



News of Friends of Grasslands

Supporting native grassy ecosystems

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May & June 2021

Events ...

Sat 15 May 9.30-11.45am

Visit to Yass Gorge.

Register: Kath kangiara@gmail.com

Sat 5th June, 6-11pm,

FOG table at World Environment Day Dinner.

Register: margaret.ning@fog.org.au

Sat 12 June, day/individual sites

FOG's Canberra's grassy on-ground projects.

Register: geoff.robertson@fog.org.au

Inquiries:

rainer.rehwinkel@hotmail.com

Franklin Grassland

May 5 & 26

Wednesdays 9-11am

Register: margaret.ning@fog.org.au

Gurubang Dhaura Park

May 16 & June 20

Sunday 9am-12 noon

Register: jamie.pittock@fog.org.au

The latest updates are found on our website at [Calendar](https://fog.org.au)

<http://fog.org.au/>



From the (new) President ...

I feel it is a great honour and challenge to have been appointed President of our wonderful organisation at the annual general meeting in March. I am looking forward to working with the strong, new FOG Committee for 2021-22.

Thank you to Geoff Roberson, who has stepped down after two stints as President of FOG. Geoff has been a fantastic leader for our organisation as he combines a vision for conservation of what we can do to better conserve grassy ecosystems and a willingness to step in and support the diverse array of activities that we undertake. It will be a great challenge to follow his example. I also thank Juliey Beckman and Ken Hodgkinson for their service on FOG's Committee.

FOG has an ambitious mission for the conservation of grassy ecosystems, which are among the most endangered in Australia. Unlike some other, superficially charismatic ecosystems, we have an added challenge in helping our fellow Australians to better appreciate grasslands before we can practically advance conservation of these ecosystems. FOG has the most remarkable array of activities to promote conservation of grassy ecosystems, including its work on education and field trips, on-ground projects, grants and advocacy. In the coming year the Committee has undertaken to focus on enhancing these existing programs for conservation.

I was delighted this month that the members of the National Capital Authority decided to visit Gurubang Dhaura (Stirling) Park to see the progress made in partnership with FOG to restore this grassy woodland. This is an example of how FOG's on-ground activities can influence governments decision makers, who will hopefully take further action to conserve grasslands elsewhere on their estate and with their planning decisions.

The looming decisions on Defence Housing Australia's proposed North Lawson residential development are of great concern to FOG as they would negatively impact a most important grassland remnant. Please support efforts by FOG and others to encourage our governments to conserve this important ecosystem.

Jamie Pittock



Photo by Stella-rae Zelnick

Advocacy Report

Naarilla Hirsch

February 2021

The Australian Heritage Council asked for comments on a proposal to add Lake Burley Griffin and Adjacent Lands to the Commonwealth Heritage Register. While FOG couldn't comment on the heritage values of other parts of Lake Burley Griffin and Adjacent Lands, it put the view that its natural values are sufficient to meet the criteria and justify its heritage listing. This was on the basis of the critically endangered NTG and grassy woodland at Yarramundi Reach, Stirling Park and Scrivener's Hut, plus species such as the endangered *Rutidosia leptorhynchoidea* (Button Wrinklewort) and critically endangered *Synemon plana* (Golden Sun Moth) that occur in these areas.

The Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council asked for comments on their draft Cat Containment Policy - Googong and Jumping Creek. FOG did not have any specific comments on this but supported its adoption in principle because of the predation threat to vulnerable species in the area: Pink Tailed Worm Lizard, Rosenberg's Monitor, Hooded Robin, Diamond Firetail, Brown Treecreeper and Speckled Warbler.

March 2021

FOG's only comment on the Mulligans Flat Woodland Sanctuary Draft Strategy 2020-2045 was that Yellow Box-Red Gum Grassy Woodland is now listed as critically

endangered, rather than endangered as mentioned in the strategy.

The Commonwealth asked for comments on a Battery Energy Storage System on Blocks 1634 and 1635 in Ginninderry. FOG's major concerns about this were about the offset proposed for the box-gum woodland impacted by this development, which was payment into the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Fund (BCF). These concerns included whether a suitable offset would be available, the timing of the offset, the location (i.e. in NSW rather than the ACT, although the loss is in the ACT), and a lack of public accountability and transparency for offsets delivered in this way.

The ACT Government is about to review the emblems which represent and celebrate the ACT and advertised participation in either the Community Reference Group or the YourSay Community Panel for this project. FOG does not have the resources to do this, but did write to the Community Reference Group about it, expressing the view that the ACT's emblems should reflect the natural values of the ACT in some form.

We suggested consideration of a perhaps lower profile but uniquely Canberran symbol that reflects our natural heritage, in particular our grassy ecosystems.

The full text of these submissions appears on our website.

White-winged Chough - a gregarious, ground feeding bird

Michael Bedingfield

White-winged Choughs are very social and reside in a family group, supporting each other in various ways. When you encounter these birds, they are usually foraging on the ground for food. As you approach they may fly away a short distance and land again to continue foraging. If alarmed they are more likely to fly up into nearby trees, calling noisily, and seeming reluctant to fly long distances. They are very easy to recognize, being almost entirely black but with a large white patch on the wings which is clearly visible in flight. The eyes are red and the bill is curved downwards slightly. Males and females are similar and when fully grown the length from bill to tail is around 45 cm. The young are dusky in colour with brown eyes. They spend a lot of their time on the ground, walking with a noticeable swagger and calling to each other frequently with soft, piping tones. When alarmed, the call is a louder and more harsh grating sound. Their flight consists of alternate strong flapping efforts with short glides.

A typical group will consist of a breeding pair with a number of younger birds. However, sometimes more than one female may lay eggs in the communal nest. Breeding success depends on the group being sufficiently large because the parents alone cannot successfully raise the chicks. So a group of at least four birds is required and families are usually larger than that. The Canberra Ornithologist's website says that the average group size is about eight, but there may be up to 20. Young birds are not sexually mature until they are four years old and stay with their parents until that time.

When a group is in need of increasing its size they are known to “kidnap” a young fledgling from a neighbouring territory. They will entice the inexperienced youngster and make it a part of the family.

Breeding occurs in late winter or spring. Raising the young is a co-operative family affair with all members of the group helping out. Everyone assists with nest building, sitting on the eggs, and later on feeding the chicks. The nest is a large, sturdy bowl-shaped one made out of mud and plant fibre. It is placed on a roughly horizontal tree limb up to about 15m above the ground and lined with feathers and grass. It may be used more than once, being restored for the next generation. After the young fledge, the family go out together as a group, exploring their territory for insects, worms, grubs and other small animals. They like scratching among grasses and searching in the leaf litter or in rotting wood. They will also eat seeds or berries, especially in the cooler months when insects are scarce. The young ones take a long time to learn how to forage alone, so assistance and support is needed until they get through their first winter.

