal leaves are deeply lobed and tend to grow more prostrate than erect. Neither of these plants has a drooping flower bud.

I have shown two specimens of the yam daisy at about half size in the drawing in the rectangle, one with toothed leaves and one without, also showing flowers, seed-head and loose seeds. A flower is shown separately at slightly larger than full size. The murnong, *Microseris lanceolata*, is yet another plant that has declined dramatically since white settlement. But through the work of FOG and other caring people, we hope it will have a bright future.



FOG groups and projects

Activities organises FOG field trips, talks, workshops, on-ground works, support to other groups, property visits, and the FOG calendar. Inquiries: activities2@fog.org.au.

Advocacy prepares submissions and advocates for grassy ecosystem issues. It holds occasional meetings and workshops. Inquiries: advocacy@fog.org.au.

African love grass (ALG) monitoring holds monitoring days at the Bush Heritage property at Scottsdale. Inquiries: linda.spinaze@fog.org.au.

Committee & correspondence The Committee organises, coordinates and monitors FOG activities. Members are Geoff Robertson (Pres.), Isobel Crawford (Vice Pres), Sarah Sharp (Vice Pres.) Al Gabb (Sec.), Sandra Hand (Treas), Kim Pullen (Imm. Past Pres), David Eddy, Naarilla Hirsch, Stephen Horn, Tony Lawson, Margaret Ning, and Benjamin Whitworth. Andy Russell is public officer. Inquiries/correspondence: committee@fog.org.au. Postal address: FOG, PO Box 987, Civic Square, ACT 2608.

Communication produces *News of Friends of Grasslands* and *FOG e-Bulletin*. Inquiries: geoff.robertson@fog.org.au (newsletter), and tony.lawson@fog.org.au (e-Bulletin).

Cultivation and Conservation encourages growing of local grasses and wild flowers to learn about their horticulture and ecology, and produces *Cultivation Corner*. Inquiries: janet2.russell@fog.org.au.

FOG ANU Fenner School, with the National Capital Authority, holds regular working bees at Yarramundi Reach (grasslands) and Stirling Ridge (woodlands). Inquiries: jamie.pittock@fog.org.au.

Financial matters, excluding membership, contact sandra.hand@fog.org.au or Sandra on 02 4846 1096.

Grassland Flora FOG is now responsible for sales of *Grassland Flora*. Inquiries: booksales@fog.org.au.

General inquiries Contact info@fog.org.au, Geoff Robertson (6241 4065) or Janet Russell (6251 8949).

Golden sun moth In 2008-09, FOG conducted a major survey of GSM in Canberra region. Inquiries: geoff.robertson@fog.org.au.

Hall Cemetery, with ACT Government, holds regular working bees to protect the Hall leek orchid and generally restore the site. Inquiries: andy.russell@fog.org.au.

Media spokesperson Geoff Robertson (6241 4065). FOG is a regular contributor on Radio Landcare, Tues 9-10am on (2XX, Canberra 98.3FM).

Membership and newsletter despatch See Membership box (page 7). Newsletter despatch is fourth Tuesday of Feb, Apr, June, Aug, Oct. To help, contact margaret.ning@fog.org.au.

Old Cooma Common (OCC) with Cooma Monaro Shire Council manages the OCC Grassland Reserve. Working bees are held twice yearly. Inquiries: margaret.ning@fog.org.au or david.eddy@fog.org.au.

Southern Tablelands Ecosystems Park (STEP) FOG helped establish STEP (at Canberra's International Arboretum), a regional botanic gardens and recovery centre to showcase local ecosystems, especially native grasses and forbs. Inquiries: limestone@grapevine.com.au.

Woodland Flora is planning the production of *Woodland Flora*, the sequel of the popular *Grassland Flora*. Inquiries: sarah.sharp@fog.org.au.

Website (www.fog.org.au) full of FOG information, back issues of *News of Friends of Grasslands*, and program details. Inquiries: webmanager@fog.org.au.