



# COOLEMAN RIDGE PARK CARE GROUP

## Newsletter May 2007

### Previous Sunday Meeting, April 15<sup>th</sup>

Three months after our previous visit we were back at GAS/Arawang. The Summit Track starts (or finishes?) where we originally started weeding, and slowly we work our way upwards, clearing to both sides of it. The recent rain had brought on fresh growth, giving us our best yet plant count. Weighing heavily on the negative side is a huge and expanding blackberry thicket which the authorities no longer have funds to deal with.

Sharp-eyed Doug spotted \**Medicago sativa* (Lucerne) to add to the list. ☼

### Future programme

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

### Next Sunday meeting, May 20<sup>th</sup>

- Nature Trail preparations
- **1.30 p.m. to 4 p.m.**  
meet at the Kathner St entrance
- bring hat, gloves, hacker, drink, snack, raincoat if it is wet ☼

### Nature Trail

We are going full steam towards the opening of the Nature Trail in June with the full cooperation of Canberra Nature Park. The pamphlet design has been finalised and printing will be handled by Lois Padgham, who has also designed the signs. Graham Heanes will organise the new posts and the pamphlet boxes. Rachael Dawes is in charge of the organisation on behalf of Canberra Nature Park.

Doug and Gösta have been doing some of the planning and we will all help at the working bee on May 20<sup>th</sup> to prepare the ground for the final lap of the trail.

Doug will spoil us with cake on this occasion. ☼

### Preemptive strike

With over 30 pine seedlings removed on the Ridge in the last few years, imagine their predominance in the landscape if they and subsequent generations of the plants had been left to grow. And for every passing year their removal would be more costly. ☼

### April log

Maned Wood Ducks with ducklings at both dams  
*Einadia polygonoides* found Fence Post Hill. ☼

### What's going on?

Two families of Wood Ducks with a combined brood of at least 13 ducklings have been dividing their time between Kathner St dam and the old dam. Erika assures us that, predators permitting, they should do fine.

There is unseasonal flowering, too: *Hibbertia obtusifolia* which generally flowers towards the end of the year, *Lomandra filiformis* which generally flowers in spring. There has also been a late show of grasses. Gardeners see shoots developing on Manchurian Pears and flower buds on Youngberries.

The rains were clearly welcome. ☼

### ACT NRM facilitator

After 25 years working for ACT Government Steve Welch has decided to move on. Steve took considerable trouble to keep in touch with volunteers and listen to their concerns. Good luck, Steve!

Felicity Grant will be acting in the Facilitator role. email: [felicity.grant@act.gov.au](mailto:felicity.grant@act.gov.au) and she will retain Steve's work phone & mobile numbers.

For on-ground works: John Freeman 6207 2491  
[john.freeman@act.gov.au](mailto:john.freeman@act.gov.au) ☼

### Asset protection

Many of our members attended corridor meetings at Stromlo Forest Headquarters when GHD consultants and representatives of ACT Parks Conservation and Lands presented maps showing proposed activities along the urban/nature park interface that were designed to ensure uniform fire management standards across the ACT. "To achieve this objective it is planned to remove rock, stumps and native vegetation, including regrowth and level uneven ground."

All members are encouraged to make submissions voicing their concerns. **N.B** – Rebecca has extended the cut-off date to Friday 12<sup>th</sup> (which actually is 11<sup>th</sup> or Saturday. Ed.).

Deb Foskey of the ACT Greens has put a question to the Environment Minister/Chief Minister asking about the use of consultants to both draw up proposals and implement them, and about the level of consultation with the Park Care Group. ☼



## What's around

Family ASTERACEAE – aster Gr. star. Previously Compositae; the daisy family



\**Chondrilla juncea* – Skeleton Weed  
Perennial herb with long thin taproot  
*juncea* – rush-like  
Native of Mediterranean region

At right:  
*Chondrilla juncea*  
affected by a  
biological  
control  
commonly  
known as  
Gall Mite



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

#### ISSUES

##### Exotic plants

With the repeal of the Noxious Weeds Act in 1996 emphases on weeds are now on case histories, not species. "Weeds" are seen, by this legislation, to be plants that threaten the value of a resource whether that be of value for conservation, farming or society in general. Action arises from complaint, not presence.

In the reserve there are 95 recorded examples of exotic species, the most prominent being Wild Oats, Phalaris and Paterson's Curse. Woody weeds like Cotoneaster, Pyracantha and Sweet Briar have been markedly reduced in number but are still present. *Verbascum thapsis* (hairy mullein) has also been reduced in population size by control measures instigated by the Park Care Group. Thistles and Horehound are prominent weeds also.

##### Exotic plantings

Plantations of non-indigenous eucalypts and acacias do not fall within the ambit of the aims of management. Blue gums (*E. bicostata*), one of the plantation species, are beginning to spread; they contribute large quantities of fuel and carry streamers of bark which, when alight, can start fires substantial distances from the main fire. In some places blue gums are competing with native indigenous trees. We suggest that a program of blue gum felling and removal begin immediately. This will have the effect of breaking up the strong linear impact of the plantations. Other species of these linear plantations should be phased out.

Note: the whole draft can be read on our web site ☺

### Biodiversity in your backyard

Suburban stewardship for a sustainable city.

Talk by Beth Mitchell, Biodiversity Projects Manager, ANU.

When: Wednesday, 23 May 2007, 7.30pm

Where: Blue Gum School Friends' Lounge, Hackett Shops. ☺

### CROWK

Jenny Horsfield writes:

*On Sunday 22 April a group of about 10 people gathered near Kathner Street to do a guided walk over Cooleman Ridge as part of Earth Day celebrations. The event was organised by CROWK (Concerned Residents of West Kambah) who are trying to educate people about a more sustainable way of living in our area. The walk was really too limited in time to allow them to see the landcare work taking place on the ridge, but hopefully they will be inspired to revisit the area. I joined them for the second leg from Youthhaven on Kambah Pool Road, and we walked over Urambi Hills. All walkers found the views exhilarating and appreciated what an asset we have - and have to defend - in our Nature Parks.*

*The second guided tour, in the afternoon, was down Tuggeranong Creek from the dam wall to the Murrumbidgee. Dr Stephen Skinner, the new Waterwatch coordinator for the Southern ACT Catchment group, was our guide. This was a fascinating walk because it showed the very real recovery of this creek after the fires and the many natural assets still present in this natural creekline, so near to urban settlement. The heavy rains of late summer flushed through the creek and the water is still flowing well. The casuarinas are vigorous and healthy and there is abundant native bird and insect life (and two large water dragons were seen). ☺*

### Mt Taylor

Web address is <http://taylorparkcare.50webs.com/>. ☺