



ParkCare

# 2023/24 Annual Planning Information Session

Date: Wednesday 26 July 2023

Time: 10am – 1pm

Location: Microsoft Webinar

## Introduction

The 2023/24 ParkCare Annual Planning Information Session seeks to provide ParkCare Patch Groups with an overview of priority work areas for ACT Parks and Conservation Service (PCS) in the coming financial year, providing broader contact on PCS priorities, and helping to inform individual annual planning sessions.

Speakers included:

- Renee Brawata, Office of Nature Conservation (previously Conservation Research)
- Harley Baker, Invasive Plants Control Program
- Mark Sweaney, Invasive Animals
- Adam Leavesley, Fire Management Unit
- Kate Boyd, Offsets

## Meeting Minutes

### Office of Nature Conservation

*Renee Brawata, Acting Director, Conservation Science and Programs, Office of Nature Conservation (ONC)*

[Note: Presentation Slides Attached]

Office of Nature Conservation (ONC) sits alongside PCS in the Environment, Heritage and Water Division of EPSDD. (Previously ONC was known as Conservation Research)

ONC conducts monitoring, research, and evaluation, undertakes assessments and provides advice, is involved in policy review and statutory planning, amongst a suit of other activities.

ONC is broken into 8 thematic teams: (1) Fauna, (2) Vegetation, (3) Urban Legends – CNCP, (4) Maps and Data, (5) Fire Ecology, (6) Adaptive Management Support Team, (7) Kangaroo Program and (8) Aquatic Team

### **Maps and Data**

Manages maps and data, including ecological asset mapping.

Canberra Nature Mapr data is uploaded nightly and informs environmental impact assessments and other works.

### **Kangaroo Team**

Undertake population estimates, herbage mass monitoring, and the fertility control program. Look at the science aspect, and management through resilient landscapes.

### **Adaptive Management Team**

Conduct ecosystem condition assessments, for five different systems including forests, grasslands, woodlands, bogs and fens, aquatic and riparian.

Support research and monitoring within Parks, so data is fit for purpose and informs management.

### **Fire Team**

Focusing on fire ecology

Post-fire in NNP, look at how does bushfire and planned burning affect sub-alpine woodland. Did this through acoustic data, camera trapping and habitat/vegetation surveys. About to start analysis on three years' worth of data. This will seek to inform the future fire management activities in Namadgi.

### **Fauna Team**

Threatened Species and Monitoring.

Work closely with Tidbinbilla on captive breeding and release programs.

Examples include Little Eagle (migratory that come back to the ACT to breed), Greater Glider (distribution in Namadgi NP).

19 projects across this team across a range of species.

General Fauna: we also want to keep common species common, including dunnart and antechinus.

### **Vegetation**

Broad functions including monitoring threatened grasslands/woodlands, delivering on action plans, undertaking broad plant community type mapping, and helping develop decision and support tools.

Commencing now a strategic restoration plan, funding has only just come through to be used over the next two years – watch this space.

Working closely with ANBG and ANU on targeted research projects.

### **Aquatic Team**

Fish surveys

Urban lakes fish stocking project, looking at option of introducing small native fish over the coming 12 months.

Fisheries management policy and biosecurity.

Threatened species monitoring and surveying (for example, Montane Spiny Crayfish)

### Urban Legends – Connecting Nature, Connecting People (CNCP)

## Urban Legends - Connecting Nature Connecting People



Evidence-based tools which support the provision of ecological advice to the planning system and other key stakeholders, including the **Urban ACT Ecological Network**



**Biodiversity Sensitive Urban Design Guide** to inform protection, restoration and ecologically sensitive development through the new Planning System for the ACT



**Canberra Urban Biodiversity Surveys** and expanded **Canberra Nature Map** for citizen scientists to contribute data about urban wildlife habitat and change over time



Restoration and protection of **20 priority urban sites** that will deliver urban cooling, enhance connected habitat and provide community amenity, including concept planning to renaturalise **Sullivans Creek**.



Co-design and incorporation of **Ngunnawal knowledge and language**



Canberra Urban Biodiversity Surveys (CUBS), and expanding to Canberra Nature Map. Includes surveying 7 species group surveys across urban green spaces in Canberra, with citizen science data feeding in, also undertaking vegetation mapping.

