



COOLEMAN RIDGE PARK CARE GROUP

Newsletter April

2008

Previous Sunday Meeting March 16th

The summer being over we reverted to afternoon work parties. Ironically, it was a scorcher. Arminel got a double dose of heat, having already represented us at the CROWK picnic.

The spreading swathes of Kangaroo Grass were cheering, and encouraged us to keep chipping away at the Salvia, St John's Wort and Verbascum. When concentrating on the ground at one's feet it's easy to think nothing is changing, but just stand back to look at the ground already worked over and satisfaction radiates. ☼

Future programme

Next meeting, Sunday April 20th

- meet on Namatjira Drive just before the Kambah Pool Road turn-off, or GAS/Arawang for clearing of exotic growth
- 1.30 to 4 p.m.
- bring hat, gloves, hacker, drink, snack, raincoat if it is wet. ☼

Arawang

March was a busy month. Tuesday 4th had Arminel and me launched into another plant survey on Mt Arawang, picking up where we left off in January. We moved into the depressingly degraded paddock through which an overhead line sags down to Arawang Homestead. Further down the slope things picked up as we found nice patches of native vegetation at the base of rocky outcrops.

Asplenium flabellifolium (Necklace Fern) was again common, as was *Cynoglossum australe*. There was *Eucalyptus pauciflora* in a grove of planted trees. *Amaranthus albus* was a new exotic to add to our Cooleman Ridge list - the following Friday we found it by the Kathner St dam. Our Arawang list grew by a dozen species as we noted things like paspalum, dandelion, and cotoneaster - our routine is improving as our eyes are sharpening. ☼

Major Mitchell

reported on Cooleman Ridge 16th March. ☼

CROWK FOOT'N'MOUTH EVENT

Arminel writes: "On the Sunday before Easter, I led a group of 13 people on a walk from Chapman shops to Lions Youth Haven on the Kambah Pool Road. This walk was arranged by CROWK (Concerned Residents of West Kambah. Our route lay over the saddle between Mount Arawang and Cooleman Peak, then along behind Macquoid's Hill. It was hot but the views were magnificent.

Approaching the Haven, we were met by Aidan the accordionist, playing Australian and Irish tunes to help us on our merry way. Other walkers joined us there, having come along the Murrumbidgee or through the suburb. There was a delicious barbecue lunch to reward us all for our footslog. The walkers enjoyed seeing the plants, especially the lovely native grasses, kurrajong saplings and kangaroo apples. I chatted to them about our work and a little of the history of Cooleman Ridge Park Care Group. At the Haven, I had set up a display incorporating our tools of trade and workwear, together with photos, a map and reference material. I also handed out copies of our pamphlet. If you know of events like this, please let me know (6231 7392). The display can easily be recreated." ☼

Census of the Vascular Plants of the ACT

We greatly appreciate the very helpful (and detailed) response from Brendan Lepschi, Curator, Australian National Herbarium, addressing our questions about the Census. Our questions were passed on to him, via Steve Welch, by Rebecca Blundell. Part I follows:

"Each state and territory in Australia has its own census, but the ACT (until recently) was the only jurisdiction without such a census. Thus, Dave Mallinson, Laurie Adams, David Jones and I prepared the Census now available at:

<http://www.anbg.gov.au/cpbr/ACT-census/index.html>

The Census is listing of all vascular plant species known to occur in the ACT, and is based entirely on vouchered herbarium specimens held here at the Australian National Herbarium. No taxon is added to the list unless there is an authenticated herbarium specimen lodged at the ANH, which the authors have seen. The Census will never be 'finished' as taxa come and go, and revisions change taxonomic concepts and nomenclature. However, we obviously need to present some version of the Census at some point, and the system we have adopted is to electronically publish the Census every six months, starting with the version currently available (which was loaded in December 2007). Once new versions are produced and loaded, any previous versions of the Census will then become redundant (except for historical purposes), and the version on the ANBG website will be the one to follow, as it is now. This is the same system as adopted by other states, although many of them also print their censuses in hardcopy".

More, next month. ☼

What's around

Family POACEAE – the Grass Family. There are about 300 species of *Eragrostis* world wide. In Australia, 66 species are known.



Eragrostis trachycarpa
Tufted native
perennial to 0.8 m
eros Gr: love
agrostis Gr: grass
trachys Gr: rough
carpos Gr: fruit



**Eragrostis pilosa* –
Soft Lovegrass
Tufted exotic annual
to 0.6 m high; nodes
sometimes
subtended by a ring
of glands
eros Gr: love
agrostis Gr: grass
pilosus L: hairy

Chapman Primary

Jenny reports:

"Our very happy relationship with Chapman Primary School has been renewed, with the Year 3 teachers expressing a strong interest in being involved in environmental education and landcare. This has been written into their program for next term. In early April Arminel and I spent a half hour with the year 3 classes talking about our role on the ridge and how they can be involved, and what the school has already achieved. On Friday 4th April a large and excited group of children, together with their teachers and a number of parents, plus Doug, Arminel, Erika and myself all walked up from the school and after depositing some new leaflets in the letterbox walked around the interpretative trail. Doug and I were very pleased to see that one of the eucalypt seedlings, transplanted over two years ago from near the Kathner St dam, is growing strongly, having survived drought and two control burns in the vicinity.

The children are so keen to learn about what's on the ridge...native grasses, lizards, inhabitants of tree hollows...they are at a very receptive age.

We hope that next term we will be able to re-start a regular program of 'nature walks' combined with some simple weeding of the trail area. It is looking very healthy, with heaps of kangaroo grass and stipa colonising areas that two years ago were absolutely weed-covered." ☼

Research on the Eastern Grey Kangaroo in the ACT

When: Thursday, 17 April, 7.30 pm

Where: Blue Gum School Friends Lounge, Hackett shops

Enquiries: ph 6247 7515 or e-mail admin@majura.org

The talk, by Dr Don Fletcher, ACT Parks, Conservation and

Lands is part of a free lecture series Hilltop to Backfence -

Celebrating 5 years of ParkCare on Mount Majura

For more information and a program visit www.majura.org ☼

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

Policies of fire management

Policies of fire management fall into three groups that may be summed up as:

- (i) keeping fire out of the landscape as much as possible;
- (ii) burning the landscape as the Aboriginal people did; and
- (iii) developing fire regimes that demonstrably address management aims.

The first of these policies seems to have been the aim on the Ridge. It is a policy that reacts to fire outbreaks by immediate suppression; it shuns prescribed burning; it does not consider fire impacts on the environment explicitly. If it could be demonstrated that non-fire options like slashing could achieve management aims within the constraints of the budget, then this policy could be relevant. The second policy implies that the flora and fauna were adapted to Aboriginal burning regimes, that the years since this practice ceased have had no effect on the landscape, that the landscape is substantially unchanged, and that any Aboriginal policy or practice of management is still appropriate to today's conditions and needs. However, as we have no firm idea of what Aboriginal fire regimes were, such a policy for this area is void. The third of these policy types seems to be the only rational one appropriate to today's needs. Even if such a policy was desirable in the past it was impracticable then because of the Air Pollution Control Ordinance of 1987 which effectively curtailed management fires near the city and suburbs. The challenge is to determine the effects of fire regimes, and alternate management actions, on the environment and on the protection of lives and property in order to help evaluate management options.

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