



CONSERVATION COUNCIL  
ACT REGION

# *Living next to Nature*



BEING A GOOD NEIGHBOUR

*to the bush next door*

# 8 WAYS TO BE A GOOD NEIGHBOUR

*to the bush next door*

## *1. Plant a bush garden*

Planting native species in your garden will encourage birds and butterflies to visit your garden. Adding rocks, logs and ponds will also make your garden an inviting home for lizards and frogs.

## *2. See nature in new*

Plants and animals live in all sorts of places, even outside nature reserves. It is important that we protect them by respecting rural properties and creating nature friendly parks and gardens.

## *4. Visit your local reserve*

Exploring your local bush or grassland is a great way to have fun, get fit and learn more about the environment. Just remember to minimise your impact as much as possible by walking or cycling only on suitable paths, taking your rubbish home with you and by not collecting firewood, bush rocks, plants or animals.

## *7. Join a ParkCare group*

ParkCare or 'Friends of' groups are a fun and social way to get your hands dirty and make a real difference to your reserve. Most groups hold monthly working bees, which can include planting, weeding, monitoring and morning tea. Look for signage on reserve gates or contact your catchment group to find out more.

# 8 WAYS TO BE A GOOD NEIGHBOUR

*to the bush next door*

*places*

## 3. *Watch your water*

Creeks and rivers are very sensitive to pollutants or changes in water flow. You can help maintain their quality by using eco-friendly cleaning supplies, minimising concrete in your garden and filtering storm water through rain gardens. You can also reduce the amount of water you use with waterwise plants, mulch, rainwater tanks and shorter showers.

## 5. *Plant a tree*

Trees, especially large mature ones, are a key part of the landscape. They provide shelter, food and breeding sites for many different plants and animals. Planting a tree, or looking after a large mature one, helps to make sure that we will still have big trees in the future.

## 6. *Reduce the flames*

The ACT has a long history of bushfires. You can help reduce risk by keeping your garden well maintained or by joining a Community Fire Unit.

## 8. *Keep your pets contained*

Protect your pet and local wildlife by keeping dogs on leash and cats in backyards or inside your homes at all times, including during the day. Dogs and cats can easily become injured or lost in the bush. Free-roaming cats and dogs also scare and kill local wildlife, even if they are well-trained or have bells.





*The beautiful Canberra Spider Orchid grows only in the Majura Region, close to the suburbs of Watson, Hackett and Ainslie (photo: Waltraud Pix)*

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### *Disclaimer*

Every effort has been made to ensure that the information in this publication is accurate at the time of printing. The Conservation Council ACT Region accepts no responsibilities resulting from changes to management, scientific understanding, planning and legislation or loss resulting from the use of this booklet.

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# BEING A GOOD NEIGHBOUR

*Living* next to

to the bush next door

## *Being a good neighbour to the bush*

This booklet is your guide to being a good neighbour to the bush. It covers some of the key issues arising from people living next to nature. You can also find handy hints and tips for actions that you can take in your backyard, in the reserves and in your community.



*photo: Andrew Palmer-Brodie*

## *Our Fragile Environment*

When new suburbs are first built, they can have highly visible impacts on the environment such as the destruction of habitat. Existing suburbs have more subtle impacts that can be very damaging over time. These impacts range from cats hunting wildlife to garden plants becoming weeds. When these impacts combine, they put stress on local environments and make them more sensitive to shock events like bushfire.



*photo: Kathy Eyles*



*photo: Rebecca Palmer-Brodie*

## *The Bush Capital*

Canberrans are fortunate to have a wealth of bush and grassland right next door. These places make Canberra 'The Bush Capital' and a great place to be outdoors and get to know nature. Unfortunately, this closeness between people and nature can threaten the places we love and the plants and animals that live within them.



