

FRIENDS OF BLACK MOUNTAIN

The General Meeting of the Friends of Black Mountain last August agreed to an active program. A Friends of Black Mountain was formed in 2001 and after being in quiet mode for a while, it has been re-activated in May 2012.

The Friends of Black Mountain are principally interested in conserving and promoting the biodiversity of the Black Mountain Nature Reserve; such as its natural, cultural, recreational, scientific, educational and aesthetic values.

Our plans and activities are based on building a record about the reserve's values and promoting its uniqueness within and beyond the ACT region.

Members include a wide range of people interested in conservation, including professional scientists and ecologists.

Although we have been active again for a relatively short time our activities have included walks, weeding, and representation about the value of Black Mountain Nature Reserve.

Jamison Plaza display

In September, we participated in the joint display with other park care groups at the Jamison Centre. A lot of people were very interested in the display, and several did the quiz sheet about the natural fauna and flora.

A number of people also joined the Friends of Black Mountain as a result.

Centenary Trail includes Black Mountain and Aranda Bushland.

On 24th September Jean Egan led a walk along parts of the Centenary Trail bicycle route that are in Black Mountain and Aranda Bushland, which is slightly different from the walker's route.

As a result of Jean's representation to ACT Government it has been agreed that the Centenary Trail bicycle route on Black Mountain will be on current formed trails, with only a short part of the route that already exists as a smaller track being upgraded.

Thus potential detrimental impact on the flora and fauna on Black Mountain has been reduced, but the impact of major events will no doubt need to be monitored.

This part of the bicycle route was approximately 6.6 kilometres long, and took about 2 hours to walk at a steady pace. There were two short, but quite steep hills. Attached is a photo of some of the people who enjoyed the walk along this part of the Centenary Trail.



Some of the people during the preview of the part of the Centenary Trail on Black Mountain and Aranda Bushland.

The Tower

The Telstra Tower display is being refurbished and the Telstra Heritage Museum has opened on the Lower Ground level. Friends of Black Mountain had a meeting with representatives from the Telstra Tower and ongoing liaison with them to promote Canberra and Black Mountain Reserve in particular.

We want to see more educative and informative information about Black Mountain at each of the levels and particularly about the vistas from the Observation Deck.

Spring Wildflower Walk on Black Mountain

Friends of Black Mountain co-sponsored the 41st Burbidge & Chippendale Walk, which was led by Jean Geue, Isobel Crawford, Laurie Adams, and Peter Ormay and was enjoyed by more than 70 walkers.

This walk was also sponsored by ANPS, Field Naturalists, Friends of Australian National Botanic Gardens, NPA, and U3A. It was interesting that a large number of these walkers came from the Belconnen area, and the next largest cluster came from the southern parts of Canberra and the region.

Eight of the walkers were interstate visitors to the Australian Naturalists' Network Get-together in Canberra.

Everyone not only enjoyed a couple of hours rambling on Black Mountain admiring the wild flowers, but also the morning- tea stop.



Burbidge & Chippendale walkers talking about the flowering trees, shrubs and orchids along the way ... a number 1 experience.

Frogwatch Census

Some Friends of Black Mountain submitted records to the Frogwatch Census 2012 for several sites that had been in previous years' censuses, as well as a new one.

Community Monitoring of Fire at the Urban Bush Interface

A pilot study by CSIRO Sustainable Ecosystems about Community Monitoring of Fire at the Urban Bush Interface included sites on Black Mountain.

Friends of Black Mountain have arranged to participate in this monitoring of plants after burns on designated areas of Black Mountain. We would also like to monitor insect and other life on these designated sites.

Some ACT Colleges are showing interest in participating in this monitoring program, too.

First Weeding Working Party

The first Weeding Working Party by Friends of Black Mountain and the Molonglo Catchment Group on 3rd November included experienced weeders and beginners.

Molonglo Catchment Group is supporting Friends of Black Mountain with tools and insurance.

But Parks & Conservation lack the resources to support park-care services to another group so we were limited to digging and chipping on this occasion, and took out many thistles and other weeds.

We met at the Caswell Drive entry to Black Mountain and helped each other to carry the tools and morning tea to the junction of the Upper Mountain trail and the Lakeview track, where Tony and Jean (of orchid fame) had found pest thistles.



A delightful morning tea ...



... midway through the thistles

It was satisfying to see the cleared areas where we had been, and to carry out the 'garbages' of seed pods that had been snipped off.



A cleared patch at junction of Upper Mountain Trail and Lakeview Track.

We now have some domestic level herbicide, so please let us know if you can identify other weedy sites that need tackling - especially ones where the weeds are easy to identify and just need chipping out or Roundup/Zero.

Black Mountain's weeds tend to be scattered in hidden corners and labour intensive to find and remove before they become a threat to the surprising diversity of this urban icon.

Vandalism of signs

As we walked along the White trail during the Weeding Working Party we were disappointed to see a cyclist on an illegal track, and a "no-cycles" sign that had been dug out and left lying on the ground.



Concrete from the "no-cycling" sign post, showing mark where one of the bolts had been



The removed "no-cycling" sign post, with the exposed bolts still in place near the bottom.

This not an isolated instance, as these signs have been reported removed from other areas of Black Mountain.

It is this kind of irresponsible behaviour that is the basis of land-carers' and park-carers'

concerns about the conservation areas being open to use by cyclists, especially those who, through their action, make it a high-impact recreation rather than respecting the nature reserve.

More weeding working parties

Nevertheless, we enjoyed the weeding working party so much that our enthusiastic Friends and weeders are keen to do more in the coming months.

Next General Meeting

The next General Meeting of the Friends of Black Mountain : 4.30pm, 22nd November, 2012 at the Catchpole's Room, Southern Cross Club Jamison.

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