



COOLEMAN RIDGE PARK CARE GROUP

Newsletter February 2005

Previous Sunday meeting, January 16th

This was our third group work party at GAC/Darrell (previous visits April and October '04) and we were again delighted by its prospects. Doug and Gösta ran the scheduled fuel assessment, beginning by hammering in wooden stakes to mark the North, East, South and West plots. So now more members know where they are located, and the assessment procedure. As for all previous fuel assessments of the various plots staked out along the Ridge, the overall fuel hazard was low.

Other members opted to devote themselves entirely to weeding, chiefly the matter of heading for conspicuous exotics such as verbascum, thistles and St John's Wort since there was very little wild oats to be seen. Doug, with spray bottle and loppers, cleared briar, pyracantha and prunus. I checked off 57 plant species of which 35 were native. A survey in October last year yielded 29 species including 11 natives. There was quite a lot of *Sorghum leiocladum*. We saw no *Solanum cinereum*, though it is very prolific to the north. ☼

Future programme

Provisionally 2005 looks like this, rotating through the three Group Areas (GA) when there is no special programme:

- Feb 20th Reptile Walk with Meg Doepel
- Thursday March 3rd, evening picnic: weeds, plant ID, star gazing
- March 20th GA weeding, fuel assessment, plant ID
- April 17th GA weeding, fuel assessment, plant ID
- May 15th GA weeding, fuel assessment, plant ID
- June 19th GA weeding, fuel assessment, plant ID
- July 17th Lichen Walk – Jack Elix
- August 21st GA weeding, fuel assessment, plant ID
- Sep 18th Brendan Lepski Plant Walk
- Oct 16th ? AGM
- Nov 20th GA weeding, fuel assessment, plant ID
- Dec 18th GA weeding, fuel assessment, plant ID ☼

January log

- 070105 St John's Wort chopped out bordering Fp Hill area; possible bearded dragon Gösta's area
- 140105 fresh digging and burrow where echidna seen 311204; several lizards/skinks, 2 kangaroos, mouse seen FpH; mynah birds harassing galahs in Olympic Site's Yellow Box.
- 280105 echidna activity – see below ☼

Pauline Lyngå, 6288 7009, gosta@webone.com.au February 2005

Next Sunday meeting, February 20th

- Reptile Walk, led by CNP's Meg Doepel, with incidental plant ID and weeding
- 1.30 - 4 pm
- meet on Namatjira Drive just before the Kambah Pool Road turn-off, or GAS/Arawang
- bring hat, gloves, weeder, drink, snack, raincoat if it is wet ☼

Tuesday January 18th, Recovery Walk

Doug reports:

Two years after the January 2003 fire, around 100 people and one dog accepted our invitation to walk a circuit through the northern end of the Ridge to observe and discuss the recovery of vegetation and possible issues of management of the area. Late afternoon it may have been, but the heat was still on as the assembly trudged up the dusty track past Fence Post Hill.

Our guides and explainers, Malcolm Gill and Joe Walker had an entertaining patter, with plenty of wry humour and interesting detail. The leadership group also included our very own Pauline along with Daniel Iglesias, manager, East District, Canberra Nature Park. At the dozen or so stops on the way, the multitude was informed variously of the behaviour of the fire, the effect on vegetation and the plants' response to the event. Also brought to the attention of people was the level of fire fuel and method of assessment as well as the behaviour of fire in grasslands.

Each topic was handled in a factual and scientific way which, judging from the feedback during and at the end of the walk was much appreciated by the audience. Several people suggested a repeat performance in 2006. As with all such suggestions, your committee will take it on notice. ☼

Control burn

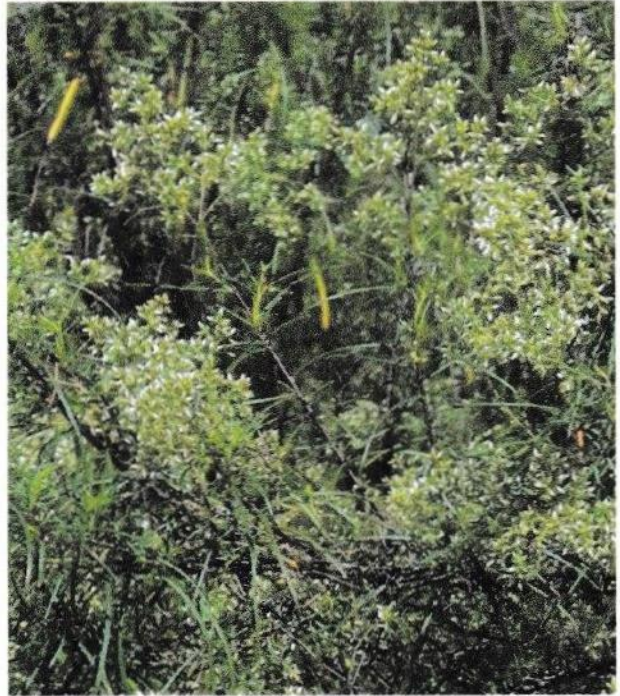
In the evening of Monday 17th, parts of Cooleman Ridge below the maintenance trail that are too rocky to slash were burnt by Environment ACT. This was to reduce the fuel load behind house blocks in Chapman. The areas treated, totaling about 5 hectares, extended from Lincoln Close around to Guinness Place, and further along towards Cooleman trig. Included was the area where the Chapman Primary children planted three trees last year. Doug tells me "one was untouched and is still thriving while the other two copped a singeing. Their leaves are affected but the trunks don't look too bad. Perhaps they are a little small to survive, but the fire wasn't all that hot and most of the bursaria and other shrubs there look like they'll survive. Time will tell." ☼