Competition with neighbouring families is a threat to a group’s survival and they are very territorial. This may take the form of harassment with aggressive display battles, when younger members may change groups. They may even destroy a rival family’s eggs or nest. Other threats are predation by nest robbing birds such as Currawongs and from introduced predators like foxes and cats. They are aggressive towards possible predators. The scarcity of food during winter can affect them too. Family groups increase in size after breeding, but weaker members of the family may not survive through the winter and the group’s membership can fall.

The White-winged Chough is known by the scientific name of *Corcorax melanorhamphos*. Similar looking birds are the Australian Raven *Corvus coronoides*, Little Raven *C. mellori* and the Pied Currawong *Strepera graculina*. White-winged Choughs prefer open woodlands and dry forests and they will venture onto grassland or suitable farmland. They are sedentary or locally nomadic and are distributed throughout eastern and south-eastern mainland Australia but avoid the dry inland areas and north Qld. Despite the extensive deterioration of the woodland habitat, these birds are not considered threatened.

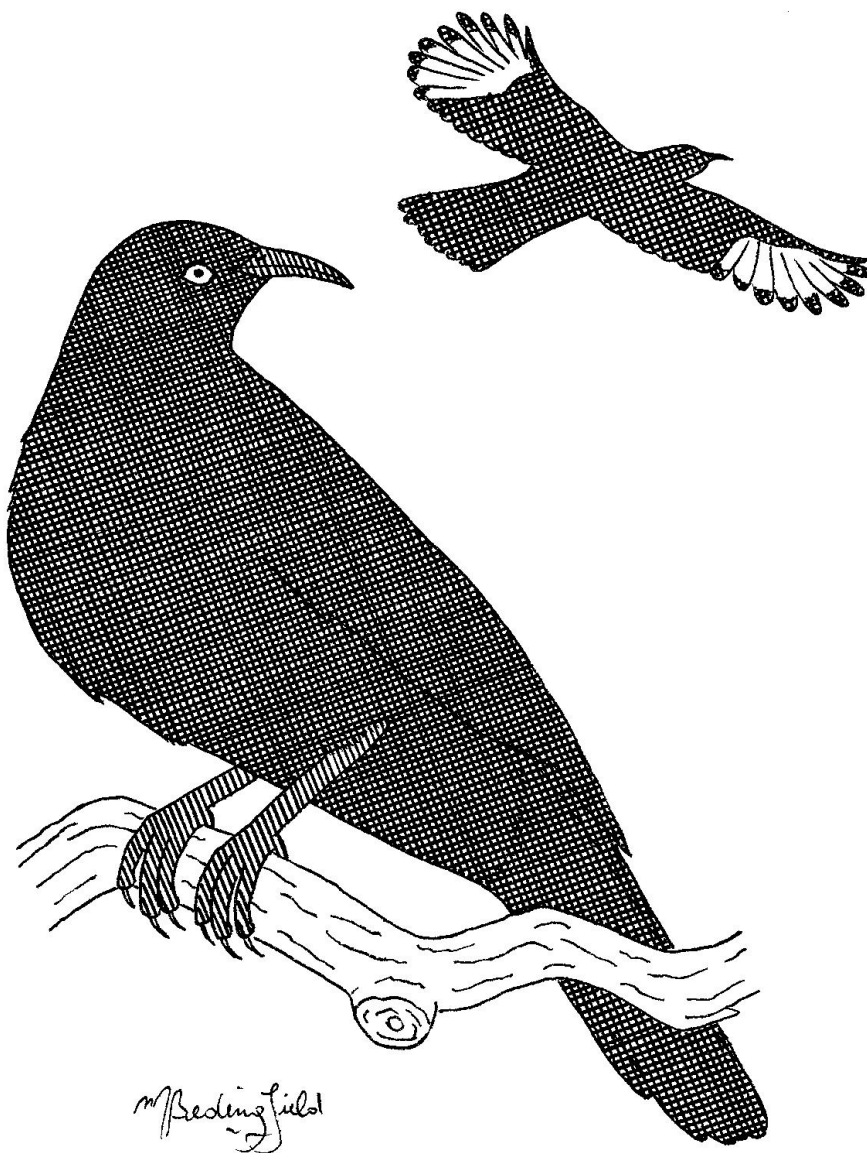
I hope you enjoy this short essay about the White-winged Chough. I am quite chuffed to be able to write about this interesting bird!

References:

<https://www.birdlife.org.au/bird-profile/white-winged-chough>

<http://canberrabirds.org.au/our-birds/canberra-garden-birds/chough/>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/White-winged_chough



Closeup - Enjoying La Niña #2

John Fitz Gerald

I'm continuing last newsletter's Closeup theme presenting a few more of the plants in our grassy ecosystems thriving in a cool moist summer that is continuing well into 2021. This time, all are Australian natives.

My first choice is *Caesia calliantha*, the Blue Grass Lily. This lily grows in grassy understorey around SE Australian woodlands and, at Hall Cemetery the best showing for many years was enjoyed. Flowers were seen at Hall in both open grassland and the box-gum woodlands. The striking blue flower generally prefers to open on warm afternoons and closes at night. Fertilisation produces green-coloured sacs of seeds that fall easily from the inflorescence. My image shows two of the sacs that have dried and opened to show regular black seeds with a dimpled surface.

Choice two is *Cyperus sanguinolentus*, a small sedge plant which, according to Plantnet, usually grows in swamps and streambanks. This season it seemed to grow densely in many places I had not seen it previously, and these would have been moist at best. Like many sedges, it produces large quantities of seed. Its spikelets are most attractive with each glume being nicely striped. My image shows many small nuts in a range of colours, underneath two spikelets still with a few striped glumes attached.

My third choice is *Schoenus apogon*, a common small plant of "seasonally wet habitats", not just in SE Australia but also in New Zealand, Indo-China and Japan. This year in our region it grew in many places including the groundlayer of our native grasslands, at least in places where intertussock space allowed sufficient light down to the ground. Again, I feel that even moist places were wet enough for this plant to grow well in this unusually cool season. My image shows the attractively patterned nuts of a whitish hue and almost translucent shell. Carefully breaking this granular shell released one small black shiny seed from inside - see inset bottom-left corner of the image.

Micrographs were taken at the National Seed Bank of the Australian National Botanic Gardens. They can be reproduced freely if attributed and linked to the Creative Commons licence CC BY. The scale bars near the right side of each image represent: Pic 1, 2 and 3 = 1, 1 and 0.5 millimetres, respectively. For plant and flower images, please go to resources like Canberra Nature Map which has 20-30 photos of all 3 species. Links: [//plantnet.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au/search/simple.htm](http://plantnet.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au/search/simple.htm); [//canberra.naturemapr.org](http://canberra.naturemapr.org); [//creativecommons.org.au/learn/licences](http://creativecommons.org.au/learn/licences)



Green sacs and black seeds of *Caesia calliantha*



Two spikelets and nuts of *Cyperus sanguinolentus*



Nuts and seeds of *Schoenus apogon*

Contact Us

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Membership to [join or renew](#), inquiries: membership@fog.org.au

Events & work parties: [Calendar](#). To attend an event, register with event organiser.

Book sales: Order forms: [Grassland & Woodland Floras](#). Inquiries: booksales@fog.org.au.

