



COOLEMAN RIDGE PARK CARE GROUP

Newsletter August

2007

Previous Sunday Meeting. July 15th

GAC/Darrel, last visited in March, always welcomes us with steady improvement. Our sizable team pushed the *Salvia verbenaca* further back, trying hard in the process to avoid the emerging *Bulbine bulbosa* seedlings which pepper the area. These should be at their best in October when the *Stackhousia monogyna* also comes into flower. It's worthy of an entry in your diary as it's likely our next meet there will miss the flowering peak. *Austrodanthonia laevis* was conspicuous with its fluffy spikelets holding shiny-backed florets.

The species count yielded 22 natives amongst a total of 38. Surprisingly this is the first time *Echium plantagineum* has featured, albeit with only a few examples. ☼

Future programme

We will continue to rotate through the four Group Areas (GA) when there is no special programme, meeting on the 3rd Sunday of the month at 1.30 p.m.

A brisk AGM on October 21st at 1.30 p.m. will precede the work party. ☼

Next meeting, Sunday August 19th

- GAS/Arawang for clearing of exotic growth
- 1.30 p.m. to 4 p.m.
- meet on Namatjira Drive just before the Kambah Pool Road turn-off, or GAS/Arawang
- bring hat, gloves, hacker, drink, snack, raincoat if it is wet ☼

July log

Various sightings of a Major Mitchell Cockatoo
270707 2 Maned Wood Ducks, 2 ducklings on Kathner St dam

*Acacia calamifolia identified C1 ☼

Land Care week planting

Plant and water 1500 trees in the Lower Cotter Catchment to improve our water quality

Where: Lower Cotter via Brindabella Rd.

When: Thursday 6th September 9.30 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. followed by a BBQ lunch.

RSVP essential: email Hayden Burgess
hburgess@act.greeningaustralia.org.au
or phone 6253 3035; 0439 030 059 ☼

Major Mitchell

There was a considerable flurry of excitement on the Ridge during July with the sighting of a Major Mitchell Cockatoo. It had joined a flock of Sulphur Crested Cockatoos flying over the Kathner St dam morning and late afternoon, but no one knew where they landed.

We told the story to Erika as she worked her area by the dam on 13th and she turned to point at the badly fire affected tree over the fence in the horse paddock. There it was, calling and displaying.

The following Monday I reported back to my informant, Roger, who was predictably on site next morning, but had no more luck than the stream of equipment-dangling birders and naturalists in his wake.

It seems there are frequent local sightings of this bird (these birds?) over the years, and it is suspected of being an escapee. ☼

FOG on Radio 2XX (Canberra, 98.3fm)

Geoff Robertson is a regular talker on FOG on the *Radio Landcare Program*, each Tuesday morning at 9a.m. ☼

Pests

Winstanley residents tell of an increase in the number of foxes, and a drop off in rabbit activity. They had a fox leap over their 2 metre high fence to peer through their window with nose to pane. ☼

Rock picking

A development application notice is displayed at the Kathner St entrance (at least) for the site preparation of the inner asset protection zone. Many of us went to a display of relevant maps at the Cotter Road depot some months ago, and put in submissions.

http://apps.actpla.act.gov.au/plandev/e-registers/pubnote/pubnoteDetail_new.asp?DA_no=200703361 is where you go for detail, and submissions are to be received by 17 August. Alternatively, phone the applications secretariat on 6207 1687.

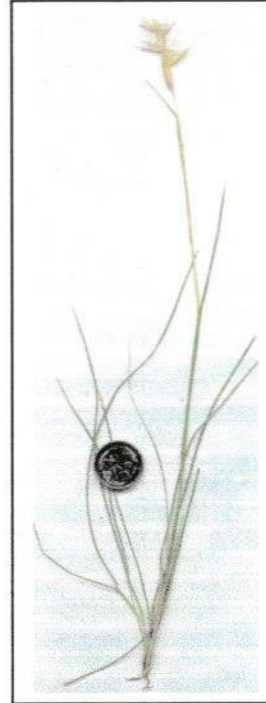
You are invited to deliver your objections, or comments in support of the application, to app.sec@act.gov.au or Applications Secretary,
PO BOX Mitchell, ACT 2911 ☼

