



# COOLEMAN RIDGE PARK CARE GROUP

Newsletter  
May 2023

**Previous Meeting**  
**Sunday 16 April 2023**  
**Darrell Place**

A wet morning, but there were patches of sun in the afternoon, although rain continued to threaten. Four weeders – Jenny Shapcott, Paul Sheils, Linda Spinaze and Chris Oates – met at Darrell Place and tramped across to the ledge that forms the southern border of ‘Kangaroo Valley’ and slopes down to the back road. Our target was woody weeds; we saw clumps of exotic shrubs: *Cotoneaster* – red berries – and *Pyracantha angustifolia* – yellow berries, but tracks around them showed that they were being used by small animals for shelter, so we left them alone for the time being. We focused instead on the thickets of briar rose that infest the area, dense, thorny and in one case nearly two meters high. We cut them off as close as possible to ground level and dabbed poison on the stumps. We then cut into the fallen stems and branches to pick out the many red and orange rose hips – rose fruit that contains the seeds – and bag them. This was an intensive and, err, thorny exercise, but we managed to fill two large bags. This is conventional best practice when dealing with briar rose, but we wondered if it would have been just as effective – as well as a lot easier – if we had simply left the hips with the offcuts to rot in situ. Paul used his very effective app to map some blackberry clumps in the area. This data will be passed to the Parks and Conservation Service for spraying. All through the weeding, we were entertained by beautiful patterns of late afternoon light and shade on the ranges.

**Next Meeting**  
**Sunday 21 May 2023**  
**Lincoln Place**

**Time:** 1.30 pm – 4.00 pm.

**Meet:** Lincoln Place.

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

**Task:** weeding.

**Contact:** Rob Lundie 0418291735

**June meeting:** Sun 18, Chauvel Circle



*Jenny Shapcott and Chris Oates Photo: Linda Spinaze*

*Chris Oates*

## **BoM Device**

Returning from the weeding on 16 April, we stumbled over a curious device on the ground. According to its label, it was a Bureau of Meteorology radiosonde, 'a scientific instrument carried aloft by balloon to transmit meteorological data by radio signal

to the Bureau of Meteorology'. The label also advised that 'This device is harmless and may be disposed of as convenient', which we did.



BoM Radiosonde

Photo: Linda Spinaze

Chris Oates and Linda Spinaze

## New display box maps

A new map of Cooleman Ridge has been created for the Kathner St and Namatjira Dr display boxes. Using Google My Maps, the map shows walking trails described on the Group's website and important landmarks. Its main purpose is to attract people's attention and interest. The QR Code will take people to the website walks page and hopefully encourage further exploration of the website. The map is a prototype and so feedback is very welcome.



Paul checks his map in the Namatjira Dr display box

Photo: Rob Lundie

Paul Sheils

## Waterwatch on Cooleman Ridge

Three members of the CRPCG share the monthly task of sampling and testing the water in the Old Dam and the Kathner St Dam. We test the pH, and levels of turbidity, phosphorus and dissolved oxygen amongst other factors. These two dams are part of the 27 waterways monitored by volunteers in the Southern ACT Catchment area, which is part of the Upper Murrumbidgee River

Catchment. The monthly results are collated into the annual Catchment Health Indicators Program (CHIP) report. In summary, the water health of the two dams on Cooleman Ridge was good in 2021 and 2022, after being only 'fair' in the two years prior. The 'fair' rating was most likely due to less rainfall and the consequent low water level, with Kathner St dam even dry at one point. However, the condition of the surrounding banks is and has been rated as poor, which is not good for supporting a healthy waterway. The assessment of the banks is only done every two years and due soon. Hopefully the grasses planted around the Old Dam about two years ago will give an improved rating, meaning a good balance of nutrients and sediment which provides for a better habitat for insects and frogs. For about four months the Old Dam has been almost completely covered with pink *Ferny Azolla*. There is a view that, due to the rain of the last few months, there has been an increase in runoff bringing phosphorus left over in the soil from when the area was farmed. The level is usually low but was a little higher in March. The fern should die off with the colder temperatures of winter. Given the noisy frogs and the one or two grebes swimming on the dam, the plant does not appear to be having an adverse effect. Special thanks to Martin Lind of Southern ACT Catchment Group (SACTCG) for his support and advice to us novice water watchers.

Peter Lindenmayer, Robyn Gow, Helen Govey

## Ridge Briefs

The Parks Athlon Gang team has replaced the gate on Namatjira Dr making it much easier to display the Group's notices. Thanks Parks.

Good to see an enterprising group of young girls selling lemonade to people approaching the Ridge from Darrell Place.

Vale Gisela Püllen who used to sit up on the Ridge above Darrell Pl and gaze across to the Bullen Range and the Brindabellas. Inspired by that view, and with Karl Jordan, she commissioned *Beyond the ridge, the ranges far* for solo cello and orchestra. It had its premiere by the Canberra Symphony Orchestra on 26 April. A lovely piece!

Rob Lundie