

Friends of Grasslands

Supporting native grassy ecosystems



Connecting the community to natural values & resources in the landscape

Indigenous values workshops with Rod Mason

Did you know?

Local Aboriginal people cultivated 'yam daisy gardens', reconstituted and moved soil around the landscape, encouraged the survival of 'fruit orchards' for their pigeons, practised water conservation, burnt areas in particular ways to unlock seed stores, and cultivated grasses, bush lettuce and water parsley?

This was all part of their traditional knowledge of the flora and fauna and its flow through the landscape in the different seasons. This knowledge served to sustain their resources which they used for food, medicine, fibre (for carrying tools and food), and shelter.

About Rod Mason

The workshop will be led by Rod Mason, respected Ngarigo elder and natural resource scientist, and formerly with NSW National Park and Wildlife Service.

Rod emphasizes learning by doing and reconnecting people to the natural and cultural resources in our region and "on farm". He aims to create a better understanding of our (Indigenous and non-Indigenous) shared culture/heritage/biodiversity values.

These workshops are likely to change completely your understanding of nature and our grassy ecosystems in particular, and to change your approach to conservation.

Workshop 1: Making string, glue and baskets (Thurs-Fri, 10-11 March, Garuwanga)

Learn:

- How to find, gather, dry and prepare materials.
- How to make string, glue and baskets, important tools and equipment for Indigenous people.
- How to identify plants, their properties and ecology (where to find them and when), and the significance of these plants to Aboriginal people.
- The language used for them and how the plants form part of Aboriginal living and culture.

Workshop 2: Resource flows in the landscape (Wed-Thurs 20-21 April, Garuwanga)

Learn:

- How the plants and fauna respond to the different seasons - six seasons.
- How to identify animals and plants, their properties and ecology (where to find them and when), and the significance of these plants to Aboriginal people.
- The language used for them and how the plants form part of Aboriginal living and culture.

Target audience

Rod Mason believes that the current landowners and managers should know how our traditional peoples' understand and manage our natural resources and, assisted by that knowledge, restore the natural landscape function and biodiversity.

Therefore any custodians or carers of Country are welcome to attend the workshop and to learn.

Date, time & costs

The dates chosen are Thurs-Fri, 10-11 March, and Wed-Thurs, 20-21 April, from 9.30 sharp to 4.30 each day.

The cost is \$25 for lunches and morning and afternoon tea. For those wishing to stay at Garuwanga before, during or after the workshop, accommodation is free.

Garuwanga

Garuwanga (Ngarigo for *Dreaming*) is a 700ha property managed for landscape function, biodiversity and cultural heritage, twelve kilometres from Nimmitabel. It is the venue for many FOG workshops and field days. Many other groups have also used it. It has ample and reasonably comfortable accommodation available.

To inquire and register

Please contact Geoff Robertson (geoffrobertson@iprimus.com.au or 02 6241 4065).

Future activities

More workshops are planned for later in 2011 and 2012 and we hope that the workshops will facilitate additional land restoration work based on Indigenous practice.

Organisation and support

These workshops are organised by Friends of Grasslands, assisted by Geoffrey Simpson and Rod Mason and supported by Kosciuszko to Coast partnership and the Murrumbidgee Catchment Authority.

They are generously sponsored by *Connecting the community to natural values and resources in the landscape* project, funded by the Murrumbidgee Catchment Management Authority, under *Caring for our Country*.



The photograph shows Rod Mason, Geoffrey Simpson, Adam Muyt and Margaret Ning at Garuwanga in 2007 when the concept of the workshops was first discussed.