Small grassy ecosystem grants: [Latest on grants](#). Inquiries: supportedprojects@fog.org.au

News of Friends of Grasslands: [Latest & past issues](#). To submit articles & news items newsletter@fog.org.au

Events & notices bulletin: to submit material ebulletin@fog.org.au

Advocacy: [Read latest submissions](#). Contact: advocacy@fog.org.au

Tax deductible donations: [Donations](#)

Website matters: webmanager@fog.org.au

Projects, work parties & contacts:

Hall Cemetery: john.fitzgerald@fog.org.au

Scrivener's Hut, Gurubang Dhaura (Stirling) Park, Blue Gum Point & Yarramundi Grassland: jamie.pittock@fog.org.au. [More info.](#)

Franklin Grasslands: margaret.ning@fog.org.au

Travelling stock reserves & Old Cooma Common: margaret.ning@fog.org.au

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More info on FOG: [annual reports](#).

Severn Park and Charles Massy

Geoff Robertson



7 MARCH. In perfect weather, thirty-eight people arrived at Severn Park, the property of Fiona and Charles Massy. Everyone was eager to understand the principles of regenerative agriculture and how they may be applied to agriculture practice and/or the restoration of our native grassy ecosystems.

Following our arrival, registering everyone and introductions, we were on our way driving to a hill top. Given there were numerous visitors, Charlie was encouraged to stand on the back of a truck where, like a prophet, he spoke to the assembled crowd. Facing east, we had a wonderful Monaro landscape stretching many, many kilometres before us. This became the backdrop to his story - Charlie is a great story teller. He spoke about his personal path to discovering regenerative agriculture principles and practices, how their application prevented bare soils and dust storms; improved hydrology, soil carbon capture and microbial activity; and caused biodiversity to bounce back - this was also partly due to extensive tree planting - some 60,000 trees.

Our second stop was at a large rarely grazed paddock which had an amazing diversity of grasses and wildflowers. We spent some time there - some of us wandering and discovering the many species of plants, while others gathered in groups to hear more of Charlie's experience.

Then it was off to lunch, where we assembled in and around a beautifully restored stone woodshed built in the second half of the nineteenth century. I was equally fascinated by a small nearby two room stone house built in the 1840s - a period of particular interest to me. While everyone had brought lunch, Fiona and Charlie produced additional food and plenty of coffee and tea.

After lunch we walked to a nearby small ribbon gum grassy woodland that had been burnt by Ngarigo elder and landscape manager Rod Mason. Charlie talked about his time with Rod, the many workshop-burns that Rod has conducted on Severn Park, and Charlie's observation that the ribbon gum had straightened following the burn. I also mentioned my experiences with Rod and with others practising "burning done the right way". I pointed out that Charlie and Fiona met Rod when they attended one of his two-day traditional land management workshops organised by FOG at our former conservation property of Garuwanga.

Our last site was to another natural grassland paddock - which included patches of kangaroo grass. Charlie spoke of the history of the paddock. David Eddy, who was present, talked of his grassland surveys on the Monaro over twenty-five years and related many of his fascinating observations.

Throughout the day we learnt much about Charlie's life history, and what made him adopt regenerative farming practices. In writing up this event, I revisited some of the material on Charlie on the web. Likely the best source is his [Australian Story](#) which went to air on 20 September last year. I totally recommend that readers take the time to watch it. Many of the stories that Charlie told during the day will be found there, plus interviews with other practitioners and researchers of regenerative agriculture and additional material on Charlie's life story.

Charlie lost his mother when he was four-and-a-half, but nevertheless enjoyed growing up on the farm and getting to know nature. He undertook a science degree in biology at the ANU with the hope of becoming a wildlife officer. According to his tutor and later PhD supervisor he showed that he was fascinated by new ideas, and was courageous and a risk taker. With his father's death when he was twenty-two, and being the only child, Charlie became a farmer, finishing his degree part time.

As a farmer he continued the farming practices inherited from his father. The 1820 ha property of Severn Park had been acquired by Charlie's grandfather in 1828 and traditionally ran sheep and cattle, running an average 8,000 to 10,000

stock units. Charlie also managed other very large properties and became involved in various rural organizations. After ten years of research, in 2011 he published his highly acclaimed *Breaking the Sheep's Back - The Decline and Fall of the Australian Wool Industry*, covering the history of the sheep industry from 1840 to 1991.

However, it was the experience of two severe droughts, resulting dust bowls, heavy indebtedness, and a two year depression that led him and his family to want to get out of grazing. He sold off his expensive heavy farming machinery, stock and half the property. Out of debt,

more relaxed, liking the property and a rural life style he began to find "a better way" - gradually discovering the principles of regenerative agriculture. In his mid fifties, he decided to do a PhD on regenerative agriculture and interviewed about sixty practitioners. He was somewhat surprised how each had come to adopt the practice - drought or other disasters and poor mental health were often strong factors in their decision to change their approach. His PhD turned into his now famous *Call of the Reed Warbler: A New Agriculture, a New Earth*, and Charlie becoming a highly visible advocate of regenerative agriculture. He readily admits that his discoveries were not new - many thousands of agriculturalists have adopted or partially adopted regenerative agriculture.



As someone concerned with keeping and restoring our natural grasslands and grassy woodlands, I am interested in the relevance of regenerative agriculture to the conservation of our grassy ecosystems. The emphasis on soil management, improved hydrology, soil carbon capture, microbial activity, landscape function, restoring native grasses and the resulting increased biodiversity are all highly relevant. Regenerative agriculture offers an alternative economic approach to rural production, by avoiding destruction of biodiversity and carbon emissions through the use of heavy machinery.

As Charlie points out, individuals who confront their own failings and find a way through are truly impressive. Charlie is one of these - his humility, honesty, willingness to question and learn, and courage are truly outstanding. A big thanks to Charlie and Fiona for their generosity and to Margaret for organising the event.

Lobe-seeded Daisy *Brachyscome dentata*
All photos courtesy of Stella-rae Zelnik

A Christian Rationale for Land Stewardship

Tony Molyneux

Tony has a background in entomological research, in the administration of Commonwealth government environmental policy and legislation and in the teaching of Biology, Environmental Science and Religious Education in Catholic Colleges and Biology and Environmental Science in government Colleges in QLD, TAS and the ACT. He is currently in his final year of study for the Bachelors degree in Theology through the Charles Sturt University - St Marks Campus, Canberra. He continues to do some entomological research with colleagues at the University of Genoa, Italy.

The Greek word (κόσμος - cosmos) describes the whole created order. Each entity in the universe exists only because it is loved into existence by God in a relationship of ongoing creation with all of its abiotic and biotic components, including Earth (Genesis 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31; Matt. 10:29; Lk. 12:6). Modern critics of the Jewish-Christian tradition suggest that Genesis 1:28 – “...Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it...” lays the foundations for today’s environmental crisis. This narrow and convenient way of justifying particular human behaviour disregards the responsibility we all have to care for our environment in a way that facilitates humanity’s ongoing journey to becoming one with God. Instead of using biblical texts to legitimise an already predetermined course of action a Christian is challenged to be a responsible steward of God’s universe.

