

COOLEMAN RIDGE PARK CARE GROUP

Newsletter
June 2016

Previous meeting
Sunday 15th May
Group Area North: Chauvel
Circle

An industrious group spread themselves across the Ridge on a beautifully sunny afternoon. Brigitte, Linda and her brother, Lester walked along the Ridge above the cut drain path, above Monkman Street. They dug up at least 150 verbascum and ~~poisoned~~ many others. They also took out about five wild roses, removing the red hips, and transporting them back in their pockets – a very picky experience!! Rob was glad to have taken up his pink bucket for this task.

Linda also sprayed the steep ~~path~~ to the Cooleman trig, focusing on the tussocky plants that seem to be breaking up the surface of the bitumen. She noticed a large patch of African Love Grass (about 20m x 10m) adjacent to the fence, which she will spray in June, having been assured by Craig that spraying with glyphosate in June does work.

Meanwhile, Jenny, Doug and Gosta worked on St John's Wort near the big tree on the knoll noticing a surprising number of small verbascum rosettes under the cover of grass.

Rohan poisoned paspalum and phalaris and hacked out verbascum as did Rob who also stripped the hips off briar roses. When their paths converged at the end of the afternoon, Rohan remarked that this part of the Ridge was looking pretty good. A satisfying afternoon.

Linda Spinaze

Next Meeting
Sunday 19th June

Group Area Central: Darrell Place

Time: 1.30 pm– 4 pm

Meet: Darrell Place

Bring: hat, gloves, ~~hacks~~ drink, raincoat if it is wet

Task: plant identification and weeding

Contact: Rob Lundie 6288 4125

Rabbits and the River Corridor

In 1914, the Commonwealth government erected a 'Rabbit Proof Fence' along the eastern bank of the Murrumbidgee River from the Cotter junction upstream to beyond Pine Island. The purpose of the netting fence was to protect the settled lands on the east of the river (in the newly formed Federal Territory) from the invasion of rabbits from the timbered forest land ~~across~~ the river. The land stretching 80 or 96 km west to Tumut and Kiandra was heavily infested with rabbits.

The river itself did not prove a barrier: in dry seasons they could jump from rock to rock to the far bank. Settlers (and the government inspectors) had to make constant patrols of the land facing the river to ensure that the fence was not damaged where it crossed many creeks, gullies and eroded washouts.

Jenny Horsfield

Parkcare and Landcare Coordinators' Meeting -17 May

Every three months the ACT Parks and Conservation Service holds a meeting of the Parkcare and Landcare groups in the ACT. It's a general information session largely one way but with useful inputs from the groups. Main points from the May meeting follow:

- x The contentious volunteer registration form is being redrafted. Watch this space!
- x The Parks and Conservation Service is being reorganised out of TAMS and into the Environment and Planning Directorate. It looks like a good fit.
- x The Parkcare Support Officer, Craig Wainwright, reported on a number of subjects viz.: Canberra Nature Park Plan of Management close to finalisation (pending further consultation with interested groups) after years in the making; the ARCGIS and Collector application-based programs for weed, trail and rabbit mapping is slow in its roll out. These programs will form the basis for future work programs and training Parkcarers in their operation will be vital; the annual kangaroo cull is in operation so expect defacing of signs and glueing of padlocks to spike; a new strain of Calici Virus to be trialled in Gudgenby in 2017; ACT Environment Grants were recently announced – Craig happy to assist groups wishing to apply in future; new activities declaration signs to be rolled out soon; annual planning meetings between Parks and Parkcare groups to be held from 12 August to 12 September; the Canberra Museum and Art Gallery currently having a woodlands exhibition – an artistic depiction of the work of Parkcare.
- x While their preparation may be a bit of a chore, each group's statistics was a valuable input to the Service in preparing budget bids, annual reports etc.
- x The frequency of first aid and chemcert training is being revised. Courses may be less or more frequent depending on demand.

- x As a possible topic for "fringe forums", the idea of indigenous use of fire compared to current fire management practices and the conduct of indigenous heritage tours were canvassed.

Doug Tinney

Stairway to Heaven?

The track on the south side of Mt Arawang from the wooden bridge up to the summit has been in a bad way for some time. With funds becoming available, Parks engaged contractors Makin Trax to repair and/or rebuild the route up the back of the hill. The worst section, the lower two thirds, has been realigned and remade. Walkers/runners now wind through rocky outcrops and curl past copses of trees. The design draws eyes to the great views over Tuggeranong and the Murrumbidgee corridor to the south. Much more fun than the head-down-watching where the feet go to avoid breaking an ankle that was the old track. The top one third is not as picturesque. It follows the old line straight up the ridge. Being the steepest part of the climb, you tend to concentrate on survival and not the view. While this section could have taken a wide sweep to the right and been a more enjoyable walk, that would have opened up a previously untrammelled area with the consequent introduction of weeds and collateral damage. The old conundrum of recreation versus environment. Never mind, we now have a great new access track which all should try.

Doug Tinney

Photo by Doug Tinney