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Alright, we all know Canberra is the bush capital, and that's part of its charm. Still, a large mob of sheep hanging out behind the Hyperdome at Pine Island like truant teenagers is a little too much!

Stock in riparian areas are just bad news. Sheep eat and trample much of the vegetation which stabilizes river banks. This leads to serious soil erosion. Their hard hooves

destroy the soil's very structure, and make regeneration of desirable plants quite difficult.

Not only do their feet and appetites cause degradation of water quality, but their dung and urine raise nutrient levels, spread disease and promote toxic algae blooms. Their waste and wool also contains weed seeds which colonize and often take over damaged riparian areas.

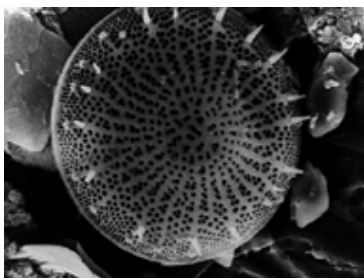
Even unruly teenagers seldom increase pollution, destroy native habitat, pass on disease and weeds and interrupt fish breeding cycles in a single rampage of

lawlessness!

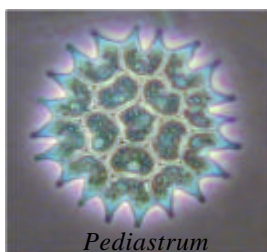
Dob in any sheep you discover on the "lam" to you local Waterwatch coordinator. While they have their place in Australia, in a river corridor, they are wolves despite their sheep clothing.



*Sheep in the 'lam' near Pine Island*



*Diatom*



*Pediastrum*

## Identification of Freshwater Algae Workshop

Algae are an often maligned group of aquatic plants. Like most forms of life, in a balanced ecosystem, algae can indicate and even promote a high level of water quality. Even the feared blue-green algae is a natural and healthy part of Australian river systems.

Join non-vascularised plant expert Dr. Stephen Skinner

for a free hands-on workshop identifying algae and other water plants as well as learning how they function in a healthy habitat.

Discover the conditions which favor algae blooms and the surprising promise algae may offer us for the future.

**When:** Jul y 4, 2007 from 10-11 am

**Where:** Australian National

Botanic Garden Education Center

**Only 25 spots are available so book early!**

**To book a place contact:**

Tanya Rucosky Noakes  
ACT Waterwatch Facilitator  
Phone# 6207-2246 or

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## Urban Wetlands for Wildlife and Water Quality

**By Rachelle McConville**

While the issues of climate change, water resources and loss of biodiversity can sometimes appear overwhelming, keen volunteers spent Earth Day making a difference.

Volunteers from Conservation Volunteers Australia and the local community turned up to plant over 400 native sedges and rushes at the McKellar Wetlands. The extremely dry conditions made it pretty hard-going. Fortunately, some welcome rain in the following week ensured that the plants have gotten a good start in their new home.

The plantings will provide valuable shelter for local wildlife, and will assist in preventing erosion along the 'frog highway'. A number of large rocks were also placed along the 'highway', by

Territory and Municipal Services, to prevent mowing damage and provide damp spots for frog to shelter in.

The McKellar Wetlands are made up of two constructed wetlands in the north Canberra suburb of McKellar. The second of these wetlands was built in 2004, as part of a new section of residential development of the area. The wetlands exist to provide not only a beautiful view and open space area for residents, but to act as a water quality control pond for it's sub-catchment area, and to provide valuable aquatic and semi-aquatic habitat for local birds, frogs, and other wildlife.

To improve habitat values, an ephemeral drainage line connecting the two permanent ponds was constructed, to provide a semi-wet corridor for wildlife to

travel between the two ponds. Affectionately known as the 'frog highway', this drainage line is designed to provide high quality shelter and breeding sites for the large numbers of frogs that were known to inhabit the wetlands, prior to the residential development.



*Volunteers at McKellar Wetlands on Earth Day2007*

## Water2Water Community Comment Phase

WATER2 WATER INFORMATION DISPLAY		
Date/Times	Event	Where
Sunday May 20	Million Paws Walk	Stage 88 Commonwealth Park
Monday May 24 to Sunday May 27	Information Display	Westfield, Belconnen
Friday June 1 to Sunday June 3	Information Display	Hyperdome, Tuggeranong

With the extremely low inflows into the Canberra water supply over the past few years, ACTEW Corporation is holding a series of information sessions concerning the imminent need for water recycling.

While most folks involved with water quality know *all* our water already *is* recycled, and has been used by dinosaurs, mastodons, and giant kangaroos, as well as every wombat, cow and small holding upstream, the exact 'hows' and 'wheres,' are still to be much

discussed.

Currently ACTEW is proposing piping essentially distilled recycled water back into the Cotter Dam through a series of wetlands. This water then will go through the treatment facilities already in place.

