



COOLEMAN RIDGE PARK CARE GROUP

**Newsletter
June 2018**

Previous meeting

**Sunday 20 May
Darrell Place**

It was a superb autumn day. Rohan, Chris, Graham, Arminel, Pat, Jenny and Linda met at 1.30 pm at Darrell Place. Linda sprayed the *African Love Grass* (ALG) south of the Big Reservoir with glyphosate, and then joined the others to dig out *verbascum*, *St John's wort*, *ALG* and *wild sage*. One blackberry bush was cut-n-dabbed. Rohan sprayed the *phalaris* and other weeds.

Pat took his big mattock to *rose briers* and young *Cootamundra wattles*. Arminel revisited weedpiles and removed thatch with her three-tined hoe, to encourage germination of native grasses and forbs. *Kangaroo grass* is doing exceptionally well in the very dry conditions! The golden everlasting *Xerichrysum* is multiplying nicely.

Jenny worked on tracking down remnants of *St Johns Wort* which she remembered from two years ago as being very thick on the grassy slope west of the track. It must have been sprayed since then as there were only a small number of plants coming up which she tried to root out as thoroughly as she could.

There were many local folk using the ridge on such a lovely day, and hopefully they were inspired by everyone's efforts. As Jenny noted: It was indeed a beautiful afternoon - best place to be in Canberra!

Linda Spinaze, Jenny Horsfield, Arminel Ryan

Next Meeting

**Sunday 17 June
Lincoln Place**

Time: 1.30 pm – 4.00 pm

Meet: End of Lincoln Place

Bring: hat, gloves, secateurs, dabber-doover, hacker, drink, raincoat if it is wet

Task: plant identification, weeding

Contact: Rob Lundie 6288 4125

July meeting: Sunday 15 July, Mt Arawang

Yabby traps in dams on the Ridge

Once a month, usually on the last Friday, I sample and analyse the water from the Kathner Street Dam and the Old Cooleman Ridge Dam (within the Cooleman Ridge Nature Reserve).

Since January I have also tested the water in the private land dam to the west of the big reservoir (over the hill from Darrell Place). This extra duty was undertaken because a lot of long-necked turtles are (or were until April) breeding there.

Near the end of March this year, at the Kathner Street Dam, there was a yabby trap containing six yabbies. I released the yabbies and confiscated the trap. A check of the private dam at the same time revealed no sign of traps or poles.

However, since then a regular user of the Ridge reported seeing three yabber traps attached to two poles (star pickets) at the private land dam. They were still there at the end of April when I did my waterwatch rounds. Park Care ranger, Richard Barnsley, also checked them and noted that they only have small (unbaited) shrimp traps on them which are not large enough to be a danger to turtles.

The position is that yabber traps in park reserves are illegal. The only place that yabber traps are legal in the ACT is in privately owned farm dams.

Pat Ryan

Award

ParkCare volunteers were awarded a Highly Commended in the Profound Influence Category at the ACT Region Volunteering Awards on 22 May 2018. Congratulations to everyone who works on the Ridge. It is good to see that environmental volunteering is well recognised.

Uniforms

A number of uniform items are available to registered volunteers who volunteer over six times a year. If you would like any items, please contact Alison McLeod:

Alison.McLeod@act.gov.au.

- Hoodies
- Fleece jumpers
- Cocky polo shirt
- Button up shirt (larger sizes only at the moment)
- Hat (size 55, 57, 59, 61)
- Beanie (one size)

Bird sighting records

As everyone would know, the 2003 fires resulted in the loss of many valuable and irreplaceable records. However, we are pleased to report that a folder containing bird sightings on the Ridge from 1990 to 2000 came to light when Linda and Arminel were conducting a recent stocktake. Around 300 records of bird sightings, which we think were compiled by Bess and David Sledge,

have now been made available to the Canberra Ornithologists Group for inclusion in their database of Canberra birds.

Such records provide very useful information for analysing the effects of the fires on the bird population. With the regeneration of the Ridge, which birds have returned, which have not, and which new species have arrived?

If you have any records pertaining to the Ridge, especially before the fires, we would love to have a copy. They do not have to be about birds. Any records of observations will be gratefully accepted. They all add to the story and understanding of Cooleman Ridge.

Alan Ford

Controlled burn offs on the Ridge

Controlled burn-offs on the Ridge in recent months have not just reduced the fire fuel load and helped keep the weeds in check and made them easier to locate, but they have also revealed just how rocky Cooleman Ridge is.



Looking towards the trig

Photo by Rob Lundie



Near the southern end of the Ridge Photo by R Lundie