*photo: Andrew Palmer-Brodie*

## *Making a Difference*

Living next to nature gives us a wonderful opportunity to enjoy and learn about the world we live in. It is also a great chance to make a real difference right next door. Plants and animals do not recognise boundaries such as reserve fences. They live, eat and breed in backyards, along roadways, in parks and on farms. Everyone can make small changes, which make big differences to the bush next door.



# Nature

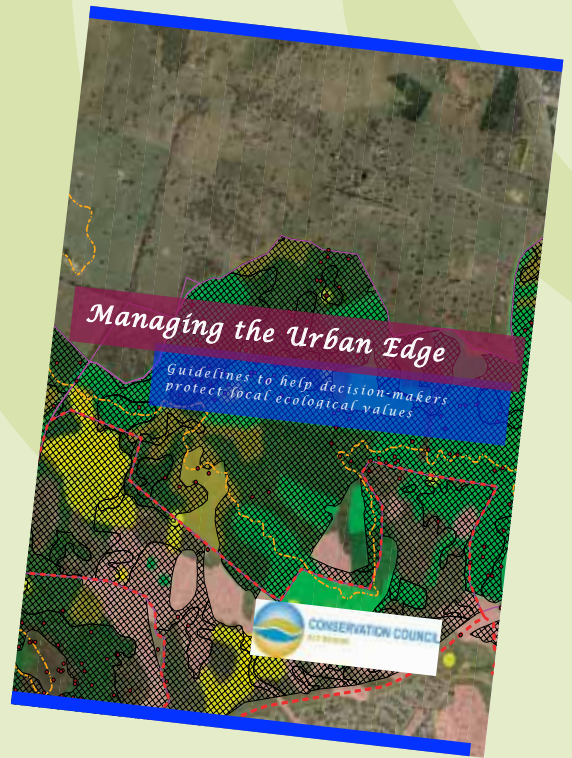
## BEING A GOOD NEIGHBOUR

### to the bush next door

*If you are interested in finding out more about the issues in this booklet, download “Managing the Urban Edge” from the Conservation Council ACT Region’s website.*

[www.conservationcouncil.org.au](http://www.conservationcouncil.org.au)

*This discussion paper includes principles, case studies and recommendations designed to guide the policy and planning of suburbs near bushland and grassland.*



*The principles and experiences behind this book have arisen from past experiences in designing and managing suburbs near areas with high environmental value.*

*Bush on the Boundary reference groups meet regularly to discuss the protection and enhancement of environmental values in the design of new suburbs. They include members from government, developers, academic institutions and community groups.*

*(above photo: David Wong, below photo: Yvonne Best)*



## stepping stones for plants and animals

### Connecting nature

Plants and animals need access to many different things to survive. Animals need to be able to find homes, food, water and other animals to mate with. Similarly, plants need to be able to distribute their pollen and spread their seed. Every animal and plant needs different things to survive and has different ways of reaching them. For example, some birds can fly long distances to hunt for small animals, while others hop around in a small area looking for seeds.

Connectivity is the idea that plants and animals are connected to all the things they need in order to survive. If they lose these connections, plants or animals become isolated and their habitat is considered fragmented.



*Spiky flowering plants like this Grevillea are great food for birds and also protect them from neighbourhood cats. (photo: Brian Walters)*



*Building a frog pond or adding logs and rocks to your landscaping is a great way to attract frogs and lizards such as this Blue Tongue.*

*(photo: Joe McAuliffe)*

### Dividing the landscape

As our urban areas expand, backyards, roads and other infrastructure can interrupt these important connections, leaving plants and animals unable to access everything they need to survive. This can lead to changes in populations, often making them too large or too small for the area.

Fragmented populations are more vulnerable to disturbances such as fire, weeds and roaming pets. These changes can result in unhealthy and unviable environments.

As Canberra grows, it is important to ensure our parks and reserves do not become further isolated from each other so that our local plants and animals can continue to move across the whole landscape.



