



COOLEMAN RIDGE PARK CARE GROUP

Newsletter April 2012

Previous Sunday Meeting 18 March Nature Trail

Glorious weather greeted an intrepid eleven at Kathner Street. Pat and Malcolm inspected drains and associated works, taking photos. Arminel demolished some African Lovegrass *Eragrostis curvula* tussocks, checked the dam wall (saturated, oozing, but still holding despite cracks from tree roots and water pressure), planted River Tussock *Poa labillardieri* clumps and scattered seed of Tall Amobium *Amobium alatum*. Doug and Marco donned protective gear and fired up the Whipper Snipper to clear a swathe either side of our Nature Trail. Everyone else got stuck into Tall Mullein *Verbascum thapsus* and Fleabane *Conyza spp.* The afternoon tea was particularly special, with Bev providing freshly cooked chocolate cupcakes. Anna then called the committee to order and ran a quick meeting as we all munched, reporting on the letter she'd sent to the Chief Minister regarding the Bathurst Burr *Xanthium spinosum* infestation and associated problems.

Short Reports

- Rohan is assuming responsibility for our **website**. The official hand-over takes place soon. Many, many thanks to Karina, who set it up and has run it single-handed for years.
- 'A Labour of Love – landcare in the ACT' is the Southern ACT Catchment Group's latest heritage project. We hastily provided material by the deadline, including photos and a profile of one of our newer members – Graham, whose heroic onslaught on woody weeds is transforming the hillside behind Chapman.

Future programme

In the cooler months, we hold afternoon sessions.

**Next meeting – Sunday 15th April
Group Area North – Chauvel.** Park at Kathner Street entrance or on Chauvel Cct.

- 1.30 – 4 pm
- Plant ID; remove exotic growth.
- Wear long sleeves and trousers, enclosed shoes, hat and gloves. Bring raincoat if it is wet.
- BYO drink & snack.

Contact Doug 6288 8589 if you need any gear or more info.

- On Friday 30th March, Athllon Depot workers Nick, Graham and Les provided the long-awaited tree-aging samples from **Tree 404**, the old Bundy *Eucalyptus nortonii* near GAN Chauvel, and a control sample from a fallen Bundy which had died following the 2003 fires. Dendrochronologist **Dr Matt Brookhouse**, has taken the discs to the ANU, for eventual examination. Thanks to everyone involved in the exercise.
- Group members had noticed cracks near saplings and other signs of weakness in the **dam wall at Kathner St.** We reported these symptoms to our managers. As a precaution against further deterioration of the wall, Nick, Graham and Les cut and dabbed all the saplings growing on it. It looks rather bare, but Native grasses and Dianella lilies should soon fill the spaces!
- Doug removed two more **Pinus radiata wildings** on Mt Arawang - which brings the total removed to 60, spread right along the Reserve. Fortunately, none of the 60 removed has had mature seed although some had immature cones. Malcolm keeps records of location and date removed.

What's around



Marbled Gecko *Christinus marmoratus*

Malcolm Gill photographed this chap in the Reserve in early March. It was under some bark on a tree in the fenced regeneration area at Kathner Street. Marbled Geckoes are not uncommon on the Ridge - Anna notes that she translocated several of them during the Rock Picking exercise (aka Asset Protection work) in December 2008.

Australian Wood (Maned) Duck *Chenonetta jubata*

Photo Gösta Lyngå

Here is a solo male posed in a favourite perching place – the bench at the Kathner Street dam, often decorated with duck droppings! On Friday 30 March, a family of at least 5 ducklings, plus the proud parents, was parading through the soggy surrounds of the dam! Wood Ducks are common around Canberra. They are goose-like in appearance and gait. They like to walk about in small flocks on grass. In our Reserve, they nest occasionally in the old hollow eucalypt trees near the dam.



Chapman Primary Partnership

On a March afternoon threatening rain, Doug and I took 60 year 4 students and their teachers for a mighty weeding session on the site bordering the Chapman School walking trail. Sixty pairs of little gloved hands and lots of excited effort saw a great deal of Fleabane removed and heaped in piles. We hope to repeat this exercise next term, the children love it. We are seeing the benefit of occasional working visits to that part of the ridge.

PS The small Wollemi Pine which we presented to the school some years ago has been planted in a fenced area protected from westerly winds and sun. It is growing well.

Jenny

Frickin' Lovegrass Report

On Wednesday 7th March, Arminel and Linda attended the Launch of Sarah Sharp's report on the distribution and abundance of African Lovegrass *Eragrostis curvula* in the ACT. (We provided input to Sarah last year.) Her report forms part of the Southern ACT Catchment Group's project 'Regional education on African Lovegrass - an integrated approach'.

Shane Rattenbury (MLA) did the honours.

A hard copy of the Report has been placed in the Group Library.

Contact Erika 6288 3550 to borrow it.