### The Ecological Network

There is a Draft Urban ACT Ecological Network, providing a vision for a network of functionally connected habitats across ecosystems in Urban Canberra. Informing Biodiversity Sensitive Urban Design (BSUD). Interim outputs available through the [ACT Ecological Network Dashboard](#).

### Question and Answer

*Q: Monitoring - How can ParkCare help? How can ParkCare find out about all the coloured pegs and tags in the reserves? (Mike, Isaacs Ridge and Mount Mugga Mugga ParkCare)*

A: The coloured pegs and tags in reserves are often placed there by Rangers, best to reach out to CNP for this information.

*Q: Renee are there specific studies conducted don urban development Noisy Miners and decline woodland birds (Waltraud, Friends of Mount Majura)*

A: Woodland bird surveys are mostly undertaken by Offsets, but Offsets work closely with COG. Noisy miners is on Laura Rainer in Offset's radar, unsure of particular research happening in this space.

Comment: Waltraud and all see this COG report re trends Woodland birds [Long-term trends in ACT woodland birds 1998–2019 \(canberrabirds.org.au\)](https://www.canberrabirds.org.au) and previous reports here [COG Woodland Bird Monitoring Project - Canberra Birds](#) (Kathy, Mt Taylor ParkCare)

Comment: We observed crash of woodland bird species diversity and frequency north Watson Fair within 10 years of development, I think because of Noisy Miners moving in - studies seem to indicate these urban dwellers move up to 300 m deep into woodlands adjacent to suburbia - this has consequences for the size of reserves, I think. planting in a certain way doesn't change invasion as we observe... Most studies BTW that are carried out in reg to planting / Noisy Miner have been done in rural areas according to Fenner School. (Waltraud, Friends of Mount Majura)

*Q: Is the population team's Strategic Restoration Plan informed by Lori Gould's Landscape Improvement Plans? (John, Friends of the Pinnacle)*

A: Yes. 2-3 showcase sites incorporating some of these plans, and then a more strategic vision of ACT over the next five years.

*Q: Would Renee's team undertake analysis of regeneration needs after controlled burns? (Lisa, Friends of Aranda Bushland)*

A: Taken on notice, Renee will refer on to the appropriate person.

*Q: Does the Fire management team work with Ngunnawal people in different ways of fire management? (Wendy, Farrer Ridge ParkCare)*

A: Consult with Ngunnawal community regularly, and work with fire management in cultural burning space.

*Q: If groups have queries for ONC is it best that these are directed via District Rangers? (Julia, Friends of Gossan Hill)*

A: We work closely with PCE< but our focus is on science aspect to inform land management. If you ever have questions, happy for you to reach out – [renee.brawata@act.gov.au](mailto:renee.brawata@act.gov.au)

*Q: What about potentially present species such as Phascogales in NNP - surveys? Also, how is the sand slug/deposits in the Murrumbidgee being managed for fish habitat (deep hollows) - mining? (Lois, Friends of Wanniasa Hills)*

A: Taken on notice, Renee will direct onto the aquatic team.

**Links provided by Renee:**

ARCGIS Dashboard: [ACT Ecological Network Dashboard](#).

Connecting Nature, Connecting People: <https://www.environment.act.gov.au/act-nrm/biodiversity/connecting-nature-connecting-people>  
[cncp@act.gov.au](mailto:cncp@act.gov.au)

## Biosecurity: Invasive Plants Control Program

Harley Baker, Senior Invasive Species Officer, Invasive Plants Control Program, Biosecurity and Rural Services

[Note: Presentation Slides Attached]

