

ACT Red Hill Regenerators – President’s Annual Report 2017

This year has again seen much of our time diverted to development issues. On a positive note, our working bees were well attended and in between the never-ending Cootamundra wattles we continued removing soft and woody weeds by the thousands.

Highlights

- We continued a major emphasis on removing Cootamundra wattle on the northern slopes of Red Hill but we also spent time removing verbascum and woody weeds.
- The much-valued “regulars’ continue to make up the majority at our monthly Sunday activities with 10-20 people attending our 11 Sunday activities, providing a total of 468 hours. We held only one weekday activity last financial year but we have since offered more of these. The total number of RHR member hours including individuals working singly or in small groups was 961 and, with the contribution of the Green Army and ADFA, the total number of hours was a pleasing 1,249.
- Other activities last financial year included:
 - Three days of work by the Green Army. The Green Army has been discontinued and so these were the last activities from them.
 - Two butterfly walks led by Dr Suzi Bond, an expert on ACT butterflies. A ‘fungi foray’ was also held to find the fungi hiding on Red Hill.
 - Dr Michael Mulvaney, our Conservation Officer, led a wildflower walk behind Hughes last December. He led a similar walk recently on 4 November, finishing at the site of the proposed new Hindmarsh development at Section 66 on Kent Street, Deakin. Michael’s entertaining and informative walks were well attended and greatly appreciated and gave many people an opportunity to understand the significant impact of the proposed development on the reserve and local traffic.
 - We participated in a Ranger-organised kangaroo count that unfortunately had to be abandoned in its later stages because of the highly active behaviour of the kangaroos in the windy conditions. We expect to undertake counts again in the future because the population size of the kangaroos is a problem for the vegetation and other wildlife on Red Hill.
 - With Greening Australia and the Rangers, we planted two areas with 200 new and replacement trees. This time we placed a lot of woody weed debris around the sites and this seems to have reduced the kangaroo damage.
 - Our ‘25 years of Parkcare’ bench was installed at a delightful site on the slopes of Davison Trig overlooking much of the reserve and South Canberra and will be appreciated by those taking the steep track up the hill. Thanks to Phil Selmes and assistants from ACT Parks and Conservation.
 - Our Treasurer, Paul Ratcliffe, submitted an application for heritage listing of the callistemon plantation near the Red Hill main lookout. On 27 October, a ceremony was held to commemorate 100 years since Walter and Mahony Griffin and Charles Weston established this plantation to “paint’ Red Hill. Dr Annie Lane, Conservator of Nature for the ACT, introduced Dr Michael

Mulvaney, who gave a lively presentation about Red Hill and the work of our ParkCare group. Minister Mick Gentleman gave the background to the planting and, together with Lady Kathleen Kingsland, undertook a ceremonial watering of the callistemons. Lady Kingsland had been invited to take part as she turns 100 early next year.

- Our group nominated Paul Ratcliffe for the ACT Environmentalist of the Year and gave us an opportunity to acknowledge his contribution to our group (and other community groups) in so many ways. Paul manages our online presence, cares for the group's tools, organises our monthly activities, is our Treasurer and helps in many other ways. He didn't take out the award this year but we will re-nominate him in the future.

Apart from the Federal Golf Club's continued efforts to proceed with a housing development with more than 120 apartments on their lease, a new proposal by the Hindmarsh building company to establish up to 550 apartments on Section 66 on Kent Street has been announced. This has led to widespread opposition in the community and Red Hill Regenerators are engaging with other community groups to achieve the best outcome. We oppose both developments, as they will impact on the Red Hill Nature Reserve.

We believe that the Golf Club could achieve its financial objectives without relying on the proposed development. However, their development company, Mbark, has engaged in constructive discussions with us but, at this time, there are many issues to be resolved

The Hindmarsh development is of even greater concern as it involves clearing significant areas of vegetation that most locals believe are part of the reserve. It will also require clearing large areas of the reserve for bushfire mitigation. There are also other significant issues with this development including traffic congestion and the presence of a former rubbish tip that may be hazardous.

We continue to be grateful for the work of some individual members who add significantly to our total effort, particularly Colin Pilliner who contributes many hours.

We were sad to see the departure of our hard-working and supportive ranger, Craig Wainright, but have been grateful for the work of our current shared ranger, Ellyse Sheridan and, more recently, Liam Banyer.

We currently have 69 financial members and 180 members and friends on our group email list.

Volunteer hours

Activity	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Number of Sunday Activities (mid-week included up to 2016)	13	12	8	11
Average number of participants	9	11	15.5	14.1
Total number of volunteer hours*	480	521	967	906
Total hours including meetings, Green Army, ADFA, etc.				1,249

* These hours represent on-reserve work, education of members and the AGM for the financial year but not meetings, preparation of submissions, etc. The Green Army & ADFA contributed another 205 & 84 hours respectively in 2016/17. The government values volunteer hours at \$50 so the contribution by our members and activities we organised had a value of over \$62,000.

My thanks again to all members for your time and effort in helping us achieve a better nature reserve. Thanks particularly to the other committee members: Michael Mulvaney, Paul Ratcliffe, Sue Ross, Robyn Tulloh, Trish Munro and Miranda Gardner. The Committee's knowledge and commitment has ensured the Red Hill Regenerators continues to be effective in caring for the Reserve and making a significant contribution to its long-term wellbeing. In particular, thanks to:

- Michael Mulvaney who provides a deep ecological knowledge base, spends a lot of time working individually on the reserve and still provides an inspiring passion for us all.
- Paul Ratcliffe for his work as Treasurer and for many other contributions including the RHR website and Twitter account and his individual work on Red Hill.
- Sue Ross for her role as Secretary and supporting the group's work in so many ways including many hours of individual work on the reserve.
- The Red Hill rangers, our Parks and Conservation Service contact Philip Selmes, the Southern ACT Catchment Group, especially Martine Franco, and many in the ACT government who work with us to achieve our objectives.

Ross Kingsland
President, Red Hill Regenerators
1 December 2016