



COOLEMAN RIDGE PARK CARE GROUP

Newsletter March

2010

Previous Sunday meeting February 21st

Our last early morning work party of the summer started as usual at 8.00, with Gösta at GAC (Group Area Central) wondering where everyone was. As it happened people were waylaid closer to the parking spot removing *Eragrostis curvula*, *Verbascum thapsus*, and *Hypericum perforatum* in particular, collecting 6 bags of *Eragrostis* seedheads and one each of seeding *Hypericum* and *Verbascum*.

The work party turned into a real party at morning tea time, when two families and Pat joined the Group for a picnic at the rocky outcrop at GAC. Pat showed up first, having been out surveying trees. He welcomed the newcomers at the car park and directed them to the meeting place. Jen and Matt arrived with their two little girls and fresh baked scones with jam and cream. Donna and Liz came accompanied by their two dogs and two teenagers - Erin and Sebastian - and laden with trays of delicious fresh fruit to share.

Once everyone had been fed and watered, and some of the initial shyness had worn off, we went for a stroll in the sunshine. It was just lovely to share with our visitors our delight in the place, and in the improvement that has followed on several years of dogged weeding.

Grasshoppers were everywhere. Sebastian showed himself an expert at catching and holding them carefully for others to admire - Jen's camera caught the moment and by afternoon there were photos of the fun and the flowers on a Web blogsite - great PR for CRPCG and ParkCare generally.

Thanks everyone - it was a very rewarding day. So rope in a relative, a friend or a neighbour for afternoon tea and a walk on the Ridge with us when we have our March Work Party! ☼

Future programme

Next meeting, Sunday March 21st

- GAS/Arawang for clearing exotic growth. Plant ID
- 1.30 to 4.00 pm
- meet on Namatjira Drive just before the Kambah Pool Road turn-off, or at GAS
- bring hat, gloves, hacker, drink, snack

Note that we are reverting to afternoon meetings during the cooler months. ☼

Common names?

Check our web site Plant List for suggestions. ☼

Kathner Street Control Burn

Recovery Report 2 from Arminel

“January was very dry - only 1mm of rain, so growth stimulated by the rain at Christmas was slowed. The potential for erosion remained high. The rainfall received in February - 171 mm - caused some new scouring and reactivated the main gully, but the damage was minimised by the rain coming as steady, soaking showers. The burnt vestiges of the *Phalaris aquatica* windrows seem to have helped slow run-off, as intended. The vegetation left above the dam also seems to have broken the rush of water and saved the upper dam wall from new erosion. The ground remains moist, with the drainage line muddy and seeping water.

“We are delighted to report that virtually all the previously healthy trees, bushes and perennial plants burnt in the fire are now showing regrowth, with some having already managed to produce flowers and even fruit since November. Although the tussocks of *Austrostipa sp* lost their ripening seedheads to the flames, and have been slow to recuperate, *Bothriochloa macra* appears to be producing a wonderful crop this season.

“There are many new seedlings emerging, too. *Echium plantagineum* remains the dominant exotic weed. *Chenopodium pumilio* has formed dense mats and numerous new seedlings are continuing to pop up throughout the burnt zone. It is probably the most numerous native annual now growing in our area. Colonies of new *Solanum cinereum* are springing up, so the conditions seem to have particularly favoured germination of this pretty native bush.” ☼

New to library

Australia's Biodiversity - Responses to Fire. Plants, birds and invertebrates. Gill, A.M., Woinarski, J.C.Z, and York, A. (1999). Environment Australia Biodiversity Technical Paper, No 1. Canberra. 266 pp. ISBN 0 642 21422 0

The threat posed by pest animals to bio-diversity in NSW. Coutts-Smith, A.J., Mahon, P.S., Letnic, M. and Downey, P.O. (2007). Invasive Animals Cooperative Research Centre, Canberra. 113 pp. ISBN 978 0 9803194 2 2

Molonglo Catchment Pest Animal Information Pack - A Resource to Enable Accurate Identification and Effective Control of Pest Animals in the Molonglo Catchment. Molonglo Catchment Group Inc 2009. ISBN 978-0-9803197-3-6

The Scribbly Gum - Volunteers Working in Parks. Spring 2009 issue (PCL)

To borrow from the library contact custodian Erika: 6288 3550 ☼

What's around

Family:POACEAE



Digitaria brownii –
Cotton Panic Grass
Perennial native to 0.8m
high; spikelets enveloped
in long hairs.
digitus L: finger, Robert
Brown (1773-1858)
sailed with Flinders on
the *Investigator*

**Digitaria sanguinalis* –
Crab Grass
Variable spreading
exotic annual to more
than 1 m high; rooting at
nodes
digitus L: finger, *sanguis*
L: blood + *alis* pertaining
to, in allusion to a
supposed ability to
staunch bleeding.
Native of warm
temperate regions.



Doug's frog report:

"My favourite frog site has struck again. It's the twin concrete troughs above the old ranger's house next to the pound paddock on the west side of the Ridge near the Kambah appendix. The Sunday before the rain in early February, a Banjo Frog (how did he know?) was using the housing for the float mechanism as an echo chamber and was booming out a song louder than Deep Purple.

"Must have worked, because a week later there was a glutinous clutch of eggs floating in the trough. Next week maybe some tadpoles.

"Frogs didn't breed in Spring because, I presume, of the presence of cattle which used the site as a watering point. But, late in the season, there may be a happy event.

"Another artificial but less industrial site next to the Kambah fire station has gone from bone dry to overflowing - and the frog chorus is deafening. Cattle grazed this wetland flat in Spring and not a frog could be heard. Hopefully there'll be lots of little frogs there soon. Amazing how quickly animals such as frogs can take advantage of a change in conditions." ☼

New members

Welcome to Tania from Duffy who's already joined the Friday weeders a couple of times, and

Barry from Chapman who has sent some great pictures of an Eastern Bearded Dragon, found in a tree just up from Monkman St. ☼

1st Aid

Arminel, like Gösta, now has a certificate. ☼

Chapman Flood Prevention Works –

Report from Arminel

"As previously reported, members of the Group had attended the Public Consultation sessions held in November 2009 and the Group committee made a formal submission in this matter.

"Wed 10 Feb 2010 was our first on-site meeting with GHD engineer Amahl Beharry, his assistant Fran, and a surveyor, Richard Jelland of LandData. The purpose was to set boundaries for sensitive areas, and to identify markers and infrastructure associated with our two self-guided walking trails. This information will be used by GHD to refine the plans further. Construction is unlikely to start before August.

"We met early (7.30 am) at Kathner Street. Gösta, Arminel and David represented the Group, with Malcolm and Doug also making brief appearances at either end of the walk.

"For the first hour or so, we were joined by three officials from Parks Conservation and Lands - Simon Tozer, (Ranger-in-Charge, Canberra Nature Park) Greg Baines (Senior Vegetation Ecologist) and Lara Woollcombe (Senior Ranger, Canberra Nature Park - Canberra South District). It appears that there has not yet been adequate liaison between Roads ACT and relevant staff at Parks about the proposed works, so this was an opportunity for a useful exchange of information about progress and processes.

"We were very glad to have a cold drink at David's place, and get a lift back to the vehicles at the end of the exercise at 10.30 am. It was very hot and bright on the Ridge by the time we finished." ☼

Waterwatch newsletter link

<http://www.act.waterwatch.org.au/Files/Newsletters/autumn10.pdf>
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