



COOLEMAN RIDGE PARK CARE ROUP

Newsletter November
2005

Previous Sunday meeting,

October 16th

The AGM was held at GAS/Arawang, and it was nice to retire to Doug's place for afternoon tea even though the threat of rain didn't materialise.

Various reports from the meeting are attached. ☼

Future programme

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

Nov 20th GAN/Chauvel weeding, plant ID

Dec 18th GA weeding, plant ID ☼

October log

Four weeks of heavy grazing in the Trial Area.

151005 *Daviesia mimosoides* found Trial Area

281005 *Ranunculus pumilio*, *Cyperus tenellus* found
Fencepost Hill ☼

Next Sunday meeting, November 20th

GAN/Chauvel – weeding, plant ID

- 1.30 - 4 pm
- meet at Kathner Street or GAN/Chauvel
- bring hat, gloves, weeder, drink, snack, raincoat if it is wet. ☼

Exotic Grass Reduction Trial

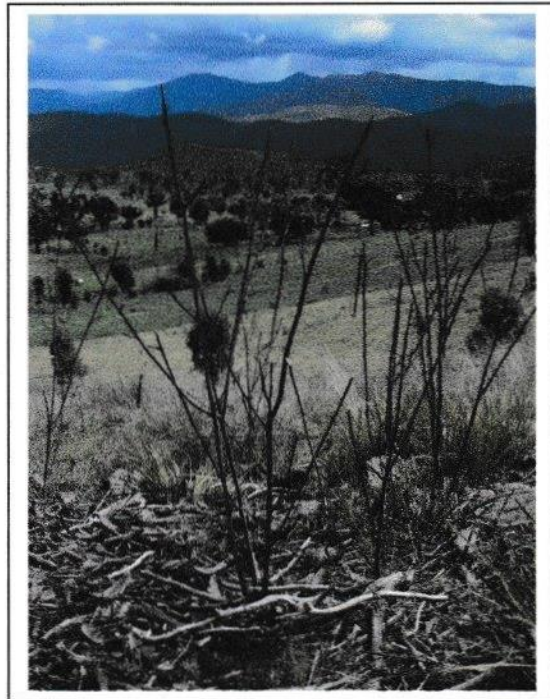
About 20 cattle were trucked to the trial area on Tuesday October 4th to begin the 'strategic' grazing trial.

On Wednesday afternoon, 2nd November, a group of us met Bill Woodruff (Environment ACT) at the trial area, after it had been the subject of four weeks of cattle grazing. With him we assessed the impact the cattle had made on the vegetation and soil. Although the animals were to have been removed that morning the operation had stalled due to CNP staff shortages, and Bill hoped to have the stock off instead by Saturday 5th. (Note: This happened.)

As reported in last month's newsletter the cattle were to be closely monitored to determine the length of time they would remain in the paddock. The mowing and wick wiping components of the trial would be undertaken shortly after the introduction of the stock. (Note: this happened shortly after the delayed removal of the stock.) As well, the CIT students would conduct monitoring surveys. (Note: CIT opted out.) Various Group members have been visiting the trial area daily and have recorded the apparent dietary preferences of

the cattle, as well as damage caused to the soil surface (tracks, trampling and pugging), the redistribution of nutrients, uprooting of native perennial grasses, and the severe defoliation of a number of native shrubs.

Although we were promised that the area was to be sensitively grazed, it has in effect been crash grazed.

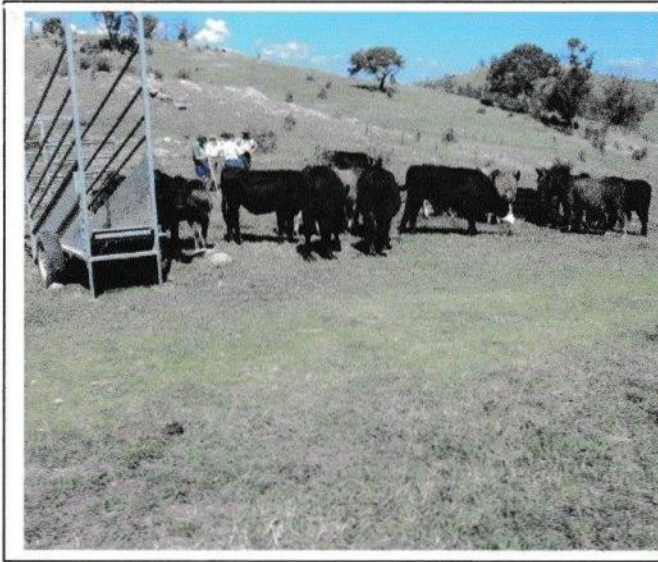


211005 A grove of profusely flowering *Indigofera australis* after "sensitive" grazing.



211005 *Hardenbergia violacea*, one of many similarly grazed.