What's around – Family POACEAE



Amphibromus nervosus
Tufted native perennial to 1.3 m high, *amphi* Gr: double, both sides, *bromos* Gr: oats, *nervosus* L: *nerved*

At the old dam



Austrodanthonia laevis
Erect, densely caespitose native perennial to 0.6 m high.
australis L: southern, Etienne Danthoine, an 18th century French botanist, *laevis* L: smooth

DRAFT: TOWARDS A MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR COOLEMAN RIDGE CANBERRA NATURE PARK (continued)

Dogs, cats, horses, foxes and rabbits

Dogs are legally permitted in the Reserve only when on a lead and under control. At present (1997) most dog owners do not keep their dogs on leads during their visits to the Reserve. While many keep their dogs under control yet not on a lead this is illegal. Some owners take their dogs to swim in the dams, also an illegal act because of danger to native animals (tortoises). Numbers of people have been threatened, even attacked, by dogs on the Ridge. Enforcement of dog regulations is important for visitor safety and for wildlife. Free ranging dogs have been seen in the Reserve, though this is relatively rare. It may be remembered that the previous lessee of the area was forced out of sheep raising by the attacks of dogs on his animals.

Cats from Chapman often visit the Reserve. Their impact is unknown but being exotic they contravene the aims of management of the Reserve.

Horses and riders use the marked National Horse Trail on the south-western border of the Reserve. Some riders take their mounts away from the trail unlawfully. Away from the Trail the presence of such large animals intimidates visitors, has the potential to spread weeds (Hatton 1987) and creates soil compaction and facilitates erosion. Investigating the feasibility of fencing of the horse trail using materials commensurate with that use, allowing pedestrians to get through it easily, and allowing access to fire-fighting vehicles at regular (appropriately spaced) intervals is recommended.

Rabbits and/or hares are not common but do reside in the Park and are on the increase. Being at low densities elimination is recommended. That they may reach high densities is evident from the experiences of Mr Ben Champion at *Cooleman*. During the Second World War the rabbits became abundant. From 1950, Mr Champion embarked on an eradication campaign that took 4 years.

Foxes are common in the Reserve. It seems impractical to eliminate them but it is likely that they spread seeds of succulent-fruited weeds like *Cotoneaster*, *Pyracantha* and Sweet Briar. A study of their carriage of seeds is recommended.

Note: the whole draft can be read on our web site. ☺

CIMAG

The Canberra Indian Myna Action Group Inc is to hold its AGM together with a public information session on 22 August 2007, beginning at 7:30pm, at the Western District Rugby Union Club, Catchpole Street in Macquarie. Short talks by: Dr Chris Tidemann of ANU, and Ian Fraser, naturalist. ☺

Arawang

Early one recent Friday morning Mark joined us on Fence Post Hill before setting off to work. We showed him the ropes and were impressed by his knowledge of the local flora. He even emailed an identification of Gösta's mystery wattle not long after leaving us (*Acacia calamifolia*). Since he's eager to become a caretaker, Jenny arranged to meet him closer to home one Sunday afternoon and together with her, he and Ray found a super spot not far from Group Area South/Arawang. Perhaps they'll show us around on our coming work party there on 19th August.

It will be fantastic having a nucleus of caretakers on Arawang again.....perhaps we'll soon be able to establish a caretaker presence towards the middle of the Ridge. ☺

Roos

Anne l'Ons writes:

I am sending you a sadness from our trip to the Warrumbungles: these animals [kangaroos] were dying because of over population, no feed due to the drought and over grazing, and a huge population of PC.[*Echium plantagineum*] which they were eating: I asked a very upset ranger why they were not culling. The answer: the minister has issued an edict, no culling what so ever. It was very distressing. The ingestion of PC by the roos is suspected of causing liver damage and general poor health.

Anne ☺