

The Red Hill Red Track – published in ‘Scribbly Gum’ December 2012

Red Hill Regenerators (RHR) hope that the new signposted Red Track on Red Hill will be an interesting way of showing visitors the national treasure aspects of this and other ACT grassy woodlands. The walk is located in the northeastern section of the reserve. The 3.2km track loop starts at the cafe/restaurant on the summit and then heads south down the ridge line to the saddle. It then travels north-east towards Flinders Way, and then parallel to Mugga Way close to the base of the slope. Near the Mugga Way / Gowrie Road intersection it ascends steeply to the Parliament House lookout, crosses the summit road after the water tanks and then back to the start on the western side of the ridge line.

This track is one of the few where you can start and finish your bushwalk with a cappuccino or tea while taking in some of the best views in Canberra. Eight interpretive signs along the route showcase themes based on the colour red. They tell track users about Red Hill's human and natural histories, its place in the history of Canberra, its distinct geology, its diverse and regionally significant native flora and fauna, and its past and ongoing environmental management issues. There's also something for kids. In each sign is a hidden red bird designed for 3 to 6 year olds to spot in a "where's Wally" exercise.

On the walk you will discover why Red Hill is a red hill, what colour scheme Walter Burley Griffin wanted for plantings on its slopes, what Red Hill and Canberra looked like in the 1920s, what regionally rare and threatened plant and animal species it is home to, and its regional and national significance as one of a few large remnants of Red Gum – Yellow Box Grassy Woodland, a listed Endangered Ecological Community. Box-Gum Woodland communities such as Red Hill's once extended throughout a 25,000 sq. km belt from Melbourne to Toowoomba, but since European settlement have been mostly (95% or more) cleared and largely reduced to remnants of less than 10 hectares. It is telling that both red gum and yellow box got their names because of the colour of their firewood rather than their appearance as standing trees.

The Red Track signs and markers were made possible with input and funding from both Red Hill Regenerators and the ACT Government's Parks and Conservation Branch.

We'd appreciate it if you could get along to check out the Red Track and its signs in the joyous magnificent bushland that is "reddy" and waiting for you.

Tell your family and friends as well, take them all on a wear red bushwalk.

Since forming in 1989 RHR volunteers have spent over some 20,000 hours in transforming Red Hill from a highly weed infested and degraded reserve to one of the region's and the nation's best remnant areas of temperate eucalypt woodland. This work continues.

RHR actively engages with Red Hill's neighbours, government agencies (ACT and Commonwealth), conservation NGOs, and other community based organisations to protect and enhance its environmental values. This also extends to participation in ACT Government and university flora and fauna monitoring and conservation management programs, for example, kangaroo counts, surveys of its endangered Button Wrinklewort population, and nest box trials.

For more information on Red Hill Nature Park, RHR's achievements, or getting involved with RHR activities check out our website at www.redhillregenerators.org.au. RHR working bees are generally on the first Sunday of each month.

