



COOLEMAN RIDGE PARK CARE GROUP

Newsletter February
2010

Previous Sunday meeting January 17th

It was good to be on the Ridge early, before the sun reached full strength. The month's pitiful rainfall avoided us. On our way to GAN (Group Area North) we paused at Malcolm's patch to appreciate his restoration of the section that had been so severely battered during mid-year drainage works. He'd realigned lopped branches and displaced rocks, smoothed earth mounds and transplanted some near-by *Lomandra* to soften the rawness. So no longer was it an eye-sore.

Our group scattered to confront the weeds of their choice – *Chondrilla juncea*, *Phalaris aquatica*, *Hypericum perforatum*, *Rosa rubiginosa*, *Paspalum dilatatum* and Doug was on tap with loppers and herbicide when needed.

A plant survey yielded 10 new entries for the area, half of them being native: of the 82 listed 49 were local. This does not necessarily indicate an increase in diversity – we now cover a much greater area, and we recognise more species. But for those who enjoy compiling lists it was satisfying. ✿

Future programme

Next meeting, Sunday February 21st

This is our last early morning start of the summer

- GAC/Darrell – weed removal and plant ID
- 8-10.30am
- meet at Darrell Place, or GAC/Darrell
- bring hat, gloves, hacker, drink, snack, rain gear ✿

Spiderman

A young man was observed loitering suspiciously round fence Post Hill one hot Friday morning.

When politely challenged he confessed to be searching for a couple of specific spiders for his PhD project – so far without success.

It was his first visit to Cooleman Ridge, and some weeks after the fuel reduction burn. He thought that a light burn would not be detrimental to his subjects, whereas the fierce fire of 2003 could have been a different story. ✿

Dams

The Kathner St dam and the Old Dam are still dry.

The water tank was removed from close to the Old Dam in the middle of January so presumably the cattle had gone too. ✿

Submission

Arminel composed and lodged a submission with the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment, Dr Maxine Cooper re *an investigation into Canberra Nature Park (nature reserves); the Molonglo River Corridor (nature reserves) and Googong Foreshores* addressing the various terms of reference

“CONCLUSION

“The ACT Government does not have the resources to care appropriately for these reserves without community involvement. This involvement must be strengthened. The resources put into setting up and supporting ParkCare and Landcare groups are currently inadequate. Each and every reserve needs at least one group of voluntary caretakers or “friends”. The network could be actively promoted to tap into the “grey army” of active, intelligent retirees. Recruiting volunteers would not only provide resources, but also increase community awareness of these valuable assets.”
✿

Tree Area 7

Pat has plunged into his new role as tree surveyor, tackling the challenges of Mt Arawang.

He has constructed a neat measuring device 1 metre high with the crosspiece swivelling to 1.3 m, the height at which the girth is measured. Once the pictures are downloaded he can use them to calculate the tree height.

We needed some new thinking here and it should speed things up a lot. Pixels are cheap.

With Naarilla and Paul each with an area, there is coverage of more than half the Ridge. It has to be a long and slow learning process but there is fascination in detail. ✿

Along a Trail with Ants on Mount Majura

Join ANU myrmecologist Dr. Ajay Narendra for a glimpse into the fascinating world of one of the most dominant animals on the planet.

When: Sunday 28 February, 4.30 pm to 6.30 pm

Where: meet at Mackenzie / Grayson Sts nature park entrance, Hackett

Bring: sun protection, sturdy boots and a magnifying glass if you have one.

Children (with adults) are especially welcome; suitable for kids aged 8 years and older.

Booking and enquiries: P 62477515 or admin@majura.org ✿



Gösta's pictures: upper 13/12/09; lower: 5/02/10

Kathner Street Control Burn

Recovery Report 1 (January) from Arminel

Since the asset protection control burn was carried out on 25 November 2009, we have been monitoring what plants are emerging and recovering. Malcolm is providing rainfall statistics. The total rainfall for December was 78mm. We have sent in our first detailed report to Parks and will do this monthly at least until the anniversary of the burn. The general summary of progress is that

- the area remains extremely vulnerable to damage by erosion as the season has been unfavourable to growth
- the most common weed seedlings to have emerged are Paterson's Curse *Echium plantagineum*.
- apart from some badly scorched Peach Heath *Lissanthe strigosa* bushes, the existing saplings, bushes and trees throughout the burn area have shown new growth.
- we have found one kind of grass (exotic) not previously observed in the area - *Eragrostis cilianensis*. ☼

Unit#26

On Friday 22 January some time after 17:00 CFU#26 Lincoln Close under Team Leader David Mackenzie responded to the smell and sight of smoke on the Ridge above Doyle Terrace. David rang 000 and was advised that trucks were already on the way. Members of the Unit were alerted and the trailer was hitched to David's Toyota. With five people aboard he drove to Hertz Place. Three others walked to the location making the turn-out eight members in total. They reported to the Station Officer who by then could only use them to carry cold water bottles to the fires mopping up on the ridge above.

On arrival it was apparent the fire was under control and by then the principal concern was parking space: there were several FB Units there and several RFS Units on the track above the fire, police cars, and later, ambulance and ACTEWAGL. David and his team were given their release and departed at approximately 18.30 and returned the trailer to Lincoln Place. The unit was stood down and David closed off the incident by reporting the stand down at 18:52.

At the time of writing the cause had not been officially announced but it appeared to have been sparking power lines behind Doyle Terrace just along from Hertz Place. The ACT Fire Brigade were there in ten minutes from the first call, seven

minutes from response. They had it under control before it could jump the track and head off into the reserve. The wind was oscillating from the NW to the NE and for a while it was not clear where the fire was headed. It could just as readily have entered the suburbs or continued through the reserve. It would have been stopped to the south by the fuel reduction burn of late last year.

An area about 150-200 m long between the property line and the track was burned: pretty much all of it can be seen from a number of vantage points nearby. This was Unit#26's first call-out in its nearly five year existence. The fire was out-of-area and on this occasion they were not able to participate in any meaningful way. However it was good experience and generated much fodder for discussion. ☼

Plant list

The revised list of plants reported on Cooleman Ridge, from 1993 to August 2009, can now be found on our website (URL below). Click on PLANTS, then click on PLANT LIST. Thanks, Karina and Christopher! ☼

☺ *Bess, we hope you are safely home again, recovering fast and soon into planning your visit to the Ridge!* ☺