COOLEMAN RIDGE PARK CARE GROUP

Newsletter
December 2015

Previous meeting – AGM
Sunday 15th November
Group Area North – Kathner St

Just before 10 am, 12 Group members began trundling down the Ridge to congregate on the grass at the end of Kathner St for the Annual General Meeting. President Alan noted in his report that it had been another successful year. He also noted Arminel's retirement from the Committee and thanked her for all her work, including the editing of this newsletter. Treasurer Rohan reported that the Group had $3,133 to its name. Pat quickly ran the election for officers which saw no contested positions but all vacancies filled. The Committee is:

President:	Linda Spinaze
Vice President:	Doug Tinney
Secretary:	Rob Lundie
Treasurer:	Rohan Thomas
Committee:	Alan Ford, Jenny Horsfield & Gosta Lynga.

Linda thanked Alan for his good work.

Other business: Arminel argued in favour of weeding in the same places on The Ridge on a regular basis as this allows the Group to keep on top of the weeds and enables the collection of long-term data about the particular area. David also pointed out that funding cuts can lead to the cessation of data collection and so it is important that volunteers continue with this task. Doug noted that the Group has taken on other areas apart from the regular ones such as the Trig when significant weed manifestations are identified.

Linda suggested the word 'loop' be added to the Nature Trail sign so that walkers have a better idea as to where the trail goes.

There was a vote of thanks for Alan's and Arminel's contributions to the Group. David also thanked the Committee for its work.

The full minutes are available on the Group's website.

Electronic weed mapping

On the hottest day so far this summer, Linda, Graham and Doug visited Park Care support officer, Craig Wainwright, to learn about the weed mapping system used to gain a picture of the weed status of the ACT at any time. Park carers may access the system from a PC and record infestations detected and areas treated. No doubt it will help in planning given cuts to the weed control budget. A smart phone application is envisaged but it is not known when. Contact Doug, Linda or Graham to learn more.

What's around—Solanum cinereum (or Narrawa Burr)

The Solanum cinereum (or Narrawa Burr) can often be mistaken for an exotic weed, with its dark green leaves and abundant, sharp spines on stems and leaves. But it is a native species, growing in woodland on hills and rocky slopes, and is widespread along the western slopes and plains of the Great Dividing Range in NSW. It is a perennial, erect shrub, growing to 1m in height. The flowers are attractive, open, mauve-purple in colour, maturing into a round fruit in late summer. The fruit look similar to our cherry tomatoes, which is no surprise since they are a related species.

Linda Spinaze

Cooleman Ridge Tree Survey

This survey was commenced in 1997 by Tony Fearnside, Pauline Lyngå and myself of the Cooleman Ridge Park Care Group. The plan was to record data for trees above a certain size and then to revisit the areas at later times to study the development of the trees. Several other members joined the project and carried out the work in different parts of the ridge. Revisits of the areas and studies of how the trees have developed would now be of great interest. The survey is available on our website at http://www.coolemanridge.org.au

If you click on **Plants** you will get to a page headed by **Flora**. There you will find this text: Please see the **Tree Survey** page for more details. Click on **Tree Survey** and find all the documents you need, how to do it, earlier data and various photos. If you have any questions about the content, email me: gosta@esc.net.au

Gösta Lyngå

Early use of super phosphate

During the early 20th century, the price of phosphate and other fertilisers decreased and the advent of mechanised equipment reduced the cost to the farmer of spreading phosphate fertilizer. The resultant increase in nitrogen levels in the soil allowed for the successful growing of *Phalaris aquatica,* a vigorous pasture grass that soon started to replace local native grasses which were considered inferior. The first extensive experiment in the use of super phosphate took place in the federal territory in 1927. Mr W Alison reported to the Lands Officer in December that year: '… it works out at 2/5 per acre per year. But the

results are worth it. It has improved the pasture 70%, whereas there was a tuft of grass here and there, it is now a mat. The growth of trefoil and clover and the better class of summer grass is wonderful. I am keeping a record of the number of sheep running in the paddocks so at the end of the year I will have the actual carrying capacity per acre'.

Other lessees in the Territory were soon eager to begin using this miraculous new form of 'pasture improvement'. There was a rapid expansion of 'improved pasture' from the 1950s to the 1980s, especially with the use of aerial spraying. This is part of the history of our own Cooleman Ridge during those years.

Jenny Horsfield

From your new editor

I am taking over as editor of the Newsletter while Arminel and Pat head off to Kununurra to be with their daughter. Their contribution has been vital to the strength of the Group through editing the Newsletter, Frogwatch, and providing tea and cake after weeding meetings, to cite just a few. We wish them all the best.

In future newsletters, apart from current news, I would like to feature members' stories and photos of the Ridge (past and present); questions you may have about the Ridge; what you like about it. So please send them to me.

Rob Lundie

Happy Xmas to all