What's around



A little over two years ago a decision was made to graze sections of Cooleman Ridge in order to reduce the fuel load. It didn't happen, for various reasons.

Now, the focus has switched to conservation. As Bill reminded us, the aim was to see if the native perennials could be encouraged by reducing the exotic grasses. The criterion for removal of the cattle: reduction of the bio mass to a specific level. Two weeks into the trial that level was deemed not to have been reached, and grazing was extended by 2 weeks. By Wed 2nd it had been reached, even surpassed. Should there be another spurt of exotic grass growth cattle will be reintroduced and natives that are already hard hit will be further impacted.

We are of the opinion that shortcomings in the trial design will inevitably produce invalid results that cannot be used to devise grazing management plans.

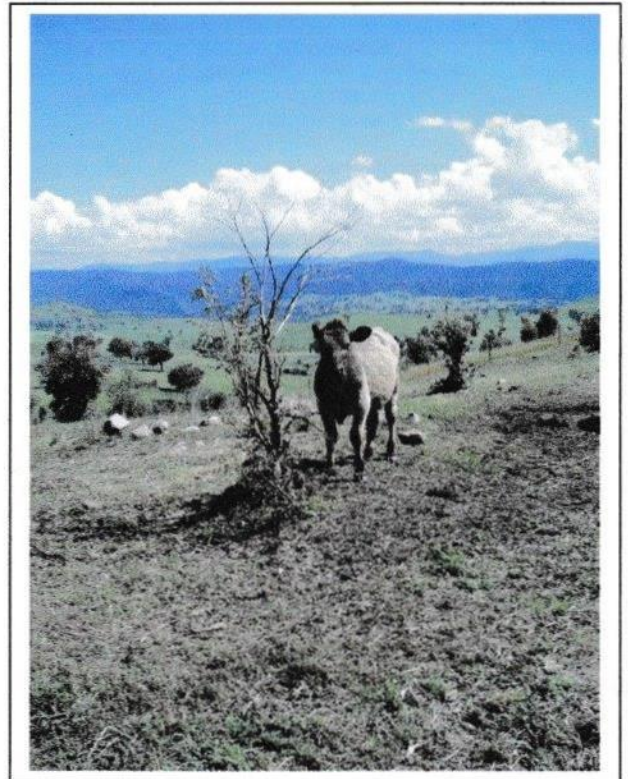
Bill conceded that it would never be possible to source enough stock to graze all of Cooleman Ridge, or, for that matter, CNP, so the grazing results cannot be applied even to the Ridge.

Our opposition to the use of grazing on the reserve, trial or otherwise, has remained unwavering. ☺

Fuel assessment

"Our firemen (they are all men) are in the process of reviewing the info collected from previous years to determine whether the same number of assessments needs to be done, or if we can do less and still get the same information. The advice we are giving to Park Care and other groups who have done this for us in the past is to not do anything until we get back to you to confirm that the plots you are sampling are still required – no use collecting info that won't be used by anyone".

Bill.



We appreciate Bill looking into this for us, as there is always more to do than we can find the time or the people for. Bill now carries a triple load having absorbed the responsibilities of Virginia who had already absorbed Angela's. We were sorry to see Virginia leave us so soon and trust her new career will bring her much satisfaction ☺

Sick listed

Although many of our Group have not had an opportunity to meet our ranger Graeme we are sorry to hear that he has been hospitalised. We hope he will soon be back on the Ridge. ☺

Plant ID

Isobel Crawford is leading a plant ID course to be held at Athllon on the last weekend in November, with another to be run later at Mount Majura/Mitchell depot. ☺

1st Aid

Each Park Care group is urged to have a member take part in a First Aid course being offered by CNP.

Please Contact Bill at Athllon to register your interest in these courses.

Phone:62072195 email bill.woodruff@act.gov.au ☺

Compression bandage

Don't forget to carry one with you whenever you are on the Ridge: it's always possible you'll run into someone who has been bitten by a snake. After doing the First Aid course you'll be able to apply it with the dexterity of a licensed practitioner. ☺