### Challenges

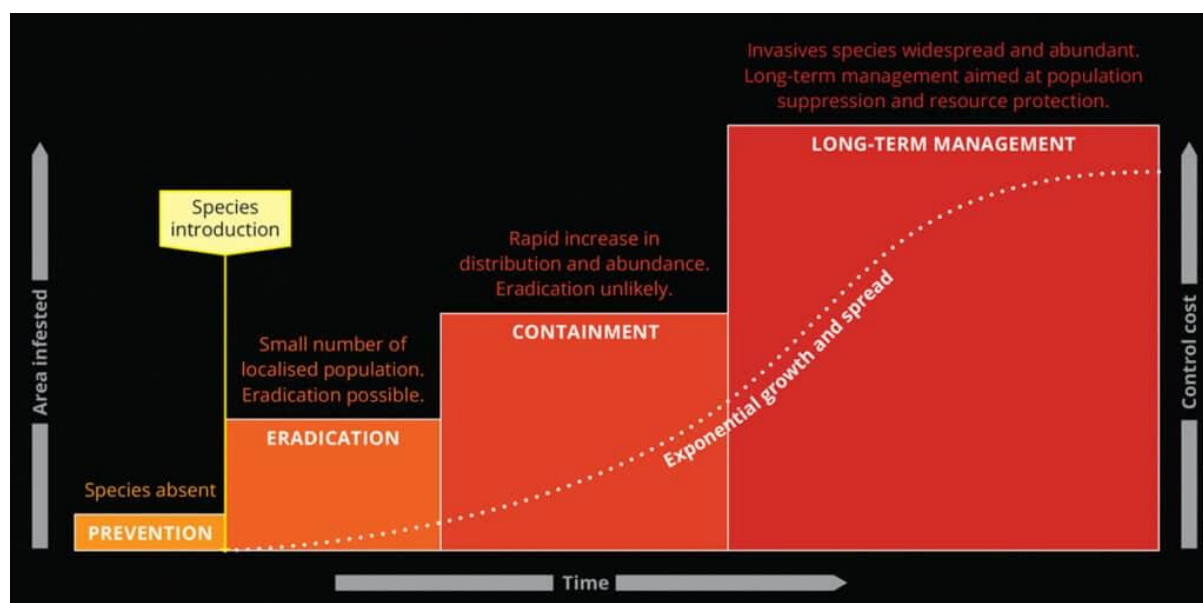
Established weeds are the most challenging to deal with, with a long history and long-established seed bank, and we can often run into a state of complacency with some weeds.

We often walk into reserves and see things that stand out (e.g. Cotoneaster covered in berries), but have walked through a patch of African Lovegrass to get there.

Established weeds require a lot of resourcing and present a higher threat level. The work is ongoing, time-intensive, costly, and resource intensive. The longevity also means the work can become demoralising for both staff and volunteers.

The ACT has many transformer species, capable of moving into healthy eco-systems and dominating them. These are the key priorities for PCS. E.g. is Serrated Tussock.

### The Invasion Curve



Source: <https://invasives.org.au/blog/the-invasion-curve-explained/>

Prevention is better than control. If we can stop it before it starts, we are ahead of the curve.

There is a 1 in 100 dollar return on investment for prevention.

Biosecurity is currently working with an environmental economist to understand return on investment (time and resourcing) to address incursions.

The economic return on protecting Namadgi National Park alone and maintaining the ecological values there over the next 20 years, would provide a monetary return (not including social/wellbeing benefits) of \$75 million.

## 2022-2023 Operations Dashboard

Link: <https://actgov.maps.arcgis.com/apps/dashboards/5449adb632884d68aeb585e3e73dde99>

ParkCare recorded 552.94 ha of treatment.

Key species targeted by Park Carers included St John's Wort, Woody Weeds, Verbascum and Cootamundra Wattle

Great to see control work recorded for Blackberry and African Lovegrass also.

The scale of volume of work just by Park Carers, for people who are volunteering and putting in their own time, is phenomenal. People should be proud of the work they are doing, and it is incredibly valued by parks staff and rangers.

Please remember to keep mapping untreated and treated weeds. Training is provided to volunteers to use the Field Maps App.

### New Colours on the Dashboard:

Green: New and emerging species (smaller, less dense populations, usually focused in particular areas. Still aiming for eradication whether locally to a site, or territory-wide)

Purple: Containment (species beyond eradication, but still trying to contain to a specific area)

Orange: Transformer Species (High risk species, capable of altering ecosystems, including high-quality areas)

Blue: Other Invasive Plants and Weeds – e.g. Nodding Thistle and St Johns Wort (while these species can in certain circumstances become quite dense and appear a significant problem, they are often dependent on weather/seasonal factors. When looking at prioritising value/economics they are less of a priority than other species)

### **New and Emerging Species: Fireweed**

Focus for Biosecurity Response Team

Still classified as new and emerging.

First records are from 2012/2013, at Commonwealth Park. Several other large outbreaks in Coombs/Wright. Currently most problematic in Taylor through nursery stock.

Mostly individual plants found on the side of the road.

Biosecurity do weekly/fortnightly visits to sites for treatment and monitoring.

### **Non-Local Native Plants**

Link:

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1UwjgpX8Y6dYPabtUA84ZsWDu7MYcbCzU/edit?rtpof=true&sd=true#gid=644747902>

Dr Paul Downey Risk Assessment: completed the Naturalised Non-Local Native Plant List for the ACT.