*stepping stones for plants and animals*



*Native gardens are low maintenance, waterwise and irresistible to wildlife. (photo: Yvonne Best)*

### *What can I do?*

- Plant native species in your garden and nature strip. Birds and animals will be able to travel more easily through your property and find valuable food and homes. If you are able to find local plants, these can be a great source of seed or cross-pollination for your local park or reserve.
- Place logs, rocks and spiky native bushes around your garden to shelter small animals from harsh weather and predators. If you have a damp patch you might also consider building a frog pond.
- Volunteer with a ParkCare group to help repair habitats in your local park or reserve.
- Don't let your cat or dog roam around your front yard or nature strip. Pets will scare or hunt birds and animals that use your garden as a home or as a stepping stone to other areas.

## WEEDS

*Living* next to

stop them at the source



### *Invaders in the bush*

Weeds are simply plants growing in the wrong place. In bush or grassland, this means any plants which are introduced to the area. Because they are often fast growing, weeds can spread quickly and outcompete local native plants. This is especially true in disturbed areas close to suburbs. Native plants in these areas are already under stress from pressures such as bushfire hazard reduction and recreation. This makes them even more vulnerable to being overcome by weed invasions.

Local plants are an important source of food and shelter for wildlife. They are also important in helping to keep our environment healthy, for example by filtering water along creeks and rivers. Losing local plants because of weed invasion affects the whole environment.

*Weeds, like this Fire Weed, can spread quickly, covering large areas and outcompeting local species.*

*(photo: Lois Padgham)*

*Some species which are native to other areas of Australia, such as this Rosemary Grevillea can become a threat to Canberra's local plant life. (photo: Michael Mulvaney).*



stop them at the source

### Your backyard

Many of the weeds invading our bush areas have escaped from gardens, by spreading their seed through the wind, on boots and in pet fur. Weeds can also be spread by berry eating birds, or by being dumped with garden waste.

Many weeds are already listed on the ACT declared pest plant species list, available from the Territory and Municipal Services - [www.tams.act.gov.au](http://www.tams.act.gov.au). Other plants, which are only recently becoming recognised as weeds, have not yet officially been listed.

Some of these species are still available from nurseries so when planning your garden, take care to select plants which will not spread into nearby bush areas.



*Sacred Bamboo is a known garden escapee, however the non-berry producing variety is perfectly safe to plant.*

### What can I do?

- Avoid plants that are known environmental weeds. As an alternative, many plants have varieties that do not spread.
- Slowly replace weed plants already in your garden. Ask your local nursery for alternatives which will not spread into nearby bush areas.
- Dispose of garden waste at Canberra Sand and Gravel - Parkwood Road, Macgregor or Vicars St, Mitchell.
- Volunteer with a ParkCare group to help control weeds in your local park or reserve.
- Keep dogs and cats from roaming freely in reserves. Weed seeds can easily be caught in fur and carried through bushland.



## CATS AND DOGS

*Living* next to

*keeping pets and wildlife safe*

### *Protect your pet*

Cats and dogs roaming freely in bush or grassland areas are at great risk of getting bitten by a snake, attacked by a kangaroo, catching a disease or becoming trapped. Even the best trained pet can become distracted by an inviting smell or an interesting log, before you have time to stop them. Pets that are kept indoors, contained in runs or walked on leashes, generally live longer and healthier lives.



### *Protect our wildlife*

Cats and dogs can be dangerous predators in bush and grassland areas at all times of the day or night.

They are particularly threatening to reptiles, birds and frogs. Even when they hunt unsuccessfully, the chase and the pet scent can frighten and disturb wildlife.

Pets are also perfect carriers for diseases and weed seeds, which become caught in their fur.