I believe that care of the environment from a Christian perspective is more likely to succeed when we have a trinitarian understanding of God’s relationship with creation. The Trinity is the perfect community in which the Father, Son and Holy Spirit coexist eternally together and none is defined while leaving out the other (Boff 2000, 53-54; Cameron 2011, 165). Thus, creation is a sacred and dynamic process in which every creature and every particle of matter reveals something of the light of the triune God (1 John 1:5). If the world is “hidden with Christ in God” (Col. 3:3), then all of reality is not the exclusive domain of humanity, but a network of relationships in which every creature is sustained and nourished by triune love. The interrelationality of human life with God, neighbour and Earth reflects the interrelationality between God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

When Jesus entered Earth’s biosphere he became a developing member of the Kingdom Animalia as well as being divine, and his bodily makeup ties him to the elements and processes that make up the universe (Gen. 2:7), (Darragh 2000, 111). His incarnation sacralises the whole of creation, which means that we cannot, on the individual, social or political levels, remain indifferent to creation or tolerate its abuse. When Jesus told a parable to sum up the character of the moral task given to humankind (Mt. 7:24-27) he stressed the importance of wise action for maintaining right relationship with creation.

The Spirit of God is the power of becoming, the Life-Giver that enables the evolutionary emergence of the life-forms of Earth in all their fruitfulness and diversity (Edwards, 2011, 37). If environmental protection laws are drafted from a biblically-based obligation to respect and care for creation, then the environment and its biodiversity has a value other than a monetary, aesthetic or cultural one. A legislative recognition of its unique value as a sacred and freely given gift from God should change our perspective from one of use through ownership to one of sustainable care and management of our ecosystems. However, people in their primary relationship to God often view their environment from a God-like perspective and manage it as if they have sovereignty over nature, only wishing to protect nature from a pragmatic viewpoint, and not because nature has any real intrinsic value. The intangible values such as ‘spiritual’ are generally given far less weight than tangible values, and as a consequence environmental care is seen as incompatible with the growth of western civilization. In his 2015 encyclical “*Laudato Si’* - care for our common home” Pope Francis identifies seven ecological virtues important in caring for our common home: praise, gratitude, care, justice, work, sobriety, and humility. If these virtues were to provide a framework upon which legislation is drafted then our approach to managing the environment would be very different.

The misuse and destruction of our ‘grassland communities’ begins when we no longer recognize any higher purpose than ourselves. If economic development and employment for people provide sufficient political pressure for change then ‘protected land and its species’ may be sacrificed for the so called ‘common good’. Sooner or later the appetite of the ‘common good’ may very quickly cause its own demise because if a ‘common good’ is not based on having viable communities now and for future generations, then, from a Christian perspective, we will destroy our relationship with creation and jeopardise our means of coming into full communion with the triune God. Humanity ‘made in the image

of God' may be spoken of as the crown of creation but that does not mean that we are apart from creation, like God, reigning over creation. A life of love and justice towards all aspects of creation, therefore, is central to wise Christian environmental practice because wisdom is about the way creation welcomes certain kinds of action (Errington 2019, 198, 225).

References

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- Francis. 2015. *Laudato Si'*. Encyclical Letter. Vatican website. http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html

Recent FoG Events

Donna Hazell and BCT grassland conservation

Geoff Robertson

Donna Hazell was the presenter at FOG's on-line presentation on 15 April. Donna undertook her PhD some years ago on frog conservation in agricultural landscapes and has since popped up in many positions in natural resource management in the Southern Tablelands involving research and program delivery. She has been a great friend to FOG - a great source of advice and assistance and co-organiser of events. She and her partner, Peter Hazell, who works for the Mulloon Institute, were particularly helpful visiting Franklin Grasslands and offering advice in my preparation of the *Franklin Grasslands Concept Plan*. The Biodiversity Conservation Trust (BCT) is a relatively new agency, consolidating and expanding previous NSW Government biodiversity programs, such as bio-banking, targeted in-perpetuity conservation agreements, and buying and selling properties through the BCT Revolving Fund. FOG approached her to talk about BCT programs that involve grassy ecosystems and its experience with them.

Her presentation commenced by explaining the BCT and its aims and programs aimed at landowners who may wish learn about biodiversity or participate in a range of programs, which include voluntary conservation programs, grants, funded agreements and agreements to generate biodiversity credits. BCT also buys and sells rural properties endowed with rich biodiversity. Those entering into BCT agreements may also benefit from rate and land tax reductions. Information may be found on the BCT website (<https://www.bct.nsw.gov.au>).

Donna then focussed on how grassy ecosystems fit into the mix of BCT programs and priorities. These include natural temperate grasslands (NTG), box gum woodland, two snow gum woodland communities (the [Werriwa Tablelands](#) and the [Monaro Tablelands lowlands grassy woodland of the south east corner](#)) and [Themeda grassland on seacliffs and coastal headlands](#). BCT's priority grassy ecosystems to date in the south east have been NTG and the two snow gum communities. Donna quoted some figures from the Monaro Grasslands Tender in 2018: there were 11 conservation

agreements, covering 1829 ha, for a total value of \$12 million - tenderers were paid between \$164-\$300 per hectare per year.

Donna explained the tender process, which is competitive. BCT seeks value for money (high quality remnants, offered in perpetuity that are reasonably priced by the landholder will be most competitive). She gave many examples of the complexity in assessing the value of what was on offer and whether it met BCT's particular target programs. A negotiated management plan is also a key part of the process. She indicated in general terms what future tenders are on the horizon.

There were many questions and in response Donna explained the complexity of the issues it was attempting to resolve. These included ensuring that interested land owners could recognise target grassy ecosystems; ensuring that offsets were like-for-like - the offsets' market is still under development; appropriate biomass management (often aimed to prevent overgrazing); appropriate use of fire management and cultural burning (guidelines are under development); and arranging for conservation agreements over public land, including travelling stock reserves (hopefully BCT is close to coming up with a workable model). Currently, the BCT website has guidelines on revegetation, grazing, and over-abundant kangaroo grazing.

Thank you Donna for enlightening us on the work of BCT, especially in relation to grasslands and grassy woodlands, for your honest appraisal of the successes and complexities involved, and for your insights into some of the many issues in managing grassy ecosystem remnants. If people would like a copy of Donna's presentation they should contact Donna (donna.hazell@bct.nsw.gov.au).

Who ya gonna call? - Julia Raine

Who does a newly formed Landcare group ask to update a twenty year old species list? Friends of Grasslands, of course.

On Sunday 11 April, a group of FOG volunteers descended on the 7ha block known as Flea Bog Flat, near South Bruce - its name referring to the muddy stretch of the Old Weetangera Road which runs through the middle. A neglected triangle of

Yellow-Box Blakely's Red Gum grassy woodland, swampy meadows, and rather large patches of blackberry & honeysuckle, Flea Bog Flat astounded the local community last spring with its display of wildflowers. Flea Bog Flat has also attracted COG's interest as the rich understorey of both natives and woody weeds has created a haven for small birds.



