FRIENDS OF MOUNT PAINTER NEWS

JUNE 2016

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JUNE'S WORK PARTY

Date:	**Sunday, 19 June**
When:	9am – 12.30pm
Location:	Summit Path and surrounds
Meet:	At the gate at the start of the summit path, above the water tanks
Tasks:	Removing pink and mesh guards from trees that have outgrown the need for them
Wear:	Warm clothes and sturdy footwear.
Bring:	Please bring some drinking water, a mug and some food to share for morning tea. Other drinks will be provided.

Friends of Mount Painter's monthly work parties are held on the morning of the third Sunday of the month. July's work party will be on Sunday morning, 17 July. On Sunday, 3 August we will work with Friends of Aranda Bushland on their patch.

Rainbow over the western slopes of Mt Painter. Photo by Fiona Fraser

SOME RECENT HAPPENINGS ON MOUNT PAINTER

Autumn tasks. Friends of Mt Painter have been cutting out woody weeds, especially Sweet Briar, on the eastern and southern slopes of the hill. We have also been whacking out Verbascum rosettes (pictured at the right of the left photo below.) And David and Dick have cleaned up weedy sections of the summit path with their brushcutters.

The Green Army helped with these tasks when they spent a day on Mount Painter in May. They also sprayed Paterson's Curse in the gully on the eastern side of the hill (Horse Paddock Gully).

Macquarie Primary School. Continuing their exploration of the possibilities of Mount Painter as a local place to learn and exercise, a small party visited the reserve in May.

Animals on the reserve.

Kangaroos on the reserve and in the surrounding paddocks were counted over two days in late April and mid May. The average of the three counts, which ranged from 256 to 291, was 271.

There have also been sightings of up to three ***Euros*** on several occasions. They have darker, coarser fur, a stockier body, and rounder ears than Eastern greys. They also don't move quite as elegantly as the greys but they do prefer rocky terrain so they would be right at home on Mt Painter.

Photo by Cath Busby

Photo by Fiona Fraser

Some rather less welcome visitors were a herd of ***cattle*** that roamed from the Tullys' paddocks to the far side of the reserve before being returned to their rightful home. A few weeks later, some ***sheep*** came through holes in the fence made by kangaroos. Perhaps they were attracted by the more enticing feed available on the reserve.

In March, the Parks Service had contractors targetting ***rabbits*** on the reserve. They used the information collected last August during a joint Friends of Mount Painter – Friends of Aranda Bushland work party, when we GPSed the position of burrows and warrens. Any additional locations found since then were added to provide as complete a record as possible. Before and after the contractors' time on the reserve, the rangers did a spotlight counts along a fixed route on the reserve. The result: very few rabbits and 6 foxes.

Mapping blackberries. When we mapped the rabbit burrows last year, we also collected information about blackberry locations. Gavin has recently covered the entire hill, picking up additional locations that we missed.

PHILIP BELL

We were saddened by the news that Philip Bell, who was Friends of Mount Painter's first President from 1989 to 1995, had died on 26 May. We owe a great debt to Philip for his championing of the natural world throughout his life. The Cook community has an ongoing reminder in our Nature Reserve of his contribution to preserving, improving and extending the bushland estate of the ACT. His energy and foresight saw the establishment of the Friends of Mount Painter in 1989. He was a leader in the campaign to extend the boundaries of the existing small reserve to include the entire hill, with its magnificent 360 degree views over the surrounding hills and valleys.

Building on the strong foundations he laid, Friends of Mount Painter has survived and flourished since its start. So we were delighted that, when we celebrated our 25th birthday in 2014, he and other long standing friends were able to join us.

Philip Bell, Barbara Daly and Jean Geue. Photo by Irene Davies

A FROG STORY

At the end of December 2011, I noticed frogs calling in the small dam at the southern end of the Wildflower Triangle. I began recording their calls three or four times a year, just after darkness fell, and contributed the recordings to the ACT and Region Frogwatch program. From the 17 recording sessions to date, we can recognise which species are calling and see that:

- Five species have been recorded.
- Most species are recorded in spring and fewest in summer.
- Four species occur equally commonly: the Plains Froglet, Smooth Toadlet, and the Common Eastern Froglet
- Peron's Tree Frog, the 'Maniacal Cackler, is least frequently recorded, and none have been heard since spring 2014.
- No frogs have been recorded since last spring, the first time there have been none at two successive recordings.
- The dam was dry at the April recording this year, for the first time since recording was started, and the two dams lower down the drainage line in Aranda Bushland were also dry. Will the forecast, wetter winter bring the frogs back?

The dam's several faces

December 2011

October 2012 when all five species were recorded. The pink colour is Water Fern.

January 2014

April 2016. Lush but there's no water

The data for this site are all available at the Frogwatch web site: http://fw.ginninderralandcare.org.au/.