*Many of Canberra's newer suburbs are being declared 'Cat Curfew Areas'. This means that cats must be contained in houses and backyards. Cat runs or floppy fence tops are a great way to let your cat safely explore the great outdoors without threatening wildlife. (photo: CATNIP).*



**AT ALL TIMES**

### keeping pets and wildlife safe

*Protect your dog from poison baits and possible kangaroo encounters by heeding warning signs. Kangaroos have been known to drown roaming dogs in dams, or kick them with their massive hind legs.*

*Many suburbs have safe places for dogs on and off-leash. Off-leash areas are a great social place for both dogs and owners.*

*(photo: Yvonne Best)*



### What can I do?

- Walk dogs on-leash, except in designated dog parks or off-leash areas. Remember to take a bag and dispose of faeces thoughtfully.
- Use dog parks and off-leash areas. These are a great way for both you and your dog to make new friends. Official Dog Parks are located at Lake Ginninderra, Lake Tuggeranong, Lake Burley Griffin, Forde and Casey. There are also many informal off-leash areas, such as some sports fields. Visit the TAMS website to find out more: [www.tams.act.gov.au](http://www.tams.act.gov.au)
- Keep your cat indoors and in your backyard by building a cat run or installing floppy fence tops. Visit the RSPCA website for do-it-yourself and retail options: [www.rspca.org.au](http://www.rspca.org.au)
- Entertain your cat or dog with fun toys and games. For a greater challenge, take up a sport like Fly Ball or Dog Dancing. Visit the ACT Companion Dog Club website to find out more: [www.actcdc.org.au](http://www.actcdc.org.au)
- Report wandering cats and dogs to Domestic Animal Services by calling 13 22 81. This is for the protection of both the animal and local wildlife. If the animal is a pet, its microchip can be scanned and the owner will be contacted to take it home. If it is a stray, it will have the opportunity to find a new home.

## OUT AND ABOUT

# Living next to enjoying nature

### *Getting to know the bush*

Living in 'The Bush Capital', Canberrans are privileged to have easy access to many beautiful natural areas. There are opportunities for walking, running, cycling and bird-watching. Spring is the perfect time to spot wildlife and enjoy nature's Floriade, although all seasons have their own special attractions. Getting out and about is a great way to get to know the bush next door and have fun while doing it.



*Making your own mountain biking or walking trails has serious impacts in bush areas. These activities threaten beautiful and delicate plants such as the Wax Lip Orchid (pictured above) which are easily damaged by cyclists or crushed underfoot. Illegal trails can also lead to serious erosion. (photo: Ian Falconer)*



*Find out about upcoming guided walks by contacting your local ParkCare group or visiting the Territory and Municipal services website: [www.tams.act.gov.au](http://www.tams.act.gov.au) (photo: Waltraud Pix)*

### *Loving it to death*

While it is wonderful to explore nature, it is important to do so responsibly. Many of our more popular areas are suffering from overuse and the impacts of illegal activities such as littering, firewood collection and capturing wildlife. These activities threaten sensitive plants and animals and can quickly degrade the local environment.



# Nature

## OUT AND ABOUT

### enjoying nature



*Canberra has many specially designed recreational areas. They are a great way to get outdoors without impacting too heavily on our local environment. For example, Lake Burley Griffin, Lake Ginninderra, Lake Tuggeranong and Gungahlin Ponds have flat, safe paths with unbeatable views. For a fun family day out visit the National Arboretum to take advantage of the on site cafe and picnic areas. For more of a challenge, Stromlo Forest Park is a world-class site designed especially for cross-country running and mountain biking. (photo: [stromloforestpark.com.au](http://stromloforestpark.com.au))*

### What can I do?

- Keep to formed trails and take note of 'no access' signs. This will help protect important habitats.
- Avoid taking your dog into sensitive areas, especially if they are declared no dog zones. Where dogs are permitted, remember to keep them on-leash at all times and to dispose of faeces thoughtfully.
- Cycle on fire trails and sign-posted cycle tracks only. Walking trails are not designed for cycling. Using them in this way is dangerous and damages the trail.
- Do not collect firewood, rocks or parts of plants. These are important homes and sources of food for insects, birds and reptiles.
- Do not touch or capture wild animals. They are delicate and will not survive in your home or garden.
- Collect rubbish and take it home with you. Even food scraps can make animals sick or spread weeds.
- Call Canberra Connect to report any problems on 13 22 81.