Learn more and give your two cents on whether you think this is the best use of infrastructure, time and money for our region by visiting their website or information displays.

<http://www.actew.com.au/water2water/Introduction.aspx>

## Dilmah Tea Supports Water Quality

Dilmah is taking a role on improving the quality of water, that essential ingredient not only for Dilmah Tea lovers, but for all Australians and for the Australian environment. Funds are used to provide access to water quality monitoring kits and training, as part of

community landcare plans to improve water quality.

As a winner of the of a 'Best Tea, Best Water' Grant for the past two years, the Southern ACT Waterwatch program is on the grow. This year's grant has supported new testing equipment, including much

needed hand lenses for volunteers. It has also meant two new Waterwatch sites on the Murrumbidgee River have been added to the program as well as the reestablishment of a site in the Orroral River Valley in Namadgi National Park.

The Dilmah programme is offering a new round of grants to

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community groups and schools to improve water quality in their local area.

The Grants Programme is an initiative of Landcare Australia and its partner Dilmah Single Origin 100% Pure Ceylon Tea. Through the grants, landcare community groups and schools around Australia will now have better ability to monitor and improve the quality of their water in their local area.

To learn more about this and other grants available visit [http://www.landcareonline.com/funding\\_opportunity\\_details.asp?fo\\_id=10](http://www.landcareonline.com/funding_opportunity_details.asp?fo_id=10)



Waterwatcher David Barrat on the Murrumbidgee River

*“All your better deeds Shall be in water writ”*

— Beumont & Fletcher



## Watermarks: the Waterwatch book review

The Capital Region Greening Australia has recently released a revised and updated *Bringing Birds Back - A Glovebox Guide.* The guide now includes the 30 most common bird species found in revegetation sites surveyed, plus another 20 bird species to keep an eye out for.

To obtain a copy of *Bringing Birds Back* please contact Greening Australia Capital Region on 6253 3035 or [admin@act.greeningaustralia.org.au](mailto:admin@act.greeningaustralia.org.au), download it as a pdf from <http://live.greeningaustralia.org.au/GA/ACT/WhatsNew/bringbirdsback.htm>

Waterwatchers undertaking habitat assessment may obtain a free copy through their Waterwatch coordinators.



## Market Marauding

Waterwatch is coming to see you!

Drop by and say, “Hello,” as the Waterwatch display travels around local food and craft markets over the coming months.

Kids can get up close and personal with amazing aquatic macro-

invertebrates, and participate in colouring and poster contests. Adults can learn what’s happening in their catchment, get involved, book an education program for a group or school or just grab some free publications, or advice from your Waterwatch Facilitator.



Look out for “Neep” our new kid’s logo!

## Wall to Wall Walk a Winner

As part of Waterwatch’s Earth Day celebration, botanist, Dr. Stephen Skinner led several hikes to Tuggerranong’s hidden jewel, the lower reach of Tuggerranong Creek.

Travelling from the Tuggerranong dam wall to the old Yarralumna homestead wall, the site is a biodiversity hotbed, with 93 bird species alone identified!

Stop in to the Southern Act Waterwatch Headquarters at the Urambi Primary School and pick up a free walking guide. Take a lovely walk, or take the next step and help Waterwatch assess, maintain and protect sites like this around our region.

For more information contact: Dr. Stephen Skinner 6296-6400 [Waterwatch@sactcg.org](mailto:Waterwatch@sactcg.org)



Lower Tuggerranong Creek

## ACT Waterwatch

### **ACT Waterwatch Facilitator**

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### **What is Waterwatch?**

Waterwatch is a national community water quality monitoring program that encourages all Australians to become involved and active in the protection and management of their waterways and catchments.

### **Who is Waterwatch?**

Waterwatch involves local community groups such as Landcare, Park Care and Catchment groups, as well as residents, schools and landowners who regularly monitor the water quality of local creeks, wetlands, lakes and rivers.

### **Why monitor?**

Healthy catchments produce healthy ecosystems with happy fish, frogs, birds, plants, macro-invertebrates and people. Waterwatch aims to create awareness of water quality issues by involving all members of the community and by forming partnerships between the Waterwatch group and water authorities, resources management authorities, business and industry.

### **First step**

If you are interested in improving the health of your waterway and meeting or forming a group of like minded individuals, you should begin by contacting your local Waterwatch Coordinator.

### **Making a difference**

Water quality information collected throughout a catchment provides a picture of the health of your waterways. Waterwatch groups have initiated many positive, community based conservation activities such as creek restoration, willow removal, removing litter from waterways, eradicating weeds, development of habitats, and reducing the use of pesticides and other pollutants.

WE'RE ON THE WEB!  
WWW.WATERWATCH.ACT.GOV

**Waterwatch is proudly supported by:**



**ActewAGL**



**Volunteers work for free but  
not for nothing!  
Our Vision—Healthy  
Waterways**

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