

COOLEMAN RIDGE PARK CARE GROUP

Newsletter
August 2016

Previous meeting
Sunday 17th July
Group Area South: Mt Arawang

It was a beautifully sunny Winter's afternoon that saw nine members of the Group (Linda, Doug, Rohan, Arminel, Pat, Gosta, Malcolm, Alan and Rob) come together for the monthly working party.

The opportunity was taken to have an informal meeting to discuss a number of issues. It was decided to ask if it is possible for the Green Army to cut and dab small to medium woody weeds in three areas in the southern part of the Ridge, and to manually remove verbascum rosettes from the woody weed area and in the northern part.

It was also agreed to seek more information about Chapman Primary School's bush program before deciding whether and how the Group may be able to assist.

The fire treatment of the area has enabled weeds to be more easily located. Blackberries were dug out (Gosta, Doug) and sprayed (Rohan) as were briar roses. Thistles and verbascum rosettes, quite prolific higher up the Ridge, were hacked out (Pat, Arminel, Rob, Doug).

Arminel removed some Sheep Sorrel and small Sweetbriars. She also did some spotting for follow up work over the next month - lots of Proliferous Pink have emerged, thousands of Vetch seedlings are coming up and some St John's Wort is ready to be poisoned once it begins to grow again.

<p>Next Meeting Sunday 21st August Nature Trail/Pauline's Patch Time: 1.30 pm– 4 pm Meet: End of Kathner St Bring: hat, gloves, hackedrink, raincoat if it is wet Task: plant identification and weeding Contact: Linda Spinaze 6288 6916</p>
--

Linda checked on the Indigofera adesmiifolia plants which she had transplanted out of the drain in May, and although they looked quite lifeless, she noted there were at least three plants which resisted her tugging out, and so she is confident they may shoot in Spring.

Doug concentrated on verbascum rosettes and uprooting recovering briars. He wandered up the drainage ditch for a way noting lots of rosettes, collecting four golf balls and noticing many bones of long dead kangaroos.

The Group also inspected the new drain and track works which will improve sustainable access to the southern end of the Ridge.

It was generally felt that all the Group's work on blackberries and exotic perennial grasses is finally showing results, allowing the emergence of a greater variety of native grasses and forbs.

Rob Lundie

The Peril of Gravel

A barely heard call for help came from the deeply eroded gravel track leading up from Kathner St (Photo 1).

How can ready access for fire trucks and other machinery be facilitated? Difficult questions with no easy answers. But case histories can help. A new surface was laid on this track in May 2009 (Photo 3).

Triple '0' was called and both ambulance and fire brigade attended. In the summer heat of 2016, this accident was particularly serious. The injured man lay face down in the gutter beside the track. He had slipped on the gravel on his way down the incline. He could barely move. He was flown to Sydney for surgery. The prognosis was quadriplegia. He died of complications after four months in hospital.

The track had warning signs that came in the wake of a previous serious accident in September 2009; that involved a 15 year old boy on a bike. He was attended by Park Care volunteers, then fire brigade and ambulance. Today, the track has a smoother grade and is covered with recycled bitumen on the steepest part (Photo 2).

How should tracks be managed? How to protect adjacent biodiversity from changed drainage, erosion and sedimentation? How to minimise damage from remedial works programs? How to foster safe recreation?

Paddy's River Granite was a convenient source of material for the job. Unfortunately, on steeper inclines, it was difficult to walk on without slipping. Much of the gravel eroded away (Photo 1) into the adjacent woodland.

The Park Care Group has an important role to play in monitoring change in the reserve. As this example shows, the monitoring includes tracks and tragic accidents.

Malcolm Gill (photos and text)

Interesting books

Two recent books for those interested in what is on Cooleman Ridge.

Name those Grasses by Ian Clarke. Available from the Australian National Botanic Garden bookshop. With its clear text, illustrations and photographs this book describes some grasses and similar groups. The drawings and photographs cover 206 species, many being common plants of roadsides and pastures.

Insects of South Eastern Australia by Roger Farrow, published by CSIRO. Every insect has characteristic feeding preferences and behaviours. This guide uses host plants and behavioural attributes as the starting point for identifying insects of the region.

Alan Ford