



Friends of
Black Mountain

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Friends of Black Mountain 2019

The success of the Black Mountain Symposium 2018 highlighted the level of interest in the topic and we received many requests for a book for general reading.

Ian Fraser and Rosemary Purdie, as co-authors, along with designer Mariana Rollgejser, have contributed their wonderful expertise towards a book, ***Black Mountain a natural history of a Canberra icon***, to be launched on or close to the 50th anniversary of Black Mountain being declared to be a conservation reserve.



Weeding on Caswell slope

Possibly the most frequent and time-consuming activity is **weeding**. With our new Friday weeding work parties, as well as Saturday weeding work parties, almost 40 wonderful weeders gave more than 670 hours to remove 40,500 weeds from Black Mountain. This included removing a large patch of *Dittrichia graveolens* (Stink Weed) seedlings near the ACTEW substation, and many very mature woody weeds. They also helped with one section of ANBG. Only one work party was cancelled because of Total Fire Ban weather.



Removing mature Hawthorn

Our **guided rambles** held in most months of the year continue to be very popular. Some were so popular that they were repeated, such as the “Ngunawal and National Capital Stories” walk. They usually have one guide with a maximum of 20 walkers. However, the large numbers at the annual Spring Wildflower Ramble needs several guides going in different directions. After a peak with the Symposium walks in 2018, the walks attracted more than 200 people this year, including the very popular Spring Wildflower Walk and Heritage Festival walks, the Butterfly Walk (with Black Mountain described as a ‘butterfly hotspot’), and our first invertebrate walk. We have received very positive feedback from participants who have enjoyed learning more about the mountain’s rich biodiversity.



More than 70 people came to the **Winter Talk** to hear Doug Finlayson talk about Black Mountain’s geological origins and evolution.



A Pittman Formation rock outcrop adjacent to Caswell Drive on the north west side of Black Mountain. Formed 460-445 million years ago, the formation is the oldest rock unit in the Canberra region.

FoBM helped organise the joint **ParkCare display at Jamison Plaza** that featured several ParkCare groups' work in the area close to the Belconnen hills area.

Our Frogwatchers heard fewer frogs at our five sites, no doubt because of the comparatively dry winter and spring this year. The water was almost firm mud in 3 of what are usually ponds. **Bird Blitz** observed a slightly smaller number of species of birds in October this year.



Vegwatch, vegetation surveys, were done on our three sites. They revealed that the cover & abundance rating was generally lower this year for the annual herbs at two of the sites. However, on the third site, there were slightly higher readings this year for cryptogams (2.5% last year, 11% this year) and native grasses (41% last year, 50% this year). Its overall native ground cover was higher this year (69% cf 53% last year) which reflects the increased growth of the perennial grasses, forbs and low shrubs over the last 12 months.

FoBM made submissions to the public consultation on the *Draft Canberra Nature Park Reserves Management*, and the *Mountain Bike Experience*, advocating a strong focus on conservation of the biodiversity. After making a submission to the *Inquiry into Nature in Our City* in 2018, a member was a witness at the hearings in March 2019. The report has been released.

https://www.parliament.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/1480091/9th-ETCS-10-Inquiry-into-Nature-in-Our-City.pdf .

We warmly thank our many active volunteers for contributing their high level of expertise and enthusiasm, including our valuable ecology advisers, speakers and guides on our rambles this year; including Wally Bell, Suzi Bond, Mark Butz, Isobel Crawford, Helen Cross, Doug Finlayson, Jean Geue, Chris Ikin, Sonja Lenz, Kim Pullen, and especially Rosemary Purdie.

Thank you to everyone in FoBM, especially the multiple roles carried out by its committee members, MCG, PCS, ACT Conservation and Research, ACT Heritage, ANBG and Friends ANBG, ANPS, FoAB, FoG, FoMP, FoTPin, GCG, NPA, STEP, radio and print media, and other organisations for their part in this very enjoyable year.

If you would like further information, please contact me by email or phone as I am happy to provide it.

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