



COOLEMAN RIDGE PARK CARE GROUP

**Newsletter
March 2024**

Previous Meeting
Sunday 18 February 2024
Above Chauvel Circle

A warmish morning did not deter 12 of us (Linda Spinaze, Jenny Shapcott, Jen Walton, Rob Lundie, Hamish McGlynn, Doug Tinney, Helen Govey, Natasha Newman, Chris Oates, Nelson Tang, Paul Sheils and Trevor Hickman) from heading up from Chauvel Circle to what is known as Reet's Patch (to the right of the area directly above Chauvel). On the way, Linda pointed out various plants and grasses such as Queensland Blue Grass, *Sporobolus* and *Digitaria brownii*. It was pleasing to note there were very few weeds in Reet's patch under the trees. However, in the immediate area there was St John's Wort, Fleabane and Verbascum which were dealt with. A large patch of blackberry was another matter but, undaunted, the group attacked it with vigour and by the end of the morning, three large piles had been formed. The short stumps were thoroughly dabbed with glyphosate but with the full knowledge that we will have to keep on top of the patch before it is eradicated. Some background on Reet's Patch: Reet Vallak worked on this patch every Friday morning for many years until she moved to Belconnen about 10 years ago and could no longer travel to the Ridge. Since then, despite minimal weeding, the patch has high native values and few weeds. It is the only patch that we know of that has orchids. We plan to maintain it more often.

Rob Lundie and Linda Spinaze

Next Meeting
Sunday 17 March 2024
The Old Dam

Time: 1.30 pm – 4.00 pm.

NOTE NEW TIME

Meet: Freebody Place.

Bring: hat, gloves, water to drink.

Task: weeding – attacking woody weeds

Contact: Linda Spinaze 62886916

Apr. meeting: Sun 21 Anniversary Seat

Farewell to Malcolm Gill

We were sorry to hear that one of the Group's founding members is leaving Canberra. Malcolm became an inaugural member 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 (see top of the Newsletter). The fern is symbolic of the Group's 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 were not able to arrange a farewell morning tea but we did present Malcolm with a card signed by

many of the Group and a painting of the Ridge done by Chris Oates. We will miss Malcolm as our 'Kathner St Correspondent' but wish him well and hope he will keep in contact.



Linda Spinaze and Malcolm Gill
Photo: Rob Lundie

Linda Spinaze and Rob Lundie

Finally a path around the southern border of the Ridge

Up until now, many walkers/riders were puzzled as they headed south along the back path to be confronted by a locked gate with a red notice "Private property. No entrance". Folk had to climb through an adjacent gate, walk up the hill, turn right onto a narrow bike track, and continue on until they reached the wide track again. Hidden in the closed off area was Arawang Homestead, and although owned by the ACT, and supposedly public property, the person renting it had deterred visitors with the signs, and occasionally more than that, as rumour has it. Fortunately, the tenant has found alternative accommodation, and we now have access through the property. This completes a lovely path all the way around the Ridge. Thanks to our ranger, Ben, for quickly organising a step-through gate.

Linda Spinaze

From Squeeze Throughs to Step Throughs

Two new step-throughs have been installed at the southern and northern entrances to the Old Dam. Much easier to get through especially when wearing a pack. *Rob Lundie*

Second Burn-off

In late February the second of two burn-offs at the northern end of the Ridge was completed. Two Rural Fire Service members I met a week later said they were pleased with the way the burn-off had been conducted and also said that it would be the last one for this financial year. *Rob Lundie*

Blackberry spraying

Notices have appeared above Lincoln Place and near the Old Dam warning that spraying of blackberries is taking place on the track up to Mt Arawang and within the Old Dam enclosure. *Rob Lundie*

Yabbies in Kathner St Dam

In 2018 Pat Ryan discovered yabby traps in the Kathner St Dam and reported in the June Newsletter that they are illegal. It seems that the problem remains. A few months ago a couple of yabby nets were found at the dam. In mid-February a rather small ACT Parks notice was put up emphasising that it is still illegal to use such nets and to fish in Canberra's nature reserves. *Helen Govey*



Illegal dam use notice
Photo: Helen Govey