



COOLEMAN RIDGE PARK CARE ROUP

Newsletter September
2005

Previous Sunday meeting, August 21st

Sunday saw us north-west of Coolleman Trig at the *Annual Exotic Grass Control* trial area. Virginia had helpfully supplied us with a description of the trial and maps of layout of the various plots. While our GPSs were being coordinated we listened to Chapman ecologist Dr Joe Walker outline some of the things we should keep an eye on once the cattle are introduced, including:

- Animal numbers
- When animals enter and exit
- Whether vegetation was grazed or knocked down
- Moisture content of soil: were hooves imprinting?
- Redistribution of nutrients

Joe and David then walked the whole enclosure to set up points for regular photo monitoring, begin the photo record, and generally observe the area.

The troops formed 3 teams of 3, each with a GPS operator, a scribe and a spotter of significant plants (though everyone spotted). Team A started at the top, Team B worked in the enclosures, and Team C started at the bottom of the trial boundary.

It was difficult to get people to stop, and as we left the site at 4 pm the first drops of rain were falling.

Once home, Gösta tabled and plotted the data from the check lists of the 3 teams.

A quick assessment shows that the area is prolific in native vegetation. ☺

Future programme

Provisionally 2005 looks like this, rotating through the three Group Areas (GA) when there is no special programme:

Sep 18th Brendan Lepschi Plant Walk, GAC/Darrell

Oct 16th AGM

Nov 20th GA weeding, fuel assessment, plant ID

Dec 18th GA weeding, fuel assessment, plant ID ☺

Next Sunday meeting, September 18th

Dr Brendan Lepschi of the Australian National Herbarium will walk'n talk us through the local flora. Brendan notices things that we overlook, helps us to correct identifications and, alas, comes with the latest Botanical name changes.

An afternoon not to be missed!

- 1.30 - 4 pm
- meet at Darrell Place, Chapman
- bring hat, gloves, weeder, drink, snack, raincoat if it is wet. ☺

The hills around Woden

Jenny writes:

"On Saturday 6 August – the day when the skies over Canberra were filled with historic aircraft as part of VJ Day – Rob and I and 5 other members of our bushwalking club, set out on a long walk around the hills of Woden, starting and finishing at our place in Kambah. It was a beautiful winter's day and we enjoyed the challenge of a 32 km walk with over 1000 metres of climbing overall.

A number of memories remain in my mind from the day: the good company of friends, the wonderful views west to the snow-capped Brindabellas and east over the "Bush Capital", and up close, the work that is going into caring for the nature parks that we traversed.

This is the route that we followed: from Kambah across to Mt Taylor, Farrer Ridge, Mt Wanniasa, Isaacs Ridge, East O'Malley woodland, Red Hill, Hughes parkland, Yarralumla Woolshed, the bike path to Weston, Narrabundah Hill, Coolleman Ridge and home again.

These hills all form part of the southern ACT catchment of the Murrumbidgee, and most of the area is cared for with great commitment by members of our catchment group. It was very heartening to see the evidence of this "on the ground". On the steep western slope of Mt Taylor we picked our way up through the rich native vegetation that flourishes- weed-free- among the rocks, courtesy of Anne I'Ons' devoted work. On Farrer Ridge we wiped the frost off the interpretative signs and admired the photographs installed by the Farrer Ridge Park Care group on their nature trail. Isaacs Ridge above O'Malley, is cared for by Ted Fleming, who has single-handedly removed briars and woody weeds from his patch over the past few years. On Red Hill we saw evidence of fresh weeding and weed-spraying by the Red Hill Regenerators. Hughes Woodland and parkland has its own small band of carers, and then back over familiar territory, past the recovering landscape of Coolleman Ridge.