What PCS uses to prioritise species, and a good tool for ParkCare use.

Example: Sifton Cassinia:

Considered native just across the ACT near Mulligans flat but is the ACT outside of native range?  
Plant is widespread in NSW. These notes are identified in the list by Dr Downey.

It's often difficult to label some of these non-native plants as invasive, there is a lot of grey area, so before we start targeting large areas of reserve for control work, we need to step back and have a better look at our priorities. For example:

- Are we getting caught up tackling Cassinia when there is Chilean Needlegrass or African Lovegrass moving in at pressure points on the reserve boundary?
- Are any of these plants performing a role in the ecosystem, that if removed, could be replaced by something with more negative effects?

### **Integrated Control Methods**

Trying to get more bio controls happening in the ACT.

Working with CSIRO on African Boxthorn Rust.

Still learning in this space on what controls work best.

Manual removal more effective in smaller areas during wet periods, for example, in orchid sites.

Revegetation and mulch useful for degraded areas after control work, for example, broad-leaf weed spread like Paterson's Curse.

Flame-weeding and selective slashing. Have undertaken a trial of Opuntia species using flame-weeding. Using slashing to improve Grassland conditions, slowing and reducing the density of species. Undertook a trial of slashing St Johns Wort on Red Hill, and while it doesn't kill the plant it does stop it from seeding that year.

Using drones for broad-scale control, including Serrated Tussock at Kowen. Positive outcomes, covering large areas rapidly.

### **Reporting and Useful Apps**

Canberra NatureMapr: Data is now incorporated daily into the non-treated weeds map. Whilst it doesn't replace mapping in treated weeds, it is a useful tool to see what species have been recorded and provide a visual ID tool.

iNaturalist: Haven't imported this data into the maps, but highly valuable tool and staff are encouraged to use it.

NSW Weedwise – provides comprehensive information on control methods.

### **Question and Answer**

*Q: Harley at Mt Taylor have been reluctant to map because our impact is so small given the infestation and may be interpreted as being 'controlled' when in fact it's out of control (Kathy, Mount Taylor ParkCare)*

A: All data is valuable to capture when it comes to mapping, as over time we can understand trends.

*Q: Vectors for fireweed spread? (John, Friends of the Pinnacle)*

A: Fireweed has a fluffy seed head so vectors typically include wind, animals and vehicles. Currently finding the biggest vector is importation of turf and nursery stock.

*Q: Best practice to control patch of CNG monoculture? PCS does not longer permit anymore to mulch to suppress germination, reduce nutrients and buy time to collect native and direct seed. (Waltraud, Friends of Mount Majura)*

A: Maybe a conversation with the area Ranger. Mulching is a good tool for monoculture, trying to control purely with chemical and praying can be problematic as tend to get reinfestation.

Comment: PCS CNP North does not allow mulching anymore; it seems there is a believe of spontaneous creation of native cover at sprayed monocultures of CNG where no native grass or herbs occurred. (Waltraud, Friends of Mount Majura)

*Q: Harley - re: working on best areas, the PCT/Quality layer has dropped off Field Maps Weed maps. Was that regarded as no longer useful? (Julia, Friends of Gossan Hill)*

A: This layer in ArcGIS was deemed to contain too much sensitive information, so it has been removed. It is still useful for Rangers in planning work in reserves.

*Q: I saw an article recently about a variety of rust developed by CSIRO Canberra that is being trialled for the control of fleabane. Any possibility to trial in the Canberra Nature Reserves? (John, Oakey Hill ParkCare)*

A: The fleabane rust was released by CSIRO across multiple sites in the ACT. The sites were selected by and are monitored by CSIRO.

*Q: Can we get 2 way communication regarding CNM sightings - for example tell me to go back and see if more plants in area or let me know of treatments that have occurred? Could be valuable to have feedback. (Lisa, Friends of Aranda Bushland)*

A: I understand that there is already good two-way communication in place between Biosecurity staff and certain Nature Map reports. We do not monitor every report, focusing on the high risk and new incursion species. Any report that is deemed to be in these categories will be responded to by staff with an indication of if and/or when the site will be controlled. This is followed up with a post when the work is done.

