



COOLEMAN RIDGE PARK CARE GROUP

Newsletter July

2007

Previous Sunday Meeting

was actually the opening of our revived Nature Trail on Saturday 16th June.

The morning was unpromising, dull, cold, gusty: we held on to things while the rangers put up a tent to shelter our display and our guests. It was enormously encouraging to have the enthusiastic support of Rachael, Bernadette and Graham.

Right on cue, at 2 p.m., the sun came out heralding a glorious afternoon.

Our special guest, Mick Gentleman MLA, described the work of park care and its importance within the community. He outlined how the 2003 bushfire destroyed several of the trail's landmarks, and the subsequent work of our group and the rangers of Canberra Nature Park to recreate an interesting walk and accompanying pamphlet. He studied our display boards, and his warmth and genuine concern were appreciated.

After the opening and refreshments we led an inaugural walk – 15 enthusiasts, none of whom opted for the shorter versions we offered them. For the last stretch of the Nature Trail there is now an alternative to the steep and unpleasant access road. Our new footpath leads down through an area quite rich in plants species, and becomes our 4th Group Area.

Bess was very disappointed to be unable to come, and send her best wishes to all. ☼

Future programme

We will continue to rotate through the four Group Areas (GA) when there is no special programme, meeting on the 3rd Sunday of the month at 1.30 p.m. ☼

Next meeting, Sunday July 15th

- GAC/Darrell for clearing of exotic growth,
- 1.30 – 4 p.m.
- meet at Darrell Place or GAC/Darrell
- bring hat, gloves, hacker, drink, snack, raincoat if it is wet ☼

June log

100607 *Amphibromus nervosus* found on the edge of the old dam

160607 3 Pine seedlings spotted for removal. Total 33

290607 2 Wedge-tailed Eagles circling Fence Post Hill

☼

Letterboxing

The response was fantastic. Several local residents came to the opening because of the drop, and many more have walked the trail since, picking up a pamphlet at the start.

Thanks also to those who offered to help but were away due to the long weekend. ☼

Weed identification

This course was held recently at the Forestry Depot on Cotter Road, and focused on garden escapes, with many of which we are uncomfortably familiar. Potted specimens were on display, and methods of dealing with them were outlined.

Of particular interest to us are *Nassella neesiana* (Chilean Needle Grass) and *Eragrostis curvula* (African Love Grass). Both of these feature in the category "must be contained" (as does *Echium plantagineum* – Paterson's Curse).

We have not yet recorded *Nassella trichotoma* (Serrated Tussock) but it is causing official concern as it moves through Canberra's suburbs, and is categorised similarly.

We were conducted on a walk through the degradation behind the Depot to become acquainted with a tall strain of *Eragrostis curvula*, very beautiful, also moving in and being targeted. ☼

Publicity

Rachael is having some corflute signs made to advertise our activities on site. With luck some will be ready for our next event, Sunday 15th July. She is also developing a notice for us to print out and place at our local shops to advertise upcoming work parties.

Recent events have indicated that there is considerable community concern for our Nature Park, and to harness it would be really tremendous. ☼

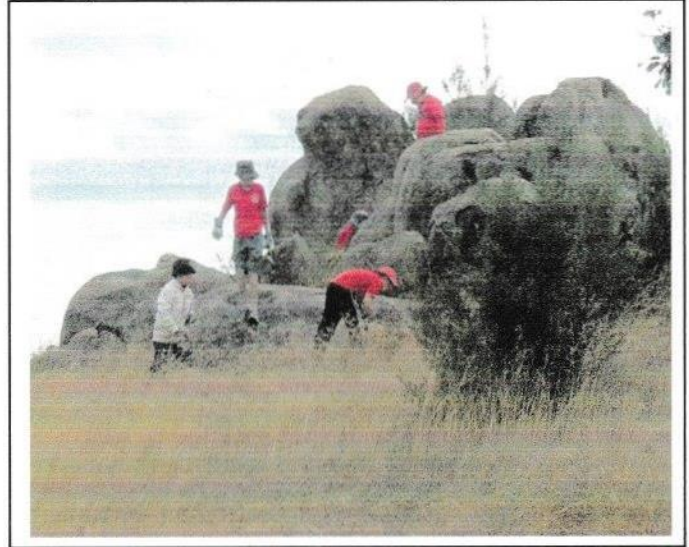
Mt Taylor

Anne relates that cattle were removed from Mount Taylor in the mid 1970s, twenty years ahead of those on Cooleman Ridge. So we can hope that twenty years from now our Ridge will have attained the richness and diversity of vegetation currently enjoyed by Taylor. ☼

Mick Gentleman MLA prepares to open the
Coolleman Ridge Nature Trail.