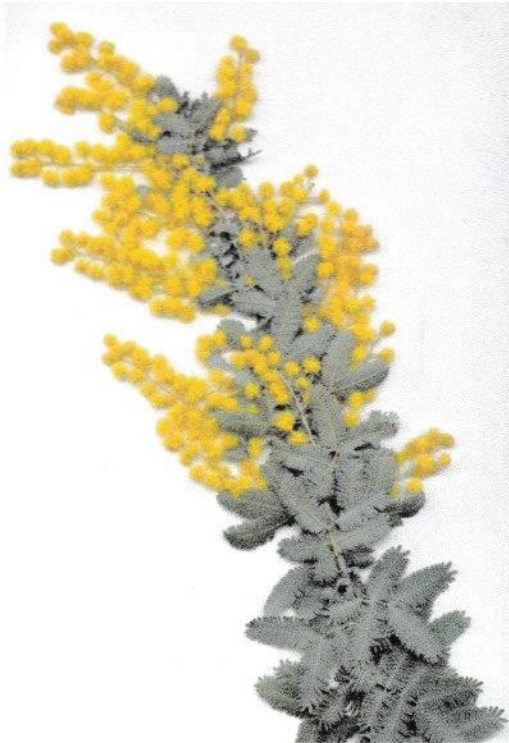
The only depressing part of the day was the walk along the bike path next to the Molonglo: a wasteland of burnt trees, weeds and rubbish. What a difference it makes when a landscape is cared for!" ☺

Landcare Week Walk

As we ambled along the trail, past the Trial area, over Coolleman Trig, back by the notice board and the dam, Gösta talked trees, Malcolm talked fire behaviour, David talked rocks, I talked plants and Jenny explained our caretaking system to the visitors. And Linda pointed out a pair of Striated Pardalotes flitting in and out of a hollow branch. ☺

What's around

FABACEAE – *faba* L. bean. The Pea family. Subfamily- Mimosoideae



**Acacia baileyana* – Cootamundra Wattle
Shrub/tree 3-1 m
akazo Gr. to sharpen
F. M. Bailey (1828-1915) wrote the 7
volume Flora of Queensland ☼



Acacia buxifolia – Box-leaved Wattle
Shrub to 4 m
akazo Gr. to sharpen
Buxus: ancient Box Tree
Occurs naturally in ACT but probably planted
above Monkman Street ☼

The world of lichens

Last month I kept my finger down too long on the zero key. The first paragraph (page 2) should have read: "There are some 30 000 species of these symbiotic fungal/algal associations, with 3 000 in Australia - there are more still to be discovered. About 25% of Australian species are endemic." Sorry about that – and congratulations to Doug for being the first person to pick me up on it. ☼

Leaping into Frogwatch in 2005

Two Frogwatch seminars will be running this September:

Seminar One will suit the beginner who will receive a comprehensive Frogwatch monitoring kit and learn the techniques to participate in the National Water Week Community Frogwatch Census in October.

Seminar Two will introduce the more advanced Frogwatcher to the exciting new Frogspotters program.

For details contact: Rachele McConville

ACT Frogwatch Coordinator

Ginninderra Catchment Group

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AGM

Interested in joining the committee?

Ring Doug: 6288 8589 ☼

Chapman Primary School Trail

Report from Jenny

"This area of Coleman Ridge, above the Chapman Primary School, has been a hive of activity lately. Every Thursday a small group of children walk up to the trail to put fresh leaflets in the box and to walk the trail and do a spot of weeding (they are getting very keen spotters of *Verbascum* and becoming quite expert at pulling the smaller plants out by their long roots.)

"The Southern ACT Catchment group has been able to assist the group in a number of ways. Recently we used a grant to employ a Conservation Volunteers group on two days of weeding and parkcare work on the Ridge.

One day was spent near Reet's area, cutting and poisoning a large swathe of Cootamunda wattles; the other day was spent on the Chapman trail, removing a great patch of blackberry and heaps of thistles and *Verbascum*. As well we planted some of the plants grown from local seed by Lanyon High School,

including: *Bothriochloa*, *Hardenbergia*, Panic grass, *Dodonaea* and Vanilla lilies. The two days were a great success and a lot was achieved in beautiful weather.

Then we had some ideal follow-up rain.

Thursday 1st I took the children up to show them the work done and they were all keen to help with the watering!

We hope this worthwhile project will continue and strengthen in 2006." ☼