Little Dumpy (*Diplodinium truncatum*)
Andrew Zelnick

A species list was compiled c.2000 by the South Bruce Residents Association to support its submission to Government, lobbying against a proposed development on the block, which led to the block being protected as Urban Open Space. Eight FOG volunteers, accompanied by local resident, Dr Masumi Robertson who had contributed to the c.2000 list, and Derek Corrigan, orchid specialist, moved very slowly through the block, adding more than 40 species.

Friends of Flea Bog Flat volunteers have lots more work cutting and dabbing but are thankful for the extra support from the ACT government this financial year to address the major weed infestations, currently being sprayed by a contractor. The group is applying for an Environment Grant to engage specialist expertise to prepare a Management Plan for the site, as well as provide training so that volunteers can undertake vegetation surveys in subsequent years.

FOG & Lawson Grasslands

FOG attended two events at Lawson recently. On 27 March, FOG held a joint stall with the Conservation Council at the Lawson markets. While there were not many stall holders, numerous people turned up - according to the counters, 1000 people. Helen Oakey, Andrew Zelnick and Geoff Robertson were kept busy talking to many individuals about the Defence Housing Australia's proposal to build a housing estate at Lawson north. As a consequence many people signed the petition requesting DHA not to proceed. If you don't know about, or haven't signed the petition, you may [click here](#) and scroll to the bottom of the page. On the adjoining stall were Lawson Grasslands Group and Ginninderra Catchment Groups, represented by Rainer Rehwinkel and Kat McGilp. It was a lovely sunny day and a most enjoyable morning.



On 11 April about nine people met with Rainer for a walk near the Lawson grassland. We met at Jumbuck Street and travelled along the edge of the eastern section of the former Transmitting Station. It was a somewhat cold day.



Rainer pointed out many features of the site and there was much discussion about the DHA housing proposal & what were possible outcome scenarios.

FOG AGM - Sarah Sharp on behalf of the committee.

On 16 March FOG held its AGM at the Conservation Council office. It was good to be able to catch up and share a drink and nibbles before holding the meeting, as life after COVID is relaxed. Thanks to Linda Spinaze for organising the food, and to Geoff and Margaret for the wine donation. Nineteen people attended the meeting, one of whom was via Zoom.

Geoff Robertson presented an extremely detailed annual report, including a report on the wide range of activities that FOG members are involved in, from field trips, forums, on-ground projects, solo or mini events, contribution to events organised by others and, of course, advocacy. Geoff drew together data on volunteer hours, arguably the most comprehensive analysis of volunteer effort by any organisation. In this he also calculated the resources required for governance of FOG. Geoff calculated that almost 6000 hours of volunteer involvement (equivalent of 3 people full time for a year) was expended, including organisation of, and attendance at, the events. This is an amazing contribution and demonstrates not only the dedication of FOG members to pursue conservation of grassy ecosystems, but the interest by others to attend events. And this was the year of bushfires and COVID. Michael Bedingfield's contribution of the cover artwork is a great example of how art can be used to engender appreciation of the beauty and diversity of grassy landscapes. The entire report is available on the website - [FOG 2020 Annual Report](#).

Geoff stood down as President, and was thanked for his significant contribution as president and in his many roles within FOG. Juliey Beckman and Ken Hodgkinson also stood down from the committee and were thanked for their contributions. Even though they have stood down from elected positions, both Geoff and Ken are remaining involved in various roles, and Geoff will be on call for any questions. Geoff will be a hard act to follow, although I have every confidence that the new committee will keep waving the banner as we all strive for improved conservation outcomes.

Three new members were nominated and duly elected. The office bearers are: Jamie Pittock (president), Margaret Ning and Andrew Zelnick (vice-presidents), Janet Russell (treasurer), Sarah Sharp (secretary), and Maree Gilbert, Alice Hathorn, Rainer Rehwinkel, Linda Spinaze and Heather Sweet (committee members). The committee is also supported by

many FOG members that contribute in a variety of ways, large and small.

Franklin Grasslands

Since our last report, we have held work parties on 24 February, 9 March and 7 April. Our 24 March work party was cancelled due to wet weather. At the three events the turn outs were, respectively 5, 3 and 11.

Noticeable changes are occurring in the vegetation structure due to the drying of the long grass and weeds, the burn on the 20 Feb, and the recent extensive mowing around the edges of the reserve. In the earlier activities our weeders could barely be seen in the long grass (see Photo 1).



On 7 April there were plenty of hands on deck to plant 200 wallaby grass seedlings, grown by Vanessa who supervised their planting (See photo 2). This planting patch shows what can be achieved - previously a large area of blackberry and phalaris were sprayed, and indigenous grasses and forbs have been encouraged to colonise, supplemented by forb and wallaby grass plantings.

Since our last working bee, three volunteers turned up on two occasions and four on one occasion to water the new plantings. Thank you to our rangers who ensured that not one but two water tanks were delivered and conveniently placed at the reserve.



Clean-up day at Franklin Grasslands

Suzanne Orr MLA organised a Clean-up day on Saturday 13 March, from 10am-2pm. Thirty people attended, comprising many people in Labor networks and their friends, local residents, and three FOG members. Local households had been letterboxed and many were curious to turn up to examine what was happening. Many bags of rubbish were collected, although there were many comments that the reserve was relatively free of rubbish. A barbecue was put on

by Suzanne. We recruited one more local resident to our Franklin Grasslands Parkcare Group on the day.

FOG members led two walks pointing out the many rare plants present, the varying landscapes and vegetation communities and emphasising the importance of the site and the plans to make it an attractive reserve for residents, making the protection and restoration of the grasslands, woodlands, wetlands and related flora fauna species a priority.

Margaret saw a striped legless lizard on the day.

Thank you Suzanne for putting on this event and your continued support.



Seven litres of rose hip @ Franklin Grasslands

Local Franklin resident, Simon Walker, a member of our Franklin Grasslands Parkcare Group, cannot join week-day work parties. However, this does not deter him and he is now geared up to undertake his own work parties. With four kids in tow he recently removed seven litres of rose hips. Here is the photographic evidence. He will now be turning his attention to cutting and daubing, and thistles.



New record for Franklin Grasslands

Andrew Zelnik is a frequent participant at the reserves work parties. However, he is easily distracted and grabs his camera when he spots something interesting. On 12 April, while on watering duty, he captured a great egret (*Ardea alba*), for the first time at Franklin Grasslands, and a spotted grass frog (*Limnodynastes tasmaniensis*), not previously photographed at the grasslands.



A Weekend at Gurubang Dhaura – Jamie Pittock

FOG, Greening Australia (GA) and National Capital Authority woodland planting day on Saturday 27 March at Gurubang Dhaura (Stirling) Park.

We had 21 volunteers plant 350 shrubs and ground covers to complement previous woodland tree plantings. The understorey plantings covered around half the six hectare former pine plantation site. A special thanks to the 13th Canberra Scouts who did a great job planting.



