

Removal of invasive exotic plants along the Ginninderra Creek.

The riparian buffer zone between Florey Drive Bridge and the Walk Bridge at Swift Place, Macgregor.



Project Description

Over the past 10 years significant ACT and Federal Government funding and many hundreds of hours of volunteer time, has been spent controlling suckers and other regrowth from invasive tree species along the Lower Ginninderra Creek (LGC).

The Macgregor Landcare Group (MLG) and Ginninderra Catchment Group (GCG) are looking for community input on a project proposal to remove invasive mature stands of exotic trees (including Poplar sp, Willows and African Acacia sp) growing in close proximity to both sides of the creek line from the Florey Drv bridge to the walk bridge near Swift Place.

The groups have received funding for the Lower Ginninderra Creek Riparian Restoration Project (LGCRRP) from the ACT Government to commence control measures for woody weeds along the LGC and replant with natives. Work began on this project in September 2011 and will continue through to the end of June 2013, to date we have removed 55 2t trucks loads of woody weeds from the lower Ginninderra Creek. On ground works have been carried out by Conservation Volunteers Australia Crews (10), Job Futures youth crews (12) and ongoing Landcare group working bees. Works include the removal of small to medium woody weeds; species targeted include Privet, Box Elder, Poplar Suckers and Willow regrowth. Through this project it has become clear that dealing with the regrowth as an ongoing management process is made far more difficult and expensive by leaving mature 'source' trees in situ.

The first stage of an overall push to establish the only '*exotic tree free*' stretch along the Ginninderra Creek would be the removal of highly invasive trees within the immediate riparian zone from Florey Drive Bridge to the Walk Bridge at Swift Place. The reason for a push for a native tree only section is to reduce the cost of ongoing sucker control.

Of approximately 88 mature invasive trees, 30 are considered priority targets for removal because of their close proximity to the creek and their extremely high yearly regrowth habit. This project would initially remove the 30 high priority trees, then use remaining funds to target lower priority trees as decided through community consultation.

After community feedback is addressed, if the project is to go ahead professional contractors would be engaged to undertake tree removal with a focus on minimal impact on the area. The optimum time to remove adult poplars is early spring just after new leaf set when energy reserves within the tree and root system are at their lowest.

The reduction in cost, both physical and financial, for managing the follow up regrowth along the creek will be a significant benefit to the community.

During this project the MLG and GCG would also like to reduce the impact of home garden plants on public open space by replacing invasive species with natives. We would like to mark some invasive species bordering the creek reserve with tape and, if residents are happy to replace these plants provide native replacements (with equal or better bird habitat). Some of the plants we would target are Cotoneaster, Pyracantha and Privet. All have berries in the autumn and birds feast on the berries and deposit them in nature reserves and other gardens with their droppings.

High priority adult trees to be removed will be flagged with Red tape lower priority trees with orange. You may have seen these trees being marked over the last couple of weeks or in the next couple. Only exotic trees will be marked.

Proposed timeline 2012

Completed- Identify invasive trees and assign removal priority
30/05/12- Consult with local residents and collate all comments
30/06/12- Address community concerns through appropriate feedback
30/07/12- Engage contractors (if required)
30/10/12- Complete stage one removal
30/11/12- Re-planting
Ongoing follow up control over next 2 year

Poplars:

- Are high water users
- Spread quickly and dominate large areas creating a monoculture.
- Create blockage points in the creek diverting water and increasing localised erosion and flooding potential.
- Cause allergic reactions including hay fever and breathing difficulties (either directly or by collecting and transporting grass pollens in fluff)
- Add to the fire risk along the creek corridor, removal of exotic trees means more of the high habitat value native trees can remain.
- In large numbers require large scale, expensive and environmentally intrusive control (e.g. Oaks Estate)

Have Your Say (For or Against)

It is important that all local residents have the chance to comment so if you are for or against this project or just want some more information please contact the Ginninderra Catchment Group

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