## Invasive Animals and Overabundant Wildlife

*Mark Sweaney, Manager, Invasive Animals and Overabundant Wildlife, Biosecurity and Rural Services*

### **Aerial Control Program**

Primarily targeting feral deer and pigs, using thermally assisted shooting.

Second year focusing on large part of Namadgi, Googong and Murrumbidgee River Corridor using this method.

Removed about 500 animals.

Supplemented with on-ground programs that we continue for deer/pigs.

Both methods need to happen.



One of the priorities for this program is to target areas where we know there are populations that could easily establish in town. More pigs in peri-urban areas (for example, golf course in Kambah). Best way to manage is to keep source populations down.

### **Rabbit Control**

More work done in how we control rabbit populations.

Working with a new contractor, doing further procurement to have access to additional contractors.

Prioritising a new method – particularly for new areas/reserves.

Have had difficulty with poisoning, particularly implementing in town due to restrictions on location, types of poison and increased carcass collection. Biocontrols are also less effective at present.

Moving to a model that has shown effective at Mulligans, including fumigating burrows and conducting thermal-assisted night-time shooting.

Implemented this year across Ainslie, Majura, Pleasant and Percival Hill, since May.

Ainslie and Majura coming to an end now, a significant undertaking.

Show positive results. Mount Pleasant was 20> and now <1 per square kilometre.

This method can be completed all year around rather than seasonally.

Working with Defence and TCCS to put a buffer around work that has been undertaken.

Red Hill has undergone fumigation works, but has not yet been followed up with thermal shooting. Both need to work together to generate positive results in population control.

### **Kangaroo Management Program**

Office of Nature Conservation conduct population counts and do biomass measurements to provide conservation advice. PCS implements the control.

Only place right now that is counted and above density is Mt Taylor. This is good news, particularly if heading back into a dry period.

### **Question and Answer**

*Q: Your database has changed recently. How do Parkcarers currently report rabbit burrow locations? (Warren, Friends of the Pinnacle)*

A: Have change the mapping quite recently for warrens, getting it all in the same place to move to a weeds-style dashboard. Will ensure this map is accessible for volunteers.

*Q: Are feral cats considered a threat? Are they targeted at all? (John, Friends of the Pinnacle)*

A: The way we approach feral animal control is to control their impact. We have to have a method to effectively control, and people are working on this around the country. For cats, there is no method that is effective enough right now to control the population. Similar story with foxes.

*Q: Is Tugg Hill monitored for rabbits? (Cath, Friends of Tuggeranong Hill)*

A: All conservation land in ACT is monitored using spotlight sampling, which gives an indication of rabbit densities. It is representative sample, so does not capture every part of the reserve. If you know of a heavily infested area, please flag with Rangers/ParkCare and we can sample these areas.

Tuggeranong Hill has two spotlight transects. We fumigate a large number of reserves and Namadgi. If a reserve is below threshold, or around that line, we fumigate regardless, as this keeps the population at a manageable level.

*Q: You're working on rabbits in reserves but what happens when they spread into residential areas? (Ross, Red Hill Regenerators)*

A: New funding with TCCS will help. Meeting with them soon to put together a plan for the new funding. It's not a significant sum, so will work with TCCS on their priorities and the buffer areas that will assist with conservation areas.

*Q: Is there a schedule of control work that we can see? Also kangaroo counts (Lisa, Friends of Aranda Bushland)*

A: Once we do the planning, there will be a schedule, but likely won't be finalised for a number of months. Kangaroo Counts are run by the Office of Nature Conservation.

*Q: Why did some local people around Red Hill complain that they heard shooting of roos? (Wendy, Farrer Ridge ParkCare)*

A: There are sensitivities around this program, we do receive large amounts of community feedback, particularly around Red Hill. You can hear shots if close enough, we use suppressed fire arms but it only cuts down noise so much.

*Q: The rabbits around Mt Ainslie are still very digging up plant roots and mulch, any ideas on how to stop them? (Annette, Mount Ainslie Weeders)*

A: Still got some time left in Majura and Ainslie. If they are still causing damage after a month or so, please advise of location and we can follow up.

#### **General Comments:**

*Yes rabbits much reduced on Mt Majura, congratulation to the team! except some residential areas abutting reserve; see also Ross comment. (Waltraud, Friends of Mount Majura)*

## Bushfire Operations Plan: Fire Management

*Adam Leavesley, Manager, Prescribed Burning and Research Utilisation, Fire Management Unit*

There is a draft burns program for 2023-2024 that is currently pending approvals.