In the coming month, GA will undertake direct seeding of ground cover species. Next autumn the second half of the site will be planted with shrubs. The objectives of the work are to extend the nationally significant grassy woodland over the site of the felled pine plantation and to incorporate a few woodland species found inland from Canberra in order to prepare for a hotter and drier future climate.

On Sunday 28 March, completing a postponed work party, a further 14 FOG volunteers planted 120 eucalypts and shrubs over felled blue gums at the north end of Gurubang Dhaura Park. The objectives are to extend the grassy woodland over disturbed land, protect large woody debris and create a copse of shrubs to provide more habitat for wildlife, including echidnas and small bush birds.



Kyle Hemming and Species Distribution Models - Geoff Robertson

In our last newsletter, Kyle Hemming, who is completing his PhD at the University of Canberra on the topic of *Forecasting the spread and impact of exotic plant species*, and has been a recipient of a FOG grassy grant, wrote up a summary of his research and findings. On 18 March, he gave a presentation of his research to a FOG online session.

Kyle introduced us to the concept of Species Distribution Models (SDMs) and illustrated how they may be used to forecast the spread of exotic plant species. His work required the manipulation of huge amounts of data.

SDMs have been used to forecast single plant (and animal) species. Kyle's initial work focused on developing a new SDM to forecast multiple plant species, using native and exotic grasses. SDMs link species and environmental data, so he categorised the grasses by C3 and C4 traits, which translate to cool winter growing grasses (C3) and tropical summer growing grasses (C4). He then went on to examine twenty further plant families.

The model estimates how many species large areas can support. Kyle divided Australia 100 x 100 km (10,000m²) areas. Did I mention that he had to manipulate a lot of data?

These areas have lots of environmental measures. To find out which the grasses might be responding to, Kyle began with thirty measures and whittled these down to seven – three categorised as temperature, two rainfall and one for each of topography and human. The human category, which seems to have an important impact, captured whether areas were settled by humans or not.

He then churned through the data looking for correlations between the numbers of C3 and C4 native and exotic grasses, and for each of the other twenty families. He largely presented his data in terms of colour maps, which illustrated the species richness (the number of species in a 100 x 100 km area), for native and exotic species, respectively. He also correlated the species richness for native and exotic species for each segment of the map for each variable. His findings were very broadly summarised in the article referred to above. For example, C3 grasses are likely well established in areas suitable for them, whereas C4 grasses are not well established in areas potentially suitable for them (this may have serious biosecurity implications for Northern Australia). He then applied the SDM to New Zealand, where he treated Australian grasses (exotic to New Zealand) and New Zealand native grasses. He found some interesting results. Overall, his analysis is highly suggestive.

The strength of Kyle's work, I believe, is providing a framework that may use many variables to explain why it certain exotic plants maybe present/absence in some areas. The sheer mass of data presented by Kyle will take time to analyse and digest.

The last part of his presentation examined the competitiveness of three very different exotic grass species on three local Canberra region indigenous grasses, using water availability as a variable. These show very interesting results and I refer the reader to Kyle's article in the last newsletter. They also illustrate how variable the results were - illustrating the complexity of statistical analysis.

If people would like a copy of Kyle's on-line presentation they should contact me (geoff.robertson@fog.org.au). Congratulations Kyle in pioneering the use of SDM in an Australian context.

PS. In clearing this article with Kyle, he mentioned that an Aussie researcher in Canada read his article published in our last newsletter and contacted him. He added "FoG has an international audience?!"

Hall Cemetery work parties

Work parties were held at Hall Cemetery on 6 March and 3 April where 16 volunteers put in 52 hours of work. In addition, there were twenty mini events at Hall Cemetery from January to March 2021 where 78 volunteer hours were put in. At our recent work parties, we focused on fleshy weeds and Pigeon Grass with a few emergences to watch such as Cleavers and Sow Thistle. As usual the seed heads of most weed species were detached, bagged and removed, while other weeds were manually removed. John was present with his line trimmer to remove phalaris, especially to the left of the entry gate. In between recent work party events the central kangaroo grass was mown, and the slash removed.



Before



After

Latest on Top Hut TSR - Margaret Ning

On Saturday 10 April, a small FOG group of five members once again wandered over Top Hut TSR to do an assessment of the weeds, and to put together a rough program of what/where/when we tackle over the next season. There were no nasty surprises, and we were able to do some weed removal even as we wandered. We managed to cross the road this time and found the western side possibly in better condition than the eastern side. It was gratifying to see that the thistle spraying undertaken over the last many months has been totally effective in terms of no viable seeds being apparent. There are still rosettes to tackle next year.

It was a warmish day, a little windy, but very comfortable, and it is always possible to find a secluded spot for lunch. Lunch time is always a great opportunity to discuss what we have seen and what else we could do. Our neighbour has put in a new fence along the north-west portion of our Back Creek boundary, but we are still missing a 15m portion of fence on the north-eastern side of the eastern part of the TSR.

Our main targets over next spring/summer will include all thistle species, tragopogon, flat weed, potentilla (very little), horehound (not much), and in fact, in the face of a determined group of wanderers, we would be able make a very decent impression on the weed load.

NOTICE - while wandering, I lost my trusty weed 'whacker', so I would love to see a really huge turn out of volunteers for the next working bee, as that is the best chance of someone finding it again!!! Pretty please!!!

Many thanks to FOG members Narelle and John for putting up June and me on the Friday evening, which shortened the Saturday considerably. This option will be open again next working bee.

Visit to pink flannel flower – Andrew Zelnick

Recently, FOG's hotspots group was alerted to the mass flowering of **pink flannel flower** (*Actinotus forsythii*). A mass flowering took place in the Blue Mountains and parts of the coastal escarpment which excited many people. While these flowers are not considered threatened, their flowering events are rare. The FOG group visited an area in the vicinity of Wishing Well, Bonnie Lookout and Echo Point Lookout, just south of Bundanoon, within Morton NP. Seeds from this species remain in the soil for many years, and require a chemical found in bushfire smoke, and the right seasonal conditions to germinate. We were also treated to many other flowers, including the parson's bands orchid (*Eriochilus cucullatus*).

References: More on the recent flowering may be found in a [recent article in the Conservation](#), in the [Sydney Morning Herald](#), and [iNaturalist](#).



Pink flannel flower close-up (top), Pink flannel flower mass flowering (left), parson's bands orchid (centre) and mountain devil (*Lambertia formosa*) – Andrew Zelnick

Yarramundi Grasslands

Sunday 11 April. Six people attended the work party on a perfect morning - a sunny day with the ground wet with dew. Paul Archer, Hongzhang Xu and Michael Wellington planted 120 Themeda tube stock - all went in without fuss, and were watered, marked and mulched; great plants purchased from Cool Country Natives. The planting was into an area first herbicided some years ago to remove Chilean Needle Grass but had to be sprayed again recently to defeat new growth of Paspalum and Plantain. Marg and Sarah did other weeding and seed sowing nearby. John darted to support all.