On the Chapman Trail
Chapman Primary School students in park care mode.



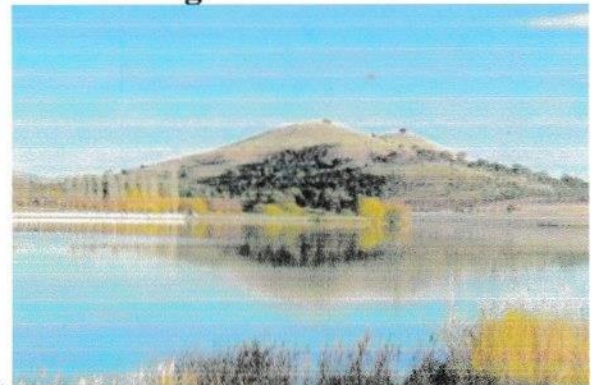
DRAFT: TOWARDS A MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR COOLEMAN RIDGE CANBERRA NATURE PARK (continued)

Park Carers see cows browsing and bruising native shrubs as well as eating other native plants. The cattle disturb plants and animals in the artificial dams. They seem to add nothing yet do detract from the stated aims of management. Eucalypts appear to regenerate more easily when released from grazing pressure. Park Carers note the abundance of weeds and the lack of native species of herbs and grasses in old sheep or cattle camps and can spend long hours trying to rehabilitate them; they see no value in creating unnecessary work by perpetuating the practices which caused the problem.

As the presence of cattle on the Ridge is so contentious it seems worthwhile to briefly review literature pertaining to cattle and conservation. Borough and Cameron (1981) noted that sheep and cattle can cause serious damage to small eucalypts by "browsing leaves and growing tips, stripping bark, and by physical breakage of stems". The absence of eucalypt regeneration in tuart forest in Western Australia for a period of 50 years was entirely "due to grazing and fires" (Forests Department of Western Australia Annual Report 1921/22). In southeastern Australia cattle may keep eucalypt regeneration dwarfed (Breckwoldt 1983). A condition of eucalypt regeneration is "low grazing levels" by domestic animals (or no grazing presumably) according to Venning (1985). Arnold (1977) considered that a "heavy grazing regime" promotes the "invasion of weed species" while Prober and Thiele (1995) found that "grazing encouraged weed invasion and reduced native species richness". In Tasmania, Fensham and Kirkpatrick (1989) considered that when grazing removed some of the grassy sward more native species may be apparent but exotics may be carried by "a variety of herbivores and machinery". Stuwe and Parsons (1977) found in Victorian grasslands that "in grazed ... sites, native plant species are often replaced by introduced species". Lunt (1991) concluded a review with "introduced stock ... will invariably diminish the conservation value of grassy ecosystems"

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

Mt Arawang



from Lake Tuggeranong. Photo: Anne I'Ons. ☼

Brace for change

Scientific names and family classifications for plant species are in turmoil, in part due to advances in DNA technology. As a step towards the establishment of our online herbarium I have checked our plant list in the Australian Plant Name Index (APNI) via Google. NSW Flora online is sadly out of date (according to our recommended source APNI) but still useful for identifications.

Pyracantha has gone from Family Malaceae to Rosaceae. *Cheilanthes* from Sinopteridaceae (Flora of NSW 2000) to Adiantaceae.

Bursaria lasiophylla is now *Bursaria spinosa* subsp. *lasiophylla*

APNI still lists *Sorghum leiocladum* as well as *Sarga l.*, apparently as the same species.

Oxalis corniculata includes *O. perennans* and *O. radicata*. But *O. radicata* is listed separately, and as a native.

Flora of Australia online states:

it is worth bearing Hooker's admonition in mind, that botanists 'should be very careful in supposing a yellow-flowered *Oxalis* to be anything but this [*Oxalis corniculata*]' (Fl. Nov.-Zel. 1: 42, 1852).

Just a sampling. ☼