Burns are identified in the regional fire management plan, with a few additions added in due to the fuel build up from La Nina. Cultural burns are also able to be proposed by Ngunnawal representatives.

The draft Bushfire Operation Plan (BOP) is subject to available resources, including budget and staffing with the necessary skills to deliver on particular components.

It is approved by the Conservator and the ESA Commissioner.

Burns under approval include Bruce Ridge, Pialligo, Bullen Range, Mt Taylor, Kowen, Rob Roy, Black Mountain, Namadgi National Park and Pine Island.

There are a number of ecological (eco) burns, and more and more proposals are coming in.

The final BOP for 2023-24 is likely to be approved by October.

ParkCare will advise volunteers when the BOP is approved and available online via ACTMAPI.

After this, groups will be given 24/48 hours' notice when a burn will be happening, as this is the final window of confirmation based on the conditions for the burn.

### **Question and Answer**

*Q: Does your team also do risk/hazard assessments on non-PCS managed land (Outer APZ block)? (Julia, Friends of Gossan Hill)*

A: The Fire Management Unit (FMU) is responsible for delivering on the requirements of the Emergencies Act on nearly all ACT Gov land – including EPSDD and TCCS managed land (excludes land managed by Education Department and Suburban Land Agency).

*Q: Can you identify the location for the small burn on Mt Taylor please (Kathy, Mount Taylor ParkCare)*

A: Not at this stage, will take on notice.

*Q: Its TCCS block, how do we find out if assessments are made? (Julia, Friends of Gossan Hill)*

A: Please send through specific locations to ParkCare and we can advise. There are 700 sites for fuel hazard assessments.

*Q: How effective is burning as a treatment for African Lovegrass? (John, Friends of the Pinnacle)*

A: This would need to be referred to fire ecologists at Office of Nature Conservation and also Rural Services. They have been using burning to knock down ALG and then spraying the area, unsure of the results. We have been burning out there for three years in a row.

Comment: I ask because Bush Heritage trialled burning at Scottsdale years ago without success (John)

*Q: Could you explain what an eco - burn is? How is it different to other sorts of burns? (Cath, Friends of Tuggeranong Hill)*

A: Burns are classified according to administrative process that brings them to the BOP/point where we deliver them. Virtually every burn does everything in terms of ecology/fuel management/staff training. If it's proposed via the regional fire management plan, the focus of the burn will be on addressing fuel reduction and will have been assessed for reducing risk to human life and property (hazard reduction burn). Eco burns are proposed via PCS staff or other stakeholders including ecologists, and the key priority is for ecological benefit. For example, West Jerra site for Grassland Earless Dragons, with the idea to reduce Phalaris and help other wetlands rehabilitate in the area.

*Q: What follow up happens after a burn? Ecological review? (Lisa, Friends of Aranda Bushland)*

A: It depends on the burn. For example, Namadgi undergoes assessments using a ratio and algorithm to understand the outcome of the burn, including burn severity mapping to identify the per centage of canopy scorch. Ecologists in Office of Nature Conservation do have a program where they review the ecological effects of burns and made decisions/comment. For example, Pipeline burn in Namadgi near the breeding habitat of a Threatened Species. The proposed burn was stalled for some time as it was occurring near the habitat, and once the burn occurred, ONC measured the impact on species population.

*Q: Why such a large area of Namadgi so soon after so much of the area reserve been recently burnt? When was the designated area last burnt? Does not seem ecologically sustainable? (Linda, \_\_\_\_\_)*

A: Do not believe this area has been burnt in a prescribed burn before. Last time this area would have been burnt is likely 2003. The area is large because there is not enough fire trails to break it up, we would much rather burn in smaller areas, but the containment lines are larger here. The burning program and management of conservation are co-constrained. We are all aware of, and both the Conservator and ESA Commissioner are signing off on the plans, we need to manage fire risk as well as ecology.

*Q: What follow up in Aranda Bushland? (Lisa, Friends of Aranda Bushland)*

A: Will need to check with the ecologists, as they make that decision and come back to us. This burn had a lower intensity as held in Autumn, won't always be able to do this in future years as the landscape dries out and burns naturally run a bit hotter.

*Q: Assume the protocol of having a "Values Officer" present at all burns still in place for nature reserves (Kathy, Mount Taylor ParkCare)*

A: There is a values officer program being developed by ONC, with the intent that the program has a significant role to play.