# FIRE

*Living* next to

*stopping the spread*

## *Thriving on the heat*

Fire is an important part of Australia's natural systems, and plants and animals have evolved over millennia to cope and even thrive on occasional flames. Unfortunately, the number and intensity of fires can increase where suburbs exist next to bush or grasslands. This is due in part to deliberate or accidental lighting of fires and to the risk of bushfires affecting houses. This increase in fires can kill sensitive plants and animals and disrupt the entire ecosystem, making it more susceptible to other impacts such as weed invasion.



*Parts of the Outer Asset Protection Zone in Molonglo are home to the nationally listed Pink-tailed Worm Lizard. This leads to the challenge of ensuring fuel reduction strategies do not damage the fragile lizard or its habitat.*

*(photo: David Wong)*

## *Protecting our assets*

Canberra has many areas where suburbs exist near bush or grassland. To protect houses and the bush alike from the risk of bushfire, Asset Protection Zones are designated around new and existing suburbs. Fuel reduction measures, such as controlled burns, slashing or grazing, are carried out within these zones.

*Did you know?*

**Fuel build up in and around the home was a major cause of house loss during the 2003 bushfires.**

## stopping the spread



*Joining a Community Fire Unit is a great way to help your community to prepare for the fire season. (photo: Kathy Eyles)*

### *Finding the balance*

Some Asset Protection Zones in Canberra are located within important bush or grassland areas. Fuel reduction in these areas needs to be undertaken very carefully to reduce the risk of bushfire without damaging the environment. The difficulty in finding this balance means that, where possible, new Asset Protection Zones should not be located where they pose a risk to environmental values.

### *What can I do?*

- Call 000 immediately if you see smoke or flames in the bush or near your home.
- Reduce the risk of fire in your garden by:
  - Using stone rather than wood mulch in high risk areas;
  - Keeping grass and shrubs trimmed and well watered;
  - Removing fallen leaves, dead plants and old branches;
  - Keeping gutters clear; and
  - Clearing away loose or hanging bark from trees.
- Volunteer to help your local community to prepare for the fire season by joining a Community Fire Unit. Find out more at <https://esa.act.gov.au/actfr/community-fire-units/>
- Do not light fires or drop cigarette butts outside of designated fire areas.
- Take note of 'Fire Risk' ratings when out in the bush and avoid lighting fires on high risk days. Visit <http://esa.act.gov.au/actfr/> for bushfire risk updates and information.



# LARGE MATURE TREES

*Living* next to

*supporting plants and animals*

## *Trees are natural homes*

Large mature trees, such as eucalypts, are a key part of woodlands and forests. They provide homes, food and shelter for many different kinds of plants and animals. For example, more than 300 different kinds of native animals including bats, birds, possums, gliders and reptiles use tree hollows. These hollows only develop in big trees that are more than a century old.



## *Stepping stones across the suburbs*

Large mature trees are also important 'stepping stones' for many plants and animals. Resting or feeding in these trees can help an animal to travel from one area of bush to another across largely cleared landscapes such as suburbs. Similarly, some plants need the shelter of large mature trees in order to grow. They can then disperse their seeds to nearby bushland.

