



COOLEMAN RIDGE PARK CARE GROUP

Newsletter March 2011

Previous Sunday meeting 20th February

Glorious weather encouraged a good attendance at Kathner St Nature Trail. Our old friend George was there, and there were three generations of one family present, with Graham Lindenmayer from Victoria joining his son and granddaughter for the occasion! Malcolm, on the mend after surgery, came to say hello. Our VP, Doug, trained Peter to use the Group's slasher. Peter felled the exotic Umbrella Sedge *Cyperus eragrostis* infestation near the dam. Graham stayed by the Trail to uproot the weeds Fleabane *Conyza albida*, Aaron's Rod *Verbascum thapsus*, Twiggy Mullein *V. virgata* and Common Sow-Thistle *Sonchus oleraceus*. George and Rob went off to poison six hip-laden Sweet Briar *Rosa rubiginosa* plants. Bridget and Saskia stayed with Arminel to observe the Cunningham's Skink family (see *What's Around*) and familiarise themselves with three deceptively similar grasses – a few specimens of the invasive weed African Lovegrass *Eragrostis curvula*, lots of the lovely native Weeping Lovegrass *Eragrostis parviflora*, and thriving Native Millet *Panicum effusum*. Thanks to Pat, who was Tea Laddie again!

Future programme

Next meeting, Sunday 20th March

TIME – 1.30 – 4 PM

LOCATION – Group Area Central (Uphill and East of Darrell Place Chapman)

TASKS – Woody weeds and Aaron's Rod *Verbascum thapsus*

PLANT ID – African Lovegrass *Eragrostis curvula*

MEETING PLACE - Entry from Darrell Place, Chapman. Meet at GAC Darrell.

WHAT TO BRING - hat, gloves, hacker, drink, snack.

MORE INFORMATION? RING DOUG ON 6288 8589 OR ARMINEL ON 6231 7392

20th Anniversary

Bess Sledge and Tony Brownlie will be our honoured guests at a *Reunion on the Ridge* on Monday 18th April. We'll be Welcomed to Country and enjoy light refreshments. Jenny Conolly, our new Parkcare Coordinator, is helping us with logistics (marquee, Portaloo, tables, chairs etc) and publicity. Past and present members of the Group (and their grandchildren and children!) and old friends from the official world will be welcome to the event. It will be physically accessible to all – including those reliant on wheelchair or pram!

Our new Coordinator Jenny Conolly

Jenny has been a Weeds and Pests Officer for about 6 years in Parks, Conservation and Lands. She previously acted in this job in 2007. Her qualifications and background are in horticulture and land management. Welcome, Jenny!

A new generation of Park Carers

Congratulations to Martha, one of our members - she's had twins! Oliver and Callum were born on 15 October 2010 at Calvary John James Hospital.

For the Diary

Sunday 10 April 10 am - 11.30 am - *Chapman Primary School Trail*. Heritage Festival guided walk led by Doug Tinney..

Saturday 16 April 10 am - midday - *Vistas and Vulnerable Vegetation - Cooleman Ridge Nature Trail*. Heritage Festival guided walk led by Doug Tinney.

Sunday 17 April 2 – 4.30 pm Workparty at Nature Trail to prepare for 20th Anniversary Gathering. Meet: Kathner Street, Chapman.

Monday 18 April 2 – 4 pm *Reunion on the Ridge – 20th Anniversary Gathering at Kathner Street*.

Tuesday 19 April Members of our Group will be on Radio Landcare 2XX FM 98.3 to talk about the group's 20 years of achievement.

**Radio Landcare 2XX FM 98.3
Tuesdays 9 - 10am**

What's around



Photo Arminel Ryan

***Egernia cunninghami* Cunningham's Skink** is a harmless and fairly common lizard, usually seen in colonies or family groups. The adult in this photograph is sheltering two juveniles. Adults may grow to over 400 mm in length. These skinks like to bask on boulders, and shelter in rock crevices. Strong spiny scales on the back and tail grip the rock, so predators can't remove them easily. If handled or caught, the skink may drop its tail and grow a new one. Adults are mainly vegetarians, eating Sweet Briar, Blackberry and presumably also Native Raspberry, all of which flourish on our Ridge. Juveniles concentrate on invertebrates.

Information adapted from p 21 of *Reptiles and Frogs of the ACT* by Ross Bennett

Informal Gathering with Dr Andrew Leigh MP, Federal Member for Fraser – an abridged report from Anna See.

On 15 February Andrew Leigh invited various environmental community groups to be part of a discussion on local environmental issues. I attended on behalf of Cooleman Ridge Park Care Group and also The Conservation Council ACT Region. Andrew organised this discussion as he is keen to liaise with the community more and understand the issues faced by park carers [...] [...] issues raised include[d] stabilising walking tracks, weed and pest management and recreation including concerns over mountain bikes on walking tracks and off lead dog walking. Two major issues raised were the lack of paid on-ground staff and difficulty in recruiting and keeping volunteers.

Andrew took these issues on board and was keen to further work with the community in trying to resolve these issues.

PS Dr Leigh has since delivered a Constituency Speech about Environment volunteers. Our Group got a mention in Hansard on 22 Feb.

Legislative Assembly recognition for Pauline

Meredith Hunter MLA gave a eulogy in the ACT Legislative Assembly on 15 Feb 2011. Gösta and Arminel were present for this sincere tribute to a remarkable life of service to the community.

Acacia baileyana blitz

Graham has returned to the attack. He's very pleased with his new bowsaw. Well done!!

Glossy Black Cockatoo

Greening Australia Capital Region tells us that "Last year staff from the Australian Government's environment and agriculture departments propagated over 7,000 *Allocasuarina verticillata* (Drooping She-oak) as part of their voluntary contribution to the environment. The seedlings were propagated specifically for a revegetation project with ACT Parks and Conservation Service to re-establish *Allocasuarina verticillata* in ACT nature reserves to provide food for the Glossy Black-Cockatoo. [This bird] is declared as vulnerable to the threat of extinction in the ACT and depends on the availability of seed from these trees to survive."

Many Drooping She-Oaks and numerous hollow trees (potential nest-sites) grow on our Ridge, so it is already part of the potential habitat.

African Lovegrass Survey

Linda Spinaze is coordinating the Group response to this. Our method is simply printing the Ridge map from our own website, walking the trails on the Ridge and marking where *Eragrostis curvula* is found. Linda will collate the results and ensure a scout is sent along any tracks not covered. Completed maps can be delivered or sent to her at 78 Sidaway St Chapman 2611.

Flotsam and Jetsam

Waterwatchers Arminel and Pat found and removed a Yabby trap baited with rotten chops from a stinking Kathner St dam on 25 Feb. Senior Ranger Lara Woollcombe took the offensive object away for us.