Comment: That great news and wonderful best practice transfer to other jurisdictions (Kathy)

Reminder that when it comes to burns, the priority will be that the burn doesn't break out form its containment lines. The safety and security of the burn will always be the highest priority. The Values Officer feeds back to DivComm to ensure everything is in place before and during the burn to protect ecological values of the area.

*Q: For Adam, we have asked for maps of fire history, but not yet delivered. Would it possible to obtain these, please? (Linda, Cooleman Ridge ParkCare)*

## Offsets

*Kate Boyd, Ranger in Charge to deliver Environmental Offsets of ACT Government, Canberra North*

[Note: Presentation Slides Attached]

Kate undertakes Offsets operations.

Responsible for on-ground delivery of Offsets, work alongside Offsets planning, research and monitoring team who are responsible for strategic assessments, calculators, etc.

2027 hectares of approved offsets, increasing CNP by approximately 20%

The Eastern Broadacre Strategic Assessment will see additional offsets in the Jerra Valley, likely an additional 720 hectares.

Other than Molonglo, all CNP offsets fall in under the CNP Reserve Management plan. Each individual site has its own Offsets Management Plan (OMP) for the life of the project, for example, Gooromon Grasslands (Jarramlee) 2018-2023. Conservation strategies for Grasslands and Woodlands also apply to offset areas.

Landscape Improvement Implementation Plans (LIIPs): Work with Grassroots Environmental/Lori Gould to develop plans. Under OMP, we are responsible to deliver 'x' hectares of restoration. The landscapes often were previously grazed and used for farming and are missing functional components that would naturally occur. Lori will undertake site visits and start from scratch, considering what is missing from the landscape, and what we want to achieve in the space. Wet season have supported planting. Will often go to another site to see what species/formations are occurring and what may be missing from the offset area. In one case went to a sanctuary near Googong Dam, and saw Poa and Carex, so planted these in Offset area in response.

Also manage biomass, using cattle, tow and mow, ecological burns. In Jarramlee, responsible for maintaining Golden Sun Moth habitat, so use cattle and mowing in these areas.

Use temporary fencing at Nadjung Mada nature reserve creating forb nodes inside the fences we plant and seed as well as to maintain biomass and weed control. The fences keep out grazing stock and Kangaroos, they stay in place for about 2 years to allow plant establishment, then are moved on to another area. Weave a commitment to improve box gum woodlands, so these nodes are focused on improving the vegetation at the ground layer. The area was burnt in Autumn, and then seeded and planted thanks to the favourable weather conditions, examples of species additions include Forbs such Hoary sunray, chocolate and vanilla lily, grasses including Wallaby grass species, native sorghum, Kangaroo grass. The fences stay up for a few years as the broader area is still grazed. The fences are then flipped to a new area to continue to expand. This method works well in wetter years and will need to be revisited (ecological burning and seeding) in drier years.

When it comes to setting up a new Nature Reserve, often near new developments, there is new signage, activities declarations, a range of tasks that need to be considered and completed. Ranger Guided Activities and other community engagement events are also hosted (including Mingle events hosted by SLA), to talk about the values, walks and appropriate visitor behaviour.

### **Question and Answer**

*Q: What is the normal timeframe for landscape improvement and maintenance in an offset, and is that long enough? (John, Friends of the Pinnacle)*

*Q: Are offsets protected in perpetuity? (Ian, Friends of Aranda Bushland)*

A: Part of the commitment. Gungahlin Strategic Assessment in 2014, had 4 years of capital works to set up, approval periods for 2014-2036, then ongoing funding after this period. Have not yet gotten to the end of too many approval periods for some of the earlier offsets. Gungahlin and Mulanggari, funding and responsibility then moves to existing reserves. Should be funded into perpetuity.

*Q: What are the differences between offset management plan and Landscape Improvement Implementation Plans (Waltraud, Friends of Mount Majura)*

A: The OMP outlines the Government commitment – what we are committed to improving/maintaining. This plan includes overarching strategic information, with some information on restoration responsibilities, but is not details focused. The LIIP is more detail focused on rehabilitation works.

*Q: Have heard talk of another fenced Sanctuary in NW Gungahlin, maybe on an offset area? Is that being considered/planned? (Julia, Friends of Gossan Hill)*

A: The northwest Gungahlin woodland area is pushing hard on serrated tussock. Unsure of fenced sanctuary being referred to.