Yarramundi grasslands - Paul Archer, Hongzhang Xu and Michael Wellington

Donations to support FOG

FOG makes small grants to researchers, educators and on-ground projects, known as grassy ecosystem grants, a highly effective way to support grassy ecosystems. It also supports FOG's TSR project.

To support these projects, you can make a tax-deductible donation to FOG Public Fund by:

Direct debit: BSB 633 000, A/c 153493960 (Bendigo Bank).

Please include your name and advise our Treasurer treasurer@fog.org.au.

Cheque: payable to 'Friends of Grasslands Public Fund',

Mailed to Treasurer, Friends of Grasslands Inc., PO Box 440, Jamison Centre, ACT 2614.

Note: if you want your donation to go to the TSR project please indicate this when you make your donation.

A receipt for tax purposes will be sent to you. You may also include a donation when you complete your membership application/renewal form. **THANKS**

News Roundup

FOG's new president

Many FOG members, friends and stakeholders will be very aware of the contribution of Jamie Pittock to grassy ecosystems conservation, and FOG acknowledged this when it made him an Honorary Life Member at its 2020 AGM, recognising his "outstanding contribution to grassy ecosystems since the 1980s, his contribution to Friends of Grasslands and more broadly his leadership and public advocacy of Australian conservation". Jamie was elected as president of FOG at our 2021 AGM.

Jamie's contribution to grasslands commenced in Victoria in the 1980s when he was an advocate for the conservation of natural temperate grasslands in Victoria. Subsequently he joined the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) where he undertook the leading role in arranging Commonwealth Government support for a number of very important grassland conservation projects. Amongst these was the grassy ecosystems grants program. FOG received one of these grants which led to its work on Old Cooma Common. Jamie's behind-the-scenes support for FOG's project was an extremely valuable contribution to the project and laid the foundation for much of FOG's subsequent successful on-ground projects. In

addition, with Jamie's encouragement, FOG and WWF formed a very close relationship which lasted many years and was extremely important to FOG in building its networks, credibility and advocacy work.



In 2009 Jamie moved to Canberra and began to study for his PhD. At that time, he initiated FOG's partnership with the National Capital Authority for restoration of National Capital Lands. That project has been sustained and enormously successful. Jamie's role as organiser, co-ordinator, liaising with NCA, public advocate, team builder, technical expert, mentor, and his enormous personal commitment have epitomised what an ideal conservationist is, and grasslands are extremely fortunate to have him as a champion.

The statistics on the number of work parties and other events, volunteer hours and so on on National Lands are truly impressive. When the group commenced, the tasks ahead looked daunting, but weeds have been cleared and many areas reseeded so that we now have extensive areas of high quality grasslands and open grassy woodlands. Work parties have added to the area covered and in 2020, FOG won a major grant to clear undesirable trees and restore grasslands at Blue Gum Point, managed by Transport Canberra and City Services. Many of the volunteers attracted previously, had little experience of conservation but now love regularly attending these work parties and gaining a sense of achievement and sheer enjoyment.

Jamie's list of professional achievements and writings is truly outstanding and his appointment as Professor, Fenner School of Environment and Society, is truly deserved. He is an important member of the Wentworth Group of Concerned Scientists. In his professional life he shows the same openness, humility, friendliness, and preparedness to act as advisor and mentor - truly great personal qualities. His willingness to appear in the media and be a public advocate for water, grasslands and conservation issues are major contributions to Australian society.

FOG features in the Blade - Geoff Robertson

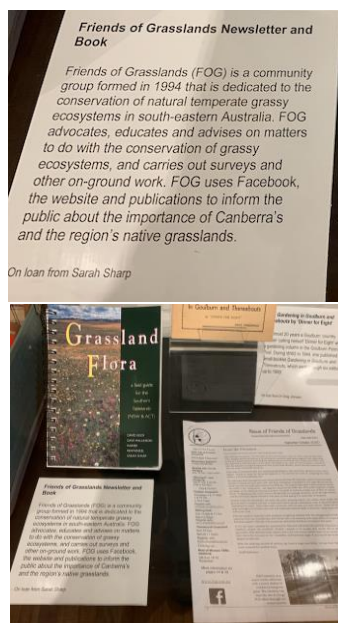
Did you see *The Blade: Australia's love affair with lawn*, an exhibition put on by the Canberra Museum and Gallery (CMAG) (21 Nov-20 Feb)?

Its promotion stated that "Australians love grass; kicking a footy, running under a sprinkler, having a barbeque in the backyard and spending time in the garden. Cultivating a perfect lawn – a status symbol to which all could aspire – required a commitment of time, money and focus. Millions of Australians rose to the challenge. CMAG's new travelling exhibition, *The Blade: Australia's love affair with lawn*, charts the history, tools and stories behind this passion.

Curated by Richard Heathcote, in conjunction with the Australian Garden History Society, the exhibition explores the history of lawn, from Indigenous land management practices through to modern gardening and lawn innovations. Come and discover why we continue to love 'the green'."

As with many exhibitions at GMAG, it was delightful and a reminder of a Canberra when people cared about their gardens.

FOG was asked to contribute and, arranged by Sarah Sharp, it featured a copy of *Grassland Flora* and a recent newsletter



(see images). A copy of Nancy Burbidge's *Australian Grasses* also featured.

Two advertisements by "Canturf", I thought were worth quoting - "Trespassers will be impressed" and "The best grass for your joint".

Keyacris scurra at Hall Cemetery

Trevor Preston recorded this April sighting of Key's Matchstick Grasshopper (*Keyacris scurra*) on Canberra Nature Map. The grasshopper was approx 12-15mm, possibly a late instar nymph according to Roger Farrow.

Trevor said "it is a known population, but good to know they are still there". He saw six individuals. "They were much easier to spot as the cemetery had recently been mowed. This is my first sighting here since last September despite regular visits to this spot. Spotted in cloudy, windy conditions at 20°C, disproving my theory that they disappear on windy days."



FOG & NCA board member meeting at Gurubang Dhaura (Stirling) Park

Tuesday 13 April. Representatives from FOG (John Fitz Gerald, Mike Lewis (also with his Yarralumla Residents Group's hat on), Margaret Ning and Geoff Robertson) met National Capital Authority CEO (Sally Barnes), board members and staff at the gate on the corner of Hopetoun Cres and Fitzgerald St (see aerial photo) primarily to familiarise board members with the work undertaken to clear the former pine plantation and replant with indigenous trees, shrubs and some forbs. It was also an opportunity to familiarise new board members with the NCA-FOG partnership. It was a perfect sunny, still morning, just damp from dew.

FOG's National Lands Group Coordinator, Jamie Pittock, was unable to attend, but had pre-distributed highly informative briefing notes. The notes were greatly appreciated. Sally Barnes welcomed the resident group/FOG representatives, board members and staff, and spoke very highly of the partnership and its contact with the resident's group. Almost twenty people attended.