*Large eucalypts are very important for the functioning of the critically endangered ecosystem Box-Gum Grassy Woodland. Because it grows in low flat areas, much of this ecosystem type was cleared for agriculture and suburban development.*

*The ACT has some of the largest remaining patches of Box-Gum Grassy Woodland in Australia. Many of these patches are protected in reserves such as Mulligan's Flat Nature Reserve, next door to the suburbs of Gungahlin.*

*(photo: Lois Padgham)*

### supporting plants and animals



*Tree hollows are the perfect home for many birds, such as these young Kestrels (above) and the threatened Superb Parrot (right).*

*(photos: Geoffrey Dabb)*

### *Fading from the landscape*

Large mature trees are often cut down during the construction of new suburbs. Even when they are kept, they tend to be lost before their time. One reason for this is damage to roots caused by concrete or roads compacting the soil and preventing access to water. Another factor is the need for trees to have space to grow. Often, big trees are cut down when they pose a safety risk to houses or pedestrians. This means that, over time, large mature trees are disappearing from the landscape.



### *What can I do?*

- Look after trees in your backyard or nature-strip. Get professional advice regarding care and requirements.
- If you have a large yard, consider planting smaller species of eucalypt. Make sure that you give trees plenty of space, away from homes and powerlines.
- Help your local ParkCare group to plant trees during winter or participate in an annual National Tree Day planting: <http://treeday.planetark.org.au>.
- If you are lucky enough to build a new home, where possible, keep some trees on the property.

### *Teeming with life*

Many different kinds of plants and animals live in and along our creeks and rivers, including frogs, turtles and tall River She-oaks. These plants and animals have evolved to suit the conditions of their waterways such as the level, regularity and speed of water flows. Keeping these within natural limits is essential for ensuring that our water is fresh, clean and productive.

In the past, the ACT's creeks and rivers included slow moving chains of ponds surrounded by trees, shrubs and grasses. This system provided important habitats for plants and animals and filtered the water making it clean and fresh.

### *Creeks to concrete*

In urban areas, many ponds and plants are replaced with hard surfaces such as drains, footpaths and roads. When water runs across these surfaces it is not easily absorbed. This means that it runs very quickly and is not filtered for pollutants such as oil, detergents or fertilizers. When this faster moving, polluted water reaches creeks and rivers it can result in significant damage to the river banks and to the plants and animals which live in and around the watercourse.

In several new and existing suburbs, concrete drains have been replaced with vibrant wetlands. These filter and regulate water, whilst providing habitat and recreational opportunities.

*The Gungaharra Creek Pond at Franklin is a welcome home for many animals and an important stormwater catchment and filter. It is also a beautiful place to take a stroll. (photo: Rob Thorman)*





## going with the flow



*Fast flowing water can erode creek banks.  
(photo: Yvonne Best).*

### Sharing our water

Water is vital for our houses, farms, industry and the environment. Living in a dry continent like Australia, means that there is a limited supply to meet these needs. It is critical that we make sure that enough water is left over after human use to keep watercourses flowing and supply plants and animals with much needed habitat. Sharing our water with aquatic plants and animals is critical for their survival.

### What can I do?

- Create a Rain Garden under your drainpipe. These modern and low maintenance gardens filter storm water and slow it down before it reaches creeks and rivers: [www.raingardennetwork.com.au](http://www.raingardennetwork.com.au)
- Use environmentally-friendly cleaning supplies. Conventional cleaning supplies contain chemicals that are harmful to aquatic plants and animals.
- Minimise concrete and other hard surfaces in gardens. Water is more easily absorbed and filtered by lawn or mulch.
- Use less water in the home and garden. This reduces the amount of water that is diverted from rivers, leaving more water for plants and animals.
  - o Use waterwise plants in your garden and spread mulch to retain moisture for longer.
  - o Collect rain water and use it to water your garden or supply toilets and washing machines.
  - o Install a grey water system to recycle household water by diverting it to the garden.
  - o Take shorter showers and use dishwashers and washing machines with good energy and water use ratings.

## BEYOND THE FENCE

*Living* next to

*nature outside reserves*

### *Crossing boundaries*

Plants and animals do not recognise fences and lines drawn on maps. They live, eat, breed and travel through many different landscapes including farms, backyards and urban parks. While reserves play a vital role in nature conservation, many important environmental values exist outside of protected areas.