*Q: Would be good to ensure that all the knowledge being generated about management of specific tsp in the offset areas is being applied to other nature reserves supporting this habitat - I have reached out to Richard in Molonglo Corridor to assist us with PTWL habitat on Mt Taylor and we prepared a management plan, but this should be established process within PCS (Kathy, Mount Taylor ParkCare)*

A: Kate and direct team are based at Mitchell Depot, and cross-pollinate with teams regularly, including Mulligans, Molonglo, CNP North. All working towards consistent processes and approaches. One good example: LIIP's started in Offsets and have been picked up by CNP.

*Q: Is there any way to find out whether a block is being considered for offset? (Lisa, Friends of Aranda Bushland)*

Taken on notice.

A: Community can request info about specific blocks through the FOI process, which may indicate which blocks are being considered as an offset, though Offsets in ACT are usually determined on a case by case basis. Approvals for Offsets consider 'like for like' values where developments may occur. Unfortunately, there is no register of potential offsets held by the ACT Government. This may change through recommendations coming from the current Offsets Policy review process, though I can't comment any further as things are in early stages.

*Q: When will South Aranda Woodlands (Lot 1550) be transferred to CNP? (Ian, Friends of Aranda Bushland)*

Taken on notice.

A: I'm not aware of it being associated with any development, therefore likely not linked as an offset site. Sorry can't help there as I'm involved with Offsets specifically. Similar to the answer above, contacting the Conservator's Office may yield some information – areas are considered for reservation under the Territory Plan through putting a case to the Conservator.

*Q: How does that interact with the new territory Plan? (Barbara, Friends of Mount Majura)*

Taken on notice.

A: If referring to the South Aranda site, then when any areas are approved by the Conservator for reservation, then the block(s) can be given a Nature Reserve overlay under the Territory Plan (through variation or technical amendment), sometimes as an extension/adjustment to an adjacent reserve. I'm not aware of process or progress of block 1550 being considered for reservation. If it being considered as an Offset site as linked to a development, then approval conditions for the development usually require protection of the Offset Site in perpetuity, which means Reservation under the Territory Plan (Nature Reserve Overlay). Any more detail specific to the Draft Territory Plan as was recently out for comment – I'm not familiar with the Aranda site background discussions or relevant info in the Draft Territory Plan, so I can't help further there.

*Q: For offsets that have been incorporated in existing reserves what information exchange is there with existing ParkCare groups. (Warren, Friends of the Pinnacle)*

Taken on notice.

A: Interaction with local Parkcare groups is dependant on the Parkcare coordinators and Rangers responsible for the reserve. In the case of the Pinnacle, the Offset Extension is now being managed by Urban Reserves, so Parkcare could contact the responsible ranger through the usual channels to

the responsible PCS Ranger for the Pinnacle. That Offset does not require 'restoration' as an offset commitment, but does require threat management, associated opportunistic improvements (eg native establishment where weeds have been treated), and general improvement in overall vegetation community condition. Other Offset extensions may have additional requirements (eg specific improvement/restoration commitments) but that it site dependant. The best approach is to enquire through usual PCS channels for Parkcare, who can get in touch with the relevant Offsets Rangers and Offsets Planning team for further Offsets information or direction where required.

### **General Comments**

Thanks Kate wish we had some of your money and capacity in the south - the older areas are missing out on this development driven investment (Kathy, Mount Taylor ParkCare)

Agree with Kathryn about the difference between north and south districts, understanding that the South Reserves have been established. The amount of input it great for the north and new reserves. (Wendy, Farrer Ridge ParkCare)

Wendy the established reserves in the north are starved of resources except Mulligans Flat and Goorrooyarroo. (Waltraud, Friends of Mount Majura)

### **Additional Questions**

*Q: Tenzin does the weed manual include all those unfamiliar weeds which we are aiming to eradicate? (Barbara, Friends of Mount Majura)*

Vera is working on having the list of unfamiliar weeds, but at this stage not much detail as other weeds (Tenzin).

I've edited the weed manual and there is a long list of weeds - one list is the prioritised weeds with lots of detail and photos; the second list gives less detail but does suggest suitable methods to tackle. There are lots of further resources listed also. (Margy, Friends of Mount Majura)

*Q: Is the list of native nonlocal species available that Harley showed? (Waltraud, Friends of Mount Majura)*

Link: [Naturalised Non-local Native Plant List for the ACT](#)