Before walking to the former pine area, John explained who FOG was, the elements of its partnership with NCA, and the quoted statistics to the number of work parties, volunteers and volunteer hours since 2009. He then explained the work that had occurred since the last board meeting at the site, two years earlier, and what the visitors might expect to see at the site. He also outlined what FOG would like the NCA to do to further the conservation and restoration at Gurubang Dhaura and other national lands. These asks have been previously



Corner of Hopetoun Cres and Fitzgerald St at the foot of the western end of Gurubang Dhaura Park. The brown area in the centre of the image is the restoration site of former pine plantation.

discussed with Sally, and this was an opportunity to brief the board members more fully. There were many questions and discussions - one matter that was emphasised was the need to recognise that this is Ngunawal land, where many important traditional features and sites remain, and the need to learn from their traditional land management practices.

Then it was off to explore the former pine forest where there was a fascinating interplay of native and exotic plants regenerating across the site, plus the new plantings which were showing plenty of signs of becoming established.

John and Margaret pointed out many of the indigenous and weed species, and opportunities that were being considered to favour the former and remove the latter. Then it was onto the Ridge where John and Peter Beutel (NCA) showed the group one of the scar trees on the stony ground, some lovely vegetation of old and newer trees, shrubs and forbs in what was previously an old blue gum planting - their successful removal of the massive blue gums (native, but not indigenous) had restored more openness, better vegetation structure and habitat, especially for rarer small birds. This was also an opportunity to informally raise issues and exchange contacts, which will assist our partnership to develop further.



John explaining a point along the ridge track at Gurubang Dhaura.

Light rail grasses debate - Sue Ross

While many friends of native grasslands would like to see more planted in Canberra there is a wide range of views on their desirability, attractiveness and suitability. A recent article in the Canberra Times [light rail grasses debate](#) about the

plantings along the tram route has elicited a wide range of adverse comments from CT readers. The nature of these comments indicates the Canberra community needs to be brought along with the appeal and rationale for such plantings. Comments include cynicism about maintenance, untidy look, and conflating dislike of the tram with dislike of the landscaping. While landscape architect Michael Reeves asks us to be patient while the plants settle in, we also need to recognise that natives do often require different situations from the exotics we are used to, and that they are rarely maintenance free. Weeds will grow anywhere they can find a foothold so timely weeding is a constant for a while. Maybe the spring flowering will help!

The Monaro grassland saga continues

Our newsletter has previously reported on the saga associated with the destruction of 30 hectares of Monaro grassland, largely thanks to reporting by the *Guardian*. As it has reported, two companies have been involved, Jam Land and Monaro Farming Systems (MFS). Richard Taylor, the older brother of Angus Taylor MP, is a principal of MFS, while Richard, Angus, Duncan and Bronwyn Taylor (Bronwyn is a member of the NSW upper house) have direct and indirect interests in Jam Land.

The *Guardian* recounted that in 2017 and 2018, Jam Land was investigated for illegally spraying 30 hectares of native, critically endangered grasslands near Delegate in southern NSW and was facing possible fines of up to \$1m. The company was recently found to have contravened the federal Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act but was not fined." However, it was ordered to remediate the land - a decision it is appealing.

Readers might recall that Angus Taylor approached the then environment minister, Josh Frydenberg, to discuss native grassland protection. According to the *Guardian* "A series of freedom of information requests showed he had meetings with senior departmental officials and that Frydenberg had asked his department whether it would be possible to weaken the protections, against scientific advice." According to the *Guardian* "Both he (Taylor) and Frydenberg have said the meeting was focused on the "technical aspects" of the grassland listing. Now it has emerged that technical work done to try to convince the federal government to change the law - the same law that the Taylors were being prosecuted under - was paid for by a NSW government grant." Further, according to the *Guardian* "(Stuart) Burge's work is believed to have formed the basis of Angus Taylor's arguments to Frydenberg in 2018. It was also sent to NSW Farmers, which used it to lobby about the stultifying effect of the federal environmental protection laws on agriculture. This led to a review chaired by Wendy Craik."

The latest revelation is that Burge was paid from a \$107,000 grant that was paid to MFS which had not sought the funds. There was a further allegation that Deputy Premier, John Barilaro, sought further funding of \$70,000 from LLS. However, the purpose of this is unknown. The NSW agriculture minister, Adam Marshall, has promised he would conduct "an internal review and produce documents about the grants after he confirmed that Local Land Services (LLS) offered the money to MFS in 2018 but the company had not applied." A more recent

article (9 Apr), describes actions by Bronwyn Taylor in this saga. As I know Bronwyn pretty well, I have written to her personally, urging her to take a more positive approach.

References: Anne Davies and Lisa Cox *Grants to farming group associated with Angus Taylor's brother to be reviewed* (Guardian 3 Mar). [Found here](#)

Anne Davies *Bronwyn Taylor urged NSW Nationals leader to intervene over grasslands protection* (Guardian 9 Apr). [Found here](#)

Responses to FOG's annual report

FOG's annual report was sent to all our ACT MLAs, Federal Canberra MPs and Senators, the Member for Eden-Monaro, and several other stakeholders. Many acknowledged it. Some with more to say said:

"Thanks so much for sending through your Annual Report. It's always a pleasure to read about the wonderful work FOG has done in the previous year. Looking forward to working with you for an even better 2021!" (Andrew Leigh)

"I recognise the great work that is undertaken by the Friends of Grasslands in making sure our beautiful and unique Canberra ecosystems continue to thrive and grow, to be enjoyed by future generations for years to come. The expertise, advocacy and stewardship of FOG over the flora and fauna of our native grasslands is a great contribution to the ACT government's and my own vision in protecting and strengthening the ACT as the Bush Capital it is renowned for being." (Kind regards, Mick Gentleman MLA).

"Thank you kindly for sending Ms Lawder a copy of the Friends of Grasslands' Annual Report. It sounds like you've all been kept very busy! Please do get in touch if there is anything Ms Lawder can assist you with, she would be more than happy to help." (Nicola Crampton, Senior Adviser, Office of Nicole Lawder MLA).

"Thank you for sending your annual report. I would like to remain connected with the Friends of Grasslands - please let

me know of upcoming events. (Peter Cain MLA) We advised him of our Calendar."

"Thank you for sharing the FOG annual report. Congratulations on 2020, despite many challenges it is great to read that your membership has increased and you were still able to run various work parties around the region. I also note on your website there is an event at Franklin Grasslands next week. Can you tell me a bit about that, I may be able to pop out for an hour to lend a hand." (Leanne Castley MLA). Leanne was able to join us at Franklin on 7 April.

"Thank you for sending through the report. I look forward to having a look!" (Dr Marisa Paterson MLA)

FOG's annual report may be found at: [here](#)



Leanne Castley MLA at our planting day at Franklin Grasslands - Photo Andrew Zelnick

Welcome new members!

Fay Wareham ACT
Carolyn & Norman Mueller NSW
Melita & Richard Milner NSW (re-joined)
Marianne Albury-Colless NSW
Rosalind Ellinger VIC
Julia Raine - ACT

Friends of Grasslands Inc.

PO Box 440, Jamison Centre ACT 2614