



COOLEMAN RIDGE PARK CARE GROUP

Newsletter
May 2021

Previous Meeting

Sun 18 April 2021 Lincoln Place

Verbascum took full advantage of last month's rain and the cancellation of the weeding party. This weed has spread all over the Ridge. However, this did not deter 15 people from tackling it on the eastern side of Mt Arawang above Lincoln Close. After a few hours of cut 'n' dabbing and hacking in the glorious Autumn sunshine, the infestation was reduced significantly.

Before fanning out to their chosen areas, Linda welcomed newcomers, Vincent Conrad and the Keighley family of Miles, Xenia and baby Hugh. She also passed around a sample of a recent weedy grass, Red natal grass/*Melinis repens*, six tussocks of which she had removed behind Freebody Place. The group received encouraging comments from passers by, including Thalia from the ABC who took at least one photo and planned to post it on Facebook to encourage some young volunteers to join in.

Those in attendance were: Paul Sheils, Chris Oates, Vincent Conrad, Peter Flint, Rob Lundie, Natasha Newman, Alex Newman, Helen Govey, Miles Keighley, Xenia Keighley, Hugh Keighley, Rohan Thomas, Linda Spinaze, Alan Ford and Gösta Lynga.

Rob Lundie

CRPCG 30th Anniversary

This year marks the 30th birthday of the Coleman Ridge Park Care Group. Much has happened on the Ridge and much has been achieved. To celebrate, and to acknowledge the Group members who have been

Next Meeting

Sunday 16 May 2021

**CRPCG 30th Anniversary
Celebration and weeding**

Time: 2.00 pm – 4.00 pm

NOTE NEW TIME!

Meet: End of Kathner St

Bring: hat, gloves, digger, water to drink.

Task: Celebrate our anniversary, optional weeding afterwards.

Contact: Linda Spinaze 6288 6916

Jun meeting: Sun 20, Mt Arawang

volunteering since the beginning, there will be a small afternoon tea from 2 pm to 3 pm on Sunday 16 May at the end of Kathner St, Chapman. Photos of Group activities over the years will be on display. This will be followed by optional weeding until 4 pm. If you are reading this newsletter you are very welcome to come along. Refreshments will be provided and so it would help us to know if you intend coming. Just email me at

lundier@inet.net.au

Look forward to seeing you.

Rob Lundie

CRPCG Founding Members

Bess Sledge: This remarkable woman began the Coleman Ridge Park Care Group. Reading in April 1991 about the success of the Urambi Park Care Group, Bess decided to

initiate a similar group for Cooleman Ridge. Ads in the local press drew a group of interested volunteers. The first meeting of the group took place on 29 May 1991, with a membership of 27. A letterbox drop and information stalls at Cooleman Court and the Weston Creek Festival swelled membership to 118, of whom 34 were very active.

While Bess Sledge and her husband David spent many days each week on the Ridge, a small band of enthusiasts formed regular working parties on a Friday and Monday and concentrated their efforts on their own 'patch'. These 'caretaker patches' flourished and provided regular and rewarding work for many of the Group, as they saw a great diversity of native plant and animal life returning to their areas. From early 1992 monthly Sunday work parties were also held at various sites that took in the length and breadth of the Ridge.

Bess's energies extended into the community, and together with her inaugural committee she held fund-raising stalls, spoke and wrote for the media, lobbied politicians, engaged with local primary schools, colleges and CIT and provided work for those in care of Corrective Services. Regular spraying, weed removal and plantings were supplemented by guided walks along the Ridge led by group members or invited specialists.

Public recognition came with a Community Landcare award to the Group and an individual award to Bess in 1994. Bess's involvement with the Ridge ended in late 2001, when family matters took her away from Canberra.

Gösta and Pauline Lynga: Pauline and Gösta both joined the Group in 1991. They regularly weeded their patches near the Kathner St Dam, and held executive positions on the committee. During their time they:

- Designed and executed the Nature trail brochure and track, which included Gösta's fine pencil outline of the Brindabellas as seen from Cooleman Ridge.
- Conducted the exhaustive Tree Survey.
- Designed a path up to the Cooleman Ridge Trig from the bridge.
- Created and placed duck-platforms in the two dams.
- Identified much of the flora on the Ridge.
- Cared for many of the Group's documents which were unfortunately destroyed by the 2003 fires when their house was destroyed.

Pauline's death in 2011 did not deter Gösta from his valuable contribution to the Ridge. He has continued to ride his bike (his only form of transport) to weed every Friday in his patch at Kathner St, and to attend the monthly weeding parties. He reports that his patch no longer contains the common weeds that can infest our Ridge (St Johns Wort, phalaris, verbascum, fleabane) and he enjoys nurturing the native geraniums, lomandra, kangaroo grass and resurrection ferns.

Tina Nevins: Tina was a committed environmentalist with a passion for Cooleman Ridge. Following the death of her partner, Tina sought solace in Mt Arawang and joined with Bess Sledge, Pauline Lynga and others as inaugural members of the Group. Park Care fitted well with Tina's practical approach to conservation. Hands-on was what she liked. But there was also a soaring concern about the Earth and the effect on it of humanity that underlay her approach. She lived the "Think globally – act locally" slogan. When Doug joined the Group in 2001, Tina taught him plant identification, how to remove thistles without being spiked, how to cut and dab and the most effective way of removing clumps of phalaris. Tina died in 2012 but her inspiration lives on.

Malcolm Gill: Malcolm became an inaugural member of the Group because he enjoyed meeting people who saw the importance of conserving the Ridge's flora. Living at the end of Kathner St, Malcolm quickly adopted two nearby patches which he consistently weeded and cared for. He also tackled the Cootamundra wattles above Darrell Place. It was Malcolm who suggested the Group adopt the local resurrection-fern (*Cheilanthes tenuifolia*) as its logo being symbolic of its aims to 'resurrect' the local flora after a long history of livestock grazing and planted belts of non-local trees and shrubs. How appropriate that symbol was following the devastating 2003 fires.

We honour the Group's founders and vow to continue with the resurrection and maintenance of Cooleman Ridge.

Linda Spinaze and Rob Lundie