What's around

Family: ASTERACEAE



Cassinia longifolia
Aromatic and sticky native shrub to 2.5m,
Leaves 40-80 mm long and 2-6 mm wide
Alexandre Cassini – 1784-1832. French botanist
who specialised in composites (daisies)
longus L. long; *folium* L. leaf ☼



Cassinia quinquefaria
Native shrub to 3m
Leaves 20-40 mm long and 1-1.5 mm wide
quinquefaria five-fold ☼

SACTCG

Jenny is the group's chair and has this to say:
The Southern ACT Catchment Group (of which Cooleman Ridge Park Carers are members) is an umbrella group whose primary aim is to improve the environs of southern ACT and to support the activities of its member groups. Members include Parkcare, Urban Landcare, Rural Landcare, Waterwatch groups and local schools. The Catchment group has a close working relationship with Environment ACT who provide office and administration support for our full-time co-ordinator. Since it was established two years ago the Catchment group has been successful in obtaining funds from the Commonwealth Government Envirofund, the Natural Heritage Trust and Environment ACT.

(Ed. Our insurance as Park Carers is taken care of by SACTCG. This is why it is important that you fill in your individual membership form and send it to Doug or Briony. CRPCG pays \$15 annual membership to SACTCG to cover our members) ☼

Web site

Our web site URL is:
<http://coolemanridge.inventivedingo.com> ☼

Echidna

Each Friday Jenny and I check the spot on Fencepost Hill where we watched an echidna on the last day of the old year. We went from the excitement of seeing that a burrow had been dug to the puzzlement of finding it filled in again, clearly from the mound of earth piled up in front of the entrance.

We told Erika when we met her weeding her patch at the Kathner St dam and learned some echidna facts from her: that they lay a single egg; they dig a burrow; they return every few days to suckle the baby, closing the burrow again on leaving; when the young animal is mature enough for independence the mother goes for good leaving the burrow open.

So why the pouch? Off to the Encyclopaedia Britannica where Anne Marie Musser had this to say:

Echidnas lead solitary lives except at breeding time when the female may be followed by a long line of males. The gestation period is about 23 days when a single leathery egg is laid into a temporary pouch. The egg is incubated for another 10 days before hatching. The young echidna is protected in a nursery burrow where it sucks milk from special mammary hairs. When fully covered by spines and able to feed itself – back to you, Erika!

(Up-date from today, Friday 4th February :

another burrow has been dug and refilled immediately to the right of the original one. What can this mean? Twins?) ☼



tinneydoug@hotmail.com

Printed: Thursday, 24 February 2005 12:44:53 AM

From : Pauline and Gosta Lynga <gosta@webone.com.au>
Sent : Wednesday, 23 February 2005 11:26:39 PM
To : <Undisclosed-Recipient:, >
Subject : picnic

📎 Attachment : clip_image001.gif (< 0.01 MB)



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Extra!

There are more stars in the sky than there are weeds on the Ridge!

Don't forget the Evening Picnic – Thursday March 3rd

Meet at Kathner Street at 5.30 pm, or go straight to the far corner, west of the Olympic Site – follow the track along the boundary between the nature park and the horse paddocks.

Bring your picnic, a warm coat, binoculars, telescopes, a good torch, weeder, and we'll fill in the evening identifying plants, listening to frogs, watching for wild life, looking at birds, gazing at stars (and weeding.)

Bring family and friends! ☼

Also, from Angela.

At the recent Parkcare Co-ordinators Meeting there was interest expressed for another **mini chemical training course** to be run for volunteers. An evening session was suggested so proposed details are:

Thursday, 10th March, 5pm till 8pm at Athllon Drive depot.

Please let Doug (6288 8589) know by **Friday 4th March** if you wish to attend