*The Grassland Earless Dragon lives in grasslands on both nature reserves and rural properties in the ACT Region. Several rural leasees have signed legal agreements to help protect the lizard on their lands. (photo: Wendy Diamond)*

# Nature

## BEYOND THE FENCE

### nature outside reserves



*Remnant strips of bush in new suburbs serve as highways for wildlife that need to travel in search of food and mates. (photo: Yvonne Best)*

### Suburban conservation

The lands upon which new suburbs are developed often have important environmental values. These might include watercourses, ecological connectivity or particularly vulnerable plants or animals. In Canberra, suburban development attempts to keep many of these values within new suburbs. For example, large mature trees may be kept in urban parks, or parks may be built around existing wetlands.

### On the farm

While most rural land is used for agricultural purposes such as grazing, these broad spaces often also support important species and ecological communities, such as woodlands or grasslands. Just as suburbs impact on nearby reserves, they also have effects on the environmental values of rural properties.

### What can I do?

- Respect the boundaries of rural properties. The owners of these properties are working hard to protect the environmental values of their land while at the same time maintaining productivity.
- Talk to your local catchment group about joining a WaterWatch, FrogWatch or LandCare group. These groups are a fun way to help monitor and protect environmental values in urban parks.
- If you own a rural property consider setting some of it aside for conservation or adopting sustainable land management practices. The Environmental Defenders Office can provide legal advice and information about potential funding: [www.edo.org.au](http://www.edo.org.au)



## WHAT CAN I DO?

# Living next to in the garden

### *Create a home for wildlife*

Attract birds and insects by planting local flowering plants in a range of shapes and sizes. Spiky native plants will help protect birds from predators such as neighbourhood cats. Add logs or rocks to the display to create homes for lizards and frogs. Building a frog pond is a great idea if you have a damp area in your garden. Contact FrogWatch for tips on creating an irresistible habitat for frogs:

[www.ginninderrallandcare.org.au/frogwatch](http://www.ginninderrallandcare.org.au/frogwatch)

### *Don't plant weeds*

Avoid plants which may escape into local bushland. Replace them with hardy kitchen plants such as Rosemary or Lavender, non-berry-producing varieties, or local native plants.

### *Be waterwise*

Planting drought resistant plants and mulching your garden beds will help your plants thrive and reduce how much water they use. This will help keep more water in the rivers and reduce your water costs. You can help even further by installing a rainwater tank or building a rain garden.

### *Cat-proof your yard*

Cat runs or floppy fences are a great way for your cat to safely explore the outdoors. These devices keep cats inside your back garden and off the streets and reserves. This protects your cat and our wildlife. Cat runs can include toys, cat grass and other temptations to keep your cat entertained for hours. Visit the RSPCA to find out more about do-it-yourself options and recommended retailers.

[www.rspca.org.au](http://www.rspca.org.au)

### *Keep your garden neat and tidy*

Regularly cleaning out your gutters and mowing the lawn helps to reduce the risk of fire spreading through your garden and into your house. It is also a good idea to prune large bushes and remove dead plants and branches.

# Nature

## WHAT CAN I DO?

### *in the bush*

#### *Get out there*

Exploring your local bush or grassland is a great way to have fun, get fit and learn more about the environment. Popular activities include walking, bird-watching and photography.

#### *Respect rural areas*

Rural areas such as farms often have important environmental values. Help your local farmers to protect them by not trespassing on their lands.

#### *Take only memories, leave only footprints*

When you are in the bush try to minimise your impact as much as possible. Walk or cycle only on suitable paths and try not to make too much noise. Always take your rubbish home with you and don't collect firewood, bush rocks, plants or animals.

#### *Join a ParkCare group*

ParkCare or 'Friends of' groups are a fun and social way to get your hands dirty and make a real difference to your reserve. Most groups hold monthly working bees, which can include planting, weeding, monitoring and morning tea. Look for signage on reserve gates or contact your catchment group to find out more.

