



COOLEMAN RIDGE PARKCARE GROUP

Newsletter April 2002

Previous Sunday meeting

March 17th.....

..... We call them Tina's thistles but she shares them with Rowan and Doug. They are a lion-hearted crew.

First sight was daunting and Doug's e-mail suggestion of biological control went down well (he is investigating.) Only having hand tools we plunged into manual removal, buoyed by the assurances of Tina and Rowan that the area really is improving. Their plantings are indeed doing well and native ground cover is increasing.

Tina side-tracked us to a planting that predates our group, and here were several additions to the herbarium - *Eucalyptus stellulata* (Black Sally), *Pteridium esculentum* (Bracken) and *Cotoneaster horisontalis* (the last-named being identified for Gösta at the Garden Shop in Weston). We'd earlier found a *Vitis sp.* (Grape Vine) at the Kathner Street end as we replaced about 20 rocks dislodged by the mysterious rock-roller.

Minutes of the meeting following the thistling are available. ☼

Coming Sunday meeting 21st April

- 1.30 -4 pm
- park at the Kambah Pony Club's parking area beyond the far end of Hake Street.
- go right (East) to the park entrance leading up to the big *Eucalyptus bridgesiana* where we will meet.
- target: woody weeds on SE slopes of Mt Arawang.
- bring hat, gloves, drink, snack, loppers or secateurs. Spray will be available.
- a brief general meeting will follow.
- Please note that children must not be close to where spray is being used but there is plenty for non-sprayers to do. ☼

Annual April Affair

Weeding! Picnic! Bird watching! Spot lighting! Star gazing!
Come with your picnic to the Kathner Street end on Thursday 25th from 5 p.m. onwards (we know it is Anzac Day). Follow the track beside the outer fence, between the Olympic Area and the outer boundary to the rocky knoll (a few hundred metres). Bring torch; binoculars handy. ☼

Waterwatch

World Water Day, Friday 22nd March, was a fitting occasion for the autumn bug-shot. Bayne again lead the monitoring. We shared his enthusiasm and surprise at the abundance of life

caught up in his 10 metre trawl along the bank of Kathner Street dam - which is now as full as it can get. It was quick work to reach the target of 20 representatives of many species, and Bayne concluded by doing complicated sums to arrive at the overall health score (which was high - we'll get a report later).

There were yabbies, leeches, dragonfly nymphs, damselfly nymphs, beetles, tadpoles, almost-frogs - *and lots lots more!*

Why so rich compared with last November? Plenty of water, warming temperatures, few pollutants. The water was deeply stained with tannin and thus fairly acid - we were advised not to drink it for more than a week at a stretch. ☼

Remnant native grassland in the ACT

is represented in:

Tussock grassland or sedgeland - tussock grasses have numerous erect stems or leaves arising from compact base or from spreading rhizomes.

(taken from *The conservation of Remnant Woodland and Native Grassland in the ACT*, National Parks Association of the ACT, 1991.)

Rushes and sedges are often confused with grasses - someone said *Rushes are round and sedges have edges*. No doubt an over-simplification. ☼

Rock displacement

This mysterious activity persists and it would be interesting to learn if the perpetrators are the same. Particularly if we could discuss the matter with them. We replaced as many as we could shift, near the Kathner Street dam, on Sunday 17th.

Fire hazard reduction

A lot of clearing of fuel, both undergrowth and trees, has taken place behind the houses, mostly below the fire trail. Fears have been expressed that in some cases this may lead to erosion. Judith Harvey, as consultant for Wildlife Research and Monitoring, and Parks and Conservation Fire Management, has been working closely with our rangers and work crews for some time, and has been keeping us informed. The Coleman Pines in the Hertz-Doyle area are down - while a large crane grasped the top, the trunk was severed and the tree lifted out vertically. Judith is continuing her survey of our flora, plotting names to our trees on aerial photographs and outlining plant communities. Thanks to her, *Bossiaea buxifolia* has joined the herbarium. She located it on the western slope of Coleman Hill near a large *Eucalyptus rossii*. ☼

Vegetation list

We've had several requests for copies lately. ☼

What's around

Family: POLYGONACEAE

The Buckwheat family



Acetocella vulgaris

Sheep Sorrel

Probably native of Europe.

Perennial herb, widespread weed with leaves that can poison stock.

acetum - Latin for vinegar I suppose this is relevant - both *A. vulgaris* and *R. brownii* have sharp-tasting leaves. *vulgaris* from Latin *vulgare* - common

Activity figures for March

For March, 3 people have reported 38 hours and 20 minutes, and 8 of our group had fun pulling thistles on Mt Arawang on Sunday 17th. If you have any further statistics for March, please give Janice a call.

Contact Janice with your hours at the end of each month (evenings excepting Tuesdays on 6288 3953 or e-mail at janice.paull@aph.gov.au) Could you please let Janice know what weeds you are removing when you provide the statistics. This level of detail is forwarded to Ann Connolly. ☼

March log

xx0302 fire hazard reduction work continued.
130302 *Bossiaea buxifolia* added to herbarium.
150302 rocks displaced above Kathner St dam
170302 rocks replaced where possible

170302 *Pteridium esculentum*, *Eucalyptus stellulata*,
Cotoneaster horizontalis, *Vitis sp.* added to
herbarium

220302 waterwatch at Kathner Street dam. ☼



Rumex brownii

Swamp Dock

Perennial native..

Rumex from Latin for Sorrel

brownii - Robert Brown (1773 - 1858) was the naturalist who sailed with Flinders on the Investigator. ☼

Members

When I talked to Bess she was cheerily unpacking boxes. Soon we should have an e-mail address for her. ☼

David

On Sunday 10th March Fisher Land Care Group planted a *Hardenbergia* in memory of David. It is in the Olympic site by Namatjira Drive.

Thanks for letting us know, Alan ☼

Doug's investigation - thistle-eating bugs

Doug has followed up the possibility of obtaining bugs to help in the fight against the dreaded thistle. Anthony Swirepik from the CSIRO advises that insects for scotch thistles are readily available around Canberra. These insects were originally released around Lanyon and Anthony has found isolated thistles around the Horticultural School being attacked by the stem borer, *Lixus cardui* and the seed weevil *Larinus latus* has been spotted at a number a sites around Weston.

Apparently the stem borer sits dormant until spring and there may already be some of these insects on the Ridge. If you are pulling thistles it will pay to see if there are any in the stems. If you do find them please let us know.

The seed weevil needs to be collected in the spring, late November/early December. Anthony has offered to show Doug how to collect these weevils. We will keep this in mind as a future project for the group.

Thank you for investigating this for us Doug.

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