



COOLEMAN RIDGE PARK CARE GROUP

Newsletter October

2007

Previous Sunday Meeting September 16

The new, final, section of the Nature Trail is looking more and more established as more people walk it. Removing exotics was a pleasure, with the 33 native species noted making it an attractive piece of grassland.

We're sad to be losing John to Darwin, but he left in a blaze of glory having happened upon a family of *Aprasia parapulchella* (see later). ☼

Future programme

Next meeting, Sunday October 21st

- GAN/Chauvel for **AGM**, clearing of exotic growth and plant ID
- 1.30 to 4 p.m.
- meet at Kathner St or GAN/Chauvel
- bring hat, gloves, hacker, drink, snack, raincoat if it is wet. ☼

Annual General Meeting

That fixture on the Group's calendar, the annual general meeting, is scheduled as above, at Group Area North which is just up from Chauvel Circle. Simplest access is via the Kathner Street entrance from where you can stroll up the track to the site.

The agenda is expected to be the standard version, ie. minutes of the 2006 AGM; reports from the executive; election of office bearers; and other business. At last month's meeting, the president announced that after four years he wished to stand down and give somebody else a turn.

Under our constitution, members of the committee must retire at the annual general meeting and are eligible for re-election. Apart from the presidency, the positions of vice president, secretary, treasurer and project officer are to be filled. Those prepared to involve themselves in the management of the Group may wish to stand for election to one of these positions.

In an act of outstanding generosity, the outgoing president will provide the wherewithal for afternoon tea, after which members will be too full to weed (perhaps weed first?). ☼

September log

Choughs gone

- 020907 Major Mitchell Cockatoo in horse paddock tree
- 040907 Major Mitchell Cockatoo in horse paddock tree
- 060907 Major Mitchell Cockatoo in horse paddock tree, in hollow of tree at foot of dam wall, perching on tree by seat.
- 160907 *Aprasia parapulchella*, family of 4, C1. ☼

Birds and bushwalking

The Canberra Ornithologists Group (COG) and the National Parks Association (NPA) will stage a bird watching/ bushwalking event on Saturday 20th October, 9am – 1pm starting at the NW end of Coolleman Ridge, Chapman where there are both good walking tracks and a good variety of birds. BYO binoculars, comfortable walking shoes, hat and sunscreen.

Bookings essential: Jack.holland@environment.gov.au
Ph: a/h 6288 7840. ☼

Birds

The Choughs have gone – they apparently need 7 for a community, even resorting to kidnapping to make up the numbers.

Elizabeth reports that over the last month there has been a Tawny Frogmouth calling during the night. It sits in a gum tree 2 metres into the reserve near their house. In the spring of 2003 after the bush fire a family of 2 adults and 2 babies used to spend the night in one of the unburnt gum trees in the garden. ☼

Walking the trail

Bess took time off from poking around the Ridge to visit Floriade. Perhaps next time she won't need Floriade as an excuse to come. Together we walked the Nature Trail, and things were looking fine till we turned through the gate above the plantation to go towards Coolleman Trig. We noted 2 patches of *Eragrostis curvula*, and then just below the Trig on the western side we were shocked to see *Euphorbia depauperata* cascading down the slope. We need to take action here. (See note below.)

The eastern slope is lovely, cared for by David.

Bess and I reminisced about the hours we spent there early last decade, and I came across an entry in her log for 1993: *Jan & Feb 10,000 verbasicum cut but not dabbed on the slope down from Coolleman Trig. 1200 salsify; 1050 a wort [could it have been Euphorbia?] 1000 thistle; land still covered in salsify and skeleton weed.*

So our efforts do pay off! ☼

Samantha

Congratulations, Donna and Geoff!
Welcome to your little daughter. ☼

CVA

Jenny has contacted Steve, who's organising a team to tackle the *Euphorbia* – possibly Friday 26th October. ☼

What's around



Aprasia parapulchella – Pink-tailed Legless Lizard

1 adult and 1 young pictured, of a family of 4

Over the years this is only the 4th time members of our group have reported finding *Aprasia*.

According to Dr Will Osborne of Canberra University they are most likely to be found in rocky outcrops on north-facing slopes of the Ridge where exotic grasses have not been encouraged by application of fertiliser, and there has not been extensive grazing. When there is moisture in the soil, and before the ground has warmed above their comfort level they may be found under shallowly embedded rocks, in association with colonies of small black ants.

They produce 2 young.

Listed as vulnerable.

Thanks, Will.

BORAGINACEAE – the Borage family

**Echium plantagineum* – Paterson's Curse

Annual or rarely biennial exotic herb to 120 cm high. Base of leaves cordate. Blue flowers – rarely pink or white
plantagineum: so called from a resemblance of the leaf-rosette to that of *Plantago*

Declared noxious weed

Native of Mediterranean region. ☼

DRAFT: TOWARDS A MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR
COOLEMAN RIDGE CANBERRA NATURE PARK (continued)
Tree decline

The eucalypts of the Reserve form a native woodland. Like much rural land in Australia, regeneration has been sparse so far. Tree decline would markedly alter the character of the landscape to its detriment. "Rural tree decline" is a widespread problem probably due to many factors but here tree decline may be associated with christmas beetle defoliation of *E. blakelyi* and *E. polyanthemos* and psyllid damage to leaves of *E. blakelyi*. Lack of regeneration may be due to competition from grasses, poor seed supply, cattle grazing and exclusion of fire. Excluding cattle from some areas seems to have allowed a smattering of regeneration to develop in some areas while planting has proceeded apace. Only species indigenous to the area have been planted.

Note: the whole draft, submitted in 1998, can be read on our web site. ☼

ANPC Workshop: Identifying plants of grassy ecosystems of the ACT region

Thurs to Fri 22-23 Nov
Objectives: to improve skills in identifying plants in the field; to learn to recognise species which indicate quality or conservation value of the site.

For details, including course fees, contact ANPC office, anpc@anpc.asn.au or 02-6250 9509; or website <http://www.anpc.asn.au>.

Registrations close: 5.00pm Monday 12 November. ☼

Waterwatch

5th National Waterwatch Conference will be held this year in Canberra, venue Manning Clark House.

November 26-29

All welcome.

Details: Tanya Rucosky Noakes, 6207-2246. ☼

Global Warming.

Cows burp at about 40 second intervals, releasing up to 100 gallons methane each per day. Kangaroos don't emit methane from fermentation of native pasture so attempts are being made to isolate various bacteria from the gut of the Eastern Grey Kangaroo to determine which ones would be most effective introduced into cattle.

Christian Science Monitor, August 25-31 2007. ☼