#### *Keep your dog on a leash*

Dogs off leash scare wildlife and can intimidate other walkers. They are also at risk of being injured by snakes and kangaroos or being hit by a car. Find out more about safe spaces to let your dog run freely on the Territory and Municipal Services Website: [www.tams.act.gov.au](http://www.tams.act.gov.au)

# WHAT CAN I DO?

## *in the community*

### *Support a community environment group*

Community environment groups are vital for the protection of our local bush and grasslands. They range in interests from a specific type of animal such as reptiles or birds to issues such as climate change or active transport. Some of the groups do on the ground work such as planting or weeding while others are more focused on policy, law or talking to the community. All are in need of your support.

You can sign up to mailing lists, Facebook or attend events to keep up to date with current issues. You can also make a tax deductible donation or become a member to show support. To find a community group which interests you, visit the Member Group page on the Conservation Council website and check out more than 40 local groups: [www.conservationcouncil.org.au](http://www.conservationcouncil.org.au)

## *Pass it on*

### *Volunteer*

If you can spare some time, most community environment groups run on the enthusiasm of volunteers. You can be particularly helpful if you have useful skills such as administration, fundraising, GIS or experience in policy, ecology or planning. On-ground groups are always looking for willing hands and most groups need extra helpers during special events.

If you feel passionate about Canberra's environment, tell someone about it! Let your friends and family know what matters to you by sharing stories and green tips over the dinner table or via email and social media. Writing a letter or making a submission to your local politician is another great way to make your voice heard. Most new developments and other changes to the environment ask for community input, take them up on it!



Discover the

# TREASURES OF THE ACT REGION



Uncover the natural and cultural heritage of the Bush Capital with the Treasures of the ACT Region. Find out more about Canberra's history, plants and animals as well as hints for great places to bike, bushwalk, swim or picnic!

Grab a copy today and start exploring the hidden treasures in your backyard!

[www.conservationcouncil.org.au](http://www.conservationcouncil.org.au)

# Handy Contacts

**Conservation Council ACT Region** [www.conservationcouncil.org.au](http://www.conservationcouncil.org.au)

for further information about living next to nature

**Territory and Municipal Services** [www.tams.act.gov.au](http://www.tams.act.gov.au) or call 13 22 81

for any information on the ACT's parks and reserves or to report injured wildlife or illegal activities

## Catchment Groups

to find your local ParkCare, LandCare, FrogWatch or WaterWatch

**Ginninderra Catchment Group** [www.ginninderralandcare.org.au](http://www.ginninderralandcare.org.au)

**Molonglo Catchment Group** [www.molonglocatchment.com.au](http://www.molonglocatchment.com.au)

**Southern ACT Catchment Group** [www.sactcg.org.au](http://www.sactcg.org.au)

## Gardening and Landscaping

**Australian Native Plants Society Canberra** [www.nativeplants-canberra.asn.au](http://www.nativeplants-canberra.asn.au)

for advice on growing native plants and biannual plant sales

**Canberra Environment Centre** [www.ecoaction.com.au](http://www.ecoaction.com.au) for workshops on sustainable living

## Pets

**RSPCA** [www.rspca.org.au](http://www.rspca.org.au) for advice on protecting your pet

**Domestic Animal Services** call Canberra Connect on 13 22 81 to report a stray animal

**CATNIP Cat Enclosures** [www.catnip.com.au](http://www.catnip.com.au) for cat containment equipment and installation

**ACT Companion Dog Club** [www.actcdc.org.au](http://www.actcdc.org.au) for dog sports and recreation

## Recreation

**Canberra Bushwalking Club** [www.canberrabushwalkingclub.org](http://www.canberrabushwalkingclub.org) for regular bush walks

**National Parks Association** [www.npaact.org.au](http://www.npaact.org.au) for activities in protected areas

