



# COOLEMAN RIDGE PARK CARE GROUP

## Newsletter April

### 2009

### Previous Sunday meeting March 15<sup>th</sup>

There had been 8 mm rain the previous afternoon, and already *Cheilanthes sieberi* was flagging startling green in the otherwise parched and brittle landscape. Sunday was dry, windy and cool for our first afternoon working bee of the year. The regeneration area above Chauvel Circle, which we call Group Area North (GAN), is looking very healthy, with hardy tussocks of *Austrostipa* sp. now dominating the grassland. The thickets of *Chondrilla juncea* (Skeleton Weed) are gradually retreating under repeated onslaughts but it takes time for other plants to re-establish. Still, some *Lomandra* sp. and grasses are venturing into the bare patches.

Rohan attacked *Phalaris aquatica* clumps with his usual vigour - and a big mattock - complaining that he was running out of material. Having long sleeves, trousers and gloves, Arminel removed 3 bags of *Hypericum perforatum* (St John's Wort). The weed warriors also targeted *Avena barbata* (Bearded Oats) and *Acetosella vulgaris* (Sorrel).

We took a break to enjoy the fresh figs that Arminel and Linda brought, at the same time looking at various plant species identifiable at this time. We noted two that are new to GAN - *Chrysocephalum semipapposum* and the exotic *Solanum pseudocapsicum*. ✨

### Future programme

With the cooler months here, we have reverted to afternoon Sunday work parties.

#### Next meeting, Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> April

- 1.30-4 pm
- GAC/Darrell - weed removal and plant ID.
- meet at Darrell Place, or GAC/Darrell
- bring hat, gloves, hacker, drink, snack, rain gear. ✨

### Office bearers

Vice president Doug will be acting president from 10<sup>th</sup> June to the end of July when Arminel is absent on travels.

**email:** tinneydoug@hotmail.com.

**phone:** 6288 8589 ✨

### So you think it's been dry?

There is still water in the Kathner Street dam. It hasn't been empty since a two month spell from mid December 2006. ✨

### State of the Ridge

Our first steering committee meeting to update the 1998 draft plan of management (dPoM) was held at the Gills' home on Saturday 14 Feb. Jenny, Pauline, Gösta, Malcolm and Arminel were there. We agreed that the Group should prepare a comprehensive document for publication on the website. Our own records over the past decade, plus material published or collected since our original dPoM, will provide the basis for a description of all aspects of Cooleman Ridge covered in the original document, plus any new matters which require comment.

Arminel's working title (for want of a better) is "State of the Ridge 2009". She's taken on the co-ordinating role. The different components will be drafted by different "experts" - some from within the Group, some from our contacts.

*If you haven't been contacted yet, and you'd like to be involved, please let one of the steering committee members know which aspect you'd be interested in.*

As matters now stand -

Malcolm will deal with the fiery side of things. David Mackenzie (Lincoln Close) will also have some input to this section.

Jenny has undertaken to revisit our history - which includes the pastoral history of the ridge, its declaration as a reserve, and the doings of the Park Care Group itself.

Pauline is updating our vegetation records.

We've asked Janice to look at the legal framework in which we currently operate, and she's agreed to do that.

Tobias is working on the birds, with the assistance of Phillip Veerman from Canberra Ornithologists.

Through Steve Welch (SACTCG Coordinator), we've been put in touch with Jo Donovan to help expand on the aboriginal prehistory.

Dr Marion Leiba ("The Earthquake Lady"), a Kambah resident, has agreed to provide material about the mudslides which resulted in serious damage to houses adjacent to the Ridge. (Our Chapman members who were up close to this event may be able to add to Marion's observations.)

Gösta will act as Map Master.

The next meeting of the steering committee will be at the Gills' home again, on Saturday 25 April, 2-4 pm. ✨

# What's around

POLYGONACEAE – *poly* Gr: many, *gonia* Gr: angle. The Dock family



*Left:*  
*Persicaria lapathifolia*  
Pale Knotweed  
Erect to ascending native herb to 80 cm high  
Common on the banks of streams and around swamps and water ways

*Right:*  
*Persicaria prostrata*  
Creeping Knotweed  
Decumbent perennial native herb  
Common in ditches and at roadsides



## Development

On 27<sup>th</sup> March, Arminel reported to Sally McIntosh and Allan Bendall of Parks, Conservation and Lands that the rocky knoll in the horse paddocks just to the south of the fenced regeneration area in from Kathner St had become a construction site. There was a bulldozer and other heavy equipment making a road to the top of the knoll where an area was being cleared of vegetation. A walker told us that she had enquired of the workmen, and was told it is to be a house “with a wonderful view.”

Although it is in the horse paddock area, it will have an immediate impact on the amenity of the reserve for all users. The wonderful view all have enjoyed looks like being another casualty of suburbanisation by stealth.

Any notification of these plans has escaped us.

Sally and Allan were also unaware of the project and had a look that same afternoon. They did not see that there would be any need to undertake additional slashing or other fuel management activities as a result of the new house and could only assume that the construction had been appropriately approved through ACTPLA and would be built to meet the required standards for bushfire protection. ☼

## May challenge

*RabbitScan* provides everyone with an opportunity to be involved in an important research project – mapping the distribution and density of the wild European pest rabbit, right across Australia, during the month of May.

Coolman Ridge Park Care Group has been registered to participate. Contact [paulyn@iinet.net.au](mailto:paulyn@iinet.net.au) for more information if you would like to contribute observations. ☼

## Chapman Primary School

Jenny reports:

“Chapman Primary staff have expressed a renewed interest in being involved with our group. Doug Tinney and I were very pleased to be invited to address the year 4 classes at the end of March. They are always interested and eager to be involved at that age! We talked about our work on the Ridge and how the school has been helping over the years. I was able to show them some wonderful coloured, mounted photos which are among the collection that Arminel has retrieved as part of the re-writing of our management plan.

“After lunch we took the three teachers plus two classes for a walk around the School Trail and explained how they will be able to help in the ongoing care of the area. I could appreciate the work done previously with the school kids in clearing vast amounts of *verbascum*!

“Not having visited the area for about a year, I was delighted to see how healthy it looked: even one of the three eucalypt seedlings rescued from the Kathner Street dam wall and replanted here a few years ago had not only survived drought and two burn-offs, but was growing strongly

“In a timely announcement, Lois Padgham has informed us that the new sign for the school pamphlet box is made and ready to install, courtesy of her work with the people at Athllon Drive. “Next term we hope to have at least three 'work parties' with the Year 4 classes